

How to Read People — What They Reveal Without Realizing It : 20 Minutes Book Insights

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

252 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Picture this.

You're sitting with someone you care about, like a partner, a parent, a child, a friend.

You ask them, are you okay?

They smile.

They say, yeah, I'm fine.

But something doesn't fit.

There's a tension you can feel.

Maybe in their breath.

Maybe in their eyes.

Maybe in the way their hands move.

Or the way they don't move at all.

And suddenly your mind starts running.

Did I misunderstand something?

Should I say something?

Why do I feel something is wrong when their words sound perfectly normal?

If you've ever had that moment, and I think we all have, Today's episode is for you.

Before we start, let me say something important.

This episode is inspired by a book I recently read called How to Analyze People by James Jared.

I'm not reading the book to you.

This is not a replacement for the book.

It is just a guide.

My personal summary.

My interpretation of the ideas that I found most interesting, practical, and eye-opening.

And honestly, if you like what you hear today, I truly recommend buying the book.



There's a lot more in it, and going deeper will only make these ideas clearer and more useful in your life.

Let's just talk.

Human to human.

Take a breath with me.

Relax your shoulders if you can.

Let's step into this world where people reveal more than they ever say out loud.

Part One Why baseline change everything?

When you try to understand people, it's very easy to get lost in details.

We focus on gestures, comments, tiny movements, eye contact, crossed arms, nervous smiles, and sometimes we jump to conclusions.

But there is one idea that makes everything simpler, more reliable, and incredibly powerful.

People only make sense when you know what they're like on a normal day.

This is their baseline, how they usually speak, how much energy they normally have, how they move their hands, how often they smile, how quickly they react, how they behave when nothing special is happening.

Because here's the truth most of us forget.

The human brain doesn't analyze isolated behavior.

It analyzes change.

It's not, oh, look, she crossed her arms. She must be defensive.

That's too simplistic.

It's, she never crosses her arms. Something's different today.

That small shift is the real signal.

Let me give you a real-life scenario.

Imagine someone who typically speaks fast, animated, full of gestures.

You meet them today.

And suddenly they're slow, quiet, reserved, with almost no movement.

Most people won't consciously notice the difference, but your body will feel something strange.

Or imagine a friend who is normally calm, soft-spoken, almost shy.

And today they're talking louder, interrupting, full of visible energy.

That jump, that deviation is meaningful.

We spend so much time trying to decode people that we forget to first understand who they are when they aren't stressed, excited, distracted, or emotional.

So here's something you can start doing immediately.



When you talk to someone who matters to you, just notice, gently, what their normal looks like.

Not to judge, not to diagnose, not to label.

Simply to be more aware.

Because once you know their baseline, every change becomes a window into what they're feeling.

One of the most beautiful, mysterious, and reliable things about human behavior is this.

The body speaks before the brain has time to prepare a story.

People can control their words.

People can control their smile.

People can even control their tone of voice for a moment.

But almost nobody can control.

Their shoulders, their breathing, their hands, their feet, their posture, their micro movements.

These are what I like to call the honest muscles.

Let's look at a few examples.

Shoulders.

Shoulders simply don't lie.

When someone is genuinely relaxed, their shoulders fall naturally downward.

Their neck moves easily, their breathing flows.

But when someone is pretending to be relaxed, when they're trying to show strength or calm, the shoulders often stay lifted, tight, rigid, almost locked in place.

It's a small detail, but once you notice it, you can't unsee it.

Hands.

Hands are storytellers.

Anxious people rub their fingers, touch their neck, play with objects, adjust clothes, twist jewelry, tap their legs.

Not because they want to show anxiety, but because anxiety leaks through the hands.

Comfort, on the other hand, is open.

Open palms, fluid gestures, relaxed fingers.

Feet.

Feet are maybe the most honest part of the body.

We move our feet without thinking, so they reveal our real intentions.

Feet pointing toward you often means interest, openness.

Feet pointing toward the door often means they want the interaction to end.



Feet shifting repeatedly often means internal tension, even when the face looks calm.

These signals don't mean someone is lying.

They don't mean someone is hiding something terrible.

They mean the body is feeling something the mouth hasn't expressed yet.

Think of these signals as whispers, not accusations.

Whispers.

Part three.

The voice.

A window into emotion.

If you want a quick, almost instant indicator of how someone is really feeling, forget their words for a moment.

Listen to the sound behind the words.

Listen to how fast they speak, where they pause, how warm or cold the tone is, whether their breathing is shallow or deep, whether their sentences sound spontaneous or carefully constructed.

You don't need special training.

You just need awareness.

Let me show you what you will hear once you start listening differently.

When someone is nervous, their voice often speeds up.

They add too many details.

They speak in long, complicated sentences, almost trying to fill the silence.

When someone is sad, the rhythm slows down.

The voice becomes softer, sometimes almost disappearing.

There's less upward energy in the tone, less color.

When someone is angry but trying not to show it, the voice becomes colder.

Controlled, shorter sentences, sharper edges.

And when someone is hiding something, not necessarily lying but hiding, you often hear a kind of carefulness.

A pause before answering.

A voice that sounds just a bit too controlled.

A sentence that feels prepared.

It's not about catching people.

It's about noticing emotional pressure.

The voice is not evident.



It is simply an invitation to pay closer attention.

Let's talk about red flags.

Not dramatic ones, not Hollywood ones.

Just small behavioral warnings that deserve attention.

These are not signs of bad people.

They are signs of internal conflict.

Let's walk through them one by one, gently.

Too many details.

Imagine asking someone a simple question.

Where were you yesterday afternoon?

And instead of saying, oh, I was at my mother's house, they say something like, well, I left work around 3.10, I think, and then I stopped to get gas because the tank was low, and then my mother called me and...

That flood of details often means I feel pressure.

I want to convince you.

It doesn't automatically mean dishonesty.

It means discomfort.

Sudden irritation.

This one hurts sometimes.

You ask something innocent and suddenly they react sharply, defensively, even angrily.

Why?

Because you touched a place inside them and they're not ready to visit.

Anger can be a shield, a way to push away a feeling they don't want to feel.

Emotional freezing.

Real people move.

They blink, gesture, breathe, shift in their seats.

But when someone becomes too still and when the body freezes, it often means they're trying to control something inside.

It could be fear, it could be shame, it could be vulnerability.

Freezing is a protective strategy.

Inconsistency over time.

Not a big contradiction.



A small one.

A story that changes subtly.

Aversion that shifts a little every time they tell it.

This doesn't make someone a liar.

It simply means something in that story is sensitive, confusing, or difficult to face.

Red flags don't mean this person is bad.

They mean this person is struggling.

And that is a very different kind of understanding.

Now we move into one of the most fascinating parts of understanding people.

On the surface, people seem complicated, unpredictable, sometimes irrational.

But if you look underneath, human behavior is driven by a very small set of emotional motives.

Belonging.

Control.

Validation.

Comfort.

Let's go deeper.

Safety.

People who seek safety avoid risks, avoid conflict, avoid uncertainty.

They like predictability.

They like routine.

They prefer emotional quietness.

Their behavior often looks like fear, but really it's just the need to feel protected.

Belonging.

Some people will do almost anything not to feel alone.

They adapt to the group.

They say yes when they want to say no. They change themselves to stay connected.

Belonging is one of the strongest human needs.

Control is not about power.

It's about stability.

People who need control aren't trying to dominate others.



They're trying to stop the world from feeling chaotic.

They make plans.

They take the lead.

They sometimes micromanage.

Because inside, chaos terrifies them.

Validation.

Humans need to feel seen, appreciated, valued.

Some people chase this constantly.

Not because they're shallow, but because they have a deep wound that whispers, You're not enough.

Validation-seeking behavior looks dramatic or intense, but it comes from insecurity.

Comfort.

Some people organize their entire lives around avoiding emotional or physical discomfort.

They choose easy paths.

They avoid difficult conversations.

They escape pressure whenever possible.

Not because they're lazy, but because discomfort feels overwhelming.

When you understand these motives, people no longer seem irrational.

They simply look human.

One of the most transformative ideas in understanding people is this.

A single moment means nothing.

A repeated pattern means everything.

A person who snaps one day isn't an angry person.

They're a human having a moment.

A person who cancels dinner one night isn't unreliable.

A person who avoids eye contact once isn't hiding a secret.

But, Patterns tell you the truth.

How someone consistently handles conflict.

How they consistently treat people with less power.

How they consistently behave when stressed.

How they consistently show love or withdraw love.



Patterns are the closest thing we have to an X-ray of personality.

A bad day is just a moment, but a repeated behavior is a story.

If you want to understand people deeply with accuracy and kindness, you need empathy.

Not soft empathy.

Not emotional merging.

Empathy as clarity.

Empathy that asks, what is this person afraid of?

What do they need?

What are they trying to protect?

What would make them feel safe right now?

Empathy allows you to read people.

Without judging them, without overreacting, without making everything about you, Empathy replaces confusion with understanding.

It replaces anger with perspective.

It replaces distance with connection.

Let me close with a simple, practical method you can use every day.

It has four steps.

Step one.

Observe.

Not intensely.

Just notice what's happening.

The body.

The voice.

The energy.

Step two.

Compare.

Is this typical for them, or is this different from their baseline?

Step three.

Interpret.

What emotion fits this behavior?

What motive might be activated?



Step four.

Adjust. Update your understanding as new information appears.

Stay flexible.

This is how clear, calm, emotionally intelligent people read others.

Not perfectly, but compassionately openly, and with curiosity instead of judgment.

Closing words.

Understanding people isn't about intelligence.

It's about attention.

Gentle attention.

Human attention.

It's about noticing the things people reveal without meaning to reveal them.

Not to judge, but to connect.

Thank you for listening, my friend.

This is Martin.

Please leave us a comment below.

What did you find more interesting?

Do you think reading people could be a useful skill?

See you in the next episode.

Let's continue exploring the human world together.

One slow, steady breath at a time.

