

Published March 2003, *Doors and Hardware Magazine*

The State We're In

As we write this (February 5, 2003), the world watches as US and UN officials debate over the proper course of action to take in response to Iraq's alleged defiance of UN demands to disarm. The split among UN member nations to back the US in a more aggressive approach to the situation is indicative of how we all feel in times of uncertainty. Left unchecked, uncertainty breeds fear that stems from a disruption of our daily lives and a breach of personal security. We don't know what will happen or what we'll do, but it seems it will happen sooner rather than later; February rather than March. So, as you read this, you may know more than we do today. Hopefully, that higher level of certainty will carry with it a greater degree of security.

Of course, world affairs have not escalated to the point that we live in a state of fear. Most of us do feel secure today. We have faith that everything will turn out well for America. We feel proud of American strength and know we are just. We keep the faith and do our jobs. But it is important that we understand and remember where that pride and faith come from; it is essential we do not forget that, like freedom and security, America is a promise that is extended to all, not a guarantee for a select few.

Security is a promise as well for the architectural openings industry; one that we cannot afford to ignore or pay little heed. Security within an office, school, church or other public facility is on a much smaller, more personal scale than the security of nations, but it is no less important. We control part of that day-to-day personal sense of well-being experienced as an individual walks through one of our openings to work, study, worship, travel or shop. It is our job to educate building owners, architects and building managers about ways to keep the sense of a "safe place" in the hearts of their building users. A well-functioning security system that includes the properly specified door and hardware components may be all but invisible, but let any component fail, and fail repeatedly, and doubt creeps in. But security is comprised of much more than reliable products properly installed that keep intruders at bay. Security builds strength, not the other way around.

Security is not merely a measure of power against opposing forces, but rather the confidence in the promise of comfort and the freedom from fear.

The promise of comfort can be conveyed in the early stages of any project, in an approach to selling security that doesn't rely on fear. In these pages you will find a case study of a security system designed for a vocational/technical school. The system was not selected as a result of scare tactics that used repeated accounts of the horror stories of disturbed kids with guns. The approach taken was much more subtle. School officials were educated on the benefits of catching internal security problems at the "bully" stage before violence occurs and fear spreads. The psychology of the "bully" is coming under much examination these days and companies that understand the importance of observing bad behavior as it transpires and containing it quickly will prevent the kinds of stories we all have heard and dread. This is the kind of useful example we hope to deliver in these pages and the kind of example our industry can set for a world that at times seems all too willing to react with fear rather than strive with hope. The notion of the "bully" brings us full circle. We have a bully in our hallway. He is contained. But the problem remains: What do we do? Who is the authority having jurisdiction? The US? The UN? By the time you read this, these matters may well be settled, but more than likely our security will be an ongoing concern. There will be another bully. Our industry's charge is to placate those everyday uncertainties that affect our daily lives; to achieve and maintain that sense of security we all desire.

When we created the *Doors and Hardware* editorial calendar for this year, we knew that security would be a major topic for the industry to examine (again). This is merely the first of your Security issues. Another is planned for October, after our annual convention, and will take up the thread of the security conversation that develops in Tampa. Perhaps if we allow the promise of security to assuage our fears and develop our comforts, we will again feel safe. As a consequence, this magazine will spend more time discussing decorative hardware and architecture as art. I'm sure we all look forward to that type of peace. [end]

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Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround

by Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.

Magazines like other business ventures from time to time need to pause and reflect on the totality of the messages they send to their reader's/customers. Part of the message is carried in the delivery. The writer's stylistic choices and attitudes are delivered along with their expert advice. Read the following sentences from recent Business Buzz sections of *Doors and Hardware*.

"Learn about your customers and prospective customers by examining your market for its unique demographic and psychographic characteristics."

"We must work hard to develop ourselves in a whole-brained way and to surround ourselves with trusted others that complement our weaknesses to avoid blind spots in decision making."

"Play the scenario out in your mind and then ask yourself, "is this decision and action strengthening or weakening my integrity?"

