

# EVE Leadership Program Shanghai, November 2016

## Leaders in Conflict as the Eye of the Storm

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**Master of Arts in Conflict and Coexistence**

Brandeis University  
**The Heller School** FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

**PROGRAM ON NEGOTIATION**

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL





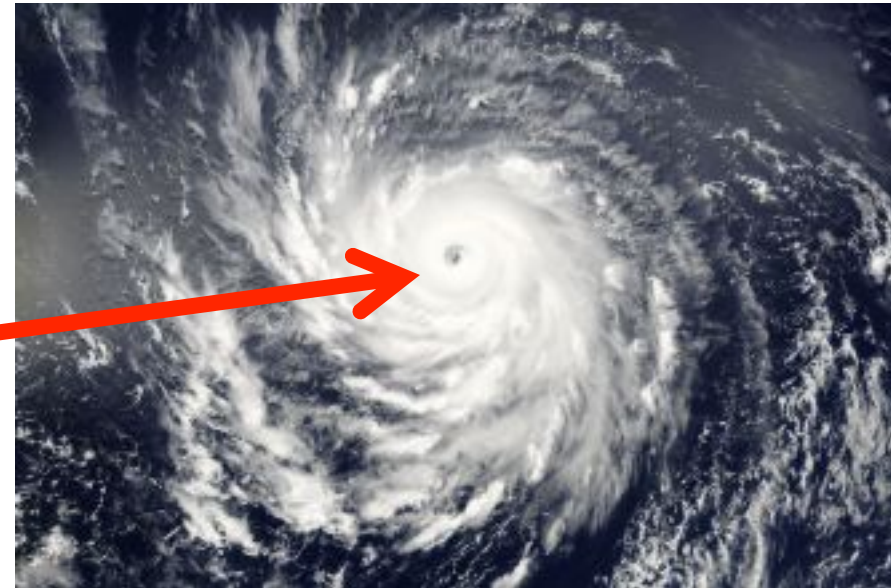
FAITES LA PAIX

# How to be a leader in conflict situations?

- **Eye of a storm** = “The region at the center of a hurricane about which the winds rotate, but which itself is relatively calm”
- **Note:** Figuratively, the eye of a hurricane is the quiet center of a dispute or controversy.”

The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition. © 2005 by Houghton Mifflin Company

Let us look at leaders in a dispute, who must work there...



Eye of Winter Storm Nemo, 2013

# PLAN

## 1. The Eye in the Storm?

- Step Back → A Double Shift: “E<sup>2</sup>”

## 2. Seeing in the Storm?

- Accompanying the double shift
- Detect emotions ... early ... accurately



A satellite-style aerial photograph of a hurricane, showing a distinct white eye in the center surrounded by dense, swirling white clouds over a dark ocean surface.

# **PART I: THE EYE IN THE STORM?**

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# ***Fundamental Advice:*** **(1) Step Back**

- **In the middle of a storm,**
  - **Do not react, do not speak**
- **Rather, your first move is to...**
  - **SHIFT TO EMPATHY**
  - **Listen purposefully**
  - **Decide to be all ears**
  - **Receive what they say**
  - **Become the calm center of attention**



# ***Fundamental Advice:***

## **(2) Improve Listening Skills**

- Enhance verbal understanding
  - Consider different listening styles:
    - Distracted
    - Unemotional
    - Reactive
    - Benevolent
- +



# ***Fundamental Advice:***

## **(3) Practice Active Listening**

- **Do not assume verbal understanding**
  - Check understanding
  - Go the extra mile to ensure you get what the other says
  - Demonstrate understanding
- **Restate what you hear: “loop”**
  - Facts
  - Opinions
- **Inquire about the storm: be curious, explore**
- **Get other’s validation and close active listening**





