Read People Better

MASTERING NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION FOR BETTER RELATIONSHIPS AND AUTHENTIC SALES

The most powerful aspect of nonverbal intelligence isn't manipulation—*it's empathy.*

When you truly understand what others are feeling, connection becomes authentic. This authentic connection is what transforms BEMER presentations into partnerships.

The Promise: What Improves Quickly

MORE TRUST IN LESS TIME

Builds stronger relationships and facilitates quicker collaboration.

FEWER AWKWARD OBJECTIONS

Leads to smoother conversations and easier agreement.

CLEANER INVITATIONS & NEXT STEPS

Ensures clarity and direction for future actions.

LESS CHASING, MORE CLARITY

Reduces unnecessary follow-up and provides a clear path forward.

The Hidden Pain: Selling into Uncertainty

Most sales friction isn't logic—it's risk + emotion + ambiguity.

Sales Challenges Solved by Body Language

RAPPORT

Do they feel safe with me?

CONCERN SURFACING

Are they confused, skeptical, or just processing?

INVITATION TIMING

Am I early, on-time, or late?

AUTHORITY DYNAMICS

Who's really deciding?

PRICE MOMENTS

Is this sticker shock or approval-process tension?

THESE ARE THE MOMENTS WHERE MISREADS CREATE PRESSURE—AND PRESSURE KILLS TRUST.

The Cost of Misreading

When you misread cues:

YOU PUSH WHEN THEY NEED CLARITY

YOU REASSURE WHEN THEY NEED CONTROL

YOU CHASE WHEN THEY NEED TIME

YOU DISCOUNT WHEN THEY NEED CERTAINTY

"SAME PRODUCT. SAME SCRIPT. DIFFERENT READ = DIFFERENT OUTCOME."

Cool Fact: We're Not Great Lie Detectors

Accuracy averages barely above chance
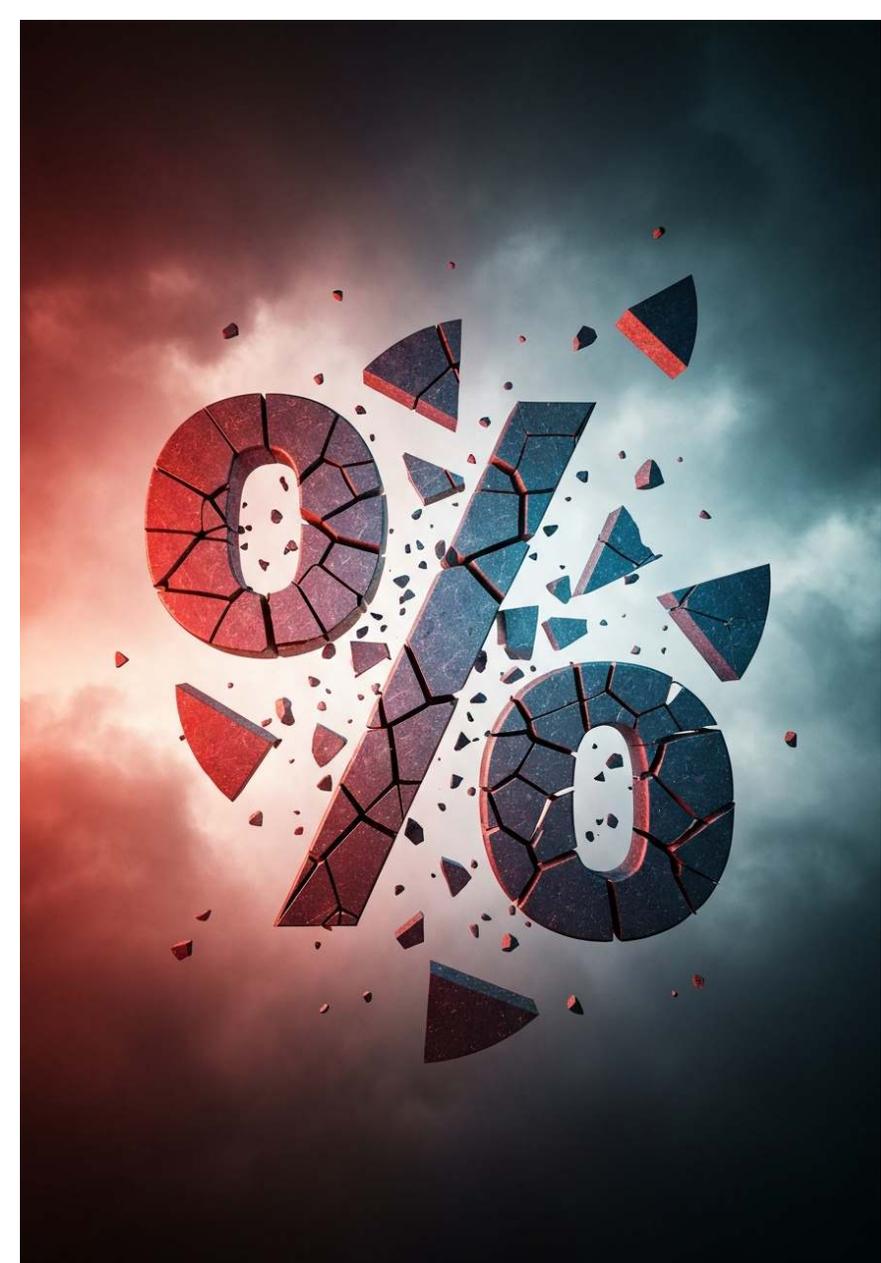
AVERAGE LIE DETECTION ACCURACY

