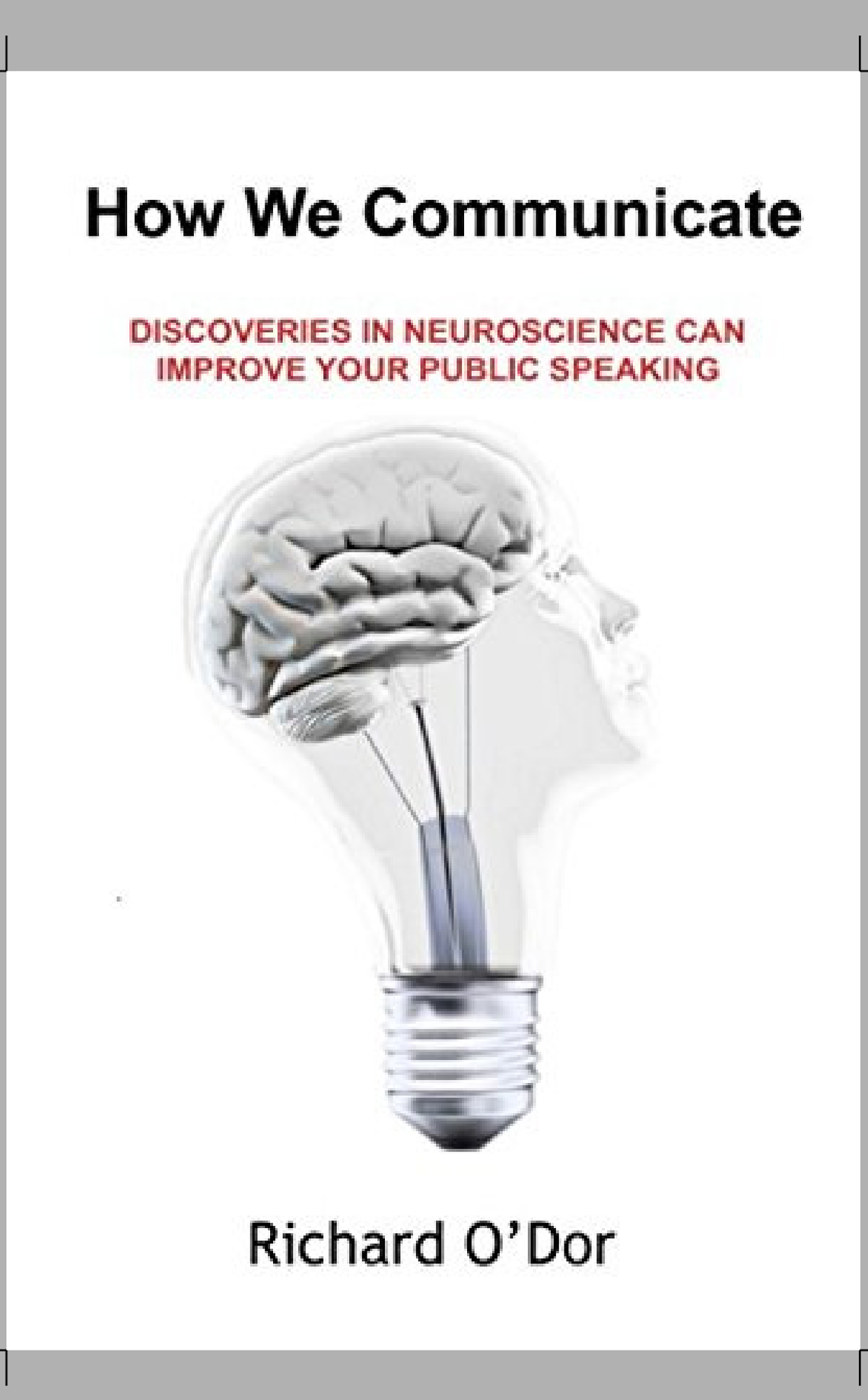


4

EYE ENGAGEMENT

— looking outward —

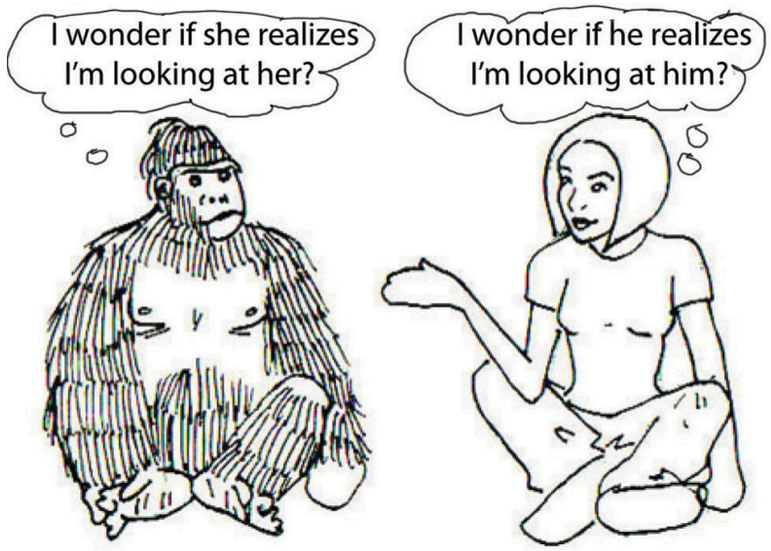
People prefer to look at a person's eyes more than at any other facial features.[1] Eye gaze is the most significant thing we do to emphasize interaction. It visually binds the emotional actions of communicators with one another and reveals how we feel about the social interaction. Further, speakers who engage other participants visually are evaluated more favorably.[2]

