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## Research on Importance of Nonverbal Communication

As expressed in the book Nonverbal communication is defined by expressing “when we relay messages and create meaning without the use of spoken words” (Beauchamp & Baran, 2015, p. 72). Being able to read and understand another person's nonverbals not only enriches your experiences in being able to communicate with others, but it can also give you insight into your own nonverbals and the messages it sends to other people. It's not just the “action” of the nonverbal communication but the purpose behind it that gives it meaning, and is essential for connecting with others.

**Academic Study:** In a study done by Sherer and Rogers (1980) they investigated the correlation between a psychotherapist's nonverbal communication with patients', and then how much the patients' liked them. In the study a total of 118 students were used, 58 being male, and the remaining 60 female. What was measured included high immediacy vs low immediacy, high potency vs low potency, and high responsivity vs low responsivity. The participants were asked to watch a short film of a therapy session that was scripted between the therapist and client. There was a separate video tape for each above scenario, and participants were asked to rate the therapist's nonverbal toward the client pertaining to the specific area of measurement. Each participant watched the videos and then completed a questionnaire for each separate interaction.

The results of the study found that for immediacy, showed that participants thought the therapist liked the client if they displayed eye contact and a close distance, compared to if they did not. In regards to potency, it was found that a relaxed posture from the therapist didn't have a big impact on how the client viewed the therapist. It was speculated that perhaps such behaviors as head nods and relaxation cues were too subdued to notice. However in the high immediacy condition clients did find the therapist more favorable. Finally the last area looked at, responsivity, if the therapist showed more head nods and was more vocal it seemed they were more receptive of the client compared to when they did not communicate this. In the conclusion of this study, the researchers found that the immediacy category was the most important when it came to nonverbal communication. This category was strongly correlated with empathy, warmth, and genuineness.

**Personal Example:** When I was competing in martial arts tournaments there was a lot said by how people would behave towards me. I knew people thought less of me because I was a girl, even though no one would directly tell me. For instance, everyone's faces got softer, their tone of voice got higher, they would give a sympathetic smile, or just smile and say nothing as they turned away from me and started talking to other competitors. People would stand against walls

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with their hands crossed, as if they were saying 'hurry up lets get this over with.' As soon as I was done fighting, doing a self defense demo, or form their body language towards me would change. I was "worth watching" and most peoples demeanor compleletly turned around. Even if you don't directly say something, your indirectly sharing what you think. Nonverbals speak volumes of their own.

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