54%

BARELY ABOVE CHANCE

CONFIDENCE IN DETECTING LIES DOES NOT CORRELATE WITH ACCURACY.

FOCUS ON SPOTTING DISCOMFORT AND ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS, NOT 'CATCHING LIES'.

SOURCE: (BOND & DEPAULO, 2006)

Myth #1: The '93% Body Language' Myth

Mehrabian's findings were about feelings/attitudes under constrained conditions, not general communication. In sales, words and context matter enormously.

(Mehrabian, 1967, 1971)

WORDS AND CONTEXT MATTER ENORMOUSLY IN SALES.

Myth #2: Eye Contact Isn't Always Honesty

- SOME PEOPLE LOOK AWAY TO THINK, NOT TO DECEIVE.

- HIGH EYE CONTACT CAN BE PERFORMATIVE.

- NEURODIVERSITY + CULTURE CHANGE NORMS.

DECEPTION CUES ARE WEAK AND INCONSISTENT; OVERALL DETECTION RATES STAY NEAR CHANCE. (BOND & DEPAULO, 2006)

Myth #3: Arms Crossed Isn't Always Rejection

One gesture has many meanings.

1

COLD ROOM, CHAIR WITH NO ARMRESTS

Consider environmental factors or seating arrangements.

2

HABIT POSTURE

The behavior may stem from a long-standing personal habit.
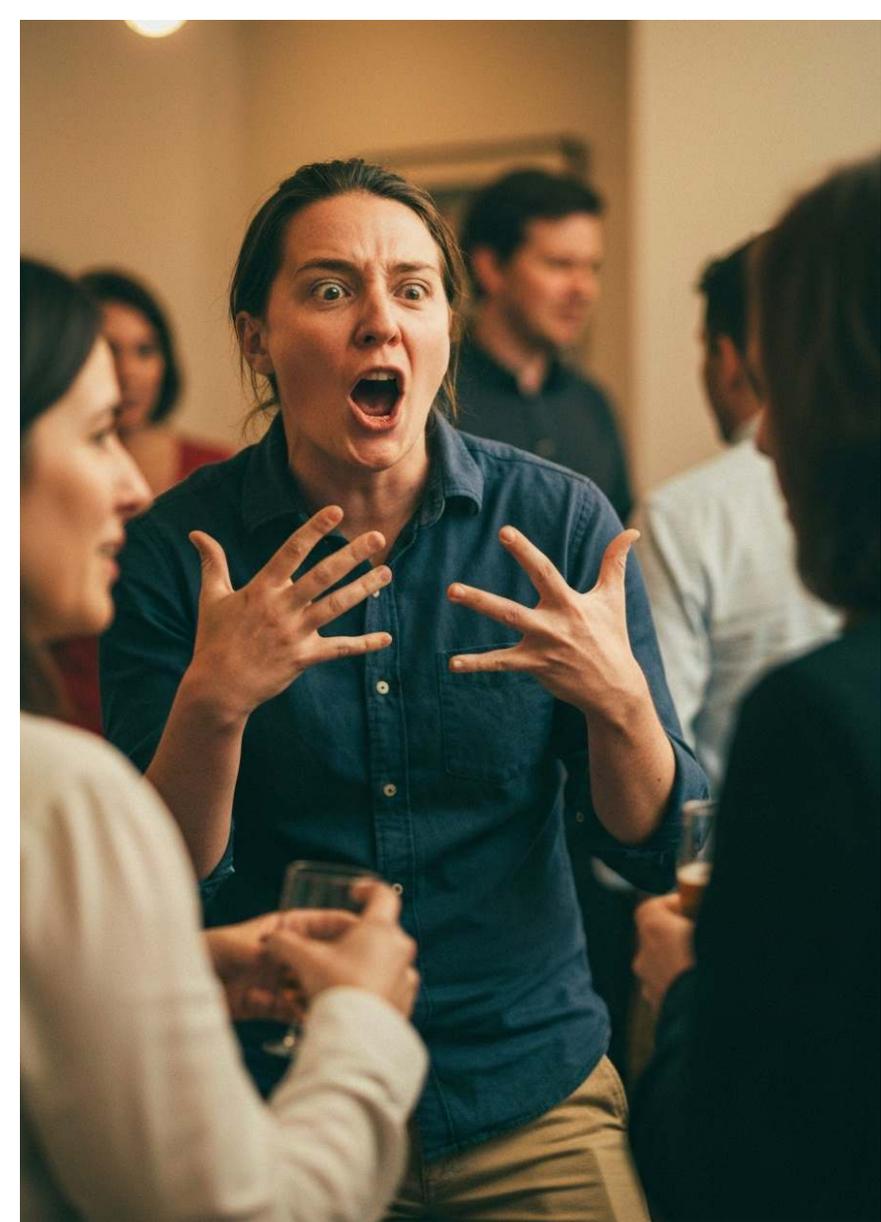
3

SELF-SOOTHING WHILE LISTENING

Individuals may cross their arms as a calming mechanism.

4

TRYING TO FEEL "CONTAINED" IN A HIGH-STAKES MOMENT

It can be a way to manage feelings of vulnerability or anxiety.

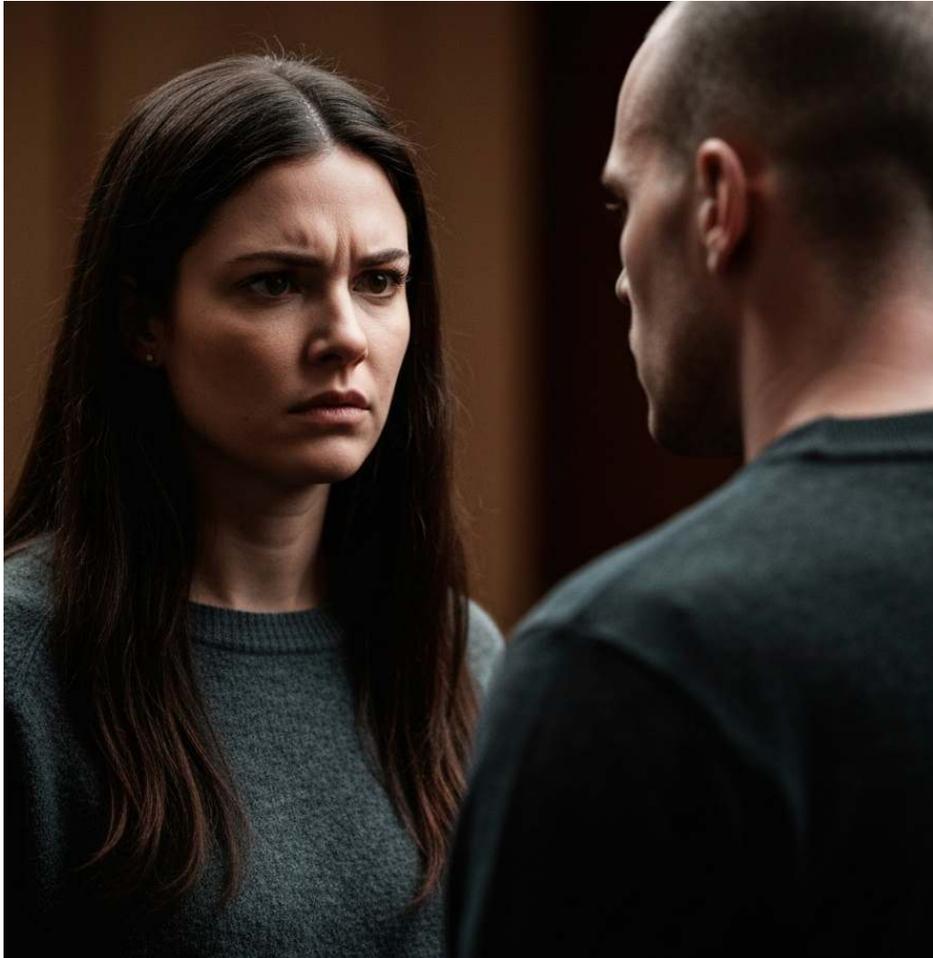IF ONE CUE SOLVED HUMANS, WE'D ALL BE OUT OF A JOB.

A gesture is a word.
A cluster is a sentence.
Context is the whole paragraph.

AVOID ISOLATED INTERPRETATIONS; ALWAYS CONSIDER THE SEQUENCE OF CUES
AND THE BROADER CONTEXT TO UNDERSTAND THE COMPLETE MESSAGE.

5 Common Errors in Reading People

Why we get it wrong

- **SINGLE-GESTURE DECODING**

  Interpreting behavior based on a single action or expression.

- **IGNORING BASELINE**

  Failing to consider a person's typical behavior as a reference point.

- **IGNORING CONTEXT**

  Disregarding the situational factors that influence behavior.
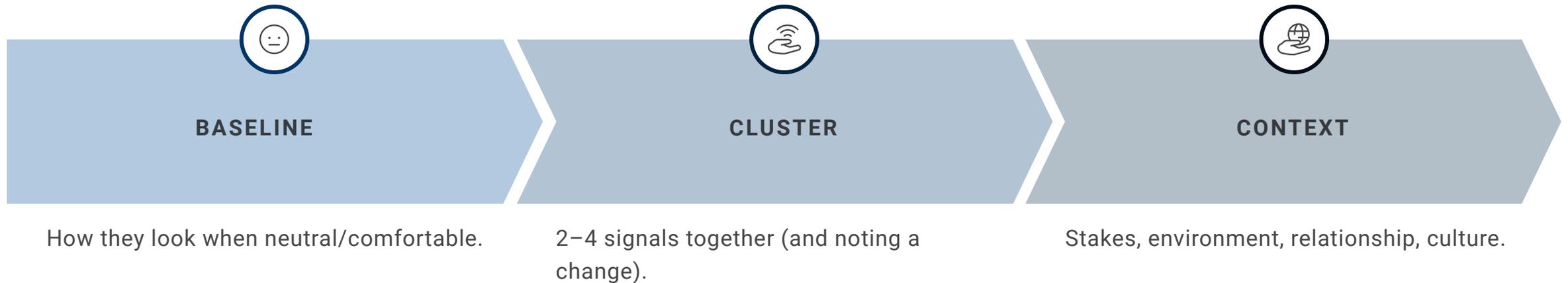
- **CONFIRMATION BIAS**

  Seeking or interpreting information in a way that confirms pre-existing beliefs.

- **FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR**

  Overemphasizing personality-based explanations for behaviors while underemphasizing situational explanations.

Your Core Framework: BCC

Baseline → Cluster → Context

BASELINE

CLUSTER

CONTEXT

How they look when neutral/comfortable.

2–4 signals together (and noting a change).

Stakes, environment, relationship, culture.

The 'Navarro Lens': Comfort vs. Discomfort

Read state first, then ask.

Comfort

Openness, fluidity, ease.

Discomfort

Compression, rigidity, self-soothing, blocking.

Remember: Discomfort can be because of confusion, risk, fear of looking stupid, pressure.

High-Signal Channels: Where to Look

- **FEET & LEGS**

  Observe direction, readiness to leave, and bouncing as indicators.

- **TORSO**

  Note whether the body is turning away or orienting toward the speaker.

- **HANDS**

  Look for self-soothing gestures, the use of barrier objects, or "busy hands".

- **FACE/NECK**

  Pay attention to jaw tension, lip compression, and touching the throat.

Meaningful Clusters in Sales

Interpreting combinations of cues

Cluster You Notice	Likely State	Smart Sales Move
Smile fades, lips press, arms tighten	Risk/Guarding	Slow down, clarify, ask what's missing
Sudden fidget, seat shift, quicker breathing	Pressure/Uncertainty	Normalize, offer options
Head nodding but feet angle to exit	Polite Compliance	Check commitment, shorten, propose next step
Lean in, eyebrows lift, questions increase	Engagement	Progress: ask for decision criteria & timing

The 'Baseline' Advantage

Baseline prevents misinterpretation.

- **EXAMPLE:**

  - Person A fidgets normally (baseline high movement).

  - Person B fidgets only when price comes up (shift = signal).

Skill Example #1: Reading Engagement

Engagement shows up as investment behaviors.

- ASKING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (TIMING, PROCESS, USE CASE).

- VOLUNTEERING CONSTRAINTS ("I NEED SPOUSE APPROVAL" - EVEN IF NOT TRUE).

- MOVING CLOSER, MIRRORING PACE, STAYING LONGER THAN REQUIRED.

IN SELLING, ENGAGEMENT IS OFTEN ABOUT EFFORT, NOT JUST SMILES.

Skill Example #2: Confusion vs. Objection

Understanding the difference and how to respond

Confusion

Confusion Cluster: furrowed brow + slower speech + scanning gaze + delayed response. **Move:** simplify + reframe

Objection

Objection Cluster: tightening + barrier + controlled voice + "Yeah, but…" framing. **Move:** surface concern + validate + address

Words That Pair with Body Language

Relationship-Safe Questions

WHAT PART FEELS UNCLEAR?

WHAT WOULD MAKE THIS EASIER TO DECIDE?

WHAT WOULD YOU NEED TO FEEL CONFIDENT?

WHO ELSE NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

Digital Body Language: Signals, Not Certainty

Digital interactions offer fewer cues, leading to more misreads. Focus on patterns.

RESPONSE TIMING IS HEAVILY AFFECTED BY WORKLOAD AND INTERRUPTIONS, NOT JUST INTEREST. (MARK ET AL., 2008; WALTHER, 1992)

Digital Cues & Expectation Management

Interpreting digital patterns to guide communication.

Digital Pattern	Possible Meaning	Better Move
Fast replies → slow after price	Risk/Approval needed	Ask "Who else is involved?" + summary + options
Short "Thanks/OK" loops	Polite deflection	Ask for a specific next step with 2 choices
Long detailed messages	High engagement	Propose a brief call to confirm criteria
Delayed replies overall	Bandwidth issue	Set expectations: "I'll follow up Friday with X."

YOUR JOB IS TO REDUCE AMBIGUITY, NOT INTERPRET SILENCE AS REJECTION.

Call to Action: Practice BCC This Week

Baseline + Cluster + Context

ASK YOURSELF:

- "What's their baseline?"

- "What changed—what cluster am I seeing?"

- "What context might explain it?"

Ask one clean question to verify.

BODY LANGUAGE DOESN'T REPLACE SELLING—IT UPGRADES YOUR TIMING.