10

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN WORKPLACE ENCOUNTERS

In the Dilbert cartoon on the facing page, Scott Adams keenly portrays what for many individuals in the workplace is an all-too-familiar sight: bosses who don't treat their employees with respect. Sometimes this lack of respect shows up in ways that are neither subtle nor inconsequential (e.g., verbal abuse). But even when the put-downs are barely noticed, the communication of contempt in the workplace can have an insidious effect, creating an atmosphere that jeopardizes the goals of any organization. In this chapter, we'll examine the many different ways that nonverbal communication, mainly in the form of **status reminders**, can contribute to such an atmosphere. Then we'll concentrate on how nonverbal communication can make or break the many task-oriented encounters we have with others in the workplace (e.g., interviews and presentations).

SUPERIOR–SUBORDINATE ENCOUNTERS: COMMUNICATING STATUS

As you already know from previous chapters, one of the primary functions of nonverbal communication is facilitating relationships. With nonverbal signals, we can encourage or discourage intimacy. We can also address fundamental issues of power and control, making it clear to everyone concerned who the take-charge person is or is going to be. Even in the workplace, where the pecking order is firmly entrenched and the chain of command is a matter of public record, nonverbal

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

1. Identify the many different ways that the members of an organization can nonverbally signal their rank and status (i.e., status reminders).

2. Explain how the misuse of nonverbal status reminders can lead to problems related to dysfunctional leadership, sexual harassment, cross-cultural misunderstanding, and workplace discrimination.

3. Explain how nonverbal communication in an organization can create self-fulfilling prophecies that interfere with an individual's job performance.

4. Understand the role of emotional exchanges in the workplace and how emotional contagion, emotional labor, and emotion recognition skills can have a positive or negative impact on the attainment of an organization's goals.

5. Indicate how nonverbal communication improves the performance of individuals in customer service transactions, professional interviews, and oral presentations.

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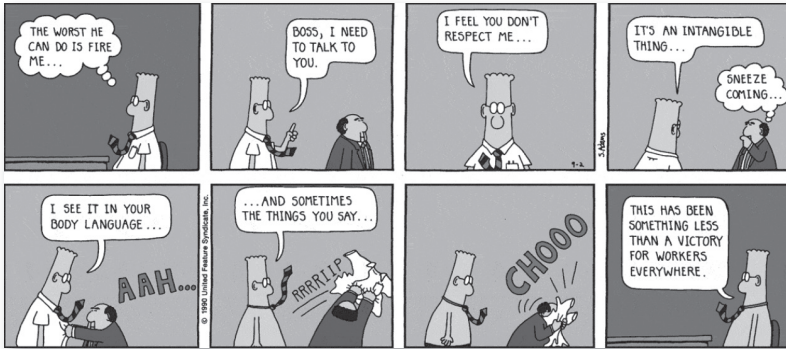
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communication announces and reinforces the status hierarchy. Sometimes, whether deliberate or not, these status reminders also contribute to serious organizational problems: dysfunctional leadership, sexual harassment, workplace discrimination, and cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Status Reminders: The Nonverbal Dimension

When you see two or more individuals engaged in conversation and one of them is the boss, you can probably guess which one it is. When viewed from a rules-of-conduct perspective, much of the behavior we witness in an organization results from our willingness to abide by various sets of rules, some more explicit (i.e., formally acknowledged) than others (Shimanoff, 1980). In any organization, our actions become both predictable and understandable when they are guided by the rules of organizational life. Many of these contextual rules define the way an individual is obliged to behave in the presence of others and the way others are expected to respond.

EXERCISE 10.1

TRY THIS

Status Reminders at Work

OBJECTIVE: To identify nonverbal status reminders

INSTRUCTIONS: Visit a convenient location where you can inconspicuously observe interactions between superiors and subordinates. (You might be able to do this by observing interactions between professors and students.) Observe a single interaction for about five minutes. Of the twelve basic status reminders discussed in this chapter, how many of them can you spot in this interaction?

Even the most trivial action in a face-to-face encounter can say something about the balance of power in that relationship. This is readily apparent in the military, where an enlisted person or junior officer will salute an officer of higher rank out of deference to his or her rank; in a corporate office, where an executive vice president freely interrupts the plant manager to tell her a joke; or in a university library, where the college dean approaches a faculty member and pats him on the back. In each case, an image of one's self in relation to another is symbolized by certain nonverbal behaviors, behaviors that communicate the relative status of the respective individuals in the organization's hierarchy.

According to sociologist Erving Goffman (1967), when the rules of a group lead individuals to act similarly toward each other, the relationships that form are symmetrical. In contrast, **asymmetrical relationships** are those in which group members act differently toward one another. In most formal organizations, persons of unequal status due to their relative positions in the chain of command develop asymmetrical relationships. Below, we summarize research findings on the many nonverbal signals (i.e., status reminders) that call attention to the asymmetrical nature of superior–subordinate relationships. We reported the results of some of these studies in each of the chapters in Part II of this text. Several excellent reviews of this research can also be found elsewhere (Andersen, 1999, Chapter 12; Andersen & Bowman, 1990; Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1996, pp. 305–320; Edinger & Patterson, 1983; Henley, 1977, 2001; Remland, 1981, 1984). Based on this body of research, we present 12 status reminders that all of us have witnessed in our everyday lives.

▶ Nonverbal status reminders reinforce the pecking order that characterizes organizational life and include those aspects of physical appearance and demeanor that clarify superior–subordinate relations between individuals in different contexts. What status reminders do you see in the picture shown here?

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DRESSING UP AND DRESSING DOWN One way of communicating status is through dress. Military personnel and police officers wear uniforms that make status identifications easy. More typically, higher-status persons in an organization wear more expensive clothes and accessories than do their lower-status counterparts. In fact, it is possible in many instances to spot the higher-ranking individual in an interaction between two people by noticing the quality of the suits, coats, shoes, or jewelry each is wearing.

Dressing up isn't the only way to communicate status. In some cases, grooming can be an indicator of status as well: clean, manicured fingernails; polished shoes; styled hair; whitened teeth; and so on imply that an individual has both the time and the money for attention to detail. Paradoxically, low-status appearances can also signal high status.

When the wearing of inappropriate, unfashionable, or even dirty clothes flies in the face of convention, it implies that the wearer is somehow above the concerns of others (i.e., the boss doesn't have to follow the company dress code).

SIZE MATTERS Height conveys status. Studies show, for example, that we are more likely to ascribe higher status to a tall man than we are to a shorter man (Wilson, 1968). The way a person positions his or her body in relation to others can also result in a height advantage, such as when one person stands over another. Some formal settings are designed to bestow a height advantage on higher-status persons. The elevated bench of a judge in a courtroom places her above everyone else, the raised platform of a teacher in a lecture hall places him above the students, and so on. In the absence of any real height advantage, one person may still try to gain the advantage over another by symbolically looking down at that person with a disdainful gaze (e.g., head tilted back, eyes downward).

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 10.1

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?

Height Can Communicate Status

I worked at a store where the store manager was literally the smallest person in the store. He was 5 feet 2 inches tall. However, the assistant manager was 6 feet tall. One day, a customer asked me if she could speak to the manager. I told her what aisle he was in and she then left to find him. A few seconds later she came back and said he was not there. I went down the same aisle and low and behold there he was. She probably didn't think he was the store manager because he didn't have the stature of a manager, being so short. She said to me in a surprised tone, "Oh, so he's the manager."

Camise

In addition to height, higher-status persons tend to use more space than persons of lower status. Often, what they own is larger and thus occupies more space. Large homes, cars, boats, and so forth symbolize status. When interacting with subordinates face to face, superiors generally take more liberties with the space around them than their subordinates do; they are more mobile and might walk around while their subordinates stay in the same place. Even their gestures tend to be more expansive than those of their subordinates. As we noted in previous chapters (see Chapter 3 and 4), body enlargement (i.e., puffing up) is one of the most common displays of dominance throughout the animal kingdom. In fact, a number of studies confirm that

among humans, expansive postures express power and the emotion of pride, leading to judgments of high status, dominance, and expertise, whereas constrictive postures express powerlessness and the emotion of shame, leading to judgments of low status, submissiveness, and lack of expertise (Carney, Cuddy, & Yapp, 2010; Martens & Tracy, 2012; Shariff, Tracy, & Markusoff, 2012).

"DO NOT DISTURB" SIGNS The territory of higher-status individuals is generally much less accessible than is the territory of lower-status personnel. We grant superiors more privacy than we do their subordinates. Organizational environments tend to be structured in ways that insulate the highest-status people against unwanted intrusions (e.g., remote locations, gatekeepers, etc.). In universities, like most organizations, the inaccessibility of an individual is directly related to his or her place in the pecking order: The president is harder to reach than the vice president, the vice president is harder to reach than the dean, the dean is harder to reach than the department chairperson, and so on. To underscore these status differences, even restrooms are more or less accessible to others based on one's position in the organization: Top executives often have restrooms in their own offices, managers have shared but private restrooms, and workers usually share a common public restroom.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL While high-status individuals may enjoy the luxury that comes from the services of gatekeepers and the privacy of remote locations, low-status individuals in an organization are rarely so privileged. Such persons tend to be at the mercy of nearly any intrusion that comes down from above. In many instances, they occupy a cubicle, a space-saving substitute for a private office that affords them very little if any real protection against the distractions swirling around them. In face-to-face encounters with the boss, they may find themselves on the receiving end of close approaches, uninvited touches, prolonged gazes, or intrusive commands—none of which they would think of initiating with the boss. As author Michael Korda (1975) aptly observes in his book, *Power!*, some people become embroiled in the various power games that define territoriality:

> Many powerful people, particularly the aggressive ones, prefer to go to other people's offices, since they are then invading the other person's turf. Thus a man who wants to establish his precedence over another may go into the other person's office, sit down, and put his feet on the desk, thus infringing on the intimate territory of his inferior. These small signs of conquest are numerous and include using objects as ashtrays when that's obviously not what they were intended for, giving orders to someone else's

▶ In most organizations, high-status persons get more privacy than lower-status persons.

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secretary, spilling coffee, and even lying down on someone else's carpet to do back exercises when the other person is seated at his or her desk. The important thing in such games is to simultaneously establish territorial rights and appear more casual than your opponent, giving the impression that you believe his office belongs to you by making yourself at home there. Generally speaking, people playing the power game on subordinates will call them into their own power spot to give orders, and go into their subordinates' offices to issue warnings, threats, and denunciations. (p. 164)

It doesn't take much to demonstrate the basic connection that exists between movement toward a person and the power one has over that person. In one recent series of experiments, for example, researchers found that even moving toward rather than moving away from an object increased one's sense of power and status (Smith, McCulloch, & Shouwstra, 2013).

THE CENTER OF ATTENTION Group leaders usually sit at the head of a table, so designated to symbolize the leader's authority over those assembled. But in a practical sense, sitting at the head of a table gives a group leader the best opportunity to command the attention of group members than sitting elsewhere; the head of a table puts the leader in a position to see and be seen by others. In fact, research confirms that one measure of a person's relative status is the amount of attention the person receives from group members while speaking compared to the amount of attention the person gives while listening, referred to as the **visual dominance ratio** of a group member (Koch, Bahne, Kruse, & Zimmermann, 2010).