Gaze direction demonstrates our engagement with specific participants. Eye engagement is the keystone of improving public speaking skills for individuals who do not have visual impairments. Although a visual impairment may hinder a speaker's ability to seek out specific individuals in a group, gaze direction training can overcome this. Because it affects all other layers of our communication, the training strategies learned in this chapter will enhance other actions.

Imagine a speaker who reduces volume while looking downward toward notes, or increases it while looking upward to engage someone. If the speaker repeats these eye actions throughout the presentation, the resulting fluctuations in volume become distractions. In this case, the volume fluctuations stem directly from the speaker's eye behavior. Attempts to alter volume would be unsuccessful because the catalyst for the sound problem is ineffective eye engagement. Speaking is more natural and powerful when directly engaging individuals. Because actions are

interconnected, training that eliminates these eye gaze fluctuations additionally reduces rhythmic vocal patterns.

The human eye has exceptional features. The eye's outline is elongated horizontally exposing more sclera than other primates do.[3] Human sclera creates a strong contrast between the iris and the face, a contrast that increases the recognition of eye gaze direction and movements. The unique white sclera of human eyes is an adaptation to enhance eye engagement while the brown sclera of other primates has adapted to conceal their gaze.[4]



Staring at a person for multiple arguments, focusing on a projected image for too long, reading a speech, and focusing over the heads of people are all ways speakers disrupt their eye engagement. Ineffective eye behavior occurs anytime eye gaze misdirects the attention of others away from your argument. This misdirection undermines the power of communication, impeding its emotional impact and causing speakers to lose credibility.[5]

DISTRACTIONS OF EYE ENGAGEMENT

The number and types of eye distractions are only limited by the ability of communicators to create them. All of the following distractions occur due to ritualized behaviors, anxiety, or even randomness. Although this list is

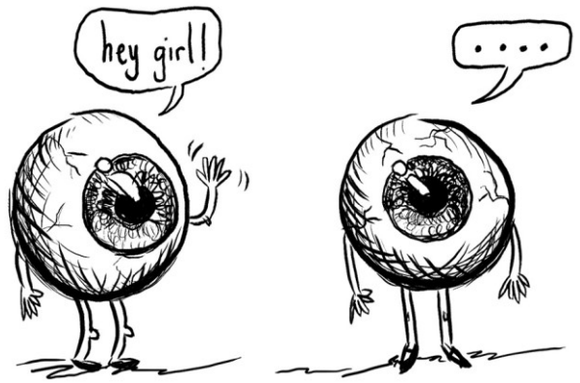
not comprehensive, it identifies the more significant problems. Most of these eye engagement distractions can be classified into six categories:

1. Eye avoidance
2. Averted eye gaze
3. Fleeting, prolonged, and erratic eye behavior
4. Restricted eye engagement
5. Dissynchronization between gaze and head position
6. Dissynchronization between eye gaze and gestures

EYE AVOIDANCE

It's easy to assume that eye avoidance is caused by fear, especially since our eyes are considered to be the most fear-inducing feature in social appraisals by others.[6] However, eye avoidance frequently occurs as a ritualized pattern, a habit. Unfortunately, it can also be the result of poor coaching. Often, a person being coached reports that they were previously told to focus at the back wall, at a person's forehead, or at spaces between people. Misinformation, such as this, breeds ritualized patterns and amplifies anxiety.

Eye avoidance can also disguise itself as other eye engagement distractions. Although they may seem interactive, long stares have the effect of reducing how often the speaker engages others. Such speakers seem to be taking refuge in the eyes of a friendly face in the crowd as a means of avoiding others.



Eye avoidance ranges from minor disruptions in eye fixations to flight. Fear is relative. As mentioned in the discussion of anxiety (see Chapter 3), forty percent of the public report a fear of speaking, but this fear runs a range from innocuous *Speech Anxiety Talk* to performance anxiety.[7] Only two percent of the population report having debilitating performance anxiety.[8] Even highly anxious individuals tend to gaze at others for a brief period prior to avoiding them.

AVERTED EYE GAZE

Misdirecting our eye gaze away from people or prolonged staring at someone subverts social engagement. This can occur if we avert or offset our eye gaze direction as a repetitive pattern, stare into space or have visual difficulties, such as astigmatism. Although averted eye gaze appears to be similar to eye avoidance, its effects can be more devastating since participants redirect their eyes to the target of the gaze. People begin to wonder what has captured the speaker's attention.

From a participant's view, observing someone with averted eyes results in a shift of attention to the gazed-at location. Males are not as likely to redirect their gaze in the direction of the speaker's focus as often as females.[9] This tendency may reflect sex-specific responses to threats. As an evolutionary artifact, males may sustain eye contact because they suspect that the averted gaze is a trick, while females do not respond to this action as a threat.

Reactions to averted eyes develop early in life. Three- to nine-month-old infants will gaze toward and smile more with strangers if the stranger maintains joint attention, but will be misdirected if the stranger gazes away from the infant.[10] Communicators need to take advantage of the fact that strangers are predisposed to eye engagement. They will maintain engagement as long as presenters do not distract them by averting their gaze.

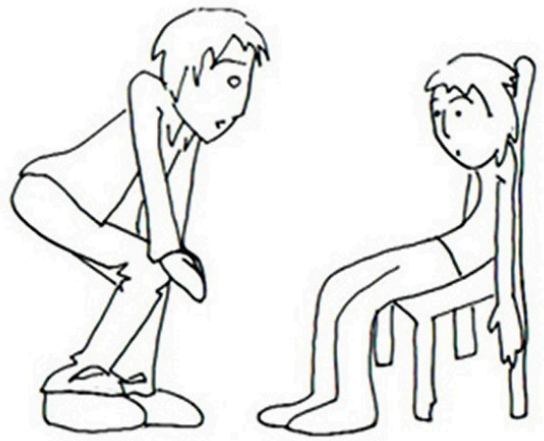
FLEETING, PROLONGED AND ERRATIC EYE ACTIONS

Fleeting eye actions undermine the power of your presentation by splitting your arguments into fragments. If you were communicating the next sentence of fourteen words, your eye movements would be extremely fleeting if you engage more than eight people. You would be creating an

argument out of almost every word in the sentence. Likewise, any of the following patterns would be distracting. The forward slash indicates a change in eye gaze direction.

1. You / would / be / creating / an / argument / out / of/ almost / every word / in the / sentence.
2. You would be / creating an / argument out / of almost / every word in / the sentence.
3. You would be creating / an /argument / out / of/ almost / every word / in the / sentence.

Of course, these are only a few of the permutations that could be created. As you read the sentences, recreating the marked gaze changes, you may have noticed that they felt awkward. Nevertheless, they are typical.



Fleeting eye engagement occurs regardless of your familiarity with the content or amount of time you have practiced a presentation. Although emotional stress can intensify the occurrence of this distraction, most fleeting eye movements are mannerisms. You scan others quickly in an attempt to include everyone. In actuality, you include no one. Fleeting eye movements can also result if you have been taught to gaze at sectors instead of individuals. Although a speaker communicating to thousands of people cannot gaze at each individual, this does not justify training speakers to gaze at areas, a practice which severs the speaker from the other participants.

Through proper training strategies, speakers can learn to focus on individuals without heightening their anxiety.

A prolonged eye gaze transforms your eye engagement into a stare. Staring at a person can appear hostile or just plain weird. It limits your interaction to one person for a longer time than expected. The longer you stare, participants will begin to redirect toward the object of your attention, instead of you. You have disengaged with others and engaged in an isolated interaction with only one person, who may perceive the staring as hostile, strange or a sign of your anxiety.

Erratic eye behavior is chaotic. A speaker with erratic eye movement cannot establish a relationship with others. Instead, a greater likelihood exists that the speaker's eye gaze will focus toward the ceiling, walls, notes, the microphone, and any other non-human item in their environment.

Unfortunately, people may misinterpret a speaker's fleeting, prolonged, and erratic eye movements as a lack of confidence, trustworthiness, or credibility. Although you may not be anxious, these distractions give the impression of anxiety. In addition, they impede the effectiveness of concurrent communicative actions. For instance, gestures are less effective if their movements artificially conform to the timing of these distractions. Fleeting eye engagement increases the likelihood of fleeting gestures. Prolonged eye focus can overextend the movement of your gestures or create mechanical appearing movements. Effective communication is difficult to create when the temporal patterns of nonverbal actions and verbal language compete against each other.

RESTRICTING EYE ENGAGEMENT

This distraction occurs for numerous reasons. Frequently, speakers restrict their eye focus to a few people because these individuals appear more engaged. Speakers may also limit their interaction because they regard specific participants as more important. For instance, during a grant review, a presenter may look only at the primary reviewer, ignoring the other committee members, even though these committee members also vote. By over engaging a significant decision maker, the presenter projects that the reviewer may have serious doubts about the grant. This is a classic example of bringing too much attention to the process. Overworking an argument makes it appear weaker. The presenter's behavior could create underlying

suspicions that only come forth during the committee's private deliberations.

