

NONVERBAL UTILIZATION



1. Introduction

Imagine meeting someone for the first time: even before they open their mouth, they are already communicating with you.

Unfortunately, most people do not consciously know to look for this information during their interactions, but find that when they begin to attend to it, they suddenly feel more comfortable to communicate with anyone because “wherever they look, the clues are always there”.

Even before he begins to speak, you really pay attention him and the things around them. You may have noticed his:

- Apparent age:
- Jewelry and accessories
- Attire or dress
- Grooming
- Height and weight
- Attractiveness and fitness
- Tattoos and skin

2. Case Study

You notice a well-dressed, clean-cut, white male walking in your direction while you are waiting to be seated for lunch in a Manhattan restaurant. He is wearing a dark blue suit, is clean shaven and lightly-perfumed. As he gets closer, you notice the skin of his face is puffy — almost as though it were bloated — and his eyes are mildly bloodshot. Some of the blood vessels in his nose are broken and flared.

As he and the hostess stand in front of you talking, you notice that his breath faintly smells like alcohol and his clothes smell more like smoke than cologne. You study his face and see even though he doesn't look like he's more than 40 years old, you can see a yellowish tint to his skin and that under his suit jacket are a number of stomach rolls that he has packed under his dress shirt. He speaks with a clear, deep *New Yorker* twang and somehow seems both jittery and exhausted at the same time.

Then you also attend to the details of their demeanor and speech:

- Introversion / Extraversion
- Noticeable Outward Emotion
- Speech
- Vocabulary
- Accent



Brief Interpretation Questions:

You may first notice his approximate age. Ask yourself, what age is he roughly and to which general phase of life could this age perhaps correspond? (This varies by person and situation)

Some general life phases:

- 20's: discovering your role and realizing their dreams
- 30's: questioning earlier decisions - reevaluation of progress and future goals
- 40's: clarifying their deeper identity - coming to terms with who you really are
- 50's+: post mid-life crisis and revitalization

You then notice the individual's *height/weight*. Does the person seem overweight for their height to weight proportion? Or maybe they seems particularly fit? Could this suggest a more sedentary or active lifestyle?

You think of his overall *attractiveness*. While very subjective and generalist, you remember that particularly attractive men and women can be intimidating to members of the same or opposite sex. On occasion, they also face unique challenges with bosses or co-workers who ignore their intelligence or otherwise cross the line in professional settings. How might this influence the world of this person?



BIQ, Continued:

You then turn your focus to their **skin**: Skin can reflect a person's ethnic background or the healthiness of their lifestyle. (For example, a smoker's skin ages faster and may develop a yellowish tint to it while heavy consumers of alcohol may have puffy facial skin and broken blood cells in their nose.

Attending to his **dress/accessories**, you wonder to yourself: Could his business attire indicate that he works in a professional setting? Is his clothing form-fitting, and/or from top name brand or does it fit poorly and/or is of low-quality? Are there tears, rips, stains, etc. in his outfit? Is he wearing jewelry? What might this imply about his affluence or prosperity?

Consider his **grooming**: Is he clean cut, disheveled or somewhere in between? How someone grooms themselves can be an indicator as to how they want the world to receive them. For example, in modern society, being especially clean-cut may suggest some level of affluence or success. On the other hand, a lack of grooming may suggest an indifference to what mainstream society thinks, or hint at what the person does in their vocation (i.e. the paint-covered, dirty overalls of a construction worker).

You finally attend to his **demeanor and speech**: Does he seem shy or outgoing, you wonder? Does he appear anxious, angry, cheerful, excited, etc? What mood is he presenting? When he speaks, does he seem well-spoken, punctuated, grammatical? Does he use words that might suggest a higher education? Is he speaking in a pattern which might conform to local usage or does he seem to have a foreign accent?

Wrapping it all up:

Now you ask yourself:

How could this apparent information reflect the "psychological undercurrent" running through his life?

You remember the following list of universal concerns shared amongst most people worldwide (to different degrees) which include:

- Romance
- Wife/Husband and Marriage
- Children
- First-time Home Buying
- Career Success
- Divorce or Separation
- Relatives
- Money challenges
- etc

Finally, as you observe this individual, you ask yourself: "What might be troubling or influencing this person and what might they be after?"

You can then utilize your observations to have a more informed communication interaction.

However, keep in mind that people, no matter how much you observe them, must be engaged on an individual basis.

Until that point, all the above represent seemingly useful, but unconfirmed observations. Only once you start interacting with them verbally, will you be able to test the validity of that which you observed — and what it might mean. Do this enough and patterns will begin emerge for you over time.

(The above is adapted from the book *Tradecraft: The Art and Science of Cold Reading*)