Each of the quotes above is from a different author, working independently to bring you the most efficacious action plan. However, brought together as the quotes would be in the memory of the dedicated reader, they begin to resonate in a way typically associated with "New Age" or "West Coast" philosophy. Business people are promised that once they get in touch with some "inner being"—whether it's their own or their customers—part of their daily challenges will be solved. No one would argue the validity of self-reflection, but the writers here must either assume the reader will take these cursory pointers and find additional guides, or they assume every reader has a well-worn yoga mat under their desk. To balance the inner journey approach, try reading *Who says Elephants Can't Dance?* This guide has a decidedly more New York edge.

The writing style in *Elephants* is plain and direct. Points are begun or emphasized with snappy epigrams that are powerful and readymade to become part of any new manager's tool kit. For example: "People don't do what you expect but what you inspect." Gerstner uses the saying as shorthand. His meaning suggests that people might be accustomed to doing things their own

way, hence give little weight to new directives. Early on, Gerstner realized that this was a problem at IBM. He had to prove his sincerity and focus by closely observing the progress made by his inherited managers. He found divisions had too much autonomy; managers were isolated from accountability by a system of assistants; decision making was diffused by what Gerstner called "a culture of 'No.'" This was a quirky protocol that had devolved at IBM. He explains that a single division at IBM could kill forward movement in a company-wide objective by casting a "non-concur" vote.

Gerstner uses an effective deadpan presentation to describe the strange IBM culture he discovered. His feelings about these incidences are just perceptible enough to register as humor. One memorable anecdote is little more than a verbatim reprinting of an e-mail he received. It was prompted by Gerstner's visit to one of Big Blues many complexes. He had just given a spirited rally-the-troops speech after which one employee (left unnamed), felt compelled to send their critique of the new boss and lecture him on the evils of "competition". Gerstner's silent after showing us this screed allows our imagination to fill in his reaction. The e-mail comes mid-book when we have a good picture of Gerstner as a tough-minded individual who admires that quality in others. He is all about the marketplace. The sincerity and totally weightless attack on his most cherished beliefs must have tickled the man. Humor is always derived from the world Gerstner found at IBM and what the rest of us consider the real world.

IBM basically invented computing and grew globally fat and happy with their cash cow, the System/360 mainframe. Businesses had to adapt to IBM's tools because they were the only data-processing game in town for decades. This marketplace dominance meant that IBM didn't have to worry about customer service, marketing, employee turnover... basically everything a normal business does worry about. The problems began when competition started making in-roads. Other mainframe makers appeared and offered the hardware for less. IBM tried to put a full nelson on their customers to keep the interlopers out. IBM refused to maintain a data center that had anything other than IBM equipment installed. Gerstner experienced these strong-arm tactics as a corporate head at American Express. He brought that memory of bad service to his new position and made correcting it a cornerstone of IBM's rehabilitation. This is one of a number of ironies contained in the book. Another example is early in Gerstner's career; he acted as a consultant and preached "decentralization" to corporations as a means to adapt quickly to changes in

the marketplace. But as the head of IBM, he found he needed to remove multiple decision centers inside the organization to accomplish the same end.

The story of IBM told here is the fullest, freshest, and easiest to follow cautionary tale of a business nature available today. The first of the computer age. The history of information technology (IT) is not long compared to the door and hardware industry. The story of a company that did not change with the times and nearly lost its relevance isn't new to us, but IT will play an ever-increasing role across business sectors. Examining a unique institution like IBM, which was the progenitor of the IT industry, we get a depth of understanding in a relatively small capsule.

One of Gerstner's fears before accepting the challenge of turning IBM around was that his technical knowledge of the computing processes was limited. You need not fear that the book dwells overlong on technical aspects of computing. There is a chart called "The Stack" that helps define the computing world into products and services. It takes one page and it is there to highlight how IBM shifted focus under Gerstner's directorship. That is as technical as it gets.

In the first two thirds of the book, Gerstner wisely avoids a strictly chronological account. His narrative whipsaws back and forth in time to explain the role of critical meetings (e.g.: stockholders, customers) or to give credit to one of his assistants (Marketing, HR). This structure also seems a more humble approach, as he does not need to concentrate on his own actions at every turn. Though these early sections of the book are interesting, on their own, they serve mainly as extended examples for Gerstner's notions on the best way to lead a business. Any size of business. By chapter 23 he has built to a point where he can begin enumerating lessons learned. These ideas would make a great guide to any leader who has room for self-reflection. For example, while speaking of integrity, he eloquently explains the affect of playing favorites. Business leaders can be swayed, as they talk themselves into compromises in the company's policies [on compensation and punitive measures]. There will be reasons, both strong personal and buisness-related arguments, to make exceptions for some employees. However, he warns: "If an executive demonstrates that exceptions are part of the game, then his or her leadership will erode as the trust of colleagues evaporates". This subject in other hands might be explained as: "fairness is good karma," but as everything else in Elephants, the moral comes down to what is practical, what succeeds. [end]

Useful phrases from *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?*

Coopetition: competing and cooperating at the same time with businesses outside your own.