A hearing impaired communicator creates a distraction when focusing primarily on the interpreter, instead of the participants. Because deaf signers maintain more and longer eye contact during conversations than hearing speakers of English, this distraction will be more obvious to others.[11] The interpreter is the speaker's voice in that the interpreter re-communicates the speaker's signing as sounds. An extended dialogue between these two individuals creates a different relationship than that of the communicator and the communicator's voice. It constructs an isolated dyad within the larger communication environment, altering the speaker's relationship with the other participants. Everyone else becomes an observer. Movements and voice patterns change to facilitate this face-to-face interaction. The communicator's eyes focus away from the other participants and toward the interpreter, while signing becomes quieter. The volume of the signing lowers because the interpreter is closer. The interpreter may continue to modulate voicing, but these sounds are not related to the presenter's signing. In fact, courtroom interpreters are trained specifically not to change the volume because it changes the deaf person's testimony.

While it's appropriate to acknowledge individuals who introduce you, isolating your eye gaze to them, unless the content demands this pattern, may be distracting. Likewise, creating lengthy interactions with specific people interferes with your ability to maintain a communal focus. During a practice, isolate your attention to an individual within a group. Select someone at the side of the larger group. Communicate with this individual for several minutes. Ignore everyone else; they are no longer participants in your interplay. Record this practice in order to listen to your voice. You will notice that your voice changes. You will not maintain the same emotional quality of the interaction for several minutes with one individual as you previously did with the entire group because it brings more attention to the fact that you are ignoring the others.

DISSYNCHRONIZATION BETWEEN GAZE AND HEAD

Public speakers frequently mismatch eye gaze and head position by either tilting their heads or not coordinating eye gaze direction with head

movements. Tilting your chin upward forces your eyes to look downward. Although this head position may not feel awkward to you, it appears awkward to others. The position implies aloofness. Likewise, tilting your head downward also alters how you engage others. In contrast to the aloofness of an upward tilt, this head position conveys shyness. Peering over bifocals can cause this same distraction.

Eye movements are substantially faster than head movements so dissynchronizations can easily occur.[12] Two of these dissynchronizations are (1) a misalignment between your head direction and eye gaze direction, and (2) eye movement before head movement. In the first example, the offset between your head and eyes remains the same even when your head moves, giving the appearance that your face and eyes are misaligned. During the second example, your eyes move prior to the movement of your head. Once the direction of your face changes, your eyes scan to the next person. This misalignment may repeat throughout the presentation, mimicking the eye actions of a cartoon spy. After observing this pattern for several minutes, participants recognize that your eye movements foreshadow the next head ratchet and they become distracted.

Although these patterns may be random, they create a different relationship between you and others, who may perceive these patterns as indicative of deceitfulness, shyness, incompetence or aloofness. The actor Jack Nicholson is skillful in dissynchronizing his eye behavior and head position to convey a sinister character.[13] Unless you aim to create hostile expressions, these distractions should be eliminated or minimized by reducing how often they occur.

DISSYNCHRONIZATION BETWEEN GAZE AND GESTURES

Dissynchronizations between eye engagement and gestures occur when you gaze toward one person while gesturing toward another. Unless your arguments create a relationship between these two individuals, (such as "Do you see what that person is doing?"), these divergent actions clash in their demands for specific participant involvement. This distraction occurs because the direction of your eye gaze and face are offset causing you to gesture in one direction while looking in another. Look at an object away from you and gesture with your right hand toward another object slightly to the right. Although this may feel uncoordinated, this pattern occurs

often. If the angle of this offset sustains a consistent measurement, these distractions are easier to eliminate because they are merely ritualized actions. Chaotic actions are always more difficult to shape because there's no consistent pattern.

ANXIETY and EYE ACTIONS

Self-focused attention underlies social anxiety.[14] In Chapter 3, a review of the research on social anxiety specific to eye engagement suggests:

- People with social phobia avoid social interaction by scanning facial features less.
- Socially anxious people generally avoid looking at others, but their gazes have a brief period of vigilance followed by prolonged avoidance of others.
- A rigid emphasis on intrapersonal communicating overwhelms our interpersonal communication, threatening our engagement with others.
- Female reactions to stress reflect a pattern of tend-and-befriend (more eye engagement) rather than fight or flight (staring or gaze avoidance).

Studies of phenomena such as change blindness suggest that we do not form rich, internal visual representations of visual memories. We do not have a mental file cabinet in our heads. The richest source of perceptual information lies in our external world. We attend to this external world.[15] In contrast to the brain as a mental file cabinet, a sensorimotor perspective of perception (advocated in Chapter 2) views the brain's role in vision as enabling the knowledge and exercise of sensorimotor contingencies,[16] which are rules governing the sensory changes produced by various motor actions, such as eye movements. You blink your eyes and the world disappears during the blink, but you do not panic because you understand this rule, or contingency. Anxiety alters these contingencies. When anxious people blink, they are wondering what the world thinks of them.

