

Nonverbal Aggression, Social Exclusion, and Cultural Expectations

Las Vegas, 7/7/26

One pattern I have observed in my own experiences involves hostile nonverbal communication. After making eye contact, I have sometimes encountered expressions of anger, contempt, or intimidation instead of a smile, neutral acknowledgment, or simple friendliness. These interactions are intentionally aggressive.

My concern is hostile nonverbal behavior that is deliberate and functions as a form of intimidation or social exclusion. People have different personalities, cultural backgrounds, and comfort levels. My interest is in understanding how these behaviors affect trust, inclusion, and community relationships.

These behaviors can operate as subtle forms of interpersonal aggression. Although they may seem minor in isolation, repeated experiences can contribute to an environment in which people feel unwelcome or targeted. Nonverbal communication influences how safe, respected, and included individuals feel within their communities.

In my personal experience, I have encountered this behavior most frequently from some Hispanic immigrants or foreign-born Hispanic individuals. These observations reflect only my own experiences and should not be interpreted as describing entire communities or suggesting that all members of any group behave this way. Every community contains people who are kind, respectful, and welcoming, as well as individuals who are not.

Today's interaction involved a Hispanic male. After making eye contact and offering a friendly smile, his response was unexpectedly hostile and intimidating. Experiences like this are emotionally difficult because my expectation, based on my understanding of American social norms, is that strangers generally respond with friendliness, neutrality, or simply continue about their day. When I encounter deliberate hostility, it leaves me questioning why the interaction became adversarial.

I believe that all people deserve basic dignity and respect regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, or background. Personal frustrations or previous experiences should not justify treating strangers with hostility because of their identity. When individuals are judged or treated negatively based on race or ethnicity, it contributes to discrimination and unnecessary social conflict.

The issue I wish to communicate is how repeated hostile nonverbal interactions may influence trust, community cohesion, and the normalization of hostility and discrimination. Understanding these dynamics may help encourage more respectful communication and reinforce the importance of treating others with equal dignity and kindness.