Going Dark: choosing to not speak to the press.

Hard Stop: the time at which a meeting must end, no matter what.

Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?: Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround © 2002

by Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.

Written October 2003

For Leadership column

The Bloodsucking Carrot: A Workplace Without Trust is a Scary Business

I couldn't help noticing two carrot references in the October 2003 issue of *Doors*. For sometime my mind has been focused upon examining the pitfalls managers often make. These thoughts I hope to turn into essays that would be the type of diversion which I would want to read in our magazine: amusing, cautionary but above all useful. It was the combination of this intense focus, the repeated mention of carrots and the passing of Halloween that triggered a memory of *The Thing from Another World*. Somewhere during this movie the head scientist (Dr. Carrington) describes the alien monster of the title as a chlorophyll-based (plant-like) humanoid. A wise-cracking reporter jokes to the effect that the creature sounds like some kind of "**intellectual carrot!**" You probably have seen this B-movie from the '50s. You may have a vague recollection of a black and white "monster" movie with a flying saucer frozen just beneath the ice with only a huge Cadillac-esque fin showing above the surface. This film has quite a few interesting ideas associated with, but its most striking aspect is the lessons the story points up about trust and leadership.

We can agree that people work together best under a leader who inspires trust throughout the team. This trust is earned all around, between the leader and each individual member of the team. The nature of some modern work groups dictates that members do not physically work together. Some might deliver their piece of the puzzle over a phone, or from the next office over. What holds the group together? Leadership and trust. The leader provides the team with a common goal. And the group must trust that they are not alone in tackling the problem.

In 1938 sci-fi writer William Campbell penned a novella titled "Who Goes There?". It was a story inspired by a pair of mischievous twins, who tricked Campbell by exchanging identities with each other. The fact that he could no longer trust with whom he was dealing, became exaggerated to horrific degree in his short story. Two Hollywood movies were made from this story. The films were made 30-years apart and show vastly divergent perspective as to group dynamics. The films do share the same setting of an isolated and frozen research station. Beyond this they barely resemble one another. Curiously the more recent film (1980)

is closer in faith to the original story. The film made between the book and the remake is the focus for us. The director of *The Thing from Another World (TTFAW)*, Howard Hawks, bought the film rights for \$900.00 and proceeded to adapt it freely. In doing so, he made one shining example of how people should work together. This is especially obvious when contrasting *TTFAW* with the remake titled *The Thing*.

Trust

In *TTFAW* we are presented with a group of eight people who can be classified as falling into either the scientific or military subgroup. The military side of the equation pilots a plane. One could say that trusting your fellow crewmen is a necessary part of staying airborne. The scientists too seem to be a group who easily swaps information and theories over a friendly pipe. It would be nice to be able to see the esprit de corps develop inside both groups, but we meet these actors as two fully developed teams. While we do not see the trust develop, we do find certain behaviors and traits that are telling. All members of both groups are experts at what they do. All are polite, tolerant, and understanding of each other. They joke with each other, they inform each other. The new dilemma from outer space brings the scientific and military groups together for the first time.

As the new combined team coalesces around the problem of the space creature. A tension develops between the head scientist (Carrington) and the military's more cautious approach. Both the scientists and the soldiers are following orders from the US government, but direction is coming intermittently as the radio signal permits. The communications lag far behind the research stations situation. This forces the military Captain into the decision maker's role.