Your brain's amygdala activates to fearful eyes[17] and to briefly presented whites of eyes.[18] Davis and Whalen provide an excellent and thorough review of the literature on the amygdala and emotion.[19] Damage to this cell mass impairs a person's abilities to detect the eye region of the face and to discriminate fear.[20] However, one subject was able to respond temporarily to a fear recognition task after being instructed to gaze at the eyes of others.[21] This simple refocus of attention was powerful enough to activate a relational response when none was expected. One way of thinking of this is that the instruction replaced this subject's sensorimotor contingency for interacting, which was missing. Strategies for reducing speech anxiety must refocus attention to others.[22] These strategies should create or reshape sensorimotor rules for interacting. Thus, a relational perspective is at the foundation of the following training strategies and exercises. Even if anxiety does not impair your ability to communicate effectively, this perspective enriches the learning of communicative skills.

TRAINING STRATEGIES – Eye Engagement

Discovery, or the recognition of a distraction, is the first essential training step. It's the precursor for transformation, which comes from training, and synchronization, which is the result of coordinating the many layers of communicative actions. Any method that creates an immediate sensibility to a distraction allows you to discover how it originates.

Understanding the complexities of eye gaze allows you to be more skillful at public speaking. Moreover, the richness of your eye engagement creates relationships, which are the fundamental reason to communicate. The length of eye interaction directed at a specific person depends on several phenomena and their interplay. The length of eye behavior is

determined by the content, medium, type of presentation, and other participants' actions.

Content influences the length and direction of your eye gaze. Synchronizing your gaze with significant statements makes these arguments more powerful. Likewise, looking at a person in the middle of a large group of people, or at a camera while voicing a significant statement, adds impact. Because you should be familiar with personal topics, people will demand more eye engagement. For example, a speaker should never glance at a note card before relating autobiographical facts. A greater reliance on note cards or a manuscript is expected when the content is of a highly technical nature. However, the more comfortable you are with your arguments and their associated vocabulary, the more other people expect you to engage them. Memorization does not breed familiarity; it's scripted acting.

Eye distractions are also affected by the medium of the communication. Blinks of the eye become more noticeable in the close focus of the television or teleconferencing camera than they are in a large public speaking environment. When viewing a speaker on a monitor, participants expect the speaker's eyes to engage them anytime they glance at the monitor, so normal eye blinking appears less natural when televised. Thus, extended eye behavior, which is a distraction in small group settings, seems more conversational when televised because it displays less blinking. The television's image creates a more intimate and personal relationship between the broadcaster and others. The best broadcasters understand this.

A presentation based on notes reduces the opportunities for eye engagement while a presentation created from a manuscript further restricts eye engagement. Teleprompters have altered this effect allowing manuscripts to be used without interrupting eye engagement. By contrast, an extemporaneous speech provides the greatest opportunity to engage others.

Eye engagement can be affected by the consequences of a speech. Formal statements are typically read to minimize any off-the-cuff comments that could have repercussions, especially in a crisis. Because formal statements are their own context and the words are the focus, less eye engagement only brings more attention to the seriousness of the words.

Of course, the statement's length must be short or the lack of eye engagement and the length of the statement might imply less candor.

Your eye engagement must synchronize with the impact of your primary argument. If that is creating a relationship with participants, then you must direct your gaze at them more often, but if it's the importance of the words, then you may read them without losing the relationship you have established. For instance, a politician may read a formal statement about a campaign issue, such as education, but should not read responses to media questions regarding a proposed educational policy.

Communication creates a social bond between you and the other participants. Gaze direction and length are affected by the participants' co-actions. Some people will be engaged while others will remain less connected. Although the level of involvement of every participant should correspond to the power of your presentation, this is a lofty goal. Some participants will be distracted by their own imaginations. While your speech may be compelling, a participant may be thinking about other things. Try not to allow your presentation to be disrupted by the isolated disengagement of a few people. If someone is not engaging you, continue to gaze at them until the phrase is finished and then change eye gaze direction. Changing eye gaze direction immediately, when you realize a person is not looking at you, would result in your eye behavior appearing erratic. Discontinue looking toward that person if they continue to be less involved; select someone else in the area. While watching the State of the Union Speech each year, we have all seen members of Congress appearing to be zoned-out, even though they should know that they are on camera.

TRAINING STRATEGIES
– EFFECTIVE EYE ENGAGEMENT–

The following strategies will help you to minimize eye engagement distractions. When you practice using these techniques, record the practice to hear how eye engagement improves your voice.

