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How to Read a Person Like a Book

Gerard I. Nierenberg

and Henry H. Calero

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GERARD I. NIERENBERG, Esq., whom *Forbes* dubbed "The Father of Negotiating Training" and *The Wall Street Journal* referred to as one of the "Eight Wise Men," has written over 20 books — translated into 28 languages — about negotiation and improving interpersonal skills. In 1968, he wrote the first book in the previously undeveloped and little-known field of negotiation, *The Art of Negotiating*. He went on to author *Creative Business Negotiating* and the multimillion-bestseller, *How To Read a Person Like a Book*. In 1973, Gerard completed a guide to a communication phenomenon so original that he had to coin a new word to describe it — *Meta-Talk: The Hidden Meanings in our Conversation*.

In addition to his successful pursuits as a lawyer and an author, Gerard Nierenberg is also one of America's most highly acclaimed speakers and seminar leaders. His seminar, *The Art of Negotiating*®, is one of the longest continuously running and most widely attended professional seminars of all time, with 350,000 attendees to date.

MR. CALERO is a former president of C-M Associates management consulting firm, which conducted executive seminars on negotiations worldwide for 30 years. He is also a former chairman of the board of Metapro Inc., a company marketing supporting equipment. He has authored or co-authored five books on management, negotiations, and communications, including *How To Read A Person Like A Book* and *The*

Human Side of Negotiations. At present he is working on a fictional novel about baseball. He currently resides in Redwood Shores, California, on the San Francisco Bay.

Repacked by Le Hong Tam

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ACQUIRING THE SKILLS FOR

CHAPTER 1

ACQUIRING THE SKILLS FOR READING GESTURES

"Learning is acquired by reading books, but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various editions of them."

— Lord Chesterfield, "Letters to His Son"

AN airport is an excellent spot for viewing the entire human emotional spectrum. As travelers arrive and depart, you can see the woman who is very apprehensive about flying pinching the fleshy part of her hand for reassurance, as if she were saying to herself, "It's going to be all right." In the same manner people say, "I had to pinch myself to make sure that it wasn't a dream." A male waiting for departure time may also be unsure about flying. However, he is sitting in a rigid, upright position with his ankles locked. His hands are clenched together, making one big fist, while he rhythmically massages one thumb against the other on top of his interlocked hands. These gestures indicate a nervous attitude.

Walking away from the departure area, you see three men in telephone booths. One of them (Figure 1) is standing with his body at attention. His coat is buttoned. He gives the impression that whoever he is talking to is very important to him. He might be a salesman talking to a customer on the telephone as if he were actually in his presence.

The second caller's body is relaxed (Figure 2). He slouches over, shifts his weight from foot to foot, and rests his chin on his chest. He appears to be looking at the floor and nods his head as if saying, "Yeah, yeah." Reading this person further, you get the impression that he is comfortable but possibly bored with the conversation and attempting to hide the fact. The receiver of the call can be taken for granted. It is probably his wife or an old friend.

From these clues, can you visualize how a third caller might look as he talks to his girlfriend? This caller's face is hidden. His hunched shoulder may be concealing it from view or his body may be completely turned away from passers-by. His head is probably tilted to one side, and he handles the phone as if it were the object of his affection (Figure 3).