Leadership

It is interesting to observe the hero of this movie: the Air Force Captain. Part of the director's fun was to create a unique leadership style for the man. The Captain is never the one who solves the problem. He is lead by his subordinates. He listens to their plan. He green lights their plan. And he facilitates their plan. One example of this is when his crew chief informs him that posting guards over the frozen monster isn't working well. The thing in the ice is frightening the guards and the room is too cold to stay in for very long. The Captain initially ribs the crew chief. But the chief doesn't just bring the problem to the Captain he also brings the solution. He

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suggests letting the guards rotate out every half-hour and giving the guards an electric blanket and a pot of coffee. The Captain quickly green lights this plan. This shows his leadership is characterized by trusting his men's advice. It also underlines the Captain's compassion for his team. Contrast this with Dr. Carrington in a similar situation later in the film. He realizes the monster is hiding inside the greenhouse and he *shames* two of his subordinate (in the name of science) to stand guard so no one can disturb the creature. He places his people in harms way and they are murdered. Even after their death, he does not alter his opinions. He remains extremely haughty and says things like: "Knowledge is more important than life" and "There are no enemies in science, only phenomena to be studied." All the members contained in both groups now see Carrington as untrustworthy. The science team quickly migrates toward the Captain's leadership. He accepts this new help readily. For example, an egghead explains the sufficiency of the heat from the electrical generator will thoroughly cook the carrot. This helps confirm the plan. Ultimately the Captain is the guy who knows the people who can solve the problem. Anyone who can aid him in his goal is accepted. As a manager he is what many a magazine advice column would consider ideal. He is also lucky to be surrounded by good talent. When they are confronted by an eight-foot tall, bloodsucking carrot, they pull together to kick its butt. It's a beautiful thing.

The Ugly Thing

In their own ways, both *TTFAW* and the remake *The Thing* highlight the importance of cohesion within a group to successfully solve problems. But the darker remake is not a case of highlighting what to do, but what *not* to do. It is interesting where we find groups and trust already established at the beginning of *TTFAW*, in *The Thing* we find individuals suffering from boredom and treating the boredom with heavy drinking. There are several examples of disrespect. There is disrespect for equipment: One member destroys a computer chess game when he loses. There is disrespect for the leader "Gary". He is only called by his rank once and this is in a sarcastic remark made in his presence. A group member sneers "El Capitan had to shoot off his popgun." There is disrespect for each other's personal space. One member of the research group asks a cook to turn down the music emanating from the kitchen. The cook agrees but just waves his hand over the dial.

The condition of the people is different and the nature of the monster is also more complicated in *The Thing*.

The creature has the ability to mimic perfectly a human host. The way the monster attacks is to absorb its victim as revealed in some truly icky special effects. Once the characters in this movie realize they are trapped with a monster indistinguishable from a familiar person, any trust they did share dissolves. They are reduced to closely watching each other in fear.

This movie has a leading man, but no real leader or hero. We follow the actions of Kurt Russell throughout *The Thing*. Russell is a solitary helicopter pilot preferring to stay in a shack away from the others. He only takes charge, after the official leader gives up command. But the idea of "leadership" is quickly made null and void. Once a logical blood test to establish who the creature has co-opted is ruined, "The leader" is whoever has his weapon drawn on the others. More time is spent accusing each other of harboring the monster than working together to root it out. This divisiveness seals the fate of everyone. *The Thing* is a much scarier film, than *TTFAW* mainly because the characters cannot help themselves. They cannot trust one another long enough to succeed.

Lessons

If you are a manager and recognize the symptoms of a workplace shaping up like that of *The Thing*, you need to own the problem of Distrust. It is not an easy problem for a weak leader to solve. It will require time. Trust, like fear, is connected to the primitive part of the brain. What's to fear in your business environment? What can you do to control it? It might require baby steps back to basics like: talking out a problem, searching for understanding, allowing for friction inside the team, but controlling it. By all means holding the team together. Remember. Without a shared goal, there is no impetus to work together. It *had* to be a series of successful missions by the military team in *TTFAW* that created a trust between them. What made those missions successful was the leader deploying his troops. In this case listening, caring, facilitating and accepting advice and information from any quarter. When you successfully develop trust, you will find your team starts at a higher plateau. Their solutions now have the potential to go beyond the organization's historic peak. They are stronger for the next dilemma.

This advice assumes you can isolate the problem to "trust" and isn't combined with truly poor or non-performance. In *The Thing* there is an absence of common courtesy. But there is also an absence of purpose. The group has deteriorated to a point where

they might have started to kill each other even without an outside force. The blame must be laid at the leaders feet. Allowing distrust to spread, a manager maybe forced to do as the famous final line from *The Thing from Another World* commands: "Watch the Skies..." not for saucers, but for a miracle.

