

Thought for the day – 31

‘You can’t stare – but you must watch!’

Get into a lift, or on to an underground train, and watch where people look. We are told as children that it is rude to stare, and in adult life we frequently do not look at people enough in negotiation.

In presentation skills training we are told that up to 70% of the message that we give is through our body language. In negotiation we are constantly giving off signals through our body language, and so is our opponent. We need to make sure that we give signals that are likely to build and develop the relationship rather than those which threaten or intimidate.

Just as important, we need to make sure that we are reading the body language of the other party. If they are feeling frightened, worried, unsure, or defensive, we need to know so that we can decide whether to do something about it. If we say something in the negotiation that has a positive impact, we also need to recognise it. Unfortunately, many of us do not pick up the body language, and even if we do we don’t interpret it properly anyway.

It is important to be receptive to the feelings of the other party in negotiation if the relationship is to be developed. One of the best ways of doing this is to be sensitive to the body language signals that are coming across, and to act upon them. Similarly, we need to make sure that we are giving off the right non-verbal signals.

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This thought has been taken from Eric’s book ‘Mastering Negotiations’. A master negotiator himself, he is our expert trainer on the subject – click [here](#) for details of one of his most popular courses.

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