

a counsellor, the counsellor should take the initiative to welcome the clients warmly, without being affected too much in his manners. A natural way of greeting that is expressive of genuineness and concern is called for. Clients feel either encouraged or put out depending upon the tone of interaction during the first five minutes or so. Every culture has its own ceremony of receiving a guest. That ceremony which is appropriate to your culture cannot be dispensed with in receiving a client.<sup>4</sup>

In welcoming, you shake hands with the person whom you are meeting. Here who extends the hand first is significant. The person who is pleased with the arrival of another person is happy to extend his hand to shake hands with the newcomer. Therefore it will always give the feeling of being wanted for the client if you take the initiative to extend your hand and gently shake hands with her.

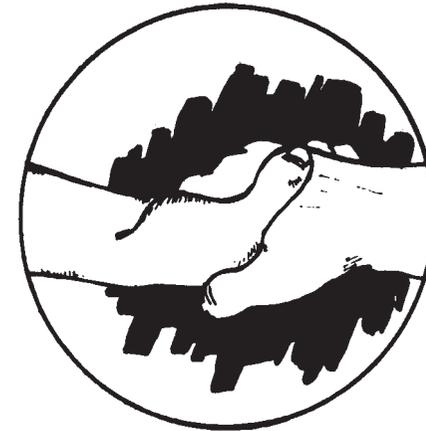
There are different styles in shaking hands. They are unconsciously purposeful. A man of dominant character, or at least the one who wants to dominate the other, places his palm over the palm of the other thus indicating that he wants to take control of the situation (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1**

*Wants to take control of the situation*

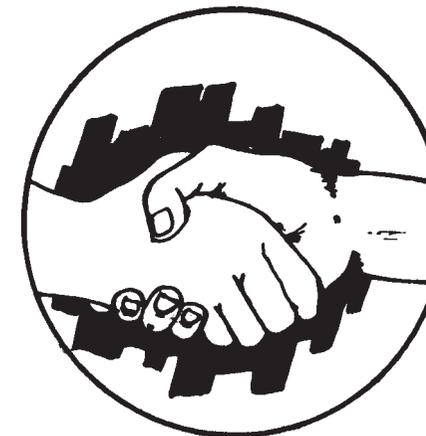
The one whose hand is down, palm looking upward, is submissive and he gives the control to the other dominant person (**Figure 2**).



**Figure 2**

*Submissive*

A partnership handshake with respect and rapport will be a vice-like handshake with both palms remaining in the vertical position (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 3**

*Partnership Handshake*

With your clients we do not expect that you dominate nor should you be submissive but deal with respect as a partner or collaborator. Then you have the politician's handshake which is otherwise called glove handshake, that is just holding the right hand of the other with both the hands (**Figure 4**).



**Figure 4**

*Glove Handshake*

*Politician's Handshake*

*Wants to give the impression : Honest, trustworthy & affectionate*

The one doing it wants to give the impression that he is honest and trustworthy and affectionate. But to do that with a stranger at the first instance may be misunderstood. Perhaps with a very well known person, this gesture will be understood but not with strangers. If you are meeting a client for the first time it may not be advisable to use a glove handshake. In counsellor training sessions I make the participants become aware of the type of handshake they use. A few of them in spite of the awareness brought about on their behaviour give a dead-fish handshake (**Figure 5**).



**Figure 5**

*Dead-fish Handshake*

*Weak character, can be easily manipulated*

It is understood that the people who give a dead-fish handshake show a weak character and can easily be manipulated. There are people who squeeze the fingers in such a way that the knuckles crack (**Figure 6**).



**Figure 6**

*Knuckles Cracking*

*Aggressive Person*

It is the characteristic handshake of an aggressive person. When either you give only the tips of your fingers, or others give the tips of their fingers, the message is one of non-confidence; when you grab only the fingertips of the other you show lack of confidence in yourself; and when others hold your fingertips only, they are lacking in self-confidence. One who gives only his finger tips besides lacking confidence in himself wants to keep the other at a comfortable spatial distance (**Figure 7**).