[end]

Emotions Revealed
Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve
Communication and Emotional Life
By Paul Ekman
Copyright 2003, Times Books
240 pages
ISBN 0-8050-7275-6

The Smirk on the Face of the Smartest Monkeys

Prelude

Recently we received an article submission from a sales trainer. We considered the story because on the face it seemed to deal with developing better sales technique. However, a book came to our attention at this same time; the information in this book so outshone the content of submission, it caused us to reconsider. With a newly jaundiced eye, we determined to politely pass on publishing the original submission.

The subject of “psychology” in a sales or in a recruitment context, one might guess, would be taken up by a few charlatans. Psychology used to sell your product to a customer, or to hire the correct candidate for a job, is going to happen whether either party in either type of exchange knows it is happening. There is a benefit to understanding the psychology that surrounds these situations because both require the ability to read people and their reactions. But it struck us as an oversimplification and possibly a confused transposition of the sales/recruiting scenarios when the previously mentioned sales trainer suggest that if a salesperson observes a customer blocking their mouth with their hand when responding, the customer’s answer will be untruthful. This assumption, even if correct, serves as no real help for someone in sales. It has limited use even for a HR recruiter where this silly notion belongs.

Salespeople need to create the right emotional dynamic leading up to a sale. This may require a bit of psychology. Body language maybe a way to check for feedback, but merely knowing your customer has no objections to listening to your pitch does not mean you are going to close the deal. This “gesture as non-verbal communication” isn’t enough to go on. It is too easy to imagine a gesture; an eye-rub, a nose pull, etc. that has nothing to do with the subconscious. Sorry. We’re plum out of magical, mind-reading power today.

The Book

If you are interested in “reading people like a book” you may like to first read *Emotions Revealed* by Paul Ekman, PhD. The psychological questions that Ekman has studied for 40 years may very well be the misinterpreted source of many a sales trainer’s baloney concerning kinesics. This book takes you back to the controlled studies where first-hand observations were recorded. The downside of going to this source is Ekman’s purpose was not to make better salespersons. You will have to figure out how to use the raw information yourself.

There has been a perennial question whether facial expressions are born in us or learned. Ekman’s research of facial reactions across cultures has confirmed that there is a set of universal emotions unquestionably wired into our brains and the muscles of our faces from birth. The first emotions to come under field study have been the so-called “negative emotions”: Sadness, Anger, Surprise, Fear, Disgust and Contempt. Ekman lumps several enjoyable emotions into one chapter in the latter part of the book. As he states the positive emotions have not been widely studied therefore less is known. He only speculates about the good emotions.

After a bit of an overview Ekman begins to breakdown the most problematic of emotions. One criticism that could be leveled early on is his choice to use words to describe how facial muscles behave while in the throes of each of the emotion in turn. This can be difficult to follow. His preoccupation with this descriptive process springs from the Facial Action Coding System he developed in 1978. Ekman found that the face has about 10,000 possible muscle interactions, but that extremely high number correlates to only 44 action units that relate to specific emotions. Luckily, he doesn’t rely solely on written description, photography is used to great advantage throughout the book. Every chapter commences with a photograph, usually snapped by a journalist. The subject of each photo is captured in a scenario that invariably leads to one of the themes behind the face of an emotion. Sadness’ theme for example is loss. In the best chapters these emotion themes are looked at in context of an evolutionarily desirable signal. Somewhere in our hominoid past the sad face, signaling loss and communicating a need for help, first trust out its lower lip and raise the inner points of its brow. This ploy (along with the other faces) was successful enough to become an involuntary part of our everyday lives. Part of the definition of an emotion is that they come unbidden. They are not planned. They come and go as something we care about is touched upon. It is important to understand

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one other characteristic that separates an emotion from similar reactions. The factor is “time.” If an emotion lasts longer than a few seconds it heads into mood territory. If a mood goes over long it begins to head into mental disorder territory. For example a sad mood that continues unrelieved is “Depression”. One of the more memorable quotes in the book deals with this speed factor. He says: “The speed of emotions can save our lives or they can ruin it when they cause us to overreact.” Ekman believes the surprise/fear emotion saves lives when people automatically turn the driver’s wheel to avoid an on-coming car.

