



## If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look On My Face?

Wednesday, August 29, 2:45 to 5:45 p.m.

## Learning Objectives

- Learn to listen with your eyes, looking for clues in another's face
- Identify methods for using the power of a compelling story, avoiding jargon and reading another person so well you become "in sync" with them
- Discover ways to build empathy, nurture your innate mind-reading abilities and improve the way you relate and talk with others



## Our Agenda

- Developing empathy and awareness of what's in the mind of the other person
- Reading the mind in the eyes
- The heart and the head of communication
- Your role in making communication successful
- Getting better at reading others
- Using empathy to be a better leader, follower, co-worker and person

## Your Introductions

- Name
- City / County / Agency
- One interesting thing about you that no one in the room knows
- Each introduction can only take 5 seconds

“The single biggest problem  
in communication  
is the illusion that it has taken place.”

Often attributed to George Bernard Shaw  
though it is doubtful he ever said it

## Understanding Empathy

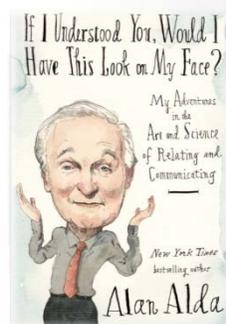
- Empathy is when you can sense what others are feeling, which in turn creates a greater awareness of what we are feeling
- It's really paying attention to what people are sharing
- It's paying more attention to the whole person, not simply their words
- It's making communication real and vivid
- Even sharing your short stories about yourselves gave us insight into the people in this room

## Alan Alda's Book

- Known to most of us Hawkeye Pierce on M\*A\*S\*H
- Hosted PBS's Scientific American Frontiers, where he interviewed thousands of scientists
- Scientists had difficult time explaining their scientific work in a way people could understand
- Accuracy got in the way of understanding
- He wrote *If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on My Face*, to help people communicate better.
- He learned empathy and the ability to be aware of what's in the mind of the other person is key

## The Heart of Connectedness

- Empathy is the key to understanding, and an improved life
- He understood art, science, relating and communicating could all work together.
- He applied the lessons of improv where reading the other person is essential
- The result was better communicators



## The Importance of Relating

- Natural assumption – lean in or putting yourself in the other person's face
- Relating is being so aware that even with your back to a person you can relate
- It's letting everything about them affect you – words, tone of voice, body language, where they are in the room, how they occupy a chair
- It's not the icing on the cake – it's the cake!
- Relating is allowing all that to seep into you and impact how you respond to that person

## What Google Discovered

- The two key factors in developing teams that work well and produce results:
  - Equal turn taking
  - Strong social sensitivity
- Social Sensitivity – being able to read your teammates: knowing when they are upset, sad, angry, frustrated disappointed
- A key was being able to read their eyes
- Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test:  
<http://www.questionwritertracker.com/quiz/61/Z4MK3TKB.html>



 **Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (Revised, Adult)**

Mouse over to zoom Practice Question

Which word best describes what the person in the picture is thinking or feeling?

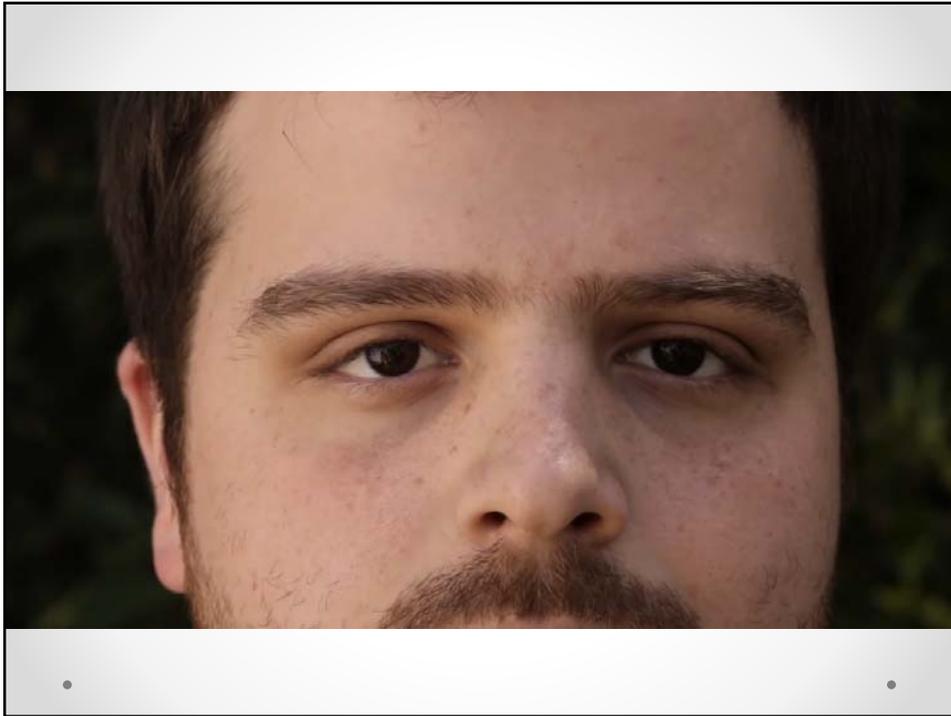
- hateful
- jealous
- arrogant
- panicked