- Engaging people
- Synchronizing eye gaze and head positions
- Synchronizing eye engagement with gestures
- Synchronizing eye gaze with other actions

- Recognizing how facial features affect eye engagement
- Communicating significant statements
- Communicating personalized statements
- Constructing manuscripts

ENGAGING PEOPLE

An effective strategy for engaging people is the *Recognition Game*. As with most games, you will need other participants. Use the following four guidelines:

1. When engaging someone while speaking, that person raises a hand
2. When the person feels that you have appropriately engaged them, their hand goes down
3. As a hand lowers, you gaze at someone else
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 until your presentation finishes

The communal actions required by this game develop your ability to engage others. If you discover that people in different locations raise their hands at the same time, your eye gaze and head directions are not synchronized. Several people sitting in the same area may raise their hands indicating their sense of engaging with you. You are probably focusing on a person near the middle of this group, but your eye gaze and head position could be offset. If they are sitting behind one another, your eye gaze is appropriate, especially if they are clustered close together or elevated above each other (stadium seating). The proximity of the participants will affect the game. The closer people are to you, the more likely only one hand should go up while you engage that person. The further participants are from you, the more hands could rise.

Combine the *Recognition Game* with the next strategy to test if your eye gaze and head are offset. If you initially see any of the patterns listed below, you may need to play the game several times. You win the game when you see a random flow of single hands going up and down.

1. No hands go up – **avoiding eye engagement**
2. A repeating pattern of two people sitting side-by-side raising and lowering their hands – **eye gaze and head position are dissychronized**
3. Only one hand rises and lowers for several phrases – **a prolonged gaze**

4. Hands dart upward and downward – **erratic eye movement**

Although it's difficult to see each person in a large auditorium, most environments allow your eyes to engage people in a personal way. Eye engagement should always be an objective of your communication since this is how you connect with others.

SYNCHRONIZING EYE GAZE AND HEAD POSITIONS

Fleeting, prolonged, and erratic eye actions can be reshaped by a simple procedure. Placing self-sticking notes on one-third of the outside area of prescription eyeglasses or sunglasses blocks side-to-side eye movements and forces coordination of your eyes and head movements. Placing self-sticking notes on the lower half of each lens readjusts your head to a more natural position. As you practice your presentation, your vision will be blocked unless you readjust your head. If you hold your head too high, participants will disappear. Similarly, applying these notes on the top half of the lenses will make the participants vanish as you tuck your head downward.

Self-sticking notes can also be placed on the side of the glass frame to prevent averted eye gazes. After practicing several hours, your eye gaze will begin to appear natural to others. Granted, this exercise may seem a little bizarre, but it works because you are using your body's natural ability to discover, transform and synchronize eye engagement and head movements. Years of ritualized mannerisms need to be counterbalanced by hours of practicing effective strategies. Sometimes you will notice an immediate change.

SYNCHRONIZING EYE ENGAGEMENT WITH GESTURES

Coordinating your eye engagement with gestures transforms both of these important aspects of communication from random movements to powerful, synchronized actions. The *You*[3] (You, You, You) exercise tests your ability to coordinate eye engagement and gestures. It demonstrates that your communicative actions, rather than your words, create meaning. Address three people by referring to each as "you" and gesture while communicating the word. For example, say You, You?, and You! While recording this exercise, differentiate the meaning of each word with your voice and gestures. Your actions must have consistent layers of meaning or

they may conflict. Even though you are communicating the same word to each person, every "you" should be different because the people are different. This simple exercise demonstrates how multiple layers of actions create meaning.

SYNCHRONIZING EYE BEHAVIOR WITH OTHER ACTIONS

The *Five-Word Speech* exercise tests your ability to coordinate eye gaze with other actions. Select five words to communicate. You can use objects to represent participants. Space these objects appropriately apart to reflect how people would be sitting. Do not use a mirror; you are not one of the objects. Practicing in front of a mirror intensifies self-focused attention. The length of your eye engagement should synchronize with the duration of your other communicative actions, such as gestures. A fundamental question underlying this strategy: How many arguments are there in five words? Your answer reveals much about how you view communication. There are many answers. Most answers should range somewhere between three and eleven. Stumped? Remember the not words: the pauses, gestures, eye gazes, facial expressions, among other actions that create arguments within the verbal expression of five words. As a successful training strategy, *The Five-Word Speech* allows you to discover the many layers of communication. While you communicate the arguments, observe how you breathe. Frequently speakers use breathing as a natural measure of the length of an argument. If you have problems with this technique, Chapter 7, *The Body's Voice*, will revisit this strategy.

FACIAL FEATURES AFFECT EYE ENGAGEMENT

Facial features affect how people perceive the frequency and duration of your eye gaze. If you have dark eyes and dark eyebrows, your eye activity will be more noticeable than that of someone with light blue eyes and blonde eyebrows. Likewise, a dark eyeglass frame encircles the eyes like the concentric circles of a target.