**Figure 7**

*Giving the tips of the fingers*

*Non-confidence, keeps the other at a comfortable spatial distance*

The right orientation to handshake could be holding it warmly without being too cold or too aggressive with sufficient interlocking of the palms instead of the fingertips. To show depth of feeling towards the other, sincerity and trust, people use double handed handshake. While holding the hand of the other with your right hand, you hold with your left hand the wrist or elbow or upper arm or shoulder of the other (**Figure 8**).



**Figure 8**

*Double handshake*

This type can be misunderstood like the glove handshake and hence it is advisable to use only when you are on intimate terms with the client and also when you perceive that such an ostentation of feeling is welcomed by the client.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. PROVIDING PRIVACY

It is imperative on the part of the counsellor to provide privacy for the client to speak freely without the fear of being overheard by others. Privacy is also desired for the sake of emoting, especially weeping. In a college set up I was called by the principal to counsel a girl in the presence of the principal herself. When I proposed that the girl could talk to me privately, the girl herself protested and wanted the principal with her. Anyway a little while elapsed and nothing significant was spoken of. Then all of a sudden the principal had a phone call for which she had to leave us. It was at that time the girl burst into tears telling me that though she had every affluence she was an orphan adopted by the foster parents who are known to the principal as the real parents. The whole problem

of the girl was with that issue. Then I kept the principal away and continued the counselling. May be due to the delicacy of the relationship, the clients may not openly demand privacy from the third party that accompanies them. But the counsellor should normally see that the clients are provided privacy.

### 3. 'SMALL TALK'

Balu was a graduate student. His life seemed to be in a mess and so he sought a counsellor. The counsellor did welcome him warmly and asked him to be seated. No sooner was he seated than he asked him to share his deep concerns, and being taken aback he started to share some peripheral problems till the end of the session and came out nonplussed. The counsellor behaved well at the initial moments but later perhaps he was too sudden to ask the counsellee to speak about his problem. Of course the clients come only to speak about their problems and find solutions, but they need to calm down and get composed before they could delve deep into their problems. Therefore counselling psychologists recommend that we engage the clients after welcoming in some neutral type of conversations only, to ease the fear and anxiety that is written large on the faces of the clients. It could be in the form of enquiring about the weather or the current events that are spoken of or any topic of some interest, topics that are non-threatening.<sup>6</sup>

### 4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Stella was in her late thirties working as a lecturer in a college staying in the college hostel. Suddenly she was unusually depressed and every effort by the hostel warden to help her proved futile. So she was referred to the college counsellor who met Stella in her office. Stella would break down with tears and would almost want to talk but would hold back as though someone was blocking her. The counsellor was a very understanding lady and

she had been quite welcoming and in a way tried to strike a conversation. Yet nothing vital transpired between the counsellor and the counsellee. Later Stella confided to one of her friends that she was afraid whether the counsellor would keep the matter shared confidential. This is an aspect which unwittingly counsellors take for granted. In an official setting and even otherwise when someone comes to confide in you, it becomes highly imperative to let the client know that you would keep everything secret and assure her that you would if at all needed to speak anything about the issues shared, to the persons who referred her to you, do so only with her consent and permission. One of the ways to deal with when people ask you a report of the counsellee is not to take up such a commitment and instead tell the person in charge that you will instruct the client to let him know what had happened between the counsellor and the counsellee. This method safeguards the absolute secrecy of the concern shared. Or you could get the consent and permission of the client to talk about whatever is necessary for her own good to the person concerned and rehearse the matter you would talk, to the client and get it edited by her.<sup>7</sup>

### 5. TIME LIMIT

One of my colleagues met a client by name Haniffa. As he was busy with other commitments he referred Haniffa to a junior staff to counsel him. The counselling was going on very well. They spent an hour and fifteen minutes together, indeed a tiresome session. When Haniffa was at the height of pouring out his feelings, the junior staff was reminded of an appointment he had already made with someone else, and so he abruptly informed Haniffa of it and wound up the session to the great dismay of Haniffa. The counsellor right at the beginning failed to inform the client how much time

was at their disposal which would have saved them from the embarrassing situation. Perhaps the counsellor thought that the session would get over by an hour but by chance things dragged on and the session got lengthened. It is the duty of the counsellor to speak about the time limit in which case the client herself will adjust her interview so that she is able to come to a conclusion on time.<sup>8</sup>

