

## **I Know What You're Thinking**

Using the Four Codes of Reading People to Improve Your Life  
by Lillian Glass, Ph.D.



Knowing how to read people — picking up on and interpreting their hidden cues — is a critical asset for success in your work life. In I Know What You're Thinking, psychologist and communications expert Dr. Lillian Glass helps you understand nonverbal language — a skill will make you more perceptive, more powerful, and more successful.

Dr. Glass holds two doctoral degrees, one in communication disorders and the other in counseling psychology. She has been a professor at the University of Southern California, has published many articles in professional journals based on her research, and is the author of numerous best-selling books. Dr. Glass also has private practices in New York and Beverly Hills.

As she has done for numerous CEOs, politicians, and Hollywood stars, Dr. Glass shows you — step-by-step — how to gain the power to know the truth about people by:

- Reading all four of the primary codes of communication, i.e. voice, speech, facial, and body language cues;
- Interpreting these codes to provide a clearer picture of someone's personality type; and
- Constantly improving your ability to make decisions based on the aforementioned.

Glass promises that after you are armed with this powerful understanding, you will be able to experience stunning insights into people you encounter for the first time. You will have greater self-awareness, more empathy towards others, and more self-confidence socially and in the business world. And, you will know what is real and what isn't.

### **The Four Primary Codes of Communication**

Studies show that the brain processes four primary codes of communication. Two of these (speech and vocal codes) are processed auditorily, while the other two (facial expression and body language) are processed visually.

When assessing people, we must interpret all four codes of communication — observing how they move, how they comport themselves, how they sound, and what they say. Before training, most of us tend to read others by relying on only one or two of the four communication codes (generally body language or facial expression). When you only rely on one or two codes of communication you cannot be sure that you have made an accurate assessment.

Let's take a look at each code and what it can tell us.

### Hearing the "Vocal Code"

The way people sound is an important clue to their personality. You experience this when you answer the telephone. In an instant, you detect a mood coming from the voice on the other end. Many aspects are familiar, but you may not have paid close attention to the pitch of a person's voice (whether it is high or low), the quality of the voice (whether a person mumbles, trails off, is whiny, attacking, or sickeningly sweet), and the volume and rate of speech.

For example, Dr. Glass states that people with a sugary sweet sounding vocal quality are usually duplicitous, that is, they say one thing while meaning another. Also, they tend to be passive-aggressive types who can turn on a moment's notice.

People who talk too fast are extremely anxious and may be angry. Studies have shown that they tend to be insecure and suffer from low self-esteem. On the other hand, people who talk too loud crave attention and are often pompous, arrogant, controlling, bullyish and competitive. And those who speak with choppy, staccato tones are usually inflexible, self-righteous, and extremely rigid.

### Listening to the "Speaking Code"

How a person sounds provides only some of the needed cues to reading a person; the words chosen and what is actually said are also important. What do people mean by what they are saying? Are they really sincere? Most importantly, what is being said "between the lines?"

For example, people who give backhanded compliments (uttering pleasantries that are really cutting remarks) or say sarcastic things followed by "just kidding" are actually revealing their true feelings -hostility or jealousy. People who gossip actually want to feel powerful, so they try to verbally eliminate anyone with whom they compete. They have radar ears, can distort what you say, and will carry their distorted version of your comments to others. And those people who beat around the bush and tend to be wishy-washy, harbor a great deal of internal fear, and are scared of making waves.

### Watching the "Body Language Code"

The body language code (the combination of movement, gestures, and mannerisms) communicates a lot about people — such as: are they lying or telling the truth, do they like you, and do they actually mean what they are saying.

For example, people who lean in towards you are showing that they are interested in you and what you have to say. This is also the case if someone copies your body language (e.g. crossing legs in unison, clasping fingers, etc.). People who feel powerful and confident usually take up more physical space while people that stand too far away are being arrogant, snobby, or simply showing that they don't like you.

### Looking at the "Facial Code"

Every face has an expression and we can read a lot about people from their faces. The facial code includes how a person holds his or her head when listening and speaking. Eye contact is crucial, as is how a person controls their mouth and the expression of their eyebrows. Paying close attention to facial expression can open a new world in reading what a person is really saying.

For example, Dr. Glass states that lip biting is often a controlled expression of internalized anger or resentment. Tight grins are phony and signal that the person doesn't really like you or doesn't like to be in your presence (but knows enough to smile in order to be civil). Another sign of dislike is knitted eyebrows (i.e. simultaneously raising the eyebrows and drawing them together).

### **Using the Codes to Assess Personality**

It doesn't take much time to form an opinion about a person. The big problem with first impressions is that they are formed in a matter of seconds and based on little information. "For instance, someone may not like you because you resemble someone who refused to date that person in high school. Or you may remind someone of a relative he or she can't stand, or you may be wearing a style of clothing that person doesn't like."

To stop making snap decisions Dr. Glass has developed a way to see beyond the façade so you can make more objective assessments. She provides tools to see people based on their personality traits so we can quickly and accurately assess their personality profiles, which tell us who we are most compatible with and those who we should avoid or handle with care.

