

10 Activities for Nonverbal Improvement

People improve their communication through application. Here are activities from *Nonverbal Epiphany: Steps to Improve Your Nonverbal Communication* that will help you improve your nonverbal communication. More information about these topics is found within *Nonverbal Epiphany*. These activities are intended to increase your understanding of other people's nonverbal communication and for you to communicate more effectively through nonverbal communication.

ACTIVITY 1:

DID YOU GET FLASHED?

Observe your different communication encounters and interactions, such as walking by someone at the grocery store, walking up to a friend, and walking up to a salesperson. Notice the eyebrow flash. Is this done every time or only with familiar people happy to see you? What is the ratio between people you know using it to greet you versus people you are unfamiliar with? Can you intentionally do it yourself to gain favor with someone? Write down a comparison list examining the eyebrow flash (or lack thereof) being used by people you are familiar with and those in business situations, such as salespeople.

ACTIVITY 2:

WHICH OBSERVED NONVERBAL BEHAVIORS ARE EVOLUTIONARY?

Observe the common nonverbal behaviors people around you exhibit. The more common nonverbal behaviors are among people from different cultures and genders, the more likely they are evolutionary. These can include expressions, gestures, and eye behaviors, among others. What ones do you notice, and why might they have been important for survival and attracting mates? Try to make note of at least one common emotional display, gesture, and eye behavior that is consistent for a given situation, regardless of the cultural background for the people interacting.

ACTIVITY 3:

DOES NONVERBAL ART IMITATE LIFE?

Watch recorded or uploaded television shows or videos that display real-life communication interactions. This can even include content on platforms such as YouTube. Some examples are interviews with sports players after a game, news interviews with witnesses, and prerecorded live events that can be filmed by armatures. Watch a variety of content in a variety of contexts and topics, as you regularly would. Then watch these videos with the sound off and focus on the nonverbal communication behaviors. Was the message that you interpreted the same between watching with the sound on and watching with no sound? What additional cues did you pick up on when the sound was off? Consider at least five similarities and five differences in your observations with sound and without sound.

ACTIVITY 4:

HOW DO SMILES DIFFER?

In your next five interactions with other people, notice their smiles. Determine whether the smiles are real or fake—whether these are people you know, employees in customer service you interact with, or strangers walking by. Create a list of real smiles and one of fake smiles, and compare who the people are in each and how many are in each list.

ACTIVITY 5:

WHAT DOES YOUR FINGER SAY?

Measure your 2D:4D finger-digit ratio. You begin by measuring the length of your index finger and then your ring finger on the same hand. Measure from the inside bottom ridge up to the top point of your finger. Then divide the length of your index finger by the length of your ring finger. After measuring your finger-digit ratio, look at the social behavioral associations described in the chapter. List those descriptions that match your personality of behaviors based on your finger-digit ratio. Write a brief narrative about the accuracy of your finger-digit ratio indicator with the associated factors described in the chapter.

ACTIVITY 6:

WHAT'S IN STORE?

Take several trips to different types of stores. They should range from the typical big-box stores to local small businesses. Notice the walking paths customers have to navigate through. Then consider the following:

- How large are the walking paths?
- What items are placed to the sides?
- Where are popular items placed in location to the store entrance?
- Are complimentary and substitutionary items placed near one another?
- Are the items throughout the store consistent with the store's image and what you would expect this store to contain?
- What is the store layout—square, rectangle, or another shape?
- How was your experience with other shoppers and customer-service employees?
- What items are placed near checkouts for impulse buys?
- What colors are the floors and walls?
- How does the store make you feel emotionally?

Write a narrative describing the differences between a large shopping store and a much smaller one. What works well in each? What can be improved in each?

ACTIVITY 7:

CAN PEOPLE CATCH EMOTIONS?

Observe the emotions of people at a social gathering. How many people are displaying emotions different from the people around them? How long does it take for one person to influence the emotions of those around them? Write down the ratio of people who conform nonverbally to other people compared with those displaying differing nonverbal behaviors.

ACTIVITY 8:

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR PERSUASION?

Observe the nonverbal behaviors that another person you are interacting with exhibits

prior to a persuasive message.

Which of these do you notice?

1. Nonverbal immediacy behaviors
2. Vigilant nonverbal behaviors
3. Cautious nonverbal behaviors
4. Head nodding

Write down the order ranking the most popular behaviors along with specific examples for each.

ACTIVITY 9:

HOW ARE YOU CULTURALLY DIFFERENT?

Observe the communication of someone from a different culture. They can be someone you know or a stranger in public. Make note about their appearance, movement, facial expressions, level of eye contact, touch, greetings, paralanguage, and the similarities and differences with your own. What about their culture might be influencing those areas, such as being from a high- or low-context culture, individualistic or collectivistic culture, or urban or rural area? Write a narrative comparing and contrasting the nonverbal behaviors of the person from the other culture you observed and your normal nonverbal behaviors.

ACTIVITY 10:

IS YOUR PIC GOLDEN?

Use information from this chapter to take a picture of your face that uses the golden ratio to improve its quality. Meisner (2016) provides five simple suggestions. Please read them below. Additional details are provided in the article cited below this activity.

1. Orient the head, eliminating the impacts of perspective.
2. Distance from the camera and camera lenses, eliminating the impacts of optical distortion.
3. Consider facial expressions and impacts on facial proportions.
4. Eliminating adverse impacts on image quality and accuracy.

5. Identify the key facial markers and calculate the most relevant measurements.

Meisner, G. (2016, March 19). How to take photos and measurements for facial beauty analysis and identification of golden ratio proportions. GoldenNumber.Net

<https://www.goldennumber.net/facial-beauty-golden-ratio-photo-analysis/>

There are also apps available that can test the golden ratio to your face:

- Golden Face (Android)
- Golden Ratio (Windows)
- Golden Ratio Camera (Apple)