

MODULE

02

The Four Legs

Body language, voice, words — and the
umbrella of passion and emotion

WHAT THIS MODULE COVERS

The communication stool has four legs. Three of them are tools. The fourth is the umbrella that holds the other three together, and without it the whole thing falls over.

The four legs are **body language** (facial gestures, hand gestures, posture, presence), **voice** (tone, volume, accentuation, alliteration, repetition, pace), **the words** — and over all of them, **passion and emotion**.

The research foundation for this is a University of California, Los Angeles study from the 1980s. Two political ad men met over dinner. One had just run a presidential race in Colombia for a candidate who was brilliant, knew policy inside out, understood public service — and whom audiences hated. The other had just run a race for a man he did not think was especially smart or well-versed in policy, and whom audiences loved. They asked UCLA to find out which part of the communication paradigm audiences actually connect to.

The researchers expected 70–75% to say the words. Instead, **55% said body language**, **38% said the voice**, and only **7% said the words**. The study was replicated repeatedly with the same result. It turned communication training on its ear.

That finding sat mostly unused for years. When Harvard asked Steve to teach a course on becoming a politician, they suggested he lean on his campaign stories and anecdotes. He declined, and asked instead to build a communication paradigm around that research. The result is what you are learning here.

Repetition deserves a note of its own. People resist it — "I have too many good things to say to repeat myself." But the ear loves repetition, and repeating a word tells the audience that word must matter.

55%

connect through body language

38%

connect through the voice

7%

connect through the words

21

emotions readable in any human face

KEY CONCEPTS

Leg one — body language

Facial gestures, hand gestures, posture and presence. Do you look in control? It is what people see that moves them.

Leg two — voice

Variation in tone, volume, accentuation, alliteration and repetition. A flat voice kills a speech no matter how good the writing.

Leg three — the words

Real, but the weakest leg. The question is never only which words, but how you bring them to life.

The umbrella — passion and emotion

Not a fourth tool sitting beside the others. It is what ties them together. Get the passion and emotion right and your gestures largely take care of themselves.

Aspirational words

Words that make people feel good — hope, love, opportunity, freedom. Steve's company tested hundreds worldwide and identified the 55 most powerful. They are covered in Module 9 and supplied as a handout.

REMEMBER

- People believe far more of what they see than the words they hear.
- If you get passion and emotion right, the gestures follow on their own.

- The ear loves repetition. Repeating a line tells people it matters.
- Ninety-three percent of the connection happens outside your word choice.

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

Audit your four legs

Watch your baseline recording again, once for each leg. Watch with the sound off for body language. Then listen with your eyes closed for voice.

BODY LANGUAGE — sound off. What did your face and hands actually do?

VOICE — eyes closed. Did your tone move, or was it flat? Where did it flatten?

WORDS — read your transcript. Which words are doing real work, and which are filler?

PASSION AND EMOTION — be honest. Could someone tell you cared?

EXERCISE 2**Find one line worth repeating**

The ear loves repetition, and most speakers refuse to use it because they have too much else to say.

Take something you need to say soon — a pitch, a toast, an update. What is the one line you most want people to walk away with?

Write it three times, changing nothing but where you would place emphasis.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

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

When and where I will use it:

