

What's the Grade Level of Your Body Language Skills?
by **Lillian D. Bjorseth, president**
Duoforce Enterprises, Inc.

Six months ago, an out-of-town client called to ask my input. She was in a meeting with the president of an association where she is chairing the annual gala as a volunteer. Also present were several of her committee members as well as an outside consultant hired by the organization.

She noticed immediately that the consultant was sitting in the most powerful position at the rectangular table. Also, that when she or her group asked questions, the consultant and the president often started to answer even before the asker was finished, with the consultant speaking over the president. When the president did speak, he often put his hand to his mouth/chin area to accompany his remarks. When others spoke, particularly the consultant, the president would rub his neck. Quite a few times, she saw him pointlessly rearranging the papers in front of him

The consultant, on the other hand, was leaning into the conversation and had his hands on the table, often palms up.

She had hired me to coach her in people-reading skills a year ago as she was impressed by how I had "called" several things that had happened at her company ... after observing the players at different events. It was a skill she wanted to hone.

Her simple question to me was, "Do you agree that the president may be on his way out? This is the second meeting where basically the same pattern has been replayed."

"Yes," I answered, "based on your description." Her comeback, "Could we spend an hour discussing what I can do before it happens? It's important that the gala goes off without a hitch." We did.

A month ago, I got another phone call. The president had been let go, and the consultant was temporarily running the association. My client had "read" a situation and reacted to it before it happened. The gala is on track; in fact, she has amassed record-setting sponsorship.

How good are your "reading skills?" Are you at the college level or still in second or third grade? This economy particularly demands that you use the 90/10 rule ...

Ninety percent of a message is communicated through the visual and vocal ingredients. Ten percent (or less) is through the words.

You say you know that rule? That's highly likely. My questions for you: Can you execute? Are you astute enough that you identify the messages and adjust in the moment or at least shortly thereafter?

Test Your Knowledge

Here are several questions based on the scenario I just described. There may be more than one correct answer. (Check <http://www.duoforce.com/ldb/direct3-newsletter.htm> to see how well did.)

1. The most powerful position at a rectangular table is the



Lillian D. Bjorseth
President
2221 Ridgewood Rd.
Lisle, IL 60532

630-983-5308
630-983-5312 (fax)

www.duoforce.com
lillian@duoforce.com

- a. Head of the table.
 - b. Middle of the longer side, facing the door.
 - c. Middle of the longer side with your back to the door.
2. Those in power or who feel they are
 - a. Let others provide the answers.
 - b. Speaker louder than others and persevere.
 - c. Try not to interrupt others.
 3. When you cover your mouth or chin with your hand while speaking, you
 - a. May be stifling a cough.
 - b. May be lying.
 - c. Feel insecure and vulnerable.
 4. Rubbing your neck while speaking with someone else indicates you think
 - a. The person is a pain in the neck.
 - b. You are eager to hear what the other person has to say.
 - c. You'd rather be somewhere else.
 5. Aimlessly rearranging your materials on the table can mean
 - a. You are fidgety, nervous or uncomfortable.
 - b. You are well organized.
 6. Having palms up means
 - a. You are trying to hide something.
 - b. You are uncomfortable.
 - c. You are being honest with people.



Lillian D. Bjorseth
President
2221 Ridgewood Rd.
Lisle, IL 60532

630-983-5308
630-983-5312 (fax)

www.duoforce.com
lillian@duoforce.com