



# Be a Group Wizard

How to work a room, manage a team and be seen as a leader  
using non-verbal communication

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SS: Well good morning everyone! Welcome back to another 'Beyond Lip Service'. I'm communications coach Sharon Sayler and we're brought to you by [impressionengineers.com](http://impressionengineers.com).

Today, it's my honor to have with us just a fabulous man that I've known for a while. I'm just so excited that he could join us. His name is Michael Grinder, and not only is he one of the foremost experts in non-verbal communication, he's also a group dynamic wizard!

So today we're going to talk about 'Have you ever been stuck in a committee that you couldn't get things done? Or a group or a team that was just driving you crazy?' Well, we're going to find out how you can survive those and maintain your sanity! So thanks for joining us today, Michael.

MG: My pleasure. I just love being on your shows, especially because of the term 'Beyond Lip Service'. It's so inline with non-verbal communication.

SS: Absolutely! Absolutely. Well, as you know, we always ask the question for communication secrets, and I know you've been our guest on my show a couple of times, but I'm sure you'll always have a good communication secret for us. So, what's another one of your communication secrets?

MG: Well, it's one that I've just developed in the last twelve months, and it really changed my thinking as I was writing the book called '*Managing Groups – The Fast Track*'. And what I discovered, Sharon, is that we need to sort out in our own minds whether we're working with a functional group or a dysfunctional group.

And the difference is night and day. And, previously, I was only thinking about the forming, storming, norming and performing, but this, the distinction of functional versus dysfunctional changes all that.

SS: Well, describe to me what *is* the difference between a functional and a dysfunctional. Sometimes I might consider a good group, but there's just one or two people who make me want to scream! So what do I do?

MG: Or strangle!

SS: Yes! Well, that word did come to mind, but I thought I would be a little more correct! I guess screaming is more correct.

MG: We're talking about formed groups because, if it's an unformed group – we're trying to figure out if they're unformed. How do we operate if they're formed? Then we make the distinction about dysfunctional versus functional. And how do you determine if it's functional or dysfunctional? That's a great question.

One of the ways to think about it is, "Are they clear about what their purpose is, and are they coming close to fulfilling it?" And a bi-product of that is, if they *are* coming close to

fulfilling it, then, normally, there's some kind of a clarity in terms of roles and positions. And what are doing? How do we support each other?

SS: And so that obviously makes sense when we're formed. I just want to make sure we have the definition of a formed and unformed so, in a formed group; that's where we know each other and maybe we've been together for a while in some function, right?

MG: Yes. And what's amazing, Sharon, is the people may know each other, the participants, but if whoever is running the meeting, such as the trainer, a guest MC, someone from another office or a factory or home office, if they don't know the group and the group doesn't know the person in charge, it's really an unformed group.

So it's not just that the members know each other, the members *and* the person in charge know each other.

SS: That would be a tough position to be in; to be a guest presenter, shall we say, and have the group already know each other and, we'll say, alliances are drawn and everything. I imagine that happens a lot. I know you give a lot of guest speeches. What do you do, as someone coming in and then just meeting a group that already know each other?

MG: I think you have to first figure out, Sharon, what is the culture of the group. Some groups are just very eager and they're carnivores and, anything you give them, they'll accept. Others are a little more skeptical, and they're checking you out.

So they're checking you out. You have to show that you have some offerings that are going to make their daily life more practical, they're going to be more confident, and competent. Then they'll listen to you. So sometimes you have to get through that testing period and other times you can just start right in.

SS: Hopefully you've got a good 'wow!' opening line or a few lines to break the ice, right?

MG: And that's why key note speakers usually present at conventions and they warm the group up for the business aspect as to why the gathering is occurring. They always have this provocative opening that is so enthralling, you start to think, "What else does this person have?"

The most recent one I came across, Sharon, that I just loved, is a gentleman I met in Australia in February when I was there working with the National Speakers Association. He had been in a car accident about four or five years earlier and he had an artificial arm. He was going to be introduced by the Prime Minister of the country and he was going to do a presentation.

And he thought, "How do I get their attention, because they don't know me from anyone else?" So what he did was, just before the Prime Minister was going to introduce him and welcome him to the podium, he took his arm that was inside his shirtsleeve – and it was artificial – and he unscrewed it.

So, when he shook hands with the Prime Minister, he pulled his arm back, and of course his artificial hand was still in the hand of the Prime Minister. And it got tons and laughter, after everyone was shocked. And so that was how he opened.

SS: Wow! That would be a shocking opening! What about, we'll just say, 'us common folk'? Maybe, even if we're not the presenter, what are some ways that we can maintain ourselves in a group or be seen as a positive part of a group?

MG: It is so simple, but it's not easy to remember to do in practice. But if we talk with our hands, pause, and during the pause we freeze that hand gesture and then not move the hand gesture again until we talk again, what it communicates is: during the pause and my hand is frozen, I'm not done yet. And so people are much more attentive, and they don't interrupt and they listen better. So you're actually teaching them manners.

SS: I know, and I love that one, because that, not only in a group, but I know even in a business group or a company type group, that works well, but also for friends and especially family! So that's a good one.

MG: Yes.

SS: And it's not that easy. I'll say it for the audience here – it's not always that easy to hold still and wait for your mouth to start motion again!

MG: And Sharon, if I can, I'd love to encourage people, if they want, to go to the YouTube site and just type in: 'Michael Grinder - Six Wrong Ways' and that would be sufficient. But the full title is: 'Six Wrong Ways To Make A First Right Impression' and we just – in three minutes will show you the six wrong ways to do it! And I promise, I learned the hard way, by doing it wrong.

SS: You know, I saw that video last weekend. I love it, it is great! You were able to duplicate all of these wrong ways, and what flashes through your mind are people that you know doing each one of those things, and you just feel like sending them the link to the video and saying, "Here, watch this!" But of course, they won't see themselves in it. They might find the humor in it, but won't see themselves in it.

I know, a lot of times, a lot of my listeners are on committees and teams, and a lot of them are just active especially in non-profits and things. Oftentimes I hear about, "Gosh, you know, I gave that idea and, five minutes later, John over there said the same idea and everybody applauded. Yet they didn't hear me when I had the same idea just a couple of minutes earlier."

Let's talk a little about that situation and what someone could do.

MG: Sharon, that's so true. We're not appreciated based on our brain power and our suggestions. We're appreciated on how we deliver those suggestions. And darn it, some people have better timing than others. And, basically, what you'll find is, in a group that's formed and functional, if they're really grappling with something, they will tend to go through moments where they're not as receptive to the solution as others.

So people that time solutions well just offer those suggestions as the group is becoming frustrated with themselves, for instance saying, “Darn it, we spent this time, we’re all intelligent people. How come we’re not coming up with the answer?”

If you do it *just then*, it works well. But, if you offer the same suggestion earlier, when we’re just brain storming and not really evaluating deciding, it tends not to go over as well. So just waiting for the right moment, my goodness, what a difference that makes.

SS: And that’s all about observing the entire group, isn’t it? Just understanding the whole dynamics of the group.

MG: Yes. Group dynamics is the real key, when you’re in a setting that’s other than one-on-one communication.

SS: Let’s just explain what group dynamics is and how knowing something about group dynamics could help the listeners.

MG: Well what we’re finding is: one of the first questions you want to ask yourselves, if you want to get something done by a group or in a group, is to say, “Who is most likely to have permission from the group to offer a suggestion?” If it isn’t you, then you have to go to that person that’s going to be your liaison with the group. If it is you, just go ahead and offer the suggestion.

The other thing that you’ll find is: if you offer a suggestion and they can visually see an outline of what you’re saying – whether that be a PowerPoint or passing out a piece of paper or sending ahead before the meeting any kind of email that has an attachment with your ideas – any time people see things they tend to be a little bit more thoughtful and reflective, as opposed to hearing things and being more spontaneous and impulsive.

SS: That’s key, and that’s one thing I’ve learned from you, is the idea of always going visual to reinforce what we’re saying and even with our non-verbal gestures. But that idea of having some sort of back-up for their memory system is fabulous!

MG: Yes! And for ours too.

SS: Exactly. Lets talk a little bit more about other ideas to not only be the liaison within the group and getting our message across, but what are some ways that we can show people within the group that maybe we have leadership capacity or something like that?

MG: The ability to come across as credible, knowledgeable, confident, competent, that’s really key in terms of your long term relationship with other people. And the more you establish yourself that way, the easier that first impression will last over time. And sometimes, however unfair this seems, sometimes you almost have to go to a new group and start over if you can’t get beyond the group’s stereotype of you. And that’s sad to say, but it’s really true.

So how do you give that first impression? How do you come across as knowledgeable and comfortable with your thoughts and ideas and leadership? And it goes back to what we said

earlier; if we talk with our hands, then pause, freeze the hands during the pause, and then talk again. If we add that to the idea of going visual with the information, what a difference it makes.

Now, a more advanced technique and one that our listeners can enjoy if they want to take out their favorite DVD-movie and go to the chapter that has the dramatic part. You will see that actors as well as presenters – and you have to train yourself to do this – if you can talk without blinking, it's an amazing hypnotic, almost trance, that you put people in, because all of your ideas seem as one connected unit, so that they almost can't think of how to break it apart. They have to buy the whole package.

So, talking without blinking. Wow! You've got to practice it, but boy, does it work!

SS: You know, when you mentioned that to me, I've been trying it and it's amazing how well it works. However, I'm still at that stage where I have to consciously keep it in the tape running besides what I'm saying, "Keep going, don't blink, don't blink!"

MG: You know, I came across a research on that by Diane Ackerman, in one of her books, and she said that the average human being blinks somewhere between six to eight times per minute. So what we're finding is that you blink to moisten your eyes and you also blink to figure out, "What's the next idea that I want to talk about?"

And I think that's why actors are able to do the dramatic part of movies without blinking, because they've memorized all the words! And so they've written out the script, they've rehearsed the script, so they almost have to be trained to blink whereas we have to be trained *not* to blink.

In fact, Will Smith talked about when he first went from Philadelphia, old hip hopper song person, to being in Hollywood and he had his first gig, he memorized everyone's lines and he actually, sometimes, on an interview show, he will actually show footage whereas the other actor in the scene is doing their lines, Will is literally moving his lips to keep the rhythm of when it's his turn to talk! So you can go a little bit too far in terms of memorizing!

SS: Yes! But you know, Diane's idea makes perfect sense, now that I hear it, about that idea of almost refreshing the screen, shall we say! I've often wondered, when I've watched video and since I've heard about not blinking, and I've been amazed about how actors have been able to do it. Now it make sense to me how they've been able to do that.

When I first started it I'd almost get a sort of muscle twitch with some part of me saying, "Blink, blink, blink!" It was crazy.

MG: The easier way to do it, Sharon, for our listeners in general, is to just memorize one or two sentences they want to deliver, that's the key message. And the go ahead and blink all you want before and after that. And, because you've memorized that one or two sentences, you'll find that it's easier to keep your eyes open.

SS: That's great. And another thing about memorizing; if it's an important time that you want to really shine and be seen as credible, memorizing those one or two key parts, it's important to know that my emotions and my intention and my are behind it as well.

MG: Absolutely, absolutely Sharon.

SS: And that's what I think is key, is sometimes people don't look at the whole picture of the communication. Not just the words they want to use, but look it, what's your intention and your emotion behind it too, because those non-verbals peek out even when we don't want them to!

MG: Yes, yes. And Sharon, congratulations on your new book. And, in that book, you have lots of great advice about how to line up your intention with what you are behaviorally doing. Congratulations!

SS: Thank you, thank you! I'm most excited and, just for the listeners, it's coming out August 8<sup>th</sup>. And I had to laugh – it's up on Amazon already and already discounted! I was laughing about that, and then somebody pointed out that they discount all their books! But I was like, "Ok, great!" It's exciting that it's up and available, and at Barnes & Noble too. So thank you very much.

We have only about 10 minutes remaining, but I wanted everyone to know also that your latest book is called 'Managing Groups – The Fast Track' and you also have a larger book called 'The Inside Track' and I just loved the content of both of them. You're going to be giving an event, coming in June, based on group dynamics called Group Wizardry, right?

MG: That's right. It's going to be in Portland, Oregon and it's actually at one of the hotels right next to the airport. It's Comfort Suites. And all of that information, of course, is on our website, but it's June 21<sup>st</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> and it is a five day program, Monday through Friday. And we limit the number of people, because we want to make sure that I get around and do individual coaching with people.

And we have three focuses: group dynamics is the big, big focus this year, but we also do presentation skills so that those listeners that go to YouTube and type in 'Michael Grinder - Six Wrong Ways' – even if they don't finish the full title '*Six Wrong Ways To Make A First Right Impression*' (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZwhedzyxTs>) – we're going to cover all those skills too.

And then, for me, one of the big highlights of the week is on Friday, people have the option of presenting the skills that they learned Monday through Thursday, and we video tape it and the person does it for three minutes. And boy, can you do a lot of skills development in three minutes and practice!

With the video camera still running, I step in front of the video camera with the person and walk the person through some other options and reinforce all the positive things that they're doing. So it's very specific and non-judgmental, and people love receiving the DVD so that they have captured in time where they were with their skills at that time in their development.

SS: Well, not only that, but I know, because I've attended before, the audience that's watching the person up there learns amazing amounts of information too from the four days. It's just surprising, even if you choose not to be videotaped for whatever reason, the amount of learning that happens in that room, on that final day, when you're seeing people implementing the skills, is absolutely amazing.

And I'll have things on the Blog Talk Radio 'Beyond Lip Service' blog if people want to know more about that. How to get to your website and all of that good stuff.

MG: Thank you, Sharon.

SS: As you know, thanks to the Internet, we are international, and one of our listeners, Sergio, he's wrote in a question for you. He wanted to know if there would be audio version of your 'Managing Groups' book? He really likes that idea of being able to hear your voice and all the inflections that you give. So I just thought I'd throw that out to you.

MG: Well, we actually do have, on YouTube, another product there that's free downloadable. Just type in 'Michael Grinder The Fast Track' and you'll actually hear my voice with an 11 minute overview describing how you sort out the four kinds of groups. The unformed, the formed and functional, the dysfunctional and the healthy groups.

And then we also will have out in the next – we're hoping – six months, a free downloadable screensaver for your computer that will have the best quotes from the book with nice pictures in the background that you can put up on your computer. But we're also taking all of our products and our screensavers now, Sharon, and we have them free downloadable as jpegs so you can put it on digital frames and you can have it either as a rotating quote that inspires people, or you can have it on your desk, and you can, when you want, rotate to the next inspiring quote.

And we're just finding huge amounts of people saying "This is great!" And, as you know, Sharon, our commitment is always for a follow-up and reinforcement. So eventually, yes, we're going to have some talking books and, at this point, we're going to focus a little bit more on our visual support system, at this time.

SS: Well that's great. Just being able to go to YouTube and see both of those – I just wanted the audience to know your last name is Grinder, though it has been pronounced differently from the way it is written.

MG: If you want, the joke is "If he's in a good mood, he's a Grinder, and if he's really working hard he's a Grinder."

SS: Ok! I wanted to talk a little bit more about screensavers. My favorite one is the one from 'Charisma, The Art Of Relationships' book, and all those wonderful quotes that happen in the screensavers. If we want to show charisma in a group – and we all want that – we know about talking with our hands and pause, and then talk with our hands again, and talk without blinking, what are a couple of other ways for us to understand a group, or show that we do have a little bit of charisma.

MG: The easiest way is to go back to the concept we mentioned earlier about going visual. There's times when you want to go visual and times when you want to look at people. We tend to overlook at people in general. We don't how to, if we show a PowerPoint or we direct them to a screen, a smart board, a hand out, that, if we want them to look, we have to make sure we look where we want *them* to look.

