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It's In The Eyes

Every move you make
Every vow you break
Every smile you fake
Every claim you stake
I'll be watching you

The Police—"Every Breath You Take"

It's been said for thousands of years that the eyes are the window of the soul and that a person's thoughts can be ascertained by looking in the eyes. Understanding instinctive, non-verbal language such as eye contact and positional angles can make you a better negotiator and communicator.

Proper eye contact is important to help you get your point across and to indicate that you hear what others are saying. When making eye contact, Patrick Collard, a consultant for the secret service and elite military units, offers the following tips:

1. Looking at your counterpart's right eye with your right eye is confrontational.
2. To indicate that you are receptive and listening, look at your counterpart with your left eye to his right eye.
3. To get your point across when you are talking, look at your counterpart with your right eye to her left eye.
4. If things have heated up, diffuse the tension by looking at your counterpart's left eye with your left eye, which is passive.

The angle at which we sit or stand is important. For communicating, our right side is our dominant side and our left side is our receptive side. Standing directly in front of someone is confrontational and may elicit a defensive attitude. Instead, turn to an angle towards them, with your left side towards their right side to convey you are listening. When arranging the conference room seating, instead of facing your counterpart directly across the table, slightly moving your chair to the right can avoid a confrontational stance. While seated, swivel your right side to their left to use your strong side when speaking to emphasize your point.

For stronger communications, remember Bogart's famous line in *Casablanca*: "Here's looking at you, kid."