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Introduction

In the movie *Karate Kid*, a young teenager is about to be hassled by some adolescents when an elderly man rescues him. It is obvious to the lad that the senior citizen is a master with self-defense abilities. What is elusive is how he gained such skills. The grateful lad seeks the martial artist's mentorship. Having gained agreement, the eager pupil arrives on the appointed day for his first lesson; however, the master has him wax the many automobiles on his car lot. Over and over, the eager pupil moves his arms in a circular motion. Disappointed that he will have to delay the start of his learning, he obediently polishes the vehicles. Having finished the job, he bounces over to the master's house—only to learn he must now paint the fence. He is instructed to stroke the brush up and down with the wrist bending in a specific manner. By the time the fence is dutifully done, the lad's disappointment has turned to resentment. He approaches the master and vents his anger at not being taught the craft he sought.

The martial artist makes an attacking swing toward the pupil who, without thinking, does the swirling movement of the wax job and blocks the attack. This response is countered by an aggressive frontal lunge by the master. Much to the student's surprise, he automatically thwarts the advance with the stroking action of the fence painting. The master has proven that the two dull chores had

To be respectful of gender equality and yet provide the reader with a fluid reading style, in this section through the start of Chapter One the communicator is referred to by male pronouns and other people are referred to by female pronouns.

value—benefits that were obvious to the master but elusive to the pupil.

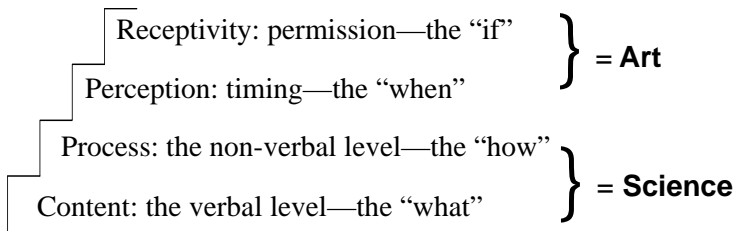
So, too, *The Elusive Obvious* contains two parts: the “Pentimento” (21 non-verbal patterns of communication) and “How Not To Get Shot.” Pentimento reveals the underlying foundation of non-verbal communication. How Not To Get Shot is the most popular application of the Pentimento patterns. By understanding and practicing each skill from the Pentimento and How Not To Get Shot until they become natural and habitual—the communicator’s version of waxing cars and painting fences—the reader will acquire the behavioral skills of a master communicator. By learning this powerful combination of skills, the reader will have a dependable way to handle volatile situations while preserving relationships. Collectively, the Pentimento and How Not To Get Shot comprise the Science of Non-verbal Communication.

Model of Professional Development

While we have heard the expression, “the art and science of communication,” in reality they are learned in the reverse sequence. Like the impulsive young student in *Karate Kid*, we are drawn to the magic of the Art but what we truly need is daily practice in the discipline of the Science. The Science of Communication must be learned first if we are to reach the Art of Communication.

A closer examination reveals that we go through two stages of the Science and two stages of the Art as we advance in our careers.

The four levels of professional development are:



Science

The first two levels (content and process) of professional development deal with the Science of Communication. When a communicator is new to a position, discipline, industry, or culture, the person is internally oriented. On the content level of communication, the person is searching for the words to speak or, if listening, trying to understand *what* is being said. Once the person knows the *what* level of communication, she progresses to emphasizing *how* to deliver the *what*. This second stage of professional development—the process level of communication—involves learning and practicing the elements of non-verbal communication. *Non-verbal* factors, not verbal, are the major determinants of meaning in any communication.¹

Art

Perception and receptivity comprise the two levels of the Art of Communication. Once a communicator knows the range of non-verbal behaviors she can use, the question becomes *when* to use the various behaviors.

For instance: at a meeting, if a communicator speaks and gestures with her elbows on the table, she will not command as much attention as if she speaks and gestures with her elbows off the table. Yet, if a communicator is speaking during an hour-long meeting, she may want to speak

most likely to occur when the speaker is at a two-point and switches to a three-point. The transition from two-point to three-point is based on the principle, “the listener follows the speaker’s eyes, not the speaker’s hand gesture.” The goal is to have “eye and hand coordination.”

*The listener follows our eyes, not our hands.
So, point where we look and look where we point.*



As a learner

TV Weather Forecasters

The next time you are watching TV notice several weather forecasters. The meteorologists can look either at the map or at the camera. When they look the map notice how you, as a viewer, also look at the map. Yet when they point to the map but look at the camera notice how you look at them instead of at the map.

Vanna White (of the TV show *Wheel of Fortune*) has made a career in the art of “Eye and Hand Coordination.” When she walks across the stage, her eyes are focused on the board. Her eyes follow her hand as she touches the lighted square. When she turns her head and makes eye contact with the audience, she signals that it is time for a question/spin.



1-4

Refinement: Credibility and Approachability

The speaker has two ways to point to a third-point location. One is by bouncing the hand to the location and the other is by holding the hand still (i.e., sideways) when pointing. When the speaker bounces her pointing hand,