COMMUNICATING SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS

Directing significant statements to a person in the middle of a group is more powerful than directing those statements to a person located on the

periphery. This is because the people who surround the participant feel involved in your engagement. Isolating your eye engagement to people on the periphery of a group limits the involvement of the participants. If the speech is being broadcast, you should gaze at the camera more often and especially during significant statements.

COMMUNICATING PERSONALIZED STATEMENTS

Engaging eye behavior with people closer to you enhances other actions that communicate closeness, such as a personalized statement. Although yelling at someone typically makes them want to flee, yelling the phrase, "I love you" to someone further away, attempts to reduce the distance between you. You will reduce your volume when the person approaches or they will not continue to approach. Your actions must have consistent layers of meaning or they may conflict and negate the outcome.

CREATING MATERIALS TO ENHANCE EYE ENGAGEMENT

The visual format of a manuscript's page can be marked to increase the duration of eye engagement with others. If someone requests a copy of your presentation materials, provide them a text that has not been marked. A marked copy allows you to spell words for easier pronunciation. For instance, Pterygium can be spelled Terigeeum (Pterygium is a wedge-shaped fibrovascular growth of the surface tissue of the white of the eye that extends onto the cornea). Dense text without contrast is difficult to see. With the visual impact of shape, color, and contrast, pages and notes can be better tools to motivate you as a speaker. The following manuscript layout enriches your eye engagement:

- Eliminate space at the top (header) of the page
- Leave a space at the bottom (footer) of about 1/3 of the page
- Reduce the side margins to increase space for content
- Enlarge the font size to enhance seeing the script capitalize and bold words of phrases **TO INCREASE VOLUME**
- Arrange long lists vertically

While the purpose of these formats is to increase your eye engagement, these changes can also improve your voice. They establish markers that train your communicative actions as sounds. If an interpreter

is your voice, the layout may reduce your tendency to forget that your signing controls the breathing of the interpreter. **BOLD FONTS** can convey an increase in volume or **a decrease in volume,** while underlining phrases in a manuscript reminds you to increase or decrease the rate of that specific phrase. **A green underline,** or **font, can convey a faster rate** while **a red underline**, or **font, suggests a slower rate**. Likewise, red / can be used to mark pauses. The length of these pauses can range from short (/) to long (///). These markings can signal different breathing locations to alter a rhythmic pattern or to self-train a different breathing pattern. Another breathing notation could be a superscript ^{B} in addition to the use of the pause indicators, ^{B}//.

Manipulating the location of words on a page enhances the likelihood of a pause. Placing the words after a crucial phrase
on the next line increases the likelihood of pausing. A vertical list

separates

each component

slowing the speech rate.

Additionally, a vertical arrangement increases your probability of including each item in a list. This can be important for an award speech, when thanking a long list of people. Anxiety can increase your speech rate, but an effectively marked text will provide reminders to control the rate. These markings interfere with a tendency to read. Although reading can result from being anxious, it typically is a habit. Moreover, marking only two to three phrases on a page emphasizes engaging others.

Page numbers should be marked in the upper corners. Marking the pages with a pencil allows you to change the page numbers and maximizes the printing space at the header. The specific corner depends on which direction you push the page to the side. If the pages are moved to your right, the left corner should be marked. You will see this corner first as the previous page moves to the side. Likewise, if the pages are pushed to the left, the right corner should be marked. This numbering system allows you to check the number of the next page as you are transitioning from the preceding page. If the pages are in the incorrect order, fanning them allows you to find the misplaced page, even as you continue to speak. Your page

numbering should indicate the current page and the total pages expressed as a fraction (1/20). This procedure eliminates the miscounting of pages prior to the presentation. The last page (20/20) indicates that you have the complete manuscript. Although you should always check your manuscript before you present, this numbering system allows you to correct a mistake. Do not staple the pages together because this eliminates your ability to fan the pages and results in page flipping. Every time you flip a page, the appearance of the sheet reminds the other participants that you are using a script. The script becomes a distraction because your actions bring attention to it.

Only a few phrases should be marked for volume or rate. Too many markings interfere with seeing the content and reduce the likelihood of creating a powerful voice. If the page is over-marked, you will read and it will be obvious to others. Your voice pattern transforms into the sounds of reading. The rate of speech increases due to your lack of eye engagement. If you already have a tendency to speak or sign quickly, you will go even faster. Marking a manuscript also provides an organizational waypoint to help you relocate where you left off in case you lose your place. It will be easier to find marked text among the other words. Effective eye engagement substantially modulates your speech rate. If you use an interpreter, these markers can coordinate your communication with the interpreter.