**nd in the Eyes Test (Revised, Adult)**

 ribes what the person in the picture is thinking or

- hateful
- jealous
- arrogant
- panicked



# Who's the Leader Exercise

## Takeaways

- What responsibility did the leader have?
- What responsibility did the rest of the team have?
- What led us to work effectively as a team?
- Whose job was it to communicate effectively?

## Additional Team Research

- Anita Wooley research at Carnegie Mellon University in 2010: 3 factors that impact group performance
  1. The ability of members to freely take part in discussions
  2. Members scores on standardized test of empathy
  3. The presence of women in the group
- Even groups online (not in the same room) worked smarter by communicating a lot, participated equally and possessed good emotion-reading skills
- Highlights the value of networking on more than just work

# The Tug of War Exercise

## TED Talk by Harvard's Helen Riess

- Looked at the emotional connections between doctors and patients; defined EMPATHY
- E – Eye Gaze (Zulu Tribe's word for hellos is sawubona – I see you, I see your dignity and respect)
- M – Muscles for Facial Expression (face is the roadmap to human emotion)
- P – Posture (Conveyor of connection, open / closed)

## Helen Riess TED Talk

- A – Affect (Expressed emotions that are labeled; excited, upset)
- T – Tone of Voice (hearing emotion / crack in voice)
- H – Hearing the Whole Person (not judging)
- Y – Your Response (our inner mirror)



## The Heart and the Head

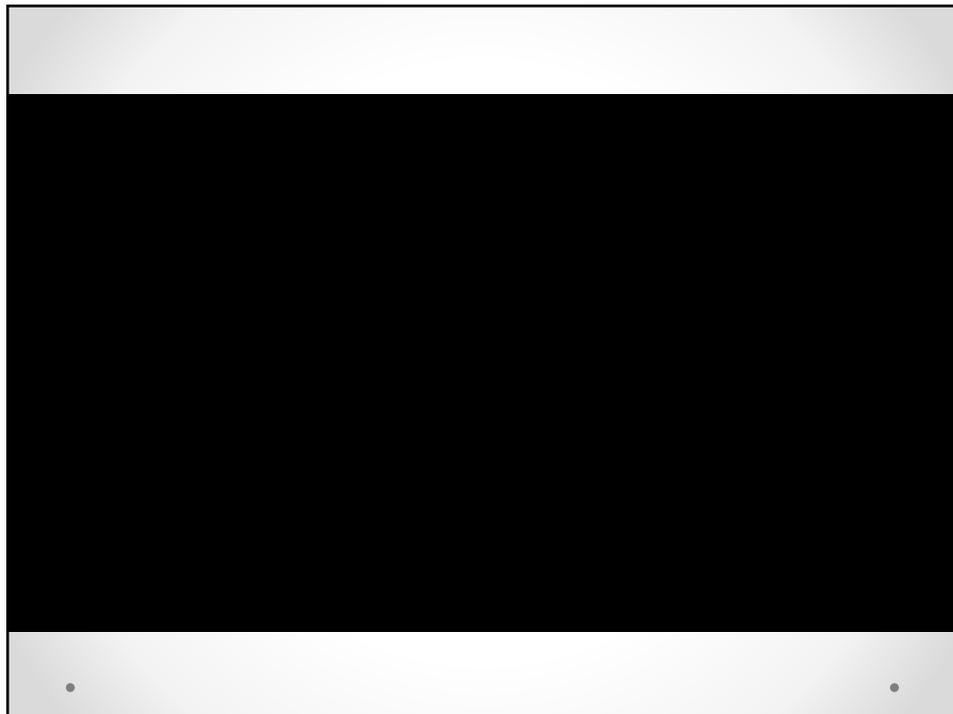
- For someone to understand us, their mind and heart have to work together
- Alda describes it as the heart – empathy –and the head – Theory of Mind
- 80's/90's scientific experiments: Neurons fired in the brain of a monkey when he saw another monkey grasp something (mirror neurons still being debated)
- When you grasp a cup, I get insight into what you're going to do next
- It relates to emotions too – a smile, a frown, we internalize the emotion