While emotions *do* have a limit to how long they can last. There seems to be no limit to how briefly they can appear on the face. This discovery has opened up a whole new money making enterprise for the author. He has developed self-training CD-ROMs for people interested in getting good at recognizing “micro expressions.” But there are problems with the idea of this training and unfortunately the book as well. The first is, as Ekman says, we *all* are already sensitive to seeing these signals. It wouldn’t be very smart of Nature to develop a signal that no one could understand. The training should help move this information to the front of our consciousness, and this presumably would allow trainees/readers to act on the information. However, at nearly every turn, Ekman warns that merely determining the presence of a singular emotion does not mean there is a correct reaction. He mainly relies on the same three examples in a parallel structure throughout every emotion discussed. The first example is a dialog between a husband and wife, where one asks the other to make an accommodation, which is unplanned. Another is the same type of scenario only between a parent and a (teenage) child. The last exchange is between a supervisor and a supervisee in a work environment. The suggestion is that in any of these three situations once the negative emotion is recognized, the recipient of someone’s anger or sadness etcetera, can return a response so bland and carefully worded, that the situation becomes defused. At a guess this strategy might work as well as just staring blankly. Who hasn’t tried to explain themselves, once they see they have upset another? The ultimate problem with using this face recognition training is as Ekman’s own research shows, emotions once initiated need to play themselves out. While in the grip of an emotion, people are not receptive to new information. They enter a “refractory period” where the emotion seeks to confirm itself in a feedback loop. So—even if one recognizes an emotion in another and attempts to defuse it—chances are good that it will

die away at its own pace. Although the book does make a weak attempt at some self-help advice (mostly in the anger-management arena) the ways Ekman suggests to apply his science is vague and boils down to common sense. He may as well say: before responding to anger with anger (which is natural) one should slowly count to ten. His best argument for controlling one’s own emotions is to learn to be hypersensitive to personal triggers.

Speaking of sensitivity, the author is at once insensitive and overly sensitive to the reader’s emotional state in short succession. As he endeavors to examine themes or events, which cause the face to change, he tends to begin with extreme examples then he moves to more subtle expressions. Sensitive readers will not be prepared for the extreme example of sadness/agony, which begins chapter 5. The woman’s story is not something anyone would choose to read. At the end of the chapter, the author decides he had better warn readers about what will come next. This is too little too late. Nothing else in the book is more horrifying than what has just preceded the warning. The unfortunate editorial miscalculation could also be seen as a trick. Ekman *is* an expert of emotion after all. One could easily feel resentment towards him for this manipulation (intended or not). But as a dispassionate scientist, he has created the emotion of Anger in the reader precisely in advance of his discussion of Anger. Evidence is available within the book that he would consider this useful. There are points in the book where he coaches the reader towards a manufactured emotional state (to understand it?). This adds to the idea that he might have been psychologically toying with his readers.

There is relief from the negative near the end of the book in a chapter that combines a procession of emotions and feelings that are probably “Good” emotions. Ekman gives the most weight to Contentment, Excitement, Relief and Wonder. While these feelings give a much needed “up” conclusion. The author can only suppose they have value as goals and help categorize personalities (As in thrill-seeker personalities arrange their lives to contain more of the emotion Excitement). He does not spend time developing the evolutionary roots of the faces linked to positive emotions as he does with the negative emotions. There is no research to back up any thoughts along these lines. He does put forward a few emotions that have no English word equivalent that would obviously speak to evolution. The Yiddish “naches” or the feeling of pride in one’s children is one example.

Peace Love and Understanding

This book gives an interesting look into the study of emotions. The use one can make of that look is an open question. The key thing is that a truly rounded individual will have a capacity for empathy. And thoughtfully studying the face of someone you are conversing with, combined with this empathy, may lead to, as the subtitle of the book suggests an improved communication. Just don't let them see you staring at their face too intensely or they may mistakenly believe you are restraining anger. [end]

Side Bar: Factoids

Talking about or reliving a past emotion can cause the emotion to occur again.

Arranging the muscles in the face for extended periods causes the emotion associated with that face to begin to be experienced.

Anger as an emotion isn't all bad. Anger at injustice motivates actions to bring about change. Anger informs others of troubles.

When we see anger we need to see the source of the anger before we sympathize with the angry person.