

WHAT EVERY BODY IS SAYING

An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide
to Speed-Reading People



JOE NAVARRO

with Marvin Karlins, Ph.D.

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 HarperCollins e-books



WHAT EVERY

BODY

I S S A Y I N G

**An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide
to Speed-Reading People**

J O E N A V A R R O

FBI Special Agent (Ret.)

with Marvin Karlins, Ph.D.

To my grandmother, Adelina, whose withered
hands lovingly molded a child into a man.

— **J O E N A V A R R O**

To my wife, Edyth, who has blessed me with her love and taught me what it
means to be a caring human being.

— **M A R V I N K A R L I N S**

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FOREWORD

I See What

You're Thinking

Marvin Karlins, Ph.D.

The man sat stoically at one end of the table, carefully crafting his replies to the FBI agent's inquiries. He wasn't considered a major suspect in the murder case. His alibi was believable and he sounded sincere, but the agent pressed on nevertheless. With the suspect's consent, he was asked a series of questions about the murder weapon:

"If you had committed this crime, would you have used a gun?"

"If you had committed this crime, would you have used a knife?"

"If you had committed this crime, would you have used an ice pick?"

"If you had committed this crime, would you have used a hammer?"

One of the weapons, the ice pick, had actually been used in the commission of the crime, but that information had been kept from the public. Thus, only the killer would know which object was the real murder weapon. As the FBI agent went down the list of weapons, he vii

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observed the suspect carefully. When the ice pick was mentioned, the man's eyelids came down hard and stayed down until the next weapon was named. The agent instantly understood the significance of the eyelid behavior he had witnessed, and from that moment forward the

“minor” suspect became the primary person of interest in the investigation. He later confessed to the crime.

Chalk one up for Joe Navarro, a remarkable human being who, in addition to unmasking the ice-pick killer, is credited with catching scores of criminals, including “master spies,” in a distinguished twenty-five-year career with the FBI. How was he able to do this? If you asked him, he quietly would say, “I owe it to being able to read people.”

Joe, it turns out, has spent his entire professional life studying, refining, and applying the science of nonverbal communications—facial expressions, gestures, physical movements (kinesics), body distance (proxemics), touching (haptics), posture, even clothing—to decipher what people are thinking, how they intend to act, and whether their pronouncements are true or false. This is *not* good news for criminals, terrorists, and spies, who, under his careful scrutiny, usually give off more than enough nonverbal body signals (“tells”) to make their thoughts and intentions transparent and detectable.

It is, however, very good news for you, the reader, because the very same nonverbal knowledge Joe relied on to become a master “Spycatcher,”

“human lie detector,” and instructor at the FBI is what he will be sharing with you so you can better understand the feelings, thoughts, and intentions of those around you. As a renowned author and educator, Joe will teach you how to observe like an expert, detecting and deciphering the nonverbal behaviors of others so you can interact with them more successfully. For business or for pleasure, this knowledge will enrich and magnify your life.

Much of what Joe will be sharing with you in this book was not even recognized fifteen years ago by the scientific community. It is only through recent advances in brain-scan technology and neural imaging that scientists have been able to establish the validity of the behaviors Joe will be

describing. Drawing from the latest discoveries in psychology, F O R E W O
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neurobiology, medicine, sociology, criminology, communication studies, and anthropology—plus his quarter century of experience using nonverbal behavior in his work as an FBI Special Agent—Joe is uniquely qualified to help you succeed in your understanding of nonverbal communications. His expertise is recognized and sought worldwide. Besides being interviewed regularly on programs such as NBC's *Today Show*, *CNN Headline News*, *Fox Cable News*, and ABC's *Good Morning America*, he continues to conduct seminars on nonverbal communication for the FBI and the CIA, as well as for other members of the intelligence community. He is a consultant to the banking and insurance industries as well as to major law firms in the United States and abroad. Joe also teaches at Saint Leo University and at various medical schools throughout the United States, where his unique insights into nonverbal communication have found a receptive audience among many, including physicians desiring to assess patients with greater speed and accuracy.

Joe's combination of academic skills and occupational credentials—coupled with his masterful analysis of nonverbal communications in real-life, high-stakes situations—has placed him apart and in the forefront of nonverbal expertise, as you will discover in this book.

After working with Joe, attending his seminars, and putting his ideas to work in my own life, I firmly believe that the material in these pages represents a major advance in our understanding of all things nonverbal.

I say this as a trained psychologist who got involved in this writing project because I was excited by Joe's pioneering work in harnessing the *scientific* knowledge of nonverbal communications to achieve professional objectives and personal success.

I was also impressed by his reasoned, careful approach to the topic.

For example, while observing nonverbals allows us to get an “accurate read” on many kinds of behavior, Joe warns us that using body language to detect deception is a particularly difficult and challenging task. This is a significant insight—rarely recognized by laypeople or by the law enforcement community—and serves as a critical and poignant reminder to be *very* careful before you declare a person to be honest or dishonest based on his nonverbal behaviors.

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Unlike many other books on nonverbal behavior, the information presented herein is based on scientific facts and field-tested findings rather than on personal opinion and armchair speculations. Further, the text highlights what other published works often ignore: the critical role played by the *limbic system* of the human brain in understanding and using nonverbal cues effectively.

The silent language of the body can be yours to master. Whether you are studying nonverbals because you want to get ahead in your job or simply want to get along better with friends and family, this book is designed for you. Gaining proficiency will require a careful examination of the chapters that follow, plus a commitment to spend some serious time and energy learning and applying Joe’s teachings in your daily routines.

Reading people successfully—learning, decoding, and utilizing nonverbal behavior to predict human actions—is a task well worth your attention, one that offers ample rewards for the effort expended. So plant your feet firmly on the floor, turn to the next page, and get ready to learn and watch for those all-important nonverbal behaviors that Joe will be teaching you. It won’t be long before you discover, with just a glance, what every *body* is saying.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I started writing the early drafts of this book, I realized that this project had been long in the making. It did not start with my interest in