## The Heart and the Head

- Adults tend to think everyone has private thoughts different from ours.
- Children below 4/5 believe what they knew was known by everyone else – the cookie example
- As Theory of Mind develops in children they learn you have to know what is going on inside the heads of others
- They begin to put together clues – facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, words to read the minds of others
- We do that too without even thinking about it

## Your group assignment

- In video, make notes of detailed reactions of individuals – hands, voice, eyes, posture, etc.
- In your groups discuss and write down:
  - Your observations of reactions
  - If your team felt the emotion of the individuals, how did that exhibit itself?
  - What other factors led to your reaction?



## How Does This Impact Your Work?

- People want to be understood
- Focusing with your whole self can help create that understanding
- It's not just the job of the person listening to understand, it's the job of the person communicating
- We can use mirror feelings to create a bond of understanding and support
- Feeling understood and valued helps create fulfillment

## The Mirror Exercise

## The Mirror Exercise

- Find a partner and stand facing each other about a foot apart
- Select one person to be the leader
- Move only from waist up making simple movements or gestures
- Your partner will mirror / duplicate your exact movements (if she raises right hand, you raise left)
- Move slowly with smooth, continuous movements
- Maintain eye contact versus looking at hands
- The goal is for no one to be able to tell who is the leader and who is the follower

## Finding Verbal Sync

- Sit in a chair facing your partner
- Instead of mirroring movements you will be mirroring speech.
- Tell what you did to start the day – saying the exact same thing at the same moment
- Slow down, watch the other person's eyes, lips, body
- Try to pick up signals of what the other person might say next and say it with them

## The Value of Being In Sync

- It helps you connect to the other person
- It focuses you on truly relating
- When you learn to soak up clues from others, you become a better communicator
- Stanford's study in marching in step and shouting cadences
  - They found synchronous marching strengthens cohesion and promotes cooperation.
  - The simple act of marching in step produced greater cooperation
- Similar studies found even tapping in sync produced the same results (7, 1, 1)

CUPS

## Getting In Sync With Your Audience

- Connecting to your audience
- Understand what's in it for them (not you!)
- Avoid jargon
- Understand their frame of you and your organization
- Create your own frame by relating effectively
- Use value words – respect, transparent, open, caring, honest, forthright, etc.
- Learn to think with empathy in mind
- Use storytelling and commonality to connect

## Your Group Assignment

You are the parks director for Scottsdale, AZ. You are holding a community meeting at a recreation center to discuss a new fee you have implemented for the skateboard park of \$1 for a drop in, or \$26 for six months to help pay for a gated monitoring system.

After watching the video in a minute, work as a group to write your starting comments to the parents and skateboarders at the meeting.

Review your words looking for empathy and ask what's the most important thing my audience wants to know



## Putting It All to Work

- Becoming good at empathy and relating takes ongoing work and practice
- Poet Samuel Beckett: "Try again. Fail again. Fail better."
- Every conversation, sharing advice, or writing a letter can be an exchange where the other person might have a better way of looking at things and gives us the opportunity to be in sync with them
- It's not a formula, it's about transforming yourself (like going to the gym but more fun!)
- The greatest reward is when you know you've truly connected

Thank you  
for serving our communities and  
working to be a more  
effective communicator



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