
Foreword

Robert J. Garmston

“What’s going on here?” I asked myself as I read this book.

Take a walk like Alice in Wonderland as you read this desperately valuable book. Everything you thought you knew about presenting, you probably can relearn here. I speak from experience. For over a decade I have taught presentation skills; written two books on the topic; attended workshops conducted by the guru of nonverbals, Michael Grinder; and cotrained with both of this book’s authors, including doing a trial-by-fire training with Kendall with police officers, some of whom in the beginning didn’t want to be in the training yet by the end were willing and happy participants. I kept asking myself, “What is going on here? I’m supposed to be writing a foreword for this book, but it is taking me ages because I keep stopping and writing notes for myself.”

The authors have put together a state-of-the-art treatise on communications as it pertains to presenting to and facilitating groups. Their work is supported by research and delightful stories—we’ve all been there—some good and some bad experiences with groups that they use to illustrate preferred ways of gaining rapport, establishing credibility, conveying information, enhancing learning, energizing and focusing groups, and dealing with the challenging behaviors that come up periodically with an errant individual or group.

If as a presenter you are currently hot, or if you are not, you can enhance your effectiveness with groups by reading this book. And have more fun. Learn, for example, how to stop looking at details and look for patterns instead to make assessments about a group’s state of mind in the moment; learn to choreograph your words with nonverbal patterns to acknowledge resistance, effectively having groups leaning forward in their seats wanting to participate; learn how to listen to questions—this is where

the best of us lose credibility if we don't know some simple patterns for hearing and responding to participants' questions.

And about Alice. This book captures the wonder of the imaginative world of Alice in Wonderland—but here we read about real and verifiable phenomena. Not even the Mad Hatter would have guessed that the position in which you hold your palm makes a difference in audience reception, or that freezing a gesture holds audience attention while you pause, and that those presenters who pause longer and with greater frequency are more influential.

In short, enjoy this special book. It is one you will want to keep on your shelf and return to repeatedly, internalizing and using more and more of the wonderful nonverbal science presented here.

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