After years of research, Dr. Glass has discovered that there are ways in which people with specific personality types tend to speak and comport themselves. She has categorized them into fourteen personality profiles. Here is how she describes each of the fourteen personality types along with examples of the communication cues that they exhibit:

1. **Passive Aggressors** keep things inside emotionally and generally won't give you a straight answer. They say one thing while their body language or facial expression are telling you something different. They often have a tight-lipped, phony grin, have a bone-crushing handshake, and speak softly, forcing others to ask them to speak up (a control mechanism).
2. **Seducers** are overly complimentary, use a lot of double-entendres, or speak in a sensuous tone — all in an effort to get what they want. They rarely break eye contact, tend to touch others a lot, and often mirror the behavior of those they are speaking to. It is not unusual for seducers to invade others' space and play with their jewelry or their hair. They are rarely seen without a smile on their faces or a twinkle in their eyes.
3. **Victims** complain chronically and constantly seem to be in the midst of

one crisis after another. They tend to speak in a whiney tone and often have a weaker, high-pitched voice that inflects upward at the end of sentences. They often appear to have a stoop-shouldered posture, frequently fidget, and their forehead is usually furrowed.

4. **Icicles** rarely let others in on how they feel emotionally. They are people of few words and rarely share much about themselves. Icicles tend to have a stiff and upright posture, a monotone voice, and often lack a facial expression. Their mechanical gestures often make others feel uneasy because they appear cold and inflexible. Icicles are difficult to read because they rarely display emotion and tend to go by the book.
5. **Wimps** usually do not have a point of view, seem to agree with what the majority of others are saying, and usually don't like to make waves. They appear to be uncomfortable when forced to state an opinion. Their voice is often soft, with hesitant mumbling tones. They scratch their head often to indicate confusion, have a limp handshake, go to great lengths to avoid eye contact, and are usually the first to break off a gaze if their eyes happen to meet another's.
6. **Liars** tend to go off on tangents, telling you more than you need to know, and often speaking hesitantly. They go to either extreme of making very poor eye contact or staring at others without breaking eye contact. They often shrug their shoulders when speaking and their facial and body expressions show discomfort. Liars have a relaxed, lifeless tone and their voice may be pitched higher when they are not being forthright. When they haven't told the truth, male liars may loosen their ties while women liars may simply place their hands on their necks — a sign of being "found out." They may also express other signs of discomfort such as fidgeting.
7. **Narcissists** talk constantly about themselves, show little interest in any topic other than themselves, and constantly seek praise. They tend to speak loudly, becoming the center of attention when talking. They may assume a stiff position, in order to look cool or important. Otherwise, they are bright and genuine, especially if others are paying attention to them.
8. **Snobs** consistently make negative remarks about others in order to seem superior and often speak in a condescending manner, like they know-it-all. Snobs often have lockjaw when speaking, giving a tight, nasal quality to their voice. Their posture tends to be rigid and their facial expression indicates that the person is literally looking down upon or judging others. The snob's smile tends to be phony and forced, with the mouth drawn back so that you can see the crease in the cheek.
9. **Competitors** usually seem to be interrupting others or trying to top whatever anyone else says. They show off, purporting to be better and have more than others. Competitors' eyes generally dart around the room because it is uncomfortable for them to maintain genuine eye contact. They will sneak glances as they seek to maintain an edge. They tend to have tense and rigid voices, facial expressions, and body language.

10. **Givers** express themselves openly, use a great deal of emotion to readily express true feelings, and are sincere in whatever they say. They are good listeners, their touch is firm and direct, and they are tentative and non-invasive in their body language. Givers often have a double-clasped handshake. They tend to be self-effacing so it is often difficult for them to accept compliments.
11. **Bullies** use loud, attacking, and brash tones. They consistently make negative remarks or cutting comments, are stubborn, and act like they know it all. Bullies are verbally belligerent and are always ready for verbal warfare. They make a lot of noise and commotion when they move around and often have a tense or angry expression on their face.
12. **Jokesters** are usually the life of the party, are quick with the comebacks, and seem to need to be the center of attention. Since jokesters need to be liked, they will say whatever it takes to make others feel good. They speak in an exuberant tone and there is often a child-like excitement to the way they speak — they can make even the most mundane experience seem exciting by their effervescence and enthusiastic tones. Jokesters are usually in perpetual motion and their body movements are highly animated. They tend to touch a lot and have difficulty communicating with others without touching in some way.
13. **Unconscious Ones** tend to make faux pas after faux pas, seem to speak before thinking (saying whatever comes to mind), and are preoccupied with their own thoughts. They are extremely blunt, overly direct, and tend to flit from topic to topic — usually making perfect sense only to themselves. They may sound nasal due to a failure to open their mouths to articulate properly. Their posture tends to be sloppy and their gaze seems off in the distance. Unconscious Ones are often oblivious to social convention — sometimes sitting or standing too close to others or using overly expansive gestures.
14. **Real Dealers** are sensitive to others and verbally generous. They seem genuinely interested in what others have to say and speak positively about others. Real Dealers say what they mean and mean what they say — with facial expressions that match their verbal expressions. Their speech is robust and enthusiastic and they use a wide range of emotion in their speech patterns. Real Dealers have pleasant and open facial expressions, have excellent eye contact, and employ a steady gaze. They appear to be physically relaxed and comfortable around others, employing loose and fluid body movements.

### **Developing Your Ability to Read People**

In order to improve your ability to read people, Dr. Glass suggests that you analyze characters on television, in coffee shops, and anywhere you are. Stop, look, and listen to everyone you meet. You may even want to read yourself, which can best be done by reviewing tapes and pictures where you're featured. It is

essential to comprehensively observe people. The more you practice looking for certain vocal, speaking, facial, and body language patterns, the easier it will become for you to read another person accurately.

If you use the techniques recommended by Dr. Glass — i.e. interpret all four of the codes of communication, integrate them to form a personality profile of an individual and hone your skill through practice — you will know so much more about the people you deal with that you will make much better decisions on how to approach and relate to them. With this newfound wisdom, you will be able to look anyone in the eye with a quiet self-assurance that says, "I Know What You're Thinking."