Decoding Nonverbal Communication

Instructions: For this activity, you will pair up with someone and take turns trying to decode nonverbal communication.

Examples of nonverbal communication include:

- Facial expressions