

Mast, M. S., & Cousin, G. (2013). Nonverbal communication. In J. A. Hall, & M. L. Knapp (Eds.), *Power, dominance, and persuasion*, (pp. 613-635). De Gruyter Inc.

### **Synopsis:**

Mast and Cousin discussed that nonverbal communication is a crucial aspect of the effectiveness of communicating with people. When people interact, nonverbal communication is just as important as verbal communication. Information through nonverbal cues can be as effective as verbal communication. Nonverbal behaviors are used to show power, dominance, and persuasion in an environment where there are high-ranking or high-status individuals. The authors draw attention to the fact that we live in a society that is categorized by social classes, so it is hardly impossible to avoid verticality in social interactions. They noted that behaviors like “looking at the other more, being more facially expressive, smiling less, lowering the eyebrows more, nodding more, touching the other more, less self-touch” (p.617) are associated as indicators of power and dominance. People with high status versus people with low status often have very different nonverbal behaviors. Individual characteristics including gender, personality, and culture affect the perception of verticality and nonverbal behaviors. A nonverbal cue that is presented by a woman can read differently when it is presented by a man instead. For example, “Expressivity might be used to convey involvement in women whereas men might use it to convey dominance” (p. 625). Interpreting nonverbal cues accurately contributes to better relationship quality between social interactions with people.

### **Key Concepts**

- **Affiliation dimension:** “also called the horizontal dimension (Hall, Coats, and Smith LeBeau 2005), which is characterized by friendliness and warmth on the one end of the dimension and by hostility and aggression on the other end” (p. 613).
- **Control dimension:** “also called the vertical dimension – which relates to differences in power, dominance, and influence among two or more social interaction partners” (p. 613).
- **Dominance:** “which describes the behavior of someone who has power or who seeks power” (p. 615).

### **Key Quotes**

- “The vertical dimension of social interactions is present in nearly every social context” (p. 613).
- “To maximize effective communication among members possessing different levels of power or status, not only the verbal content of a message is important but also the way the information is conveyed nonverbally” (p.614).
- “Certain nonverbal behaviors may be used to express dominance in men but not in women. Expressivity might be used to convey involvement in women whereas men might use it to convey dominance” (p. 625).

### **Essential Question**

- How might nonverbal cues and behaviors be relevant on a universal level since there are differences in nationality, race, culture, etc. in people?