

Watching Others

To emphasize how people interpret nonverbal signals based on their own experiences and beliefs, try the following activity:

Pair up with someone and go to a local mall or airport. Take along a pen and paper as well as a copy of this chapter. Decide how many people you will observe. Assign a number to each person you observe. Select a site from which you will both have a clear line of vision in a busy area (food court or entrance area). Choose individuals to watch at random and together observe them discreetly for an agreed-upon amount of time. At the end of the time, jot down your observations of nonverbal cues and what you thought the cues conveyed in terms of general messages. Finally, compare notes and discuss any differences between your observations. Then answer these questions:

1. *Were there differences in perception between you and your partner? If so, why might they have occurred?* _____

2. *What trends or typical body signals were noted? What do these mean to each of you?* _____

3. *Did men and women differ in their nonverbal behaviors? If they differed, describe how they differed.* _____

4. *Did behaviors differ between people under and over the age of twenty years? If they differed, describe how they differed.* _____

5. *Did you notice any trends in dress and grooming between men and women and among people of similar age groups? What were they?* _____

6. *How can you use what you learned in your own customer service environment?*