For similar reasons, high-status individuals may also gravitate toward the center of a room, where they are in the best position to command the attention of others. At an office party, this display of status might not happen right away. Based on his observations of such gatherings, Korda (1975) described what he often saw as two distinct phases: (1) On arrival, the most powerful persons will tend to occupy separate corners of the room, each one attracting a small circle of supporters; (2) after some time, these high-status persons will abandon their corner positions, move slowly toward neutral territory, and form a circle near the center of the room with other high-status persons. As Korda says, "Their first act is to display themselves and seek confirmation of power from the rank and file. Once this has been accomplished, they move naturally toward one another and close ranks, the powerful separating themselves instinctively from the non-powerful" (p. 96).

THE COLD SHOULDER Politeness norms usually compel us to give a speaker our undivided attention. As is the case with many other actions indicative of high status, however, not paying attention stems from one's ability to disregard the rules.

Picture this scene: Ben, a 20-year employee of a large manufacturing plant, is talking to his supervisor, Tino, about some problems he has been having with one of his coworkers. While Ben is talking, Tino is looking over his mail. Occasionally, he glances over at one of his other workers as though he is amused by what she is doing. He looks at his watch a few times. When he hears a phone ringing, he walks off in the direction of his office without excusing himself. Giving someone the cold shoulder, what Tino does to Ben, is a prerogative of higher-status individuals who don't have to worry about the consequences of being impolite.

THE SILENT TREATMENT Choosing not to speak can be a status signal in certain situations. In other situations, silence conveys lower status, such as when waiting for one's turn to speak or choosing not to interrupt. According to communication researchers Judee Burgoon, David Buller, and W. Gill Woodall (1996),

> Silence shows respect for authority. Protocol dictates that subordinates must wait for superiors to break the silence first, and their refusal to do so can be a very potent reminder of the status difference. The ultimate form of silence—failing to acknowledge another's presence with a greeting—is a powerful symbolic message of status inequality, even if unintentional. A person who receives no greeting from a preoccupied equal or superior can easily stew for a week about the perceived snub. (pp. 316–317)

KICKING BACK For obvious reasons, talking to a higher-status person will make us more tense and anxious than will talking to a peer or a lower-status person. Generally, higher status is associated with an easygoing demeanor. When watching two individuals—one higher in status than the other—conversing with each other, we would probably have little difficulty correctly identifying the higher-status person if we based our decision solely on which of the two individuals seemed to be the most relaxed. In his early and well-known experiments, psychologist Albert Mehrabian (1972) found that the postures and movements of superiors generally differed from those of subordinates: Superiors were more likely to lean back in their chairs, to use open arm positions, to stretch out, and to place their arms and legs in relaxed, asymmetrical positions. To Mehrabian, these signs of relaxation suggest a fearlessness that is normally reserved for individuals in positions of power.

THE VOICE OF AUTHORITY Throughout the animal kingdom, the sound of status is loud and low-pitched (indicating large size). Not surprisingly, we associate power and dominance with the same vocal signals. We seem to understand instinctively that we will be much less threatening to children if we alter our voice by speaking in a soft, high-pitched tone (i.e., parentese or baby talk). Research indicates that in addition to

vocal pitch and volume, higher-status speech is moderately fast, articulate, expressive, and relatively accent free.

BELATED APPEARANCES It's okay to be late if you're the boss, but don't try being late for an appointment with one of your superiors. This is one of the many double standards that pervades the workplace and reminds us of who's in charge. As communication researcher Peter Andersen (1999) concludes,

> Like money and property, the rich, the powerful, and the dominant control time. By contrast, the lives of the less privileged are filled with waiting—in crowded health care clinics and in long lines for unemployment checks, welfare, food stamps, and temporary employment. Waiting time decreases as status increases. (p. 321)

Julius Fast, author of the book, *Body Language in the Workplace* (1991), sees a connection between how long someone makes us wait and what that person thinks of us. In the United States, according to Fast,

> a wait of about five minutes to see someone on business when you have an appointment is considered normal. If someone keeps a client waiting beyond ten minutes, the subtext is clear—"[M]y time is valuable." Fifteen minutes, and the subtext is "I am more important than you." Twenty minutes and the subtext becomes "I am contemptuous of you." (p. 140)

Of course, such observations are difficult to substantiate (there are many other reasons why someone may be 15 minutes late for a meeting), but they nonetheless show how time communicates. At the very least, someone who makes us wait longer than we expected owes us a sincere apology.

MONOPOLIZING A CONVERSATION No doubt, all of us have had the experience of being in a conversation in which we never had the chance to talk. Of course, not everyone who monopolizes a conversation is higher in status than their listeners—many of them just love to talk. But talking can become self-indulgent, a privilege that comes with one's rank in an organization. Holding the floor is such a strong indicator of status, in fact, that we can correctly identify the leader of a group or the higher-ranking person in an organization based entirely on which person does most of the talking. Interrupting a speaker often occurs as an attempt to monopolize a conversation, as a turn taking behavior (i.e., taking the floor from another person) can serve as a status reminder in any conversation (Farley, 2008; Farley, Ashcraft, Stasson, & Nussbaum, 2010).

AN EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER While display rules constrain the emotional expressions of most people in various social situations, these rules, like many others, can be cast aside when interacting with lower-status individuals because display rule violations in the company of lower-status individuals generally won't produce the same kind of condemnation that they will in the company of one's peers or that they most certainly will in the company of one's superiors. Thus, higher status allows one to show how he or she really feels: to yell, frown, stare angrily, smirk, not join in the laughter, yawn, and so on. By not following the display rules that conceal all sorts of negative emotions and put phony smiles on our faces, high-status individuals are free to show us how they really feel whenever they feel like it. They may end up being much more expressive than their lower-status counterparts, pushing the latter onto what could be an emotional roller coaster.

RESEARCH 10.1

FIND OUT MORE

How Do Workers Respond to Angry Bosses? It Depends

The researchers in this study distributed questionnaires to 100 supervisors and 243 subordinates from 40 companies in Taiwan. The companies included a range of industries: banking, retail, high tech, manufacturing, service, transportation, and more. They found that expressing negative emotions sometimes helped supervisors, and sometimes it hurt. For instance, expressing negative emotions improved the performance of subordinates if the subordinates were highly conscientious and agreeable. The researchers also discovered, among other findings, that expressing negative emotions lowered the performance of subordinates when the subordinates held a low-power orientation and viewed their supervisor as relatively powerless.

To find out more about this study and to answer the following questions, see the full text (cited below).

1. According to the authors, why is it important to study the negative expressions of leaders?
2. How did the researchers recruit and gain the cooperation of their participants?
3. Did the researchers find what they expected to find? What explanations were given for their results?
4. What are the practical implications of this study?
5. What kind of study is this? (See Appendix.)

Source: Chin, N., & Ho, T. (2014). Understanding when leader negative emotional expression enhances follower performance: The moderating role of follower personality traits and perceived leader power. *Human Relations, 67*, 1051–1072.

Nonverbal Displays of Status: Mishaps and Misunderstandings

Status reminders serve a useful function: They clarify the roles and relationships in an organization while simultaneously reducing much of our behavior to actions that are simply appropriate or inappropriate. If we know the standard script (i.e., proper etiquette) for such interactions, it can make our lives a bit easier and keep us out of trouble. But there is another side: Unlike verbal reminders of who the boss is, the inherent ambiguity of nonverbal reminders can create all sorts of mishaps and misunderstandings that imperil an organization. In this section, we focus on four such perils: dysfunctional leadership, sexual harassment, workplace discrimination, and cross-cultural misunderstandings.

DYSFUNCTIONAL LEADERSHIP In a well-known essay, management scholar Robert Tannenbaum (1961) defined leadership as "interpersonal influence, exercised in situations and directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specific goal or goals" (p. 24). To anyone who has ever been in a leadership position, this definition probably sounds accurate. A leader must influence his or her followers, communicate effectively, and accomplish certain goals. No two situations are exactly alike. In this section, we'll examine how a leader's nonverbal communication can diminish his or her influence over subordinates in certain situations and thus interfere with the attainment of organizational goals. The problem comes in two forms: The first arises when a leader ignores the danger of mismatched behavior and the second arises when a leader succumbs to **sex-role stereotyping**.

Often, only a fine line separates a status reminder from an act of contempt. The ambiguity of many nonverbal signals raises the stakes for leaders who happen to have a dominant communication style. If a leader's inattentiveness, fits of anger, spatial intrusions, booming voice, floor hogging, and so on demeans his or her subordinates, the leader may lose a great deal of influence over them. Collectively, these actions greatly influence our perceptions of a leader—in particular, his or her consideration of others. For example, one study found a strong positive correlation between how much subordinates liked their supervisor and the extent to which they believed their supervisor used nonverbal involvement behaviors (Hinkle, 2001). A leader's use of dominant behaviors, on the other hand, leads to negative evaluations. Participants in one study viewed videotapes of a supervisor giving instructions to a subordinate. Asked to imagine they were the subordinate in the interaction, the participants responded to one version of either a male or female supervisor delivering a neutral or dominant message in a neutral or dominant delivery. The supervisor's neutral message was, "Please check these figures and submit any changes when you are done." The dominant message was, "You have to improve your work or there is not going to be a place for you in this organization." The neutral delivery included moderate eye contact

and a relaxed facial expression and tone of voice while the dominant delivery consisted of glaring with a loud, angry tone of voice and an angry facial expression. Participants rated the supervisor as much less competent and likeable when the supervisor's delivery was dominant. More importantly, the negative impact of the supervisor's delivery was greater than that of the supervisor's verbal message (Driskell & Salas, 2005).

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 10.2

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?

Nonverbal Displays of Status Can Foster Resentment

The first semester I attended the university full time (as a continuing education/nontraditional student) was a bit unnerving for me. I was attending classes with freshmen, mostly traditional students, and taking 100-level courses. I encountered an instructor in one department who seemed to thrive on letting his young students know who was in charge. The first day of class, he went over his rules, one of which was a zero-tolerance policy for lateness. He sat in front of the class with his feet propped up on the desk and arms clasped behind his head. He spoke in a very loud authoritative voice and made very little eye contact with us. I only made it two weeks and felt that his "power trip" was much more than I could tolerate. In that two weeks, he did not arrive on time for class even once!

Susan

Of course, these findings are not surprising because, as we have seen in previous chapters, nonverbal behaviors carry powerful messages about our attitudes toward others. In the workplace, subordinates are likely to form impressions based on their observations of leaders in a variety of interpersonal encounters. But some of these judgments may depend less on the leader's behavior than they do on how the leader's behavior compares with that of his or her subordinates' (i.e., degree of asymmetry). This is what I discovered in a laboratory experiment on first impressions and nonverbal displays of status (Remland, 1984). I produced four videotapes of the same two male actors playing a scene in which a superior reprimands his subordinate. Although the script was the same in each role-play, the actors changed their nonverbal presentations so that each actor had a high-status and a low-status performance. In the high-status performance, the actors used a relaxed posture, an indirect body orientation, a loud voice, inattentive behavior, and an act of spatial invasion. In the low-status performance, each actor used a tense posture, direct body orientation, soft

and hesitating speech, and attentive gaze. Four versions of the superior–subordinate scenario resulted from these performances: (1) high-status superior with high-status subordinate, (2) low-status superior with low-status subordinate, (3) high-status superior with low-status subordinate, and (4) low-status superior with high-status subordinate. Judges rated the superior on how considerate he was toward his subordinate and how well he solved the particular problem. As it turned out, what mattered most was the asymmetry in the actors' performances—how mismatched their behavior was. When their performances were symmetrical (i.e., both high status or both low status), it made no difference to the judges whether the superior used high-status displays or low-status displays. But when their performances were asymmetrical, judges rated the superior's high-status displays as much less considerate than his low-status displays. Apparently, it's not what the boss does but what the boss does in relation to what his or her subordinates do.

Large asymmetries in superior–subordinate interactions—where there is a big difference between the way the superior acts and the way the subordinate acts—may be less desirable than more symmetrical or matched behavior. As we have seen in previous chapters, matching, reciprocity, synchrony, and mimicry often reflect or lead to positive feelings and rapport. If an employee feels uncomfortable interacting with the boss because of these mismatches in their behavior, that employee may choose to avoid the boss as much as possible. This could foster an organizational climate in which management inadvertently discourages the open and free-flowing exchange of ideas that is so necessary for organizational success (Remland, 1988). On the other hand, if the boss abandons the use of status reminders in a well-intentioned effort to empower his or her subordinates or gain their affection, the boss may find that the subordinates rarely do what they're told (i.e., they see the boss as more of a friend and coworker than as an authority figure). Thus, the double bind of status reminders, from the leader's perspective, is that conveying too much status may make the leader abusive in some situations while not conveying enough status may compromise the leader's legitimate authority in other situations. The best remedy, of course, is for the leader to become aware of his or her nonverbal signals and to use them judiciously, using more status reminders when the situation calls for it (as in cases of insubordination) and using fewer in other situations (such as when one is interacting with a timid or insecure employee).

Reflecting an awareness of the need to be polite or supportive—which varies according to factors such as culture, gender, and context—it seems unlikely that most leaders in American organizations would avoid the use of some low-status behaviors. Even the most casual observations of bosses interacting with their employees probably confirm this. In one study, researchers found that higher-status persons spoke more, used more hand gestures, and leaned forward less than lower-status persons did. But the higher-status persons also nodded more frequently (Hall & Friedman, 1999).

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 10.3

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?

Low-Status Nonverbal Signals Can Weaken a Leader

I used to work at this plant where the supervisor didn't get any respect from most of the workers. He never acted like he was in charge and so he didn't command much respect. We just never took him very seriously even though he was our boss. He seemed to be unsure of himself half the time when he talked to us. He hesitated, looked intimidated, and seemed sort of nervous, like he was afraid we wouldn't like him or agree with him. Needless to say, he didn't last very long at the job.

Tim

Unlike the first set of behaviors, all of which signal higher status, head nodding (which implies attentiveness, agreement, or the desire for approval), tends to signal lower status. One especially interesting finding in the study was that the greater the disparity was between the high-status person and the low-status person, the less the high-status person spoke. As the researchers point out, "This seemingly paradoxical pattern is understandable if the [high-status] person is motivated to downplay his or her own status in the service of comfortable social interaction by (as one example) encouraging the partner to speak more" (p. 1088). Still, subordinates, through their own behavior, may encourage status differences. One study found that persons in low-status positions often choose low-status behaviors (which may be more comfortable for them), when they interact with higher-status persons, particularly in task-oriented contexts (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). In the case of male–female interactions, this tendency to complement dominant behavior with submissive behavior can in itself create difficulties, which we discuss later in the next section on sexual harassment (see Research 10.2 for more on this).

Using nonverbal behavior to reinforce status differences also varies according to one's culture. Hofstede (1983) argues that cultures classified as high in **power distance** tend to embrace authoritarian values and encourage actions that perpetuate status distinctions. For example, researchers in one study asked Japanese and American respondents to imagine various interactions between high-status and lower-status individuals. Though there was considerable agreement on the specific behaviors differentiating high- from low-status persons, the magnitude of the differences varied, with Japanese (a more hierarchical, collectivistic people) reporting greater differences than did Americans (a more egalitarian, individualistic society) (Kowner & Wiseman, 2003). Thus, what seems excessive in one culture may seem quite ordinary in another.

There is another obstacle that leaders must face, the one that comes from sex-role stereotyping. A great deal of scientific research supports the idea that the nonverbal communication of women differs from that of men. We have already reviewed many of these studies in Part II, studies showing differences in physical appearance, approach–avoidance signals, facial expressions, voice, and gesture. Table 10.1 summarizes these differences. In addition, several in-depth reviews of this research are readily available (Andersen, 1999, Chapter 5; Burgoon et al., 1996, pp. 232–239; Hall, 1984, 1985).

Table 10.1 Gender Differences in Nonverbal Communication		
Signals	Males	Females
Physical appearance		
	Taller	Shorter
	More muscular	Less muscular
	Wider shoulders	Narrower shoulders
	More body hair	Less body hair
	Stronger jaw and chin	Weaker jaw and chin
	Thicker neck	Thinner neck
	Thicker eyebrows	Thinner eyebrows
Approach–avoidance		
	More control touching	Less control touching
	More staring	Less staring
	Closer approaches	More distant approaches
	Discourages closeness	Invites closeness
	Less attentive gazing	More attentive gazing
Facial expression		
	Less expressive	More expressive
	Less smiling	More smiling
	More displays of anger	Fewer displays of anger
	Less crying	More crying
	Fewer displays of fear, shame, and embarrassment	More displays of fear, shame, and embarrassment
	Less responsive	More responsive
	Less head tilting	More head tilting

Signals	Males	Females
Voice and gesture		
	More interrupting	Less interrupting
	More floor holding	Less floor holding
	Louder voice	Softer voice
	Lower-pitched voice	Higher-pitched voice
	Less rising intonations	More rising intonations
	Infrequent giggling	More frequent giggling
	Fewer back channels (head nods, *uh huhs*)	More back channels (head nods, *uh huhs*)
	More expansive gestures	Less expansive gestures
	More use of insulting gestures	Less use of insulting gestures
	More relaxed postures	Less relaxed postures

Although researchers continue to test the validity of these gender differences (some depend on the situation; others are no longer as pronounced or as widespread as they once were), the overall picture still remains the same. Even a cursory examination of Table 10.1 reveals a stunning parallel between these findings and those reviewed earlier on status reminders. Nonverbal communication between men and women continues to remind us of the traditional sex-role expectations that place men in charge of women: Men act as leaders, women act as subordinates. Yet researchers also find that many of these differences disappear when women assume leadership positions. The influence of status and power on nonverbal communication may be greater than that of gender (Johnson, 1994). In addition, studies show that women's nonverbal behaviors become more powerful than men's when men and women work together on tasks seen as traditionally feminine (Dovidio, Brown, Heltman, Ellyson, & Keating, 1988). But women often find themselves penalized no matter what they do. As communication and gender researcher Deborah Tannen (1994) writes,

> [W]omen in positions of authority face a special challenge. Our expectations for how a person in authority should behave are at odds with our expectations for how a woman should behave. If a woman talks in ways expected of women, she is more likely to be liked than respected. If she talks in ways expected of men, she

is more likely to be respected than liked. It is particularly ironic that the risk of losing likability is greater for women in authority, since evidence indicates that so many women care so much about whether or not they are liked. (p. 202)

In the long run, some degree of **behavioral flexibility** (doing what the situation demands) may be the best course of action for both men and women. Most organizational communication experts, in fact, usually recommend a situational approach in which the communication techniques depend on the goals we wish to achieve. The skills needed to interview a job applicant effectively differ from those needed to deliver a forceful presentation, the skills needed to counsel a troubled employee differ from those needed to reprimand a difficult one, those needed to run a meeting differ from those needed to motivate a work group, and so on. In short, submissive signals sometimes work best, dominant signals work best at other times, and a combination of submissive and dominant signals work best at still other times.

Overall, it makes sense to focus on the task at hand and achieve a competent communication style for that task instead of focusing on the use of high- or low-status behaviors. In one study, researchers compared the effectiveness of a task style (i.e., competent) of nonverbal communication with that of a dominant style, submissive style, and social style (i.e., friendly and competent) (Carli, LaFleur, & Loeber, 1995). They prepared four sets of four videotapes: a set for each of two male speakers and a set for each of two female speakers. On each tape, the speaker used one of the four styles to deliver the same persuasive message to a seated listener (who was only partially visible so the person's gender could not be identified). Each speaker altered his or her nonverbal style as follows:

1. *Task style*—used a rapid rate of speech; spoke in a firm tone of voice with moderate voice volume; had few hesitations; used an upright posture, calm hand gestures, and a moderately high amount of eye contact

2. *Social style*—spoke in a moderately loud tone of voice, used a relaxed posture with the body leaning toward the other person, had a friendly facial expression, and used a moderately high amount of eye contact

3. *Dominant style*—spoke in a loud and angry tone of voice, pointed intrusively at the other person, maintained almost constant eye contact, and had a stern facial expression

4. *Submissive style*—spoke in a soft and pleading voice with many hesitations and stumbles, had a slumped posture, made nervous hand gestures, and averted his or her gaze from the other person

As expected, the judges who watched the tapes were persuaded most by male and female speakers when those speakers used the task and social styles. Contrary to what we might expect, female speakers were not penalized any more than were male speakers for using a dominant (i.e., masculine) style—male and female speakers using this style were equally ineffective. However, female speakers who used a task style were less effective with male judges than were male speakers who used the same task style. Again, with male judges, when female speakers injected some warmth and friendliness into their presentations (a social style), they were more persuasive than when they used the cooler task style; this wasn't true for the male speakers. The male judges also rated female speakers using the task style as less likable and more threatening than the male speakers who used the same style. Although the results of this study show that women succeed using a task-oriented style rather than one that highlights feminine (submissive) or masculine (dominant) traits, it still reveals the presence of a double standard. For the same performance, women apparently get less credit from men than do their male counterparts.

Other studies also show support for the presence of a double standard. For instance, observations of group members' nonverbal reactions to male and female leaders suggest unequal treatment of a leader's performance based solely on gender. In one laboratory experiment, researchers observed that in small group discussions, the same behavior of the group leader (male or female confederates) elicited more negative facial expressions from group members when the leader was a woman rather than a man, even though group members rated male and female leaders as equally competent (Butler & Geis, 1990). A more recent study replicated these results in a laboratory setting as well as in organizational field settings where female team leaders generally received more negative facial expressions from group members but not more negative ratings of competence (Koch, 2005).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT Sexual harassment occurs in the workplace for several reasons. Some of these reasons, particularly those that involve the deliberate abuse of power, are obvious (e.g., offers to exchange job opportunities for sexual favors). But it is equally obvious that many cases of sexual harassment occur because one person misreads the nonverbal cues of another. These are the cases we focus on here.