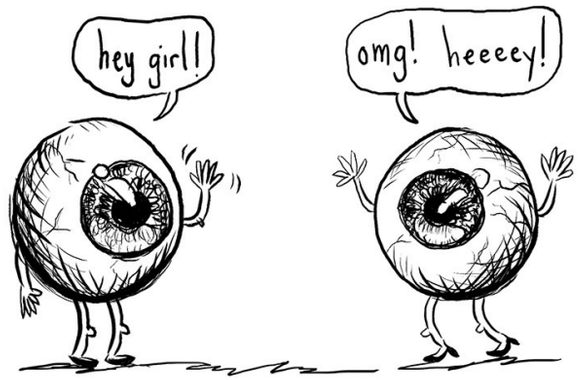
Manuscripts should be designed to enhance the interconnectedness of the words on the page. Arguments should not be fragmented at the end of a line or page. Although a sentence may flow from one line to the next line and from one page to the next page, you should design each page to make the written words have continuity. Never use a justified typography. Computer created pages value the straightness of their edges over how space is used to link words as arguments. If a phrase cannot be completed on a line, place the entire phrase on the next line.

Sometimes a manuscript must be modified prior to a presentation. Last-second changes create opportunities for errors and therefore require scrutiny. You may have practiced several hours with the old manuscript and find these last minute changes place words in a different location. Minimize errors by having the changes affect fewer pages. Numbering the pages in pencil allows you to add pages within a manuscript without

altering the other pages. If for example, you added two additional pages after page eleven, label these pages alphanumerically (11a/20, 11b/20), instead of changing all of the remaining page numbers. Although two pages were added, these changes did not alter the location of the words or images on the other 18 pages. You have only to learn the location of the words on these two new pages, rather than relearn the location of all the words in a twenty-page document.

Eye distractions can be the result of poorly designed notes. If you have any preparation time, note cards should not be handwritten. They should be created on a computer and printed or pasted onto cardstock. There's no reason to limit your content to words. Note cards may contain words, pictures, schematics, illustrations, graphs, or any image that permits you to organize your thoughts. You should arrange lists of words vertically. Important images can be enlarged, in color, underlined or enclosed in a box.

Materials are crucial to an effective presentation. It's best to have multiple copies of these materials and access to a virtual copy. The materials aid your eye engagement, but should never become the focal point of your gaze, unless you need to direct the participants' attention to them. This is true of the materials you use to recall information and visualize information for others, such as PowerPoint presentations. If your gaze is always on the PowerPoint slides, you have disconnected your focus from others and forfeited an opportunity to bond with participants. Typically, when this happens, the speaker has composed excessively wordy slides, turning PowerPoint images into giant note cards.



PRACTICING EYE ENGAGEMENT

Improving your eye engagement can be achieved by practicing these exercises with others or with objects. You should target your gaze to others by working with a small group of people, or by arranging a minimum of three objects at the same level of a person's eyes. Enlarged photos, or quickly sketched faces, can be used if you cannot practice with people. Record these practices placing the camera's lens at eye-level for a person sitting in a chair. The camera's lens becomes a person. Research on eye gaze uses images of faces, so this is an easy and practical substitution. Practice with the lens as the middle person; then shift the camera, or rearrange the objects so you can view your eye gaze in a different direction. Video feedback of public speaking is helpful for socially anxious individuals.[23]

Years of ritualized actions need to be counterbalanced by hours of practicing effective strategies. These training techniques employ your body's natural abilities to create improvements in your eye engagement. Make notes of specific distractions and try the exercises that challenge you to change these. Because this chapter concentrates on eye engagement, limit your analysis to gaze direction, eye movements, and length of gaze plus synchronization with statements. As you review the recording, turning the sound off will allow you to concentrate on eye engagement more effectively.

Research on mirror neurons (Chapters 2 and 3) emphasizes a strong physical relationship between eye engagement and gesturing. Now that we have explored techniques to improve eye engagement, we can build upon this progress. The following chapter further develops your eye engagement, while improving your gestures.

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EYE ENGAGEMENT

1. Eye engagement visually binds the emotional actions of communicators with one another and reveals how they feel about the social interaction.
2. Eye avoidance frequently occurs because it's simply a ritualized pattern, a habit.

3. Misdirecting our eye gaze away from people, or prolonged staring at someone, subverts social engagement.
4. Fleeting eye engagement increases the likelihood of fleeting gestures, while prolonged eye gaze overextends the movement of a gesture.
5. Eye direction change is more natural when it corresponds to changes in structural boundaries, or points of hesitation, such as a breath between phrases.
6. So powerful is the role of the eyes in communication that attempts to mitigate other distractions, such as rhythmic vocal patterns or mechanical appearing gestures, without addressing eye gaze are unlikely to succeed.
7. The eyes signal fear more than other facial features.
8. Any method that creates an immediate sensibility to an action allows you to understand how that distraction originates.
9. The length of eye behavior is determined by the content, medium, type of presentation, and other participants' actions.
10. The richness of your eye engagement creates relationships, which are the fundamental reason to communicate.