## 6. PREVIOUS COUNSELLING

Puspha was an intelligent lady who went to meet a counsellor. Her problem was not being able to bear people being happy. She would be upset and annoyed at people who laugh and enjoy life. The counsellor himself was an expert in dealing with difficult cases. As usual he tried various types of therapies and at the end he became aware that he would not be able to facilitate this particular case. On enquiry at the end he realized that Puspha had been to a number of counsellors and had dealt with this problem but to no avail. Only then did it dawn on him that Puspha's case was a chronic type and it would be better for her to get help from a psychiatrist. The mistake of the counsellor was in not enquiring if the client had any previous counselling for the same problem. This would have saved the time and energy spent unnecessarily on the patient. If the client had had some counselling and undergone certain therapies for her particular problem under discussion, then that information would have been useful to the present counsellor to try other methods of dealing with the client instead of applying those techniques which proved ineffective for the client.<sup>9</sup>

## 7. INVITATION TO TALK

Durairaj was a good conversationalist. When he went for counselling, he was very exuberant to talk about a number of things which were of interest both to the counsellor and himself. After a long time when the

counsellor announced that the time was up, he got perplexed for he had not yet spoken of his problem. The client may go on talking unrelated things or may keep mum and in either case the counsellor, after the initial talk to calm down the client, can invite her to speak about the problem. Some clients specially wait for a signal or the permission from the counsellor to talk about their problems.<sup>10</sup>

What I have spoken so far is being referred to as 'Initial Structuring.'<sup>11</sup> The objective of the initial structuring as a preparation for the oncoming counselling is to facilitate the process of counselling. Here we find two aspects: one is person-oriented in the sense that it aims at establishing a therapeutic relationship of caring concern with the client, and the other is task-oriented formalities that will reduce wasting of time and energy and help both the counsellor and the counsellee to move forward in a focused way. It is also possible that when you give the permission to talk, the client keeps silent. Here you need a certain knack to elicit a response from the client. If the client is confused as to where to begin you could gently ask her to say whatever comes to her mind. You could also make a statement telling that it is difficult to begin, or simply make statements about what you observe, like telling her that she seems sad or depressed. You could also draw her attention to the obvious fact of what is going on in her mind. These techniques might trigger off and the client might start talking. Perhaps your initial structuring could be like the following: Karuna, I am happy that you have come to speak to me, and whatever you speak to me is confidential. Now we have forty-five minutes together and what would you care to share with me?

While asking the client to speak about the problem the counsellor could be careful in the choice of words he makes. For example, asking a client straight, 'Tell me

what is your problem?' might be too frightening for a client, since it is a direct question which is personalized. Though clients come to deal with their problems, they may not be very happy to hear the word 'problem.' Therefore you could ask the client like 'What is that you would like to share with me?' or 'What are your concerns that you would like to work on in this session?' These kinds of invitations keep the problems non-personalized, and so the client may not feel threatened.<sup>12</sup>

In the first stage what you are using, whether knowingly or unknowingly, are what we call 'social skills,' which comprise a number of other specific skills like saying 'Good Morning' or 'Good Evening' and introducing your name in a simple understandable way like 'I am George, a full time counsellor at Anugraha Institute and I am happy to meet you; then you have 'politeness skills' like 'Thank you' 'Please' 'Excuse me' 'Pardon me' 'Would you mind' and the like; and there come kindness skills like offering a chair, showing the way, giving a glass of water, enquiring about the health and the like.<sup>13</sup> So far we saw the skills of the counsellor in the first stage and now let us turn to the task of the counsellee in the same stage.

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## ASSOCIATING

Our main line of search is to know what makes for a successful counselling and what the counsellor and the counsellee ought to contribute towards the success of the session. In the preceding pages we have spelled out the skills of the counsellor. I am particularly interested in knowing what the counsellee ought to do so that the efforts of the counsellor are fruitful. Hence in the following pages we are going to concentrate on the task of the counsellee.

### 1. WILLINGNESS

One thing stands out rather prominently which a counselling psychologist cannot overlook. Counselling cannot be forced; it can only be offered. No forced counselling will be a successful one. This is almost a fundamental principle regarding the client. Clients' goodwill is absolutely essential so that the desired goal is achieved. Some counsellors make great attempts to convince the clients of the need for counselling and try to do their best, but the unwillingness of the client sabotages the whole effort of the counsellor.

In a way the willingness of the counsellee comes prior to the initiatives of the counsellor. We had seen in the foregone pages that it is the counsellor who takes the initiative to welcome the client, make her feel at home and invite her to share her concern. In fact the client should have come already motivated and be willing to cooperate with the initiatives of the counsellor, at least by associating with the counsellor in whatever way she could. Some counsellors are over-confident to the extent that they begin to believe that by their influence they could help even an unwilling client. I do not deny the

social influence of the counsellor and the indirect pressure that can be put on the client without her ever knowing it. Some counsellors by their clever manoeuvring are able to make the client want counselling. In this case it is no more forced than wanted, though that willingness was brought about by the social influence of the counsellor.

Adrian Van Kaam has something very noble to say about the free response of the counsellee without which the process of the counselling seems meaningless.

*The authentic counsellor wants to affirm the unique personality and the spontaneous initiative of his counsellee; he wants him to grow in his own independent being. But this desire can bear fruit only when the counsellee ratifies my therapeutic attempt by his own consent to my desire for him. Therapeutic care does not want to force or to impose. What is more, as soon as the counsellor tries to overpower the counsellee, if only by suggestion, then his activity is no longer therapeutic care. Counselling can only become authentic by means of the free consent and cooperation of the other.*<sup>14</sup>

## 2. GREATER RESPONSIBILITY

In the introduction of the book, we have seen that counselling is a collaborative process, a two-way stimulation. If it is a collaborative process then the initiatives of the counsellor alone is not enough. The counsellor provides enough of stimulation towards the client's self-help. Finally it is the counsellee who achieves the goal she set, it is she who manages the problem, it is she who decides to live an enhanced life devoid of psychological games. It is more correct to say that the clients achieve their goals through the facilitation of the counsellor. The counsellors do not control the outcome of counselling. In fact, the one who is more responsible for the process, outcome and quality of counselling is the

client herself.<sup>15</sup> Her responsibility and cooperation start from the very start by her willingness, right through the process, decision making, and finally rests with her execution of the decisions she makes.

It is widely accepted that counselling will be in good shape because of the goodwill of the client. Take for example, clients with antisocial personality disorders who rarely cooperate with anybody and for that matter with any counsellor. It has been found that such clients profit from counselling to the extent they are willing to cooperate with the counsellor.<sup>16</sup> In our own lives we find that if we happen to want a thing we do get it; otherwise any amount of pressure from outside is not going to make us get it.

## 3. LAW OF INERTIA

The cause of unwillingness could be many, and they all come under one particular principle called law of inertia which states that a thing will rest until something moves it. In human behaviour this physical law can be seen in various forms.<sup>17</sup> The law of inertia is further reinforced by the psychological games the clients play. Dr. Eric Berne speaks of a number of psychological games clients play. They seem to be playing from three different positions or roles. There are in every society some 'persecutors' who nag and ill-treat others. There are also people who are always being persecuted and victimized and they are called 'victims.' Then there come some people who are on the look out for rescuing the victims from the persecutors. Thus there are three roles: the persecutor, the victim and the rescuer. All the three categories of people play their roles unconsciously. Here particularly with regard to the law of inertia, we find that the people who play the role of victim want to perpetuate their role as victims and hinder their own progress unconsciously. For example, the people who play the game of 'Poor Me' will not venture to improve their lot but will keep

complaining about everything that happens to them.<sup>18</sup> They are paralysed by inertia and will not take the necessary steps to get the help needed by way of approaching a counsellor or cooperate with him for their own good. Take another example of a person who plays the victim's game of 'if it were not for you.'<sup>19</sup> She would blame her family background and personal defects as reasons for not improving. These are a kind of passivity and learned helplessness that come in the way of the clients and prevent them from approaching a counsellor or to cooperate with him. The ugly faces of inertia are thus seen in numerous manifestations like passivity of not doing anything, learned helplessness thinking that one is incapable of improving a situation, disabling talk telling that one does not have the potency to manage one's life, and disorganization in which a person will keep her personal and social life in a mess and will not be able to figure out what she could do to ameliorate the circumstances.<sup>20</sup> Thus we find that inertia can be one of the major reasons why clients do not cooperate with the counsellors.

#### 4. FEAR OF CHANGE

Coupled with the law of inertia, we also find the fear of change<sup>21</sup> that prevents the clients from taking adequate steps. Though there is a desire for novelty deep down within us, we are also aware that we do not want any change. There was a devastating flood in 1977 along the riverbed of the Cauvery in Trichy and Srirangam, as a result of a cyclone. Many of the poor people, living in a cluster, lost their houses and property. When some of the voluntary agencies took up their cause and proposed a better place where they would not be affected by flood any more, and where there were plenty of job opportunities, the people simply refused to move, in spite of the new proposal being very appealing

intellectually. Though the new proposal promises a better living condition, the fear of a changed life style disturbed the people more than the abject poverty they were facing in the flood affected area.

Something similar happened in Bombay and Calcutta where slum dwellers were proposed with better dwelling places which were quite decent and neat. Before long they all returned to their original dwelling places in the slum because they could not tolerate change in their customary habits. In Andhra Pradesh some bonded labourers were freed by the Government, and after a few months they went back to their landlords begging to be taken back as bonded labourers. In the same way clients are afraid of a changed way of life because the new way is unfamiliar, or they have to make a number of adjustments, or simply they are accustomed to the old ways only.

The feelings of the clients apparently desiring a change, and unconsciously deep down fearing the change they ask for, are well brought out in subtle verses by Rabindranath Tagore in Gitanjali when he sings:

*The shroud that covers me is a shroud of dust and death; I hate it yet hug it in love. My debts are large, my failures great, my shame secret and heavy; yet when I come to ask for my good, I quake in fear lest my prayer be granted.*<sup>22</sup>

This is a pitiable state of some of the clients who are afraid of taking up the responsibility of changing their lives drastically, when they go for counselling or cooperate with the counsellor.

There are some categories of people who do not seem to benefit from counselling. Children, very old people and people whose intelligence is below average tend not to understand the dynamics of their interaction and are in a way unable to go along the counselling process, and

also later lack the guts to execute the decisions. In some sense they are unable to cooperate with the initiatives of the counsellor.

## 5. RELUCTANT CLIENT

Practically we can divide the clients into those who do not want to cooperate, and those who though willing cannot cooperate with the counsellor. They are the reluctant clients and resistant clients. Reluctant clients are those persons who do not want counselling at all for their own personal reason.<sup>23</sup> They are not self-referred but rather referred to by others. Mala aged 45 is a married woman. Her husband feels that she is in need of psychological help, and Mala too agrees to it but is unwilling to meet a counsellor, for the simple reason that an intense interaction in a counselling situation frightens her. Siva's case is quite different. He is suspicious of everyone and has great difficulty in trusting others. His lack of trust comes in the way of approaching a counsellor. Catherine is a cute girl doing her first year of graduation. Her problem is: she is very shy. She is not able to face an audience, and even individuals separately. Besides, to share her inmost thoughts and feelings with another person is something shameful for her. Thus her feeling of shame prevents her approaching a counsellor. Thus we find a number of reasons for the reluctance of the counsellee. At times the third party is interested in counselling. This happens mostly with the parents of teenagers. The parents are sure that things do not go well with their teen-age children and they want by all means that the children should get counselling, but unless the children themselves want counselling it is of no use coaxing them, for they usually do not oblige. Similarly we find persons sent from correction homes by the officials. Since they have to fulfil an obligation of meeting a counsellor, they come and for no other

reason. From such clients what could be expected except reluctance and indifference?

## 6. RESISTANT CLIENT

Another category is the resistant clients. They are persons who wanted counselling but later changed their mind and resist every attempt of the counsellor.<sup>24</sup> Resistance could be either conscious or unconscious. If resistance is conscious, it almost amounts to reluctance and it is hard to deal with, but if it is unconscious the counsellor can facilitate to remove the unconscious block and help them come up with the necessary cooperation.

## 7. 'COAX ME' GAME

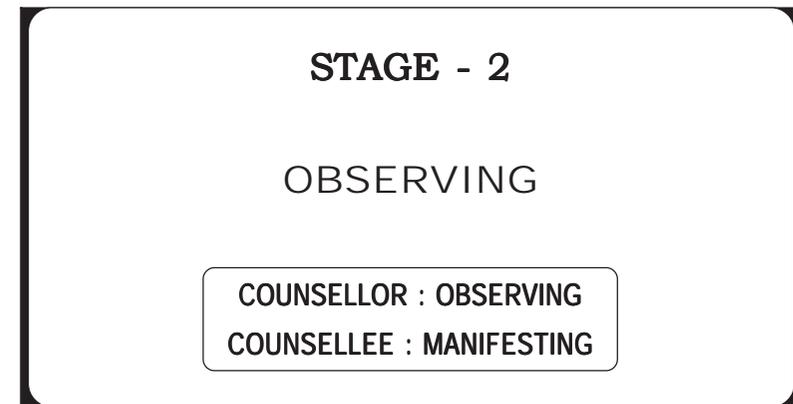
When speaking of reluctance and resistance, I am reminded of a psychological game which the clients might play with the counsellor. The game is 'coax me'<sup>25</sup> which is played from the role of a persecutor. According to the dynamics of this game, the person playing this game is intent on putting the other person down. In the context of counselling, the client unconsciously puts the counsellor off by declining every appeal from the counsellor. It might happen that a counsellor unaware of the game pattern may get hooked by the client and might be playing the complementary role to maintain the game pattern. The counsellor might have tried his level best to convince the client of the need for counselling at a particular phase of her development. The client might say that a particular need has to be met before counselling can be started. When that particular need is met, she might propose another need, and thus the person will go on placing many unreasonable demands and keeping the counsellor coaxing her, and finally the counsellor might get annoyed with the demands and leave the client to herself, meanwhile feeling bad about the whole situation. It had been a perfect game plan that had been worked

out. When clients are either reluctant or resistant, it is worth exploring if the clients are playing the game of 'coax me.' If it is a game plan that is cunningly executed, then the counsellor can address the client in words similar to the following and stop the game proceeding further: 'You seem to be finding it difficult to talk to me. I would like to assure you that I am available to you whenever you decide to speak up, and for the time being we wind up the session.' This unexpected response from the counsellor might shake the client, and she might leave behind her game pattern and begin to answer.

## 8. SILENCE

Silence is an enriching experience. It is in silence that great insights are gained. Both the counsellors and the counselees can utilize silence for the maximum outcome. For whatever reason silence does occur, the counsellor should be prepared to deal with it.<sup>26</sup> It is likely that the very session opens in silence. After your initial formalities and invitation to talk, the client might sit quiet. As I have already remarked, the counsellor could invite the person to say whatever comes to her mind, or could say that she is thinking of something, or she is finding it hard to speak. If it is during the counselling interview, check if you have responded to the previous statement of the client. If so, then take this occasion to summarise the materials so far shared, or ask the client to summarise the materials by herself or find out the core messages. After all these, if the client keeps silent, then better respect the silence.

We have reached the end of the first stage of understanding and analysing the skills of the counsellor and the tasks of the counselee, and let us pass on to the next stage.



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## OBSERVING

### 1. BODY SPEAKS MOST

The surest way to understand a person is to observe her non-verbal behaviour. The training we receive in the schools and the society does not teach us to read the non-verbal behaviours. In counselling situations, the counsellor can get lots of information (and more or less accurate information) by observing the non-verbal behaviour of the counselee. Robert R. Carkhuff recommends observing the nonverbal behaviour thus:

*Observing skills involve the helper's ability to see and understand the non-verbal behaviour of the helpee. These skills are essential because the richest source of empathy is the helper's observation of the helpee's physical behaviours. We must observe those aspects of the helpee's appearance and behaviour which tell us about the helpee's energy level, her feeling and her degree of congruence (whether she really is as she appears). The helpee gives us many cues to her experience in her physical behaviour and appearance. When all other cues to the helpee's*

*experience confuse us, we must return to the most basic evidence of all — the helpee's behaviour.*<sup>1</sup>

In the second stage of counselling, the counsellor focuses his attention on the cues to read the non-verbal behaviours of the client. Once I had been to a medical exhibition. Going through the various stalls, I came across a room at the entrance of which was written "The body never lies." It was the forensic science stall. We have different means or vehicles of communication. What is evidently known is the medium of language through which we communicate with one another. Even before language could develop, man would have been communicating with one another. Certainly he would have communicated by his body, that is also a vehicle of communication. The primary mode of communication for the primitive man was the body. Before he could develop a language, there could have been in all probability an intermediate stage of communication made of paralinguistic behaviour (of noises made through the mouth).

Thus, in the evolution of communication man started to speak with the noise produced by his vocal cords, and later by a language. The same phases of development are seen even now in babies. The babies rely purely on their body language for communication along with grunts, cries, gurgles, and the like which later develop into a language. The psychologist Mehrabian has estimated the percentage of each of the modes of communication; and he came up with astonishing results. He says that we communicate 7 percent verbally, 38 percent vocally, and 55 percent bodily.<sup>2</sup> In other words communication is mostly by body language, then by paralinguistic behaviour (like accent, emphasis, intonation and pauses), and the least is by words. The client who comes to you therefore does speak mostly through her body. If you

are not able to read her body language, then you miss most of her communication. Hence my stress on reading the body language of the client.

## **2. THE UNCONSCIOUS PEEPS OUT THROUGH THE BODY**

The interest of the psychologists in understanding the body language started some thirty years back, though of course Freud himself observed in 1905 that patients revealed themselves through their fingertips.<sup>3</sup> People instinctively read body languages from the very beginning of the human race; yet real scientific study began only in recent years. Kinesics, the science of body language, is in its infancy. All the same we are endeavouring to exploit the knowledge gained through kinesics to understand the client and help her better.

Once I happened to see a group of men seated in the parlour of an institution. One among them, Prakash by name, had already placed his legs on a small table, while the others were seated along with him in a circle. The other men who sat with him were his equals or his juniors. In a way Prakash was asserting his dominance, superiority and his territorial rights. On other occasions also I had observed the same individual; whenever his status is threatened, he immediately assumes the posture of placing his legs on the table in front. On another occasion, I was animating a group of young girls for community building. All of us were seated on mattresses that were well arranged in the room. A number of cushions were also provided so that any one wanting a little more support or elevation could very well make use of them. On entering the room, I found Clara, one of the participants, seated on an elevated seat. She was very conspicuous by her elevation. I did not pay much attention to her raised seating. During the interactions I could make out that Clara was superior in intelligence

and practical ability. She was showing to me and to the whole group that she is superior to the rest. Both Prakash and Clara were speaking eloquently through their postures. The unconscious somehow leaks out through the body, if not through the words.

### 3. BODY SPEAKS A LANGUAGE

In every language are words, phrases and sentences.<sup>4</sup> There are simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences. We have active voice and passive voice; and we have direct speech, and indirect speech and a whole lot of grammar. Since body movements and gestures are a language, they too should be having words and sentences as in a spoken language. Experts in Kinesics say that body language in fact has words and sentences. A little gesture of touching the mouth or the nose is like words; and a cluster of gestures (like dilated pupils, preening behaviour, and thumbs in the pocket with the other fingers pointing down) is like a sentence made up of many words. Words have different meanings in different contexts; for example, the word 'light' will mean 1) an article that is not heavy, or 2) an article that emanates luminous particles, or 3) the luminosity itself. Likewise every gesture has to be understood in its own context; one and the same gesture may have different meanings in different context.

### 4. ENERGY LEVEL

Before anything else, what impresses upon the counsellor is the physical appearance of the counsellee. The amount of disorganization can be made out from the way one appears. If one's energy is very much drained by the conflicts and demands in her day-to-day living, we cannot expect the client to appear neat and clean. When a person is neat, it only indicates that her energy level is at the optimum level. Certainly it takes a certain amount of energy to maintain oneself clean and to

appear neat. If the grooming is markedly poor, then the person's energy level too is very poor and low. A drooping head, slumped shoulders, a caved in chest, slow and burdened gait indicate clearly a low level of energy, and therefore weakness and defeat in life. On the contrary, when a person carries her head erect, with her shoulders flexibly straight, chest fully extended and a gait that is light, she indicates high energy and a confident outlook.<sup>5</sup> Along with the nonverbal behaviour, one should notice the body-build, posture and grooming.

### 5. EYE SCANNING

Neurolinguistic Programming (abbreviated as NLP as developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler) in recent years has devised a method of getting information about what is going on within a person by watching her eye movements. This is called 'eye scanning'<sup>6</sup> in NLP. When you remember something from your past experience, your eyes move up to the left corner for a fraction of a second (Visual Memory) (Figure 9).



**Figure 9**

*Visual Memory*

If the eyes move up to the right corner (Visual Construction) (Figure 10),



**Figure 10**

*Visual Construction*

then she is constructing a visual image which she did not have early. For example, I am asking you to imagine yourself in the costume of a judge. Since you have never worn the costume of a judge, you need to construct an image of yourself in that attire. Therefore whenever you are accessing, as revealed by the movement of the eyes up to the right corner, it is sure that you are having something visual which is being constructed; and if up to the left corner, you remember a thing you have seen. Lies are constructed. If I tell a lie that I have seen a baby elephant, then automatically my eyes will go up to the right corner, since I am reporting a visual image which is constructed. If I have really seen a person stealing, when I speak of that, my eyes will move up to the left corner. Care should be taken to read the eye movements. Once I taught eye scanning to a group of counsellor trainees. One of them, after a few days, reported that he was insisting with a peer counsellee that she was telling a lie since he found her most of the time looking up to the right corner. Actually accessing a visual or auditory or kinesthetic mode is done within a fraction of a second. As soon as you are asked a question, straight go your eyes to the specific direction and return. Therefore look for the accessing rather than where the eyes rest.

So far we have seen two eye movements. Thirdly, if the eyes move to the left side straight, then it is an auditory memory (Auditory Memory) (Figure 11).



**Figure 11**  
Auditory Memory

For example I ask you to recall your favourite song; your eyes will move to the left side straight. If I ask you to tell me how your girl friend's laughter changes into a loud lamentation, your eyes will turn to the right on a straight line, since you have to construct the sound auditorily (Auditory Construction) (Figure 12).



**Figure 12**  
Auditory Construction

If I ask you how it would feel to run on the seashore, your eyes will go down to the right corner. Down is the place when we are in touch with our feelings. When we ask a client, 'what are you feeling right now?' she will look down to the right: she is accessing and is in touch with her feelings (Kinesthetic) (Figure 13).



**Figure 13**  
Kinesthetic

When you are all by yourself having a self-talk then your eyes will look down to the left corner (Auditory Dialogue) (Figure 14).



**Figure 14**  
*Auditory Dialogue*

These eye movements are of a fixed pattern, revealing what representational system you are accessing at a given moment. Thus eye scanning will give you additional information about the client sitting in front of you.

## 6. BREATHING (CALIBRATION)

Calibration is another way of observing a client's internal state. Calibration is external manifestation of the internal state of mind.<sup>7</sup> Whether the client sitting in front of you has some visual experience or auditory experience or kinesthetic experience can be made out from the location of her breathing. Breathing high up in the chest, or even temporarily stopping of her breath, will indicate that the person has visual images. When the breathing is mostly felt at the diaphragm, she has auditory experience; and if her breathing is very deep, low in the stomach, it will betray kinesthetic experience. A person really having a strong kinesthetic experience will be breathing very low at the bottom of her stomach, that is at the abdomen.

By eye scanning and calibration, you will have some information about the client whom you are going to counsel. Since we intend to understand the client in all her manifestation, we make use of her eye movements and her breathing patterns. The more you observe the client, the better it is.

## 7. HAND AND ARM GESTURES

Rubbing the palms indicates positive expectation gestures (**Figure 15**).



**Figure 15**  
*Rubbing the palms: Positive Expectation*

Clenched hands is a frustration gesture signalling that the person is holding back a negative attitude (**Figure 16**).



**Figure 16**  
*Clenched hands: Holding back a negative attitude*