

MODULE

12

Emotion

The umbrella — the most important leg,
and the easiest to fake badly

WHAT THIS MODULE COVERS

Emotion is not one of the four tools sitting beside the others. It is what holds the words, the body language and the voice together. Without it, nothing else works.

Emotion comes last in the sequence because it is the umbrella over everything else. It lets you slow down. It changes your inflection and tone. It triggers your hands and your face automatically. It is how you clear credibility, believability and likability.

And because all 21 facial emotions are universal to every human being, emotion is a language that works everywhere, through interpreters, across cultures.

But **do not fake it**. Faking emotion is worse than having none, and the module's two case studies are both nationally televised examples of exactly that.

Steve's practical drill: take one line and deliver it with all 21 emotions, filming each take, then watch them all back and find out which ones you do well and which you should never use. His own line is "21 percent of children in America go hungry and it makes me angry." Asked how you could possibly deliver that with happiness, the answer is sarcasm — "21 percent of American kids go to bed hungry every night. Wow, that's amazing." You can move the emotion anywhere you want once you have practised it.

The module closes on Indira Gandhi taking a hostile interview away from the interviewer — the technique covered properly in Module 13. Her power came from confidence. She would not be bullied, and she converted his questions into answers she dictated.

21

emotions to test on one line

6

you will probably use most

2

careers damaged in this module

KEY CONCEPTS

Emotion as the umbrella

Not a fourth tool. It is what ties voice, body language and words into one thing. It slows your pace, moves your inflection and produces your gestures without you planning them.

Never fake it

Audiences detect performed emotion reliably and punish it harder than flatness. Both case studies below are people saying the right words with feeling that did not read as real.

The 21-emotion drill

One line, twenty-one takes, all filmed. You will discover two or three emotions you deliver beautifully and several you should never attempt.

Test before you deliver

When the stakes are high and you have the means, test it. Steve killed a presidential campaign ad that his media consultant swore was the best of his forty-year career — focus groups laughed at it.

FROM THE VIDEO

Two State of the Union responses

BOBBY JINDAL. The Louisiana governor was chosen to respond to a State of the Union — a signal his party saw him as a rising star. By every account a bright, likable man. The words on the page were fine. The delivery was flat and contrived, and it went on for twenty minutes. When jokes appeared, test audiences audibly moaned. It arguably ended his national career.

KATIE BRITT. Years later, the Alabama senator delivered a response filmed in her kitchen — which itself unsettled test audiences. She had visible passion. But people said, overwhelmingly, that it looked like acting. On the line about fearing her children would not have the American dream, focus group members responded: she is a US senator, her kids will be fine.

Steve blames staff in both cases. Someone should have run a mock recording and said: do not deliver it that way. One good presentation elevates who you are. One bad one destroys it.

REMEMBER

- Emotion is the umbrella. It produces your gestures for you.
- Faked emotion tests worse than no emotion at all.
- Run one line through all 21 emotions and learn which ones are yours.
- If you can test it before you deliver it, test it.

PRACTICE

Exercises

Type directly into the shaded boxes below and save the file. Come back to your answers after you have practised — this is your record of what changed.

EXERCISE 1

The 21-emotion drill

This is the central exercise of the whole course. One line, twenty-one takes, all filmed. Start with the six basics and push into the compounds.

Write your line. Something you actually believe.

After filming: which two or three emotions looked completely natural on you?

Which ones looked forced and should never be used?

Try the hardest one — sarcasm disguised as happiness. What happened?

Tick each one once you have done it:

- ☐ Filmed all six basic emotions
 - ☐ Pushed into the compound emotions
 - ☐ Watched every take back
 - ☐ Wrote down my two best and two worst
-

EXERCISE 2

Find where you are faking

The Jindal and Britt failures were not lack of effort. They were effort that read as performance.

Watch your recordings and find one moment where your emotion looks manufactured. Describe it.

What is the real feeling underneath that line? Go back to your emotional triggers from Module 5.

Re-record that line using the real feeling. What changed?

EXERCISE 3**Run a mock**

Both case studies would have been caught by one honest rehearsal.

Who in your life will tell you the truth about your delivery? Name them.

Deliver something to them and ask for the honest version. What did they say?

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

One thing from this module I will use the next time I speak:

When and where I will use it: