

Introduction: Welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer Podcast. The show that walks you step by step to improving strategies you can use today to grow your business. We show you how being kind, useful, and, of course, enchanting will bring you more clients and build a thriving community.

Now here's your host from sunny San Diego, Jacob Sapochnick.

Jacob: Hello everybody, this is Jacob Sapochnick with the Enchanting Lawyer podcast. This is a show where we interview the most inspiring entrepreneurs, business people from all over the world that share their experience with us and inspire us to do better at what we do.

Today we have a very, very exciting guest and a very exciting topic that we're going to share. Her name is Vanessa Van Edwards.

Vanessa is the founder of Science of People. She's a published author and behavioral investigator. She specializes in body language for entrepreneurs. Her work has been featured in Forbes, Businessweek, and CNN. She's a Huffington Post columnist and winner of Portland Startup Weekend in 2012.

Vanessa is just a very exciting person and I'm very happy that you're here in the show. Welcome, Vanessa.

Vanessa: Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Jacob: Very nice. We just talked before the show and you are in Oregon. How's everything in Oregon?

Vanessa: It's wonderful. I think it's like the secret wonderful place that no one knows about yet. So I love it up here in Portland.

Jacob: Excellent. I gave a little brief intro about you but I always like to give it to our guests to introduce themselves and just tell us about your background and what got you to the Science of People.

Vanessa: Sure.

The Science of People is a human behavior research lab. I like to joke that I'm a recovering awkward person because people skills did not really come naturally to me. Growing up I just always felt very uncomfortable interacting. I did not know how to present myself. Being sort of a lover of science and an inner geek, I decided to start to look at the research behind people skills.

I discovered very early on and early in college that there was actually a very robust set of research on people skills but ... especially with body language and non-verbal behavior but we didn't really know about it. We weren't taught body

language in school, you aren't taught about charisma in school. As I started to learn about it for myself, and I really felt like it completely changed my interactions, I decided to start my own company.

So 9 years ago we started Science of People, bringing the research to the people. Science based self-help. That's exactly what we do. We test all the research in our lab. We put together courses and columns and tips trying to make academic research into applicable self-help.

Jacob: Very good. So you focus mostly on entrepreneurs, right?

Vanessa: Yes. Well, we have our biggest demographics entrepreneurs but it can really work with anything. If we're talking about body language or the power of non-verbal, or even human lie detection, the science of lie detection, yes, it's going to be tremendously helpful for professionals and entrepreneurs [unclear 00:03:19] themselves. But it's also very helpful if you're in a relationship, with your friends. Not that your spouse ever lies to you, not that I'm saying that, but it could potentially be helpful in other areas as well.

Jacob: Absolutely.

Before we dive in into the importance of using it and understanding it, why don't you explain to me and to our listeners ... By the way, most of them are attorneys, and a little secret you just told me that both your parents are lawyers, right?

Vanessa: Yes. My parents are both entertainment lawyers and they're also practicing in California. I was very much on that track and I have a love for – it is weird to say but I have a love for laws and contracts. I'm very detail-oriented. And so I thought I was going to be a lawyer.

One of my favorite things to do is to work with lawyers, to talk to lawyers because there is no better application of people science than the legal field. Because lawyers have this very unique skill set where they're dealing with high-pressure, high-emotional situations, they're selling themselves constantly here.

If you build your business, you can be the rainmaker for your firm. You're networking, you're pitching. But then you're also negotiating, you're also doing depositions, you're reading hidden emotions, you're calming clients down if they're going through a difficult time. You're hiring, you're bringing on people onto your team, you're partnering with other partners, you need every single skill, soft skill that some entrepreneurs only need one or two of. And so it's a very unique area. So I'm very excited to be here with you.

Jacob: We're excited as well. You're now one of us.

Vanessa: Yeah. I hope so. I'll be an adopted member for today.

Jacob: Vanessa, again, before we dive in into the importance, can you explain briefly what is exactly body language.

Vanessa: Sure.

So when I'm talking about body language I'm actually talking about non-verbal communication. Research shows that non-verbal communication makes up 60% to 93% of our communication. At a minimum they find that it's 60%. Which is pretty surprising because when you think about going to pitches or talking about client or walking in ... picking in front of a jury or doing voir dire, you're thinking about what you want to say. You're very rarely thinking about how you want to say it. The non-verbal communication is your voice tone, it's your body, it's your facial expressions, it's your cadence, it's how you deliver what you want to say.

Jacob: How important it is for entrepreneurs to understand it.

Vanessa: I think that it's one of those skills, body language, that we're all born with. We're given body language at birth but we have it naturally. I like to think of it like a secret superpower that you actually were born with this. When we go into school, children entering school, show over 400 body language expressions. By the time they leave school, they're showing less than 100. We actually have these skills, we have it intuitively but we are trained out of it.

I think that for lawyers and entrepreneurs especially, being able to find ... name and tame our intuition. Be able to know exactly what we are already given and use it and level up. Leveling up our client relationships, leveling up our income, leveling up our sales, making sure that people request our business card before we have to give it, that's, I think, what the power of body language can do.

Jacob: Right. I read somewhere that 7% of our judgments are based on what we actually say. The rest is actually about how we visual and vocal and what we do. It's really important to master this art.

Are there any different types of body language that you think are important for us to know?

Vanessa: I think, actually, what's important to know is that there's less types than we think.

Most people think, and research for a long time, thought that body language was learned. That babies were born and they looked at their parent's face and they copied it and that's how they learned facial expressions and body language. However, then there's a set of research that came out in the 1970's. It started to examine the genetic points of body language. And they found that babies who are born blind, congenitally blind babies, make the exact same facial expressions,

the exact same body language expressions as seeing babies at the same time. So there's something about body language that's actually coated within us.

There are 7 universal facial expressions, for example. They're called microexpressions that we make across cultures, across genders, across races. So whether or not you speak someone's language, whether or not you can even hear what they're saying, if they're speaking to a fellow juror across the room or they're at an interview across the waiting room, just by observing their face you know what their internal emotional state is.

Jacob: I read somewhere people are classifying by close and open where we're talking about defensive nervous. Are these things that we should be aware of?

Vanessa: Yes. That's a great way of thinking about it. Close or open, or comfort versus discomfort.

We're lawyers and entrepreneurs on this podcast and so I'm going to even take it a step further and go more advanced. I think that going beyond just discomfort and open and close, I think identifying specific emotions is more important. For example anger.

There's very specific body language gestures for anger. There's couple of things that happen. First is a chin jut. You'll often see, especially men, will jut out their chin when they're feeling anger. If you do that right now, you'll actually start to feel kind of like territorial, a little like "Don't do it for too long. Okay, don't do it for too long." That is a universal gesture of anger. It's a territorial gesture.

So when you see people do that, you ask them a question: a potential client, someone on the stand, in a networking event. You've just triggered something and then it made them a little uncomfortable, a little bit angry. You specifically, more than just discomfort, you've identified anger. So you immediately want to go into reassurance mode, explanation mode, take a step back. So actually in the specific emotions are even more helpful for us to know because then we know what to do next, how to get them out of it.

Jacob: Right. I think another one that is worth mentioning and the one that I've been, you know, is the nervous body language. For example nail biting, blushing, coming to a room and have a weak handshake. These are the one kind of more obvious, the nervous one. Are there any tactics to hide or conceal that?

Vanessa: Yeah. So what you're talking about it called self-soothing behaviors or pacification gestures. Sometimes it's helpful to think about body language in terms of what we did as children when we showed more of these expressions naturally.

When we were younger and we were upset or we had an upset stomach, our parents would hold us, stroke our back, rub our head, generally soothe us. We still do this as adults when we're feeling uncomfortable and nervous. We do the same things that our parents did for us. We try to calm ourselves down. We crack our knuckles, we bite our lips, we rub the back of our neck, we rub our arms, we cross our arms over our chest and grip our arms. That's because it's the feeling of being held or being self-soothe by our parents.

First just being aware of that. Being aware that that is our, everyone's natural tendency when they're feeling nervous. The first step is awareness. The second thing that you want to do is you want to try to counteract that nervousness. This is using your physiology to work for you as oppose to against you.

When you are nervous, the chemical behind nervousness, and forgive me if this is way too biological. You can tell me to stop geeking out a little bit. When you feel nervous, the hormone that's pumping through your body is called cortisol. Cortisol is the stress hormone. It makes us think slower, it makes us feel anxious, it cause us to have dry mouth, it cause us to have weight gain, it slows down our metabolism. It's exactly what we don't want coursing through our body when we're trying to perform well.

When we're nervous we have cortisol pumping. And so we're trying to rub our skin, calm ourselves down to get that cortisol to slow down. What helps cortisol lessen more than just self-soothing is actually pumping testosterone.

Testosterone for both men and women is the strength or power hormone and we produce it naturally and it's incredibly empowering. It's the feeling. It's the chemical behind the feeling of 'I can do anything.' It's endurance, it increases our cognitive abilities, it makes us think faster, it makes us more clear-headed.

What you do to proceed cortisol in your body is actually the opposite of self-soothing behaviors. It's when you expand your body. So the more space you take up the more testosterone you produce and lower your cortisol levels go. This was researched on by Harvard Business School.

So right now while you're listening to this, if you want to just take a deep breath, roll your shoulders back and down, point your chest, your chin and your friend up towards the sky, leave your arms nice and loose by your side or even better, put them on your hips so they're kind of wide and expansive. If you're sitting or standing, firmly plant your feet and spread them more than hip width apart so you have this kind of almost like a cowboy stance quite wide.

That Superman post or Wonder Woman post is one of the most testosterone producing body language behaviors. Immediately within 5 minutes of doing that,

your hormone level start to switch. Your cortisol starts to drop and your testosterone starts to pump.

So if you're about to take a stage, or take the stand, or walk into a networking event, or going to a pitch, or even get on a phone call, standing like this outside in the waiting room, even keeping your hands nice and loose, or walking very, very loosely around the room is going to get you the right hormones you need to be able to perform at your best.

Jacob: Wow, that's a great tip. I was actually going to ask you a question that I got from some of our listeners because we sent kind of a little email just to see what questions people want to be ...

Vanessa: Yeah.

Jacob: One of the question is that how people can avoid acting awkward or look weird or shy in an important business meeting or a situation. That seems like a one thing they can do, right, like an exercise before entering the meeting.

Vanessa: Yeah. It's all about prep because then it gets your mind in the right place. And I like to think about non-verbal is like you are taking control of your cues. Instead of letting your nerves control you, you're letting your body dictate how you want to show up. So it's a very, very purposeful behavior to do that. It's called Power Posing, power posing before you walk in. Then once you walk in, I use something that's called a launch stance.

A launch stance is like ... it's a slightly toned down version of that stance we just did because, you know, standing like Superman for a meeting is very powerful. It's a little socially aggressive. Just taking it down a notch. Then you pull your legs into be about hip width apart, leaving your arms nice and loose by your side.

So not checking your phone, not bending your head over and down over your phone. Most people think, "Oh, I have the posture." Well, you have the posture when you're not checking your phone. The problem is when we check our phone, we immediately go into cortisol [unclear 00:14:32] behavior.

So making sure that before big meetings, you keep your phone in your pocket or in your purse and you make sure to stand nice and wide.

Jacob: Right. And that's a common behavior when you go into like a networking event. You just look at your phone, immediately it makes you feel even less powerful because you keep looking at your phone and you don't talk to anybody.

Vanessa: Exactly.

By the way, this is 101. We're on a podcast so we can't go that deep that quickly. That's like a really, really basic, basic move. Everything builds upon that. When you talk about body language, you always want to start with the basics. It's like a college course; you do 101, 201, 301, and then that Ph.D., Masters level. That's how it goes. That's like a foundation. If you can rock that and you feel like, okay, like I have this down, I'm ready for this one, there are much more advance tips that you can do if you want to do that.

Jacob: Right.

Another question that came up is people – attorneys and professionals – we often go to networking events, mixers, and we meet people we never seen before. What are some of your tips on building trust and connection with complete strangers immediately?

Vanessa: Yeah. I have a question. I'll give you a quick quiz here, Jacob. When you first meet someone, where do you think you look first? Where is the first part of their body that you look?

Jacob: Typically in their eyes.

Vanessa: Okay. So that ...

Jacob: That's what I do.

Vanessa: Yeah, so that's what everyone says. Consciously, that is right. The first place we consciously look is their eyes. But what research has found is that there is a place that we look very briefly before we consciously look in their eyes. Subconsciously the first place we look ever we first meet someone is their hands.

The reason for this is actually an evolutionary response, survival mechanism. If you think back to our caveman days, when we were approached by a stranger caveman, the first thing we had to do was look at their hands to see if they were carrying a rock, or a spear, or a weapon. Because we had to know are they friend or foe. Are we safe or not.

We still do this even though we're not often approached by someone with a spear. We still do this when we first meet someone. We look very briefly, we glance at their hands.

Now, what we're looking for is we're looking to see can I trust this person. What they did is there's actually specific studies in courtroom behavior and they found that whenever the defendant has their hands underneath the desk, jurors rate them as more sneaky and deceitful. Just that. Just having your hands hidden, it's brain-to-brain speak. The other person's brain goes "I can't see if their friend or foe. I don't know if we should believe them."

Having your hands visible, definitely advising your clients to have their hands above the table at all times, especially during depositions, but also when you walk into a networking event for the first time, when you walk into a meeting for the first time, do not have your hands in your pockets. Don't have your hands tugged into your purse handles.

A lot of women I notice they carry a big purse and they have their hand either tucked into the handle or hidden behind their back or in a co-pocket. All of that is you're sending a signal to someone else that you are not a friend, you are not to be trusted.

So keeping your hands visible, making sure they're not behind also file folders and clipboards. Sometimes when a lawyer comes into a room for a client consultation, they're carrying files in front of them. Have most of their hands hidden behind the files or behind their back. So you always want to make sure that they're incredibly visible. Such an easy thing to do and it really, really ups your trust levels.

Jacob: That's a great tip. Because it's always awkward to walk in into a room and you don't know anybody there and so naturally we try to hide our hands or whatever, look at the floor.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Jacob: Signs of discomfort and, of course, they show. This is a great tip.

Vanessa: Easy. It's such an easy one to do.

Jacob: Any other tips on building trust using our body language?

Vanessa: There's so many. I'm trying to think of ones that would be easy to describe here without ... I love to share the studies, the research behind it because I think that when you're talking about behavior change, it's always good to know the why in addition to the what. Power posing obviously helps with your confidence. Hand is a great trust indicator.

I think that the last one that's really easy, the real kind of 101 stuff, is that the universal cue for engagement, for listening, is when we slightly tilt our head. Either to the right or left, it doesn't matter which side. Because if I were to say to you, "Do you hear that buzzing?" You instantly automatically turn your head to one side. That's because we're trying to expose our ear. So it's a non-verbal gesture of I'm listening.

So one thing you can do, especially if you're with someone who is opening up to you or you want them to open up further to you. You want to show them "I am with you. I am engaged. I am totally on your side." One when you can non-

verbally emphasis your words is by head tilting while they're speaking. Especially if you've been told that you're intimidating, or hard to get along with. Tilting your head is a great way to soften you, to soften you up, to show that you are warm and engaging.

Jacob: Wow, that's a great tip. We can start using it already in our next mixer.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Jacob: Following on that tip, one of the things that happen in those meetings is that we meet so many people and we kind of forget most of them. What will be one or two tips that you can share with us that will make us memorable to anyone, anywhere? This is something that, I think, is very powerful.

Vanessa: I think that it's ... If I have the answer to that question, I think that the world will be different. If there was one thing that made everyone memorable, it would be really important. I think if I had to pick one thing that would help your memorability, it would be to speak to people on two different tracks.

Most of the time, we are communicating with people on one track and we're only conscious of one track: you're speaking, your words. Our body language is sort of an afterthought. It's like "Yeah, make good eye contact, have a good handshake, have a good posture." That's what people think of when they think of good body language, which is not even completely the story. It's kind of an after effect. I would say how can you communicate your message non-verbally along with your words.

When you're thinking about your pitch where your elevator pitch, or your final statement in court, how can you explain your words with your hands or with your body? For example, we did a huge research experiment with Ted Talks where we examined hundreds of hours of Ted Talks and we looked for patterns between a Ted Talks that with the most popular and the Ted Talks that were least popular. There was clear, clear non-verbal patterns in that research. That research is actually not released yet, we're going to release it in the spring.

But one of the things that we found was the popular Ted Talkers, the ones that got millions of views, not just a couple of thousand views, they did this thing with their hands where they emphasized their words with the gestures. So when they talked about a big concept, they had a ... it look like they were holding a big beach ball. When they talked about little tiny details, they scrunch their fingers together and made it like they were picking out little tiny things. Or when they talked about increasing, they'd bring their hand up in front of them as if like they were going up a slide.

They actually use their hands to emphasize their words and in that way, they were able to captivate their audience because for the first time, the audience felt like they are being spoken to on two different levels. Not just one.

Jacob: Wow, this is great. This is going to be available to the public to read it once you ...

Vanessa: Yeah.

There's two things that you can get for free on the website. First is we have a course that's totally free, it's called The 7 Scientifically Proven Steps to Increase Your Influence. All we've done is we've gathered the best research on influence and put them into a fun online course. That's totally free. So you can get that by signing up at my website. In this research, we're going to publish the entire research for free, see if we can just benefit from it. I mean the more people that know and have these tools, the better.

Jacob: Excellent. Then what we're going to is, in our show notes, we'll have links to your website and to any course that you'll be releasing so people can also sign up for that if they want.

Vanessa: Love it. Wonderful.

Jacob: Excellent.

I've been reading on some of the things that you released and you mentioned the concept of the non-verbal brand. Can you explain more about the importance of this for entrepreneurs and any professional and what it is?

Vanessa: Yeah. I think that when you think about your brand, it's not just how you show up. It's not just your business card. It's not just your title or your education. It's also how you portray that brand in your materials, in your social media pictures.

For example, I mentioned briefly facial expressions and the seven microexpressions. What I want you to do is look at your social media pictures, look at your LinkedIn profile picture, look at your headshot, and figure out what microexpression you're showing. You might think that you're showing smiling but what most people don't realize is the only true indicator of happiness is when our upper cheek muscles are engaged. Very fondly known as the crow's feet.

Jacob: Yeah.

Vanessa: The crow's feet is the actually only true indicator of happiness. Anyone can fake smile, worse a side smile or a smirk. A one-sided mouth raise is actually the

universal microexpression for contempt. You might not realize that in your non-verbal brand, you're sending off very different messages than you think.

You can compare your social media profile pictures to our social media profile pictures at scienceofpeople.com/face. We have a whole face guide in there that you can look at because it drives me crazy when I see contempt because I know that they don't mean it. So make sure that you're purposeful with your branding and your pictures as well as your written content.

Jacob: Right. Somebody said that it takes 42 muscles to frown but only 17 to smile?

Vanessa: That's right.

So sadness is the hardest microexpression to fake. You can't fake sadness, it's not the easiest. Only one in ten people can consciously activate their crow's feet on demand. But sadness is the absolute hardness. You have to pull the corners of your mouth down into a frown. You have to pinch the inner corners of your eyebrows together. It's incredibly ... and you have to pout out your lower lip and make your lower lids, eyelids quiver. Very, very difficult to do. You can try it right now if you want. It took me a couple of hours in the mirror to get those muscles working.

Yes, when you see happiness you want to always make sure it's genuine. But when you see sadness, when you see that lower lip pout out, you almost always do know it's genuine and then you have to address it because that is very hard to fake.

Jacob: Yes. That's going to be the audit for everybody. Just check your photos online. If the smile looks fake, just get rid of it, right?

Vanessa: Exactly. Go set up a little headshot section.

Jacob: [unclear 00:25:39]

Vanessa: Yeah. We have on that page. On that page or on another page, we have a shot list of all the things you should try to get. The shots you should try to get if you're going to redo your shot list to have really genuine, authentic photos.

Jacob: Excellent. We'll do that.

One more thing that is interesting is in all the meetings that we have between people, clients, colleagues, the sense of respect is one of the most important feelings. How would you show respect to somebody non-verbally? Because sometimes we say things to people but unless we do something more, they're not going to believe it.

Vanessa: Yeah. I think the easiest one is something that's called fronting. Fronting is when we aim our toes, our torso, and our body towards the person we're speaking with. Now most people think they do this already, but I want you in the next few weeks, when you go to networking events, when you're out in meetings, I want you to pay attention to where your toes are pointing. We typically point our toes towards the most important or most attractive person in the room. When we want to leave, we typically, subconsciously point our toes towards the exit. We cannot help it, our toes just point in the direction of where we want to go.

So first you might notice interoffice crushes by noticing where people's toes are pointing. Second, you will also notice where your direction is headed, where your interest is. Always make sure that from the toes to your eye gaze. Don't just think about your eye gaze. All the way down to your feet, that's the best way to show non-verbally respect and non-verbal engagement.

Jacob: Wow! This is great. This is something I'm going to start thinking about now, interoffice romances.

Vanessa: Yes. Yes.

Jacob: More liability here.

Vanessa, I wanted to ask you about ... give us some tip. I know there's so many things we can share about understanding body language, but for somebody who is a beginner, who is trying to figure out this, what are some of the tips for understanding body language? What will be the ... some of the beginners?

Vanessa: I would say just trying to notice. Start getting the habit of noticing what other people's facial expressions are saying that we forget to look at people's expressions. We remember to look at their eyes, but we forget to look at their expressions. I think that it's really important.

As you're watching reality television, or as you're interviewing with friends or whatever, just start to pay attention to how their face moves. Where do they pull their eyebrows down? Are they using a genuine smile? Do they show you a little contempt smirk? That ... our brains are muscles, the more that we exercise that part of our brain, the easier it will be to spot those microexpressions.

They've shown that when you work out your brain in a new area, it's very much like learning a new language, a foreign language, that once you start it just becomes stronger and stronger, and it becomes easier and easier.

So I would just start by noticing the facial expressions you see, and then once you're ready, you can look at our microexpression guide and start to try to spot those microexpressions. Even one at a time looking for anger, looking for

contempt, looking for surprise. That's going to help you so that your brain just starts to naturally do it.

Jacob: Excellent. These are great tips.

So for example, let's say we have a client sitting across the table the first time, how will we know that this person is interested in our services, in us – kind of very much like dating, but what will be some of the cues we can pick to see if they're interested in working with us or doing more things with us. So they just kind of like sitting there and they want to move to next professional?

Vanessa: There's two things that kind of show interest. One is the eyebrow raise. So when we're interested or engaged, we typically will raise up our eyebrows. We also do this when we want someone to pay attention to us. So when you see someone do this while they're talking, it means they really want you to hear what they're saying.

The eyebrow raise shows interest and engagement. It's a really easy one to spot. And then leaning forward and leaning in. So if you say something and all of a sudden they shift forward in their chair, they slightly lean in towards you, you just captivated something that they find interesting.

Jacob: Wow, this is great! What if they're not interested? What are some of those signs?

Vanessa: So it's the opposite, right? Distancing behavior is leaning back, disengaging. Turning the face away is a kind of blocking behavior where you try to distance and lean back from what you want. Leaning back and blocking is the opposite of those engagement cues.

By the way, there's definitely some nuances here that I'm not mentioning because we're just sort of talking about the casual side. I always try to be careful because I think that the worse thing we can do is think that we're body language experts when we're not and then we assume wrong things. It's a little bit more complicated than that but that sort of gives you like a general thing to start with.

Jacob: Absolutely. Do you think body language is something that you can learn and improve on? If so, what are some of the things that you can do to learn this?

Vanessa: The easiest way to learn about body language is to immediately put into practice. Think about one or two skills that we just talked about in this podcast and go out and try them right away. See if they feel natural to you. Try pre-power posing like getting that really expansive body language before you go into something 'do you feel any different.' Try tilting your head when delivering bad news to see if it softens your blow. Immediately when you start to apply it, you'll

start to get that non-verbal feedback from them which is a great way to solidify into muscle memory so that it becomes natural for you.

Jacob: Perfect.

Thank you so much, Vanessa, for sharing those great tips. For the audience that want to find you, you're at scienceofpeople.com?

Vanessa: Yes, that's me.

Jacob: Perfect. We're going to share the website and everything else in the show notes. Thank you very much for coming on the show.

Vanessa: Thank you so much for having me.

Closing: Thanks for listening. You can find even more resources, including the show notes for this episode, at enchantinglawyer.com. That's www.enchantinglawyer.com.