So we've all been in programs where someone chose a wonderful PowerPoint but looks directly at the audience and as participants, we feel in a bind. "Do I break eye contact and actually look over at what's on the screen?" And so charisma is a combination of, when you are looking at something visual, you can use a very credible James Bond voice, whether you're male or female. Just keep your head still. Have your voice be very flat. And at the end of whatever you're saying, have your chin come down. And as it comes down, you sound like a pilot on an airplane.

Then, when you're looking at the people, be a little bit more flight attendant, and have your head go up and down, and have a rolling kind of voice. And people love knowing that when you're looking at the visual, you're doing your position, your pilot, your level of responsibility, your knowledge base.

And when you're looking at us, you're much more people and friendship and relationship oriented. And charisma seems to be a blend of both being issue oriented and people oriented, Sharon.

SS: That's so true. And I was thinking about a variety of people, mostly celebrities that have charisma. They do seem to be able to connect with us and then still be very strong and believable. I find that fascinating. And so, when we use these different voice patterns, we practice them, and when you said "rolling voice pattern" can you give us just a little sample of what a rolling voice pattern is?

MG: Well, I can really exaggerate and have my head go up and down, and that makes my voice seem very, very friendly. And, especially if you have some kind of a smile in your voice. So one of the things that you and I do, when we're talking on our Internet radio, is we have mirrors in front of us and all good sales people or people that do a lot of business on the phone, they have this ability to look at themselves in the mirror and, if they're not smiling, their voice isn't smiling also.

So that's an example of a very approachable voice and people will like being serviced by that kind of a person.

SS: I'm glad you put the disclaimer there on the exaggeration, because I was thinking, "Wow, that is syrupy!"

MG: Yes it is, yes it is. Pollyanna, Pollyanna.

SS: And so, knowing what effect you're going for beforehand seems to be the key on this, because obviously it can be carried to the extreme if you're not practiced with it.

MG: Absolutely, absolutely. And that's why I like your book so much, and I'm glad it's coming out in August, even though it's up already on Amazon, because you really go into the differences between those two voice patterns, and what your intention is for each, and what the effect is on them.

SS: Right. And I find that, so often, when I talk to people about communication, a lot of times, they're not really clear on what their intention is before they open their mouths. And I find that so interesting! Then why are we opening our mouths if we're not sure what we're going to be saying, and what our intention is for speaking?

MG: A really easy cue for people, Sharon, is, if they're sending information, if it's non-negotiable, then use the pilot voice. And, if you're trying to seek information or brain storm or get input, then use the flight attendant voice.

SS: Those are good analogies too for people to understand, because, a lot of times, I find I'll be observing someone and my friend will be in communication with someone and they'll come away saying "I can't believe what just happened!" And I explain by saying, "Maybe the voice pattern there is the reason you didn't get the outcome you thought"

Or, we also have corresponding hand gestures that go with those two as well. There's the sending info: usually the palm is either to the side or down, and that can unconsciously stop the flow of information.

Gosh, Michael, I know you and I could just go on and on and on. Thank you so much. We're down to our last 60 seconds – I can't believe it! Time flies.

Let's talk to the group a little bit. Let's remind them about when Group Wizardry is and on your website, how to get hold of you.

MG: MichaelGrinder.com or MichaelGrinder.com will bring you to the website, and the course is June 21<sup>st</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>. It's in Portland, Oregon, right at the airport, called Group Wizardry, and we have lots of information that you'll have on my site and your site, Sharon, that will direct people there.

SS: Absolutely. And I encourage everybody to go to it, because I've been to it, and the acceleration in my learning was fantastic.

So thanks for joining us today Michael.

MG: My pleasure.

SS: And I wanted to make sure, everyone, be here next Tuesday, when we're having Suzie and Otto Collins, and we're going to talk about our one-on-one relationships; the relationships we have with those closest to us, and how to communicate better with them.

So join me next week, and thank you so much for listening today.

*[End of questions]*