**Do not simply listen through your head**

**Listen through your heart**



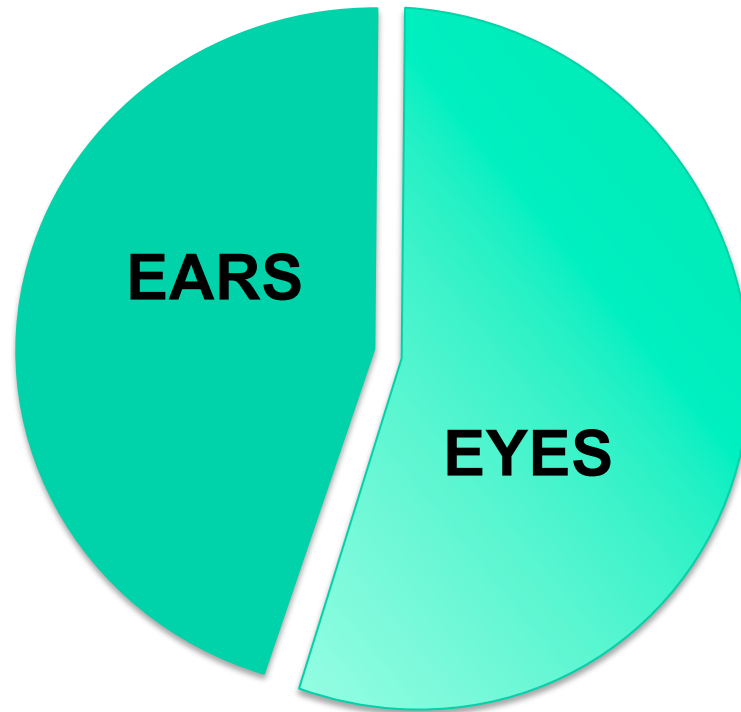
# ***Advanced Advice:***

## **(1) Step Back Mindfully**

- **In a storm, step back:**
  - Be totally there
  - Shift to **full empathy**: let the winds rotate around you
  - Pay attention to **all the signals** people send to you: including what they say **beyond words**
- **Decide to perceive more broadly:**
  - Mobilize **more than one sense**
  - At least: **listen & look** ( $L^2$ , Houston & Alii, 2013)
  - Be all eyes and ears ( $E^2$ )



$$E^2 \rightarrow L^2$$



# *Advanced Advice:*

## **(2) Improve Perceiving Skills**

- Enhance NON verbal understanding
  - A party to a conflict is more than words
  - You as a leader or mediator are more than ears
- Explore the forest beyond the tree:
  - Facts
  - Opinions
  - But also **Emotions**
- **Humans communicate most emotions  
NON VERBALLY**



# Why Do Emotions Matter?

“Emotions are a process,  
a particular kind of **automatic** appraisal  
influenced by our evolutionary and personal past,  
in which we sense that something **important**  
to our welfare is occurring”

**PAUL EKMAN**  
***EMOTIONS REVEALED:  
RECOGNIZING FACE AND FEELINGS  
TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND EMOTIONAL LIFE***  
**2003, P. 13**



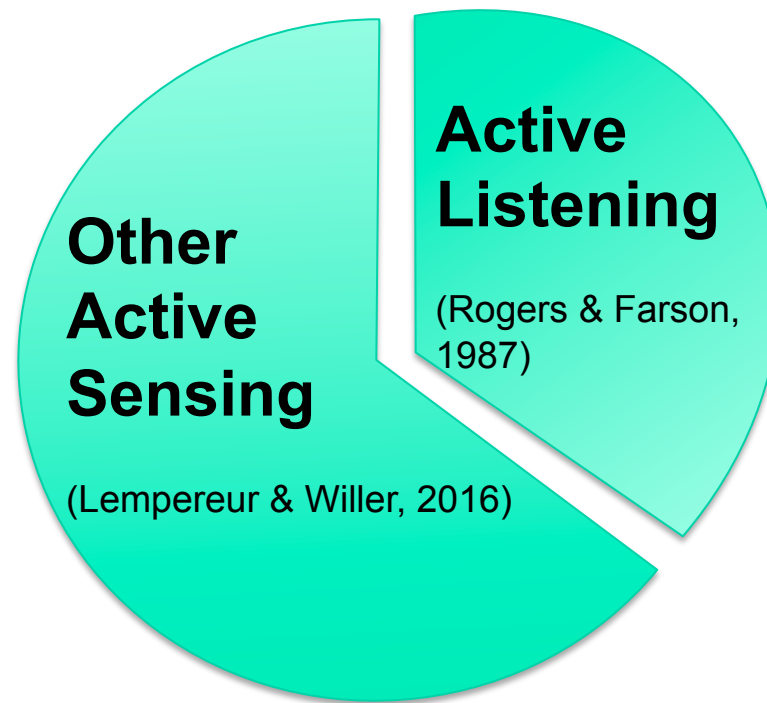
# ***Advanced Advice:***

## **(3) Practice Active Perceiving**

- Add **NON verbal communication** to your perception repertoire
  - “7% rule” (Mehrabian)
- Go the “extra mile” in restating all you perceive
- Practice active perceiving or sensing
  - Develop your capacity to grasp more stimuli
  - Make hypotheses, not assumptions
  - Test your hypotheses



# Active Perceiving: A Complimentary Approach



# Potential Benefits of Active Perceiving/Sensing

- Access **deeper motivations**, underlying interests
- **Hypothesize** what people transmit beyond words
- Increase **emotional awareness** and **primal leadership** (Goleman, 2005)
- Grow your **EQ** and not simply your **IQ**
  - Do not simply rely on logical and verbal intelligence (IQ)
  - Encourage other **forms of intelligence**, like intra- and inter-personal intelligence (Gardner, 2006)
- Strengthen **connection** between mediator/leader and parties







**PART II:  
SEE IN  
THE STORM?**

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# How to Support Active Sensing / Perceiving?

## *Address 3 Challenges about Emotions*

- 1. Lack of detection**
- 2. Late detection**
- 3. Incorrect identification**

## *Pursue 3 Goals in Active Perception*

- 1. Detect emotions**
- 2. Detect them early**
- 3. Detect them accurately**



# Goal #1: Detect Emotions through the Non Verbal

- **Some emotions are universal** across cultures
  - They generate **physical and chemical reactions** that help us handle whatever has sparked the emotions
  - They are revealed **through many non verbal cues**: facial expression, body gesture, tone of the voice, etc.
- **Display rules** are different across cultures
- **Practice** helps get better at detecting emotions
  - Stronger emotions are easier to detect
  - **Macro-expressions** easier than **Micro-expressions**



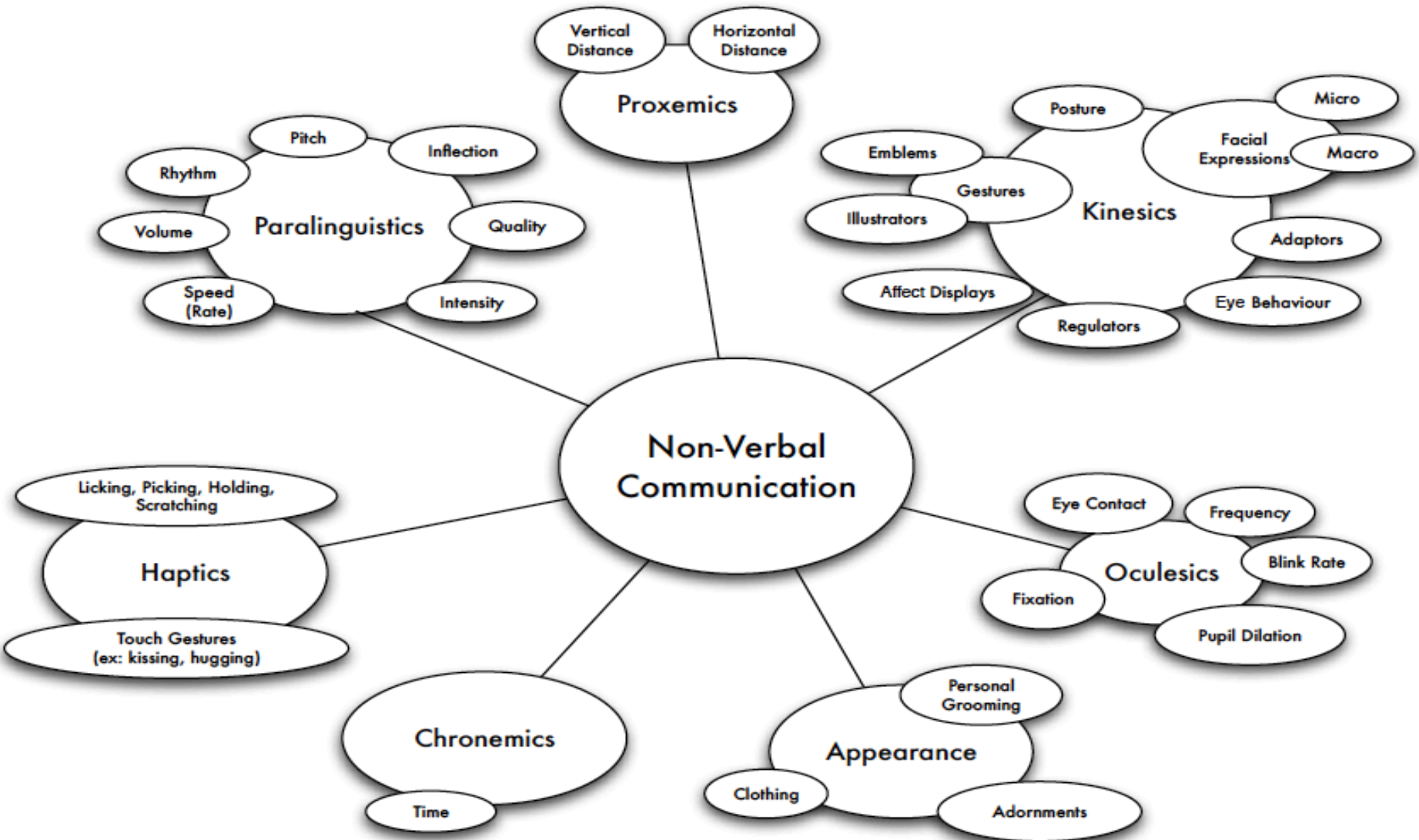
# WHAT TO LOOK FOR?



# Be Aware of the 7 Subfields of Nonverbal Communication

- 1) *Components of speech* that modify the meaning of words  
→ **Para-linguistics**
- 2) *Spatial* separation between individuals and how it relates to environmental and cultural factors  
→ **Proxemics**
- 3) *Movement*, gestures, stance, posture to communicate with others  
→ **Kinesics**
- 4) *Eye* behavior  
→ **Oculesics**
- 5) *Physical appearance* & surrounding environment → **Appearance**
- 6) Study of *time* & how we relate to time  
→ **Chronemics**
- 7) Communication through *touch*  
→ **Haptics**

# Map Non Verbal Communication



# Goal #2: Detect emotions early

## Get the different layers/levels of emotions in a timely manner

- Not only **patent** displays
  - Clear, evident expressions of emotion that are easy to spot (ex: pounding fists and yelling)
- But also **latent** displays
  - Subtle/hidden/soft expressions of emotion (before outbursts)

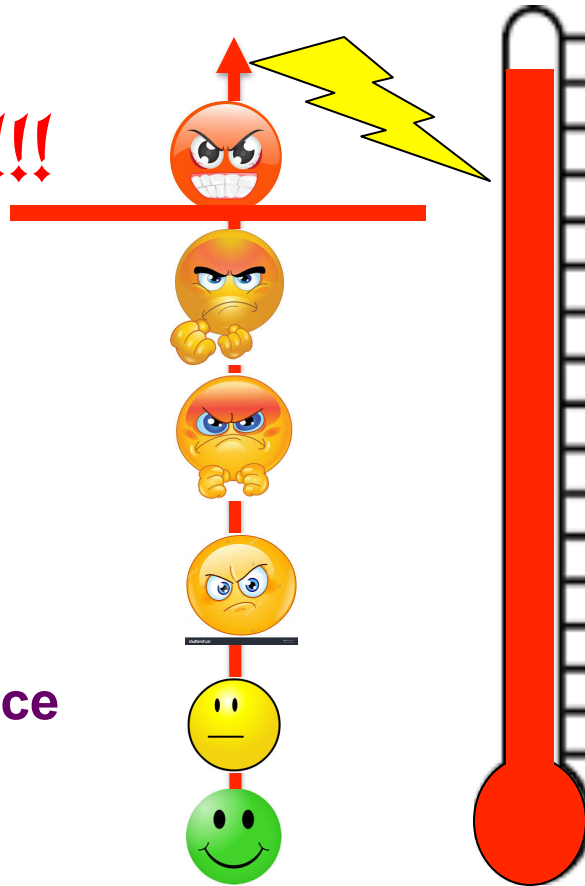


# Grasp the Timeline of Emotions

Too late!!!!

Too late?

Note the presence  
of emotion here



Rage

Anger

Frustration

Upset

Discomfort



# Goal #3: Detect Emotions Accurately

- **Learn to decipher the “right” emotions**
  - Learn to identify universal **expressions of emotions**
  - Some emotions are harder to **distinguish**
    - Anger or contempt
    - Surprise or fear
    - Mixed emotions
  - We try to mask emotions, but we leak them through **micro-expression**
- **Practice** helps get better at it
  - **Macrofacial expressions** are easier to spot
  - **Microfacial expressions** are harder to identify



# Advantages of Spotting Emotions Early *and* Accurately?

**It expands my options as mediator/leader:**

- Put people first, separate people from problems
- Perceive / recognize people in their complexity
- Acknowledge emotions in a timely fashion, rather than “too” late
- Face the **paradox of emotions**: we need more *or* less emotions

**Let us have MORE:  
CATALYST OF EMOTIONS**

Bring emotions to the surface

Get the real stuff out, let us have it

Make / test hypotheses

Understand underlying motivations

**Let us have LESS:  
MITIGATOR OF EMOTIONS**

Prevent emotional outbursts

Not let situation get out of hands

Mitigate risks of escalation

Suggest separate meeting (caucus)

**→ SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP**



# \*HUMILITY\*

## ⚠️⚠️ Proceed with Caution... ⚠️⚠️

- Learning the nonverbal = learning a new language
- We make many mistakes at the beginning
- Continuous inquiry and feedback remain necessary to test hypotheses and question assumptions

*Knowing better what someone is feeling  
does NOT mean knowing what they are thinking!*



# SUMMARY: LEADERS/MEDIATORS AS THE EYE OF A STORM

## First Shift in Conflict: OPEN YOUR EARS

1. Step back and do not react
2. Improve listening skills (verbal)
3. Practice **active listening**

## Second Shift in Conflict: OPEN YOUR EYES

1. Step back mindfully
2. Improve perceiving skills (non verbal)
3. Practice **active perceiving**

## Third Shift in Conflict: ... TO EMOTIONS

1. Detect emotions
2. Early
3. Accurately

# Thanks for listening ... and looking