An unwelcome sexual advance can occur when the perpetrator mistakes quasi-courtship behavior, which is little more than innocent flirting, for actual courtship behavior (see Chapter 8). Since many of the signals are the same—prolonged eye contact, smiling, touch, body orientation, and so forth—it may not be easy for everyone to spot the telltale signs that these courtship signals are not supposed to be taken seriously (e.g., signs of incomplete involvement, references to the context, etc.). Compounding the problem is the long history of male–female relationships

▶ Many cases of sexual harassment occur because one person misses or misreads the nonverbal signals of another person. How can you tell that the woman shown here is uncomfortable with the nonverbal communication of her coworker?

istockphoto.com/Alina Solovyova-Vincent

in the workplace, which still encourages individuals to view a superior, subordinate, or coworker as a potential mate. But the landscape in which men and women now work is no longer the same.

Explanations of sexual harassment usually refer to the actions of both the perpetrator and the victim: inappropriate sexual behavior by the perpetrator and some form of resistance or at least disapproval by the victim. Studies show that judgments of whether an individual is guilty of sexual harassment depend on the actions of both parties. The more inappropriate a behavior is and the more unwelcome the behavior seems to be, the more likely we are to define it as an instance of sexual harassment. But studies also show that men and women frequently don't see eye to eye about what actions constitute sexual harassment. In general, men are less likely than women are to see the same scenario as a case of sexual harassment, particularly when there is some degree of ambiguity in the actions of either party (Jones & Remland, 1998). For example, a recent experiment demonstrates how a smile in response to sexually provocative questions can lead to misunderstandings and inappropriate sexual conduct (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2005). Based on the idea that women use social smiles for a variety of reasons, the researchers discovered that female job applicants were more likely to use *masking smiles* (concealing negative feelings) in response to questions such as "Do you have a boyfriend?" than in response to questions such as, "Do you have a best friend?" These non-enjoyment smiles led to perceptions of the interviewer as sexist and sexually harassing. But men were less able to read these uncomfortable smiles correctly than women were, and men who scored higher on an instrument that measures likelihood to sexually harass were the most likely to interpret the smiles as flirtatious!

The danger of being misunderstood is especially serious in asymmetrical relationships, where a status reminder can quickly take on sexual overtones. A superior's use of immediacy behaviors—touching, looking, and getting close, for example—has long been the prerogative of higher-status individuals. But since these actions are subject to all sorts of interpretations (e.g., friendliness, intimidation, sexual interest), there is always the chance of misreading the signals. In addition,

a subordinate's use of submissive or low-status behaviors, such as smiling, head nodding, silence, eye contact, direct body orientation, and the like, can make it equally difficult to tell whether the subordinate is welcoming the superior's advances (if that's what they are) or is simply acting as a subordinate. The ambiguity of nonverbal signals also makes it possible for offending harassers to deny the charges against them. Yet, holding people who engage in harassment accountable means letting them know as unequivocally as possible, in words and actions, that their behavior is unacceptable. Anything less is unlikely to deter the harassment. The risks of sexual harassment to the organization and the individuals involved make restraint a prudent policy. We must think about the consequences before we say or do something that may be offensive.

As noted above, the inherent ambiguity of nonverbal signals in the context of superior–subordinate interactions may lead to cases of sexual harassment. But nonverbal behavior may also reveal whether someone is prone to engage in sexual harassment. Studies on the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of persons likely to sexually harass show that such persons tend to describe themselves in ways that emphasize social and sexual dominance (Pryor, 1987). And some studies indicate that nonverbal behavior (i.e., displays of status) is part of the behavioral profile. In one study, participants viewed silent clips of videotaped interviews of men being interviewed by an attractive female subordinate (who could not be seen by the viewers). While only observing the men's nonverbal behavior, the participants were able to predict which men scored high on a test that measured likelihood to sexually harass and which men scored low (Driskell, Kelly, & Henderson, 1998). In a follow-up study, male undergraduate participants, classified as high or low on likelihood to sexually harass (based on their test scores), were interviewed individually by a female confederate posing as a high school senior (Murphy, Driscoll, & Kelly, 1999). To put the men in a more powerful position relative to the interviewer, the researchers told them that they would be evaluating the performance of the female interviewer following the interview. Men classified as more likely to sexually harass expressed greater dominance through their nonverbal behavior (e.g., less time in the interview, less forward leaning, more indirect body orientation, and more direct eye contact) compared to those less likely to sexually harass. Underscoring the idea that sexual harassment is more about power and control than it is about sexual attraction, the researchers found no differences between the two groups in any nonverbal signals of sexual interest (e.g., smiles, sexual glances). In more recent studies, researchers have discovered that a male supervisor's dominant nonverbal behavior not only leads to perceptions of the behavior as more sexual and more likely to be harassing than other forms of nonverbal behavior (e.g., flirtatious behavior) but that such behavior actually hinders the task performance of female subordinates (Kelly, Murphy, Craig, & Driscoll, 2005).

FIND OUT MORE

How Do Women Respond to the Dominant Nonverbal Cues of Men?

The researchers in these experiments raised the question of how women respond to the nonverbal behavior of men, particularly when the man occupies a more powerful position than the woman in an organizational environment. They found support for their hypothesis that a woman's nonverbal behavior would tend to *complement* rather than *reciprocate* (match) that of the man's. That is, when the man's nonverbal cues were dominant (using expansive postures as opposed to constricted postures), the woman's nonverbal cues were more submissive (using constricted postures rather than expansive) than they were when the man's nonverbal cues were not dominant. This was especially the case when the man was instructed to smile—even when he used a sexist remark. As the researchers concluded, "[I]t seems that overt sexism can promote behavior in a way that actually promotes women's submissiveness or lack of resistance when the bitter pill of sexism is given the sugar coating of a smile" (p. 1492).

To find out more about this study and to answer the following questions, see the full text (cited below):

1. Who were the participants in these experiments? What did the researchers ask them to do?

2. What is gender salience and how did the researchers include this in their experiments? Why did they include it in their experiments?

3. How did the researchers measure the women's nonverbal behavior?

4. What are the main limitations of this research?

Source: de Lemus, S., Spears, R., & Moya, M. (2012). The power of a smile to move you: Complementary submissiveness in women's posture as a function of gender salience and facial expression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 38,* 1480–1494.

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION Jim wasn't promoted because he doesn't speak up as much as Shelly does. Frank was well qualified for the job, but he didn't get it because he's only 5 feet 3 inches tall. Barbara didn't get a prestigious work assignment because of her wardrobe. Mario's accent kept him off an important committee. Sandy wasn't hired because the other applicant was more attractive. In each case, no one—including the victim—was aware of any discrimination. How can this happen? It usually happens not because of any overt discrimination but because of our automatic tendency to think less of someone whose looks or actions are indicative of lower status rather than of higher status. For example, an employer ordinarily wouldn't consciously reject a job applicant because he has a high-pitched voice or a foreign accent. Yet these cues may still influence the employer's perception of the applicant (e.g., "I think she's pretty unreliable,"

"He doesn't seem very intelligent," etc.). Numerous scientific studies demonstrate that we form all sorts of negative impressions of individuals simply because those individuals in some way communicate a low-status identity. For instance, one study of regional accents found clear evidence of workplace discrimination. The study involved 56 potential employers listening to 10 males reading the same 45-second passage. Readers with southern accents (Georgia and Louisiana) and a New Jersey accent received the most negative ratings from the employers. In particular, listeners evaluated the southern accents as friendly but less educated, cultured, and energetic (Brinson, 2000). (We reviewed many of these studies in Part II of the text.)

Research shows that **powerless stereotypes**—being seen as weak, ineffectual, incompetent, nonauthoritative, and so on—afflict people who share certain physical features considered to be low-status, such as being unattractive, obese, short (men), dark skinned, poorly dressed, baby faced, and physically handicapped. Research also suggests the presence of a demeanor bias (supporting the same kind of powerless stereotyping) against low-status behaviors: not speaking up; speaking in a high-pitched voice, nasal tones, and with certain accents; having a slouched posture; giggling; looking down; not gesturing; being interrupted; smiling nervously; wearing certain attire; and so on. These unflattering appraisals can undermine a person's opportunities to succeed in the workplace. In one set of experiments, for example, researchers found that both male and female job applicants with feminine-sounding voices were judged as less competent for a job than were male and female applicants with more masculine-sounding voices (Ko et al., 2009). One's choice of attire can also trigger negative stereotypes and biases that lead to discrimination. In one study, researchers found that female job applicants dressed in Muslim attire (i.e., black robe, black shoes, and black hijab) received more negative evaluations and less time in the job interview that the same female job applicants dressed in nonreligious attire (i.e., black shoes, black pants, and black shirt) (King & Ahmad, 2010).

This kind of discrimination generally goes unnoticed or, as is often the case when judging one's behavior rather than one's physical appearance, is accepted as part of the evaluation process. Of course, bona fide job qualifications that require an employee to be good looking, to wear certain clothes, to speak up, and so forth are neither rare nor unreasonable. In the case of a speaker's accent, for instance, an employer might claim that the accent jeopardizes the speaker's ability to do the job. On the other hand, such claims can also be used to perpetuate an unwarranted policy of discrimination.

Lawsuits alleging "accent discrimination" have accused employers of denying jobs to individuals with foreign accents; the employers claim that the accent would interfere with effective job performance. Similarly, there have been some efforts to keep teachers with accents from being assigned to teach in the early grades on the grounds that

FIND OUT MORE

When Is It Bad to Be Beautiful?

As the research reported in this book illustrates, the well-known halo effect for attractiveness, sometimes referred to as the "what is beautiful is good" hypothesis, usually extends to most situations, including those in organizational contexts. But are there any exceptions? In this series of studies (evaluating job applicants, evaluating applicants for admission to a university), the researchers found support for the idea that people may feel threatened by attractive members of the same sex more than attractive members of the opposite sex and that this would lead to differences in the evaluations of attractive and less attractive persons. They also found that persons with high self-esteem were less likely to downgrade attractive same-sex applicants.

To find out more about this study and to answer the following questions, see the full text (cited below):

1. Who were the participants in these studies? Do you think a different sample would produce different results?

2. What did the researchers do in these studies to obtain evaluations of applicants? How realistic were the studies?

3. Is there anything other than self-esteem that you think might have a similar effect on the results?

4. How do the results of these studies compare with any work-related experiences you've had?

Source: Agthie, M., Sporrle, M., & Maner, J. (2011). Does being attractive always help? Positive and negative effects of attractiveness on social decision making. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 37*, 1042–1054.

their accents would interfere with teaching the English language. Attorneys and civil rights activists are concerned that this is ethnic discrimination in disguise, pointing to instances where the foreign-born applicant was denied a job in spite of speaking accurate and perfectly intelligible English (Knapp & Hall, 2002, p. 412).

Women, in particular, often find themselves in a precarious position. Since many feminine behaviors turn out to be low-status behaviors in the workplace, women are prime targets of discriminatory practices that can keep them from climbing the corporate ladder.

CROSS-CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS In Brazil, as author and business consultant Roger Axtell (1998) observes,

> Most touching, as well as sustained eye contact (a sign of courtesy), occurs between peers. A younger person would not touch an older

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?

Giggling Can Send a "Powerless" Message

About two months ago, I was going on an internship interview for FOX news. On the way to the interview, I asked my mom for any advice because she is the executive director of her company and oversees all of the hiring. The only advice she gave me was, "Don't giggle." She elaborated by saying that girls who giggle aren't taken seriously and even appear to be stupid. I had never really thought about my nervous behavior before this, but during the interview, I consciously did not giggle. The interview went well and I got the internship, even though I ended up turning it down for another one!

Denise

person informally, and strangers do not touch. Similarly, there is little eye contact between people of different ages or status. Usually the younger or less powerful person looks down and away. Many Americans mistakenly interpret this indirect eye contact as evasiveness or deceit. (p. 211)

As we have seen in earlier chapters, the meanings we attach to many nonverbal signals, particularly emblematic gestures, vary dramatically from culture to culture. In addition, the learned scripts that account for much of our communication behavior vary according to the traditional beliefs and values of a cultural group (e.g., individualistic versus collectivistic cultures). In this section, we'll examine how cultural differences in the communication of status can lead to all sorts of mishaps and misunderstandings.

People in all societies must occasionally interact with others whose social standing differs from their own. To avoid blunders that might give offense and to act properly, they must learn the rules that govern such interactions (i.e., etiquette). According to psychologists Marianne LaFrance and Clara Mayo (1978),

Some cultures have very few status distinctions; in many so-called primitive societies, only the tribal chief is set apart from all the other members. Most complex societies have many status distinctions based on wealth, power, age, sex, family, occupation, and other reasons. Some cultures have evolved very elaborate nonverbal rules for monitoring and regulating status. (p. 178)

But even among industrialized societies, the weight attached to status distinctions varies considerably. The term *power distance* refers to a culture's preoccupation with the maintenance of status differences between groups of people and with how important or unimportant those differences are (Hofstede, 1980). Countries classified as high in power distance embrace authoritarian values and encourage actions that perpetuate status distinctions. The top ten countries on this list are the Philippines, Mexico, Venezuela, India, Yugoslavia, Singapore, Brazil, France, Hong Kong, and Colombia (most African and Arab cultures are also included in this category). In contrast, low power distance countries embrace egalitarian values and place much less emphasis on the expression of status. The top ten low power distance countries are Austria, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, and Great Britain. Although not near the top of the list, the United States, Canada, and Australia are also considered low power distance cultures.

The power distance orientation of a culture exerts a strong influence over its members' nonverbal communication. Elevated to a fine art, the whole business of communicating status is much more serious and complex in high power distance cultures, where even the simplest of transactions may be orchestrated carefully to signal differences in status (e.g., proper attire, greeting rituals, demeanor, etc.) and where any failure to follow the rules can have undesirable consequences. Certainly, as we noted earlier, Americans have their share of status reminders. But Americans visiting a high power distance culture might be inclined to view the expression of status in that culture as excessive and even unpleasant (e.g., "abusive" bosses, "groveling" employees). Yet how would visitors to the United States react to the way our superiors and subordinates interact? A visitor from Thailand (higher power distance), for example, would probably think that we are too permissive while a visitor from Finland (lower power distance) would probably think that we are too strict.

Another cultural difference with implications for communicating status involves the use of time. Struck by the significant differences he observed in the way people in various cultures scheduled their everyday activities, anthropologist Edward Hall (1983) concluded that some cultures have a preference for doing many things at once (polychronic or P-time cultures), whereas other cultures prefer doing one thing at a time (monochronic or M-time cultures). Hall elaborates on how this fundamental difference can produce a message of status where clearly none is intended.

TASK-ORIENTED ENCOUNTERS: GETTING THE JOB DONE

Thus far, we have addressed the importance of nonverbal communication in expressing and perpetuating status differences in the workplace. We've also considered how the communication of status can jeopardize the goals of an organization, leading to

problems of dysfunctional leadership, sexual harassment, workplace discrimination, and cross-cultural misunderstanding. In this section, we focus on how nonverbal communication can help or hinder our performance in various task-oriented encounters, highlighting the ones for which we need preparation to be successful: interviews and presentations.

FIND OUT MORE

Dress for Success: How Much Self-Sacrifice Is Required?

The authors of this study interviewed men and women, aged 26–45, about how they cope with the demands of the workplace that keep them from wearing clothes and accessories that express their personal affiliation with the punk subculture. The authors found that the interviewees adopted a number of different coping strategies. For example, one strategy was maintaining two closets: one for work, the other for outside of work. Another strategy was deciding to either blend in or to stand out. Tattoo coverage was a common theme among many interviewees. One interviewee, Bill, a sales representative, remarked, "[T]he main thing is just covering up the tattoos. That's about it. I mean, I have one on the back of my neck that people still see. People see them. So it's not a big deal, but . . . you get some older clients that you don't want to freak out" (p. 293).

To find out more about this study and to answer the following questions, see the full text (cited below).

1. What is the punk subculture and how does it influence one's appearances?

2. What do the authors mean by *appearance labor*?

3. How did the authors find persons to interview for this study?

4. What were the main methods of accommodation used by the interviewees?

5. What kind of study is this? (See Appendix.)

Source: Sklar, M., & DeLong, M. (2012). Punk dress in the workplace: Aesthetic expression and accommodation. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 30,* 285–299.

Of course, no matter how much we prepare, the subtleties of nonverbal communication can sabotage even our best-laid plans. In the sections that follow, we'll first consider the role of self-fulfilling prophecies, then the impact of emotional exchanges, and finally, we'll focus on successful nonverbal communication in various workplace interactions.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: Expectancy Effects in the Workplace

In the 1960s, psychologist Robert Rosenthal (1966) showed how a researcher's nonverbal cues could unwittingly prod human subjects into behaving the way the researcher hoped they would rather than the way they might in the absence of the researcher's influence, a finding that demonstrated how the nonverbal signals of a researcher can damage the validity of a scientific experiment. Turning his attention to the classroom, Rosenthal discovered that a teacher's nonverbal cues could produce a similar kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. When a teacher believes that a student is bright (whether or not the student really is), the teacher will expect great things from that student. In many subtle ways, the teacher will unknowingly telegraph these expectations to that student. Emboldened by these positive messages from the teacher, the student rises to the teacher's expectations (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968).

When they are made aware of this phenomenon, teachers try their best to monitor the messages they send to their students, trying to signal the same high expectations to everyone, including low-achieving students. But researchers continue to uncover these **expectancy effects** in the classroom. Unbeknownst to them and contrary to what they report when asked, teachers' feelings still leak out to their students—positive feelings toward the good students, which encourage them to excel, and negative feelings toward the poor students, which invite them to fail (Babad, 1992). Interestingly, research shows that young students, but not adults, have so much implicit knowledge of and are so attuned to teachers' differential treatment of students in the classroom that they can make accurate guesses from a 10-second video clip of a teacher's nonverbal communication in a single lecture as to whether that teacher is likely to show favoritism to some students or not (Babad, 2005a).

Researchers have found sufficient evidence of expectancy effects in other workplace environments as well. Research suggests that in the courtroom context, jurors are highly attuned to a judge's negative nonverbal cues (Burnett & Badzinski, 2005). These signals can influence the outcome of a trial. In fact, judges often get the verdicts they expect after signaling their expectations to members of the jury (Blanck & Rosenthal, 1992). The same process influences the outcome of job interviews. One study found that an interviewer could inadvertently elicit from a job applicant the undesirable behavior he expected to see (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). These self-fulfilling prophecies can easily interfere with the effectiveness of most formal workplace encounters. Information-gathering interviews (e.g., job interviews, survey interviews, etc.) become tainted when an interviewer gets hoped-for rather than truthful answers to questions. Business meetings become dysfunctional when attendees say what they think the boss wants to hear instead of what they honestly believe (this phenomenon

is called *groupthink*). Oral presentations deteriorate when speakers, fearing audience disapproval and signaling that fear to the audience, begin to get the negative feedback they expected in the first place.

Certainly, part of our preparation for interviews and presentations should include some assessment of how our performance might suffer from expectancy effects. Becoming aware of how we unintentionally signal our expectations—through facial expressions, head nods, eye contact, body movement, and so on—is the first step toward correcting the problem. Trying to suppress and counteract these signals, the second step, requires that we also make some effort to monitor our behavior during the performance.

Emotional Exchanges in the Workplace

As in all of our everyday face-to-face interactions, we send and receive emotional messages in the workplace, expressing how we feel and picking up the feelings of others. The study of these exchanges in the workplace is beginning to show that sharing emotions, following display rules, and being attuned to the emotions of others are basic components of one's emotional intelligence and play an important role in determining the effectiveness of our workplace interactions (Côté & Hideg, 2011).

EMOTIONAL CONTAGION *Emotional contagion* refers to a phenomenon in which emotions spread from person to person (see Chapter 5). The implications of emotional contagion for organizations have not escaped the attention of scholars and practitioners, who consider it a ubiquitous process that leaders should harness for the good of the organization (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In one study, researchers observed 70 work teams across diverse industries and found that members who sat in meetings together ended up sharing moods in a relatively short period of time (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). Some evidence supports the claim that the more cohesive a work group is, the more contagious the emotional displays will be (Goleman et al., 2002). Further, leaders are most likely to control the contagion that takes place because group members generally see the leader's emotional reaction as the most appropriate response and, therefore, members tend to model their own reactions on the leader's, particularly in emotionally ambiguous situations. In other words, if the boss is laughing, maybe it's okay for us to laugh, too. Just such a scenario occurs in the popular Jim Carrey movie, *Liar, Liar,* in which Carrey plays Fletcher Reede, an attorney and habitual liar who falls prey to his son's wish that he must tell the truth for 24 hours. In one hilarious scene, Reede walks in on a meeting that his boss, the head of the firm, is having with members of the firm. When asked what he thinks about the boss, Reede reveals everything he despises about his boss while everyone listens in stunned disbelief. All eyes then turn to the boss, awaiting his reaction. When the boss begins laughing hysterically, everyone instantly joins

in. As this scene illustrates, the leader may be the one who activates the emotional contagion process. Of course, a leader's ability to spread emotions probably depends on his or her capacity to convey those emotions. That is, a leader with a highly expressive face, voice, and body is more likely to activate the process than is a leader who doesn't show much emotion.

Emotional contagion may occur wherever individuals work together in face-to-face groups or meet directly with the public. But does it affect task performance? Some research suggests that the spread of positive emotions can boost the performance of work groups (Barsade, 2002), predict job satisfaction among employees (Fisher, 2000), increase cooperation and minimize conflict (Barsade, 2002), improve sales performance, and increase customer satisfaction (Homburg & Stock, 2004; Verbeke, 1997). Researchers have also discovered, however, that the spread of negative emotions is a contributing factor to stress and burnout among physicians (Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, & Bosveld, 2001), nurses (Omdahl & O'Donnel, 1999), teachers (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000), and sales personnel (Verbeke, 1997). Thus, studies show that emotional contagion in the workplace may have positive and negative effects on employee performance, health, and well-being.

EMOTIONAL LABOR The contagion process described above depends to a large degree on the genuine (i.e., spontaneous) expression of emotions. But the workplace also demands that individuals engage in various kinds of emotional deception, pretending to be cheerful when they are really annoyed or frustrated, for instance. Expressing an unfelt emotion, exaggerating a felt emotion, and suppressing a felt emotion are acts of **emotional labor** in the workplace, which the sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) defined as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display [that] is sold for a wage [and] therefore has exchange value" (p. 7). The management of emotions, according to Hochschild, requires a worker to engage in either surface acting or deep acting. *Surface acting* only requires the actor to display an emotion with no attendant feelings. On the other hand, *deep acting* requires the actor to elicit the corresponding emotion in some way, as a method actor might do to prepare for an emotionally charged scene. Curiously, the short-term effort involved in deep acting may surpass that needed for surface acting, as it requires more long-term effort and takes a heavier toll (Grandey, 2003; Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

In her early research, Hochschild (1983) estimated that "roughly one-third of American workers have jobs that subject them to substantial demands for emotional labor" (p. 11). Mann (1999) surveyed twelve UK companies and found moderate levels of emotional labor in almost two-thirds of the communications reported by respondents and high levels in about one-third of the reported communications. More than half of the participants reported that they laughed or frowned not because they

wanted to but because they were expected to. Sixty percent of the reported communications involved suppressing an emotion, mostly anger. In addition, those higher up in the organization reported less emotional labor than did those lower in the chain of command, supporting Van Maanen and Kunda's (1989) astute observation that "only the dominant and the dormant have relative freedom from emotional constraints in organizational life" (p. 55). Other surveys show that American employers and employees tend to agree that emotional labor is a job requirement, though more involved and satisfied employees share this perception to a greater degree than do less involved and satisfied employees (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006).

▸ Jobs that require workers to display emotions they do not feel or inhibit emotions they do can lead to emotional exhaustion and job burnout.

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Studies of flight attendants, nurses, cashiers, and others show that emotional labor consists of four basic elements: (1) the frequency, duration, and intensity of emotional displays; (2) the variety of emotions displayed; (3) attentiveness to display rules; and (4) the discrepancy between the felt and the displayed emotion, referred to as **emotional dissonance** (Mann, 1999; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Subsequent surveys have identified emotional dissonance as a strong predictor of job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and other factors contributing to job burnout (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Pugliesi, 1999). There is also evidence that emotional dissonance, particularly the suppression of negative emotions, can produce health consequences related to prolonged stress. But the research also points to factors that lessen the impact of these negative consequences, such as job autonomy, social support, and cultural climate (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 1996).

Despite the sometimes-damaging effects of emotional labor, research identifies benefits that arise under certain conditions. For example, the use of deep acting and the regular display of positive emotions can result in lessened dissonance, improved performance, and increased satisfaction (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Grandey, 2003; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). Other researchers contend that any requirement to display positive emotions leads ultimately to improved performance (e.g., increased sales) and a heightened sense of accomplishment (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). In a qualitative study of sales workers, for example, Abiala (1999) found that emotional labor was most likely to produce positive effects when interacting with customers was

a small part of the workers' day, there were few rules to follow, the intent to sell was not concealed, and the workers were hired for their training and experience rather than for their looks or demeanor. Regardless of the circumstances, however, managing emotions is an essential and often inescapable part of one's job in an organization. So it may not be surprising to find that it is also one of the strongest predictors of job performance and organizational commitment (Kluemper, DeGroot, & Choi, 2013).

EMOTION RECOGNITION Whereas the research on emotional contagion and emotional labor generally focuses on the expression and management of emotion, other studies have examined the recognition of emotion. The ability to recognize emotions in others is a mainstay in the research on interpersonal sensitivity, which is necessary for leadership success, personnel functions of hiring and performance appraisal, the development and functioning of work teams, and successful customer service (Goleman et al., 2002; Riggio, 2001). In one review of the research on emotion recognition ability, researchers found a consistently positive correlation between job performance and the emotion recognition accuracy (Elfenbein, Beaupré, Lévesque, & Hess, 2007). For instance, one study found that the ability to recognize posed facial expressions of emotion predicted the outcome of a negotiation exercise. Participants with greater ability performed better than participants with less ability to recognize expressions of emotion (Elfenbein et al., 2007).

But some studies have also raised questions about the benefits of emotion recognition in all situations, finding support for the counter-intuitive claim that "people reading" has a downside. Using the Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (DANVA), one study found that the ability to read negative emotions conveyed through the voice rather than the face damaged workplace evaluations received from peers and supervisors (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). Similarly, another study found a negative correlation between the ability to read body cues and ratings of rapport from an interaction partner but a positive correlation between the ability to read facial cues and these same ratings of rapport (Puccinelli & Tickle-Degnen, 2004). Apparently, as the researchers claim, the ability to pick up emotions from less controllable nonverbal communication channels (such as the voice and the body), which the researchers refer to as *emotional eavesdropping*, may burden individuals with difficult or unpleasant information that was not meant to be shared. Certainly, more studies of this kind will continue to clarify the costs as well as the benefits of reading emotions in the workplace.

Successful Nonverbal Communication in Task-Oriented Encounters

The effectiveness of our nonverbal communication in most formal workplace encounters depends on the particular goals we want to achieve. Much of what we

have already addressed in earlier chapters applies here as well. Skills in building conversational rapport, gaining compliance, detecting deception, providing emotional support, and managing interpersonal conflict are all highly useful in various workplace encounters, from sales interviews to counseling sessions. In the remainder of this chapter, we survey the research on how nonverbal communication contributes directly to the immediate success or failure of these encounters, whether we are communicating to an audience of one or to an audience of one hundred. Does nonverbal communication affect the outcome of these encounters? In recent years, mounting evidence shows that it does.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TRANSACTIONS Even in workplace encounters that involve little or no preparation and where the participants have had no prior contact with each other, nonverbal communication can make a difference. As we saw in Chapter 7, our physical appearance and even our use of a single immediacy behavior such as touch, eye contact, or close proximity can help us gain the compliance of a complete stranger. A similar effect sometimes occurs on the job during customer service transactions. In one well-known study, for instance, researchers discovered that people, especially women, who were touched on the hand by a librarian while she returned their library card had a more positive attitude toward the librarian and the library in general than did those who were not touched (Fisher, Rytting, & Heslin, 1976). The use of touch also had a positive effect in another widely cited study. Waitresses received bigger tips from diners they touched on the hand than

from those they didn't touch (Crusco & Wetzel, 1984). Researchers in another study found that patrons in public taverns who were touched on the shoulder by their server ordered more drinks than did patrons who were not touched (Kaufman & Mahoney, 1999). In retail sales interactions, touch also has a positive impact; but as one recent study shows, the impact may depend as much on the customer as it does on the use of touch alone. Researchers compared the impact of a salesperson's brief touch on the shoulder of customers in a high-contact culture (France) and a low-contact culture (Germany). Customers trusted the salesperson more, rated the product more favorably, and were more likely to purchase the product when the salesperson touched them—but only in low-contact cultures or only when the customer had a greater need for touch (Orth, Chameeva, & Brand, 2013). So

▸ Research shows that in customer service transactions, customers who receive smiles from service employees are likely to reciprocate these smiles and report more satisfaction with the service they receive compared to customers who do not receive smiles.

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it appears that the benefits of touch may be lost in places where the use of touch is relatively common (high-contact cultures) or with customers that have little need or desire for touch.

Customer service professionals may benefit from other immediacy behaviors as well, such as getting close and making eye contact. For example, in one study, waiters and waitresses in family-style restaurants in a small Midwestern town and in a large urban area received bigger tips when they squatted and made eye contact with diners than when they stood and made eye contact (Davis, Schrader, Richardson, Kring, & Kieffer, 1998). As another researcher concluded from interviews with numerous waitresses, good service is synonymous with friendly, deferential, and even flirtatious behaviors (Hall, 1993).

Customer service employees are probably inundated with advice about being friendly and courteous. In fact, observations of customer service encounters confirm that smiling has beneficial effects, sometimes due to the process of emotional contagion. Customers who receive smiles from service employees are likely to mimic or reciprocate these smiles and report more satisfaction with the service they receive compared to customers who do not receive smiles (Pugh, 2006; Tan, Foo, & Kwek, 2004). Moreover, the strength and authenticity of the employee's smile makes a difference, with more genuine and fuller smiles producing more beneficial effects (Barger & Grandey, 2006; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremier, 2006). While few can deny the importance of friendly service, employees who follow emotional display rules have to continually monitor their own nonverbal behavior and work to keep difficult-to-control signals (e.g., a smirk, an angry tone, etc.) from betraying their true feelings.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 10.5

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?

Gender Discrimination Occurs in Customer Service

When I used to waitress and serve a male/female couple, I often went out of my way to treat the man nicer because he usually was the one paying and I wanted a bigger tip. I would smile at the male customers, compliment them, and sometimes touch then on the shoulder. Because men responded more generously with their money than women did, I made sure I worked the men real good to make more money. I wasn't mean to the women; I just didn't treat them the same.

Julia

But even when they try, customer service employees don't treat everyone in the same friendly manner. For example, some research documents a gender bias that favors male customers. A researcher found in one study that although female salesclerks gave friendlier service (more greetings, smiles, and eye contact) than their male counterparts did, male customers received friendlier service than did female customers (Rafaeli, 1988). In another study, researchers discovered that when a man and a woman approached a salesclerk at the same time, the clerk served the man first 61% of the time and the woman first 32% of the time (in the remaining cases, either no one was served or the clerk inquired who was first). While dressing up improved the male customer's chances of being served first, it did not do the same for the female customer (Stead & Zinkhan, 1986). But not all studies show a customer service bias favoring male customers. The occurrence of gender discrimination may in fact depend on other factors. For example, based on more than 300 observations of customer service encounters in various businesses and retail stores, researchers in one study found that employees were least likely to exhibit friendly behavior (e.g., smiling, eye contact, thanking, etc.) toward customers who were male, white, young, or casually dressed (Martin & Adams, 1999). Another study showed that black vendors were friendlier (e.g., smiles, pleasant tone of voice, speaking, touch) to black customers than they were to white customers (Amsbary & Powell, 2007).

PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS Most of the face-to-face interactions that occur in the workplace are dyadic encounters, one person communicating to another. These interactions include formal interviews between employers and job applicants, doctors and patients, researchers and respondents, attorneys and clients, and so on. Although we need much more research to understand fully the role of nonverbal communication in each of these encounters, the research that has been done gives us some idea of what helps and what doesn't.

Studies show that nonverbal communication affects the outcomes of all sorts of interviews. In many types of interviews, nonverbal signs of involvement (see Table 7.1) produce positive results. Most information-gathering interviews, for example, depend on the interviewer's ability to gain the cooperation of an individual and encourage him or her to talk freely. Research indicates that touching and making eye contact with a person increases the likelihood that the person will comply with a request to participate in a survey (Hornik & Ellis, 1988). Research also shows that even apprehensive respondents will talk much more and will like their interviewer more when the interviewer uses high levels of nonverbal involvement (direct body orientation, forward lean, head nods, back channels, and gazing while listening) as opposed to much lower levels (Remland & Jones, 1989).

FIND OUT MORE

How Important Is Nonverbal Communication in the Sales Interview?

According to the authors of this study, nonverbal communication is at least as important for a successful sales interview as the verbal content of the interview. With regards to the sales interview context in particular, prior research confirms five distinct phases: approach (e.g., greeting, building rapport), needs identification (i.e., active listening), presentation (i.e., making the pitch), overcoming objections, and closing the sale. Using the National Collegiate Sales Contest scoring instrument (which includes an evaluation of each of the five phases), undergraduate business and marketing majors participated in role-plays of sales interviews. Subsequent evaluations indicated that the students needed a balance of effective verbal and nonverbal communication order to maximize their persuasiveness, especially during the approach and needs identification phases of the sales interviews.

To find out more about this study and to answer the following questions, see the full text (cited below).

1. How were the students motivated to participate in the sales interviews?
2. How realistic do you think the sales interviews and the evaluation of the sales interviews were?
3. Why didn't nonverbal communication improve the performance of sales interviewers during the overcoming objections phase of the interviews?
4. Specifically, what are the nonverbal behaviors that sales interviewers should use during the first two phases of the sales interview?
5. What kind of research is this? (See Appendix.)

Source: Taute, H. A., Heiser, R. S., & McArther, D. N. (2011). The effect of nonverbal signals on student role-play evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Education, 33*, 28–40.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 10.6

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?

Nonverbal Communication Gains Survey Compliance

I hate when those people with clipboards come up to you at the mall with those questionnaires. But one day while walking through the mall, this little old lady was doing the survey. I felt bad for her so I decided to do it. During the interview, she was so friendly—smiling, touching me on the arm, and making eye contact—that I really loosened up and dropped my previous thoughts about loathing mall interviews.

Jilanna

Research also confirms the positive effects of nonverbal involvement behaviors in counseling sessions (Barak, Patkin, & Dell, 1982; Fretz, Corn, Tuemmler, & Bellet, 1979; Tepper & Haase, 1978). One study found that clients rated counselors as having greater expertise when the counselors used high levels of involvement (such as forward lean, eye contact, and hand gestures) directed toward the client than when they used fewer of these behaviors, an effect that outweighed the impact of conspicuously displayed diplomas (Siegel & Sell, 1978). In another early study, counselors were judged as more trustworthy, attractive, and expert when they used responsive nonverbal behaviors, which included head nodding, vocal variety, facial expressiveness, eye contact, and gestures, than when they used less responsive nonverbal behaviors (Claiborn, 1974). Other studies show that congruent postures (i.e., matching) as well as a counselor's forward lean are indicative of greater rapport between counselor and client (Charney, 1966; Sandhu & Reeves, 1993; Sharpley & Sagris, 1995; Stafford, 2001; Trout & Rosenfeld, 1980).

In medical consultations, research confirms that a physician's nonverbal communication has important consequences for patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes (Roter, Frankel, Hall, & Sluyter, 2006). In one study, investigators found that physicians who were better able to express their emotions tended to have more satisfied patients (DiMatteo, Hays, & Prince, 1986). For example, when a physician or nurse conveys emotion (i.e., concern, warmth, enthusiasm) through their tone of voice, patients tend to adhere more to their treatment and to be more satisfied with the treatment they receive (Haskard, Williams, DiMatteo, Heritage, & Rosenthal, 2008).

Many more studies show a link between a physician's use of nonverbal involvement behaviors and patient satisfaction (Conlee, Olvera, & Vagim, 1993; Hall, Roter, & Katz, 1988; Harrigan, Oxman, & Rosenthal, 1985; Harrigan & Rosenthal, 1983; Larsen & Smith, 1981; Richmond, Smith, Heisel, & McCroskey, 2001; Schorr, 2000; Street & Buller, 1988). For instance, one study examined the nonverbal behavior of physicians in three different 15-minute standardized patient interviews, each requiring a different set of communication skills (e.g., gathering information, counseling). The researchers found that in all three interviews, the physician's tone of voice, smiles, open postures, body lean, eye contact, head nods, and facial expressivity had a much greater influence on patient satisfaction than did the actual quality of the interview content, as evaluated by other physicians (Griffith, Wilson, Langer, & Haist, 2003). A similar study in Japan corroborates these findings. In standardized patient interviews, medical students received more favorable evaluations from patients, regardless of the medical faculty's ratings of interview content, when they used higher levels of nonverbal involvement behaviors (nodding, direct body orientation, eye contact) and when they adapted their speech rate and volume to match that of their patient (Ishikawa et al., 2006)

Of course, more positive nonverbal behavior is not always better and can backfire when doctors use excessive amounts of touch, too much eye contact, or positive vocal

tones that downplay the seriousness of the visit (Hall, Roter, & Rand, 1981; Harrigan et al., 1985; Larsen & Smith, 1981). Cultural and gender differences in the use and interpretation of nonverbal cues also matter. As we have seen in previous chapters, some cultures are more comfortable with nonverbal displays of closeness and affection than other cultures are. In addition, the same behaviors do not always carry the same meanings, which can cause misunderstanding in doctor–patient interactions. For example, one study discovered that Canadian and Chinese physicians' and patients' use of back-channel responses while listening to one another (head nods, vocalizations) improved their recall of information in intracultural interactions but hindered communication, leading to less recall of information, in intercultural interactions. While a Chinese listener may have nodded to say "I am paying attention," a Canadian speaker may have interpreted the head nod as "I understand what you are saying." This kind of misleading feedback could make it more difficult to exchange information in an accurate manner (Li, 2006). Gender also makes a difference. Research also shows, for instance, that female physicians are more likely than their male counterparts to use and consequently to benefit from the use of nonverbal immediacy behaviors: They obtain more medical information from their patients and receive higher evaluations from persons who observe them interacting with patients (Hall, Irish, Roter, & Ehrlich, 1994; Koss & Rosenthal, 1997).

When doctors don't use a variety of nonverbal involvement behaviors, they run the risk of communicating a lack of interest in their patients. One specific way that physicians communicate a lack of interest is by not actively encouraging, and sometimes even not allowing their patients to speak. One observational study of 60 routine primary care office visits found a disturbing tendency for physicians to interrupt their patients. On average, patients spoke uninterrupted for 12 seconds after the resident physician entered the room. One fourth of the time, physicians interrupted patients before they finished speaking. The average visit lasted 11 minutes with the patient speaking for about four minutes. During this time, physicians interrupted patients an average of two times. Interestingly, the researchers observed gender differences in how physicians treated patients. Female physicians interrupted patients less often than did their male counterparts, and females patients were interrupted more often than were the male patients. Not surprisingly, the more patients were interrupted, the less they liked their visits (Rhoades, McFarland, Finch, & Johnson, 2001). Obviously, not interrupting is one way to get patients to speak. Another way is through active listening (i.e., the use of back channels). Researchers in another study found that a physician's use of reinforcing facial expressions and head nods increased patients' self-disclosures during their interactions (Duggan & Parrott, 2000).

Patients recognize the importance of a doctor's communication style. In one survey, 85% of the respondents said that what they looked for in a physician was whether the

doctor communicated well and demonstrated a caring attitude. The doctor's experience and credentials were not nearly as important (Makoul & Schofield, 1999). According to some studies, differences in the nonverbal (and verbal) communication styles of physicians are important enough to explain why some doctors get sued and others don't. Researchers in one study examined the differences between frequently sued obstetricians and those who had no claims against them. The patients of frequently sued doctors said they felt rushed, ignored, or ill-informed during visits. One of their biggest complaints was that the doctor did a poor job of listening to them (Hickson, Clayton, & Entman, 1994). Participants in another study viewed a videotape of a physician treating a patient. In one version the doctor used positive communication behaviors, which included eye contact, a friendly tone of voice, appropriate touch, smiles, responsive facial expressions, and a relatively long period of contact time. In the other version, the doctor refrained from using positive communication behaviors and did not spend much time with the patient. Participants were more likely to judge the doctor in the second version as less professional, caring, friendly, trustworthy, and competent. Perhaps most importantly, they saw that doctor as more to blame, more negligent, and more liable for possible mistreatment of the patient (Lester, 1993).

Social scientists have also investigated nonverbal communication in the employment interview. These studies, along with countless insights from personnel professionals, employment interviewers, communication consultants, management specialists, and others, give us a fairly accurate and comprehensive view of how nonverbal communication affects the performances of both the interviewer and the interviewee (Arvey & Campion, 1982; DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999; DePaulo, 1992; Fleischmann, 1991; Forsythe, 1990; Forsythe, Drake, & Cox, 1985; Gifford, Ng, & Wilkinson, 1985; Hickson & Stacks, 1993, pp. 246–252; Imada & Hakel, 1977; Leathers, 1997, Chapter 14; McGovern & Tinsley, 1978; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978; Young & Beier, 1977).

Interviewers are quite susceptible to the nonverbal messages they receive from job applicants. Like the rest of us, highly trained interviewers have all sorts of biases and preconceptions about what a person's appearance and behavior reveals about that person. As we have seen throughout this text, we form instantaneous impressions of people—favorable and unfavorable—based on their facial features, body shape, height, clothing, tone of voice, gaze behavior, use of space, facial expressions, and so on. Usually knowing little about the applicant except what's on the résumé, employment interviewers often have little choice but to follow their gut reactions. Evidence that most interviewers make up their minds after only the first few minutes of an interview seems to confirm this (Hickson & Stacks, 1993, Chapter 12). The apparent similarities that exist among large numbers of qualified applicants results in a **negativity bias**, a tendency for the interviewer to attach more significance to what he or she dislikes about

the applicant than to what he or she likes. Thus, salient and undesirable features of the applicant's performance, such as a sloppy appearance, poor manners, halting speech, nervousness, or tardiness, can undermine the applicant's chance of success. Moreover, the nonverbal cues of the interviewer—signaling a positive or negative attitude—can greatly influence the performance of the applicant, weakening it when the signals are negative and improving it when the signals are positive (see *expectancy effects*).

In a relatively short time, the applicant tries to create a favorable image in the mind of the interviewer. To be successful, an applicant's communication should project the image of someone who is motivated, enthusiastic, composed, responsive, and assertive. Table 10.2 summarizes the nonverbal signals most likely to help the job applicant communicate such an image.

The image a job applicant conveys through vocal and physical cues has a significant impact on the judgments of interviewers. In fact, some research suggests that the effect of the applicant's nonverbal communication is greater than that of the applicant's verbal abilities (Goldberg & Cohen, 2004). Research also raises the possibility that an applicant's nonverbal communication may predict performance on the job. Using videotaped interviews with managers in utility companies, researchers found that a composite of vocal cues (pitch, pitch variability, speech rate, pauses, and variations in volume) correlated with supervisory ratings of job performance. Similarly, the researchers found a positive correlation between the same vocal cues and job performance ratings for a sample of videotaped interviews with managers in a news-publishing company. In this latter sample, the researchers also found a positive correlation between visual cues (physical attractiveness, smiling, gaze, hand movements, and body orientation) and job performance ratings (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999).

Building rapport—an important goal of most researchers, counselors, physicians, employment interviewers, and others—may require a friendly and nonthreatening demeanor that is not entirely compatible with the goals of all professional interviewers in all interview contexts. Although most sales professionals strive to establish positive relations with their clients, for example, the circumstances of a particular situation may call for an interviewer to use a hard-sell rather than a soft-sell approach, intimidating a client with a loud voice, steady gaze, disapproving face, and more. In fact, one contingency theory of the sales interview recommends the use of a hard-sell approach for certain clients (e.g., less knowledgeable and educated) and when the likelihood of making a sale is either very good or very bad (Poppleton, 1981).

Similarly, in police interrogations (or in many attorney–client interviews), the goal of an interviewer may be at odds with the use of a friendly and nonthreatening style. When trying to assess the honesty of a criminal suspect who is highly motivated to lie, an interviewer may be more likely to elicit truthful statements or to pick up

Table 10.2	Successful Nonverbal Communication in the Employment Interview
Image	**Nonverbal Signals**
MOTIVATED	Wearing proper business attire
	Knowledge of proper etiquette (handshake, punctuality)
	Fluent speech, floor holding (i.e., preparation)
ENTHUSIASTIC	Animated gestures
	Pleasant facial expressions
	Expressive voice
	Moderately fast speaking rate
	Moderately close distances
COMPOSED	Avoiding closed postures
	Avoiding self-touch
	Avoiding nervous mannerisms (displacement activity)
	Avoiding negative facial expressions (anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, boredom, etc.)
	Avoiding tense, rigid postures
	Avoiding interruptions (i.e., showing patience)
RESPONSIVE	Short but thoughtful response latencies
	Back channels (e.g., head nods, saying *uh huh*)
	Responsive facial gestures (e.g., smiles, eyebrow raises, etc.)
	Attentive eye contact and body orientation
	Some mirroring
	Adapting to nonverbal feedback
ASSERTIVE	Masculine attire
	Strong, confident voice
	Direct eye contact, avoiding downward gaze
	Firm handshake
	Erect posture
	Strong, full gestures

nonverbal clues to deception (i.e., signs of guilt and anxiety) by making the suspect uncomfortable rather than comfortable. Indeed, the stress-inducing techniques of police interrogators—the use of silence, staring, shouting, close proximity, and so on—may sometimes facilitate lie detection. In his work with police interrogators, communication researcher Dale Leathers (1997) found that they often rely heavily on nonverbal signs of stress such as gaze avoidance, perspiration, fidgeting, unusual breathing patterns, abnormal swallowing, and the like. On the other hand, studies also show that many of these professional lie detectors may be overconfident in assessing their own ability to detect deception, performing no better than the rest of us when they are put to the test (Feeley & Young, 1998).

Police interviewers are also vulnerable to **deception stereotypes**: actions believed to be (though usually not) associated with lying, such as avoiding eye contact, and fidgeting. In one series of studies with considerable implications for cross-cultural police–citizen interactions everywhere, researchers in the Netherlands discovered evidence of racial discrimination in police–citizen interviews: a tendency for police interrogators to judge black citizens' nonverbal communication, which typically includes more speech hesitations, smiling, and gesturing, as more deceptive than that of white citizens (Vrij & Winkel, 1991, 1992, 1994). Adding further support to this finding, recent study of 120 videotaped noncriminal police interactions with law-abiding citizens showed that black and Hispanic citizens in these encounters exhibited more "suspicious" nonverbal cues, such as gaze aversion, speech hesitations, smiles, and hand gestures, than did the white citizens (Johnson, 2006).

ORAL PRESENTATIONS Many people in the workplace must sometimes give oral presentations. The delivery of those presentations—the speaker's nonverbal communication—can determine whether or not the audience pays attention to or cares about the speaker's message. What constitutes an effective delivery?

There is no shortage of advice in the popular and academic literature about delivering an effective speech. Typical recommendations include making eye contact with individual audience members; using smooth, forceful gestures; not standing too far from the audience; using pauses for emphasis; adjusting vocal volume; enunciating; expressing emotions through the face and voice; dressing to gain respect; speaking fluently; and so on. While most of these recommendations seem to reflect a consensus among experts and probably resonate with beginning and experienced public speakers alike, many have never been tested adequately in scientific studies, leaving unanswered questions about the relative impact of nonverbal signals on various indexes of speaking effectiveness—comprehension, attraction, credibility, attitude change, and the like.

Research recommends the use of nonverbal involvement behaviors. In one study, for example, communication researchers Judee Burgoon, Thomas Birk, and Michael Pfau (1990) studied the nonverbal communication of undergraduate students who were assigned to give in-class persuasive speeches. They found that the student speakers most likely to be evaluated by audience members as credible and persuasive were the ones who exhibited nonverbal immediacy and expressiveness: facial expressiveness, facial pleasantness, pitch variety, eye contact, vocal fluency, body lean, and body relaxation. Other studies indicate that speakers are also likely to be persuasive if they speak moderately fast and loud and move toward their audience. While these findings seem to imply that a single style of public speaking is most successful, other research suggests that a dynamic style of speaking (e.g., rapid, loud, high-pitched speech) is especially effective for well-liked and highly respected speakers, whereas a more conversational style (e.g., slower, softer, calmer, lower-pitched speech) may be best for everyone else (Burgoon et al., 1996).

Some studies highlight the impact of a speaker's delivery in workplace settings. One study of a salesperson's nonverbal communication in an industrial sales call found that professional buyers rated the salesperson as more believable when he used a steady gaze and more interesting and persuasive when he avoided speech hesitations in his presentation (Leigh & Summers, 2002). Another study found that the speech delivery of a bogus CEO was more effective with eye contact, fluency, smiles, and dynamic gestures and that the speaker's delivery was a more important predictor of his performance than either his vision for the company or the success of the company (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999). Other studies also show that the delivery of a leader is more predictive of a leader's charisma than is the "visionary content" of a leader's message (Holladay & Coombs, 1993, 1994).

The most ambitious and groundbreaking program of research to date has been exploring the use of "social sensing" technology developed at MIT's digital media laboratory (including mobile sensors called *sociometers*) to capture, measure, and analyze the effects of nonverbal communication—tone of voice, rate of speech, body posture, gestures, proximity, and more—in a variety of naturally occurring face-to-face interactions, including brief oral presentations. Led by management scholar and computer scientist Alex Pentland, researchers have been able to quantify the impact of speech delivery with greater precision than ever before. In one study, for example, Pentland and his colleagues arranged a contest for students in MIT's Executive MBA program to determine who would do the best job of pitching a complex business plan to a group of their peers and charged them with the task of deciding which of the plans to submit for consideration to a panel of venture finance experts (Pentland, 2008). As a requirement for participation in the contest, each

student had to wear one of the MIT lab-developed mobile sensors while delivering his or her presentation (these badge-like devices were attached to their clothing). The results of the study confirmed the powerful impact of a speaker's delivery. As Pentland concludes,

> The executives thought they were evaluating the plans based on rational measures, such as: How original is this idea? How does it fit the current market? How well developed is this plan? While listening to the pitches, though, another part of their brain was registering other crucial information such as: How much does this person believe in this idea? How confident are they when speaking? How determined are they to make this work? And the second set of information—information that the business executives didn't even know they were assessing—is what influenced their choice of business plans to the greatest degree. (p. 71)

Few people in the workplace give more oral presentations than teachers do. If there is a link between successful speaking and nonverbal communication, the classroom could be an ideal place to find out. Numerous studies show that teachers who use an array of involvement behaviors in their classroom presentations—making a lot of eye contact, getting close to students, using touch, exhibiting open body positions, showing emotion through facial and vocal expressions, gesturing, smiling, and so on—tend to receive higher student evaluations (i.e., the students like the course more) and tend to have students who believe they learn more. A teacher's nonverbal communication during an oral presentation has such a powerful effect on student attitudes that observers can make accurate predictions of a college instructor's end-of-term student evaluations after exposure to just a few seconds of the instructor's content-free nonverbal behavior during a single lecture (Babad, Avni-Babad, & Rosenthal, 2004). Despite these effects, there is little evidence that a teacher's nonverbal communication directly affects students' learning of course content (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004). For instance, one controlled experiment compared the impact of a fluent and a non-fluent style of delivering the same lecture. One group of students was randomly assigned to the fluent lecture, where the instructor stood upright in front of a desk, gestured, maintained direct eye contact, and spoke in a fluent manner without the use of notes; another group of students was randomly assigned to the non-fluent lecture, where the instructor hunched over a podium behind the desk, read from notes, intermittently looked at her notes and her audience, read haltingly and flipped through her notes several times. Although the students assigned to the fluent lecture gave the instructor higher evaluations and felt they learned more than the students assigned to the non-fluent lecture, there were no differences in what the students actually learned (Carpenter, Wilford, Kornell, & Mullaney, 2013).

SUMMARY

In everyday workplace encounters, nonverbal communication announces and reinforces the differences in status that exist between members of an organization. These status reminders, common in most asymmetrical relationships, come in many different forms: dressing up or dressing down, size, "do not disturb" signs, getting close (invading another's personal space), holding the center of attention, the cold shoulder, the silent treatment, kicking back, the voice of authority, tardiness, monopolizing a conversation, and an emotional roller coaster. Although the use of these signals is inevitable and necessary, their misuse can lead to serious problems. Dysfunctional leadership can result when a leader ignores the danger of mismatched behavior or when a leader succumbs to sex-role stereotyping. Sexual harassment can occur when one person misreads the nonverbal signals of another. Workplace discrimination can occur when employers favor high-status nonverbal signals over lower-status signals. Cross-cultural misunderstandings can occur when persons from different cultures overlook each other's interpretations of status signals.

The success of many task-oriented encounters often depends on the use of nonverbal communication. Becoming aware of nonverbal expectancy effects—the nonverbal cues that create counterproductive, self-fulfilling prophecies—requires an individual to monitor the subtle signals that can reveal his or her expectations. Emotional exchanges also have important consequences in the workplace. These exchanges include the process of contagion, emotional labor, and emotion recognition. In addition, the use of nonverbal involvement behaviors—smiling, leaning forward, eye contact, touch, facial and vocal expressiveness, speech fluency, and so forth—can contribute in varying degrees to the success of customer service transactions, professional interviews, and oral presentations.

KEY TERMS

Asymmetrical relationships 357

Behavioral flexibility 370

Deception stereotypes 394

Emotional dissonance 383

Emotional labor 382

Expectancy effects 380

Negativity bias 391

Power distance 367

Powerless stereotypes 375

Sex-role stereotyping 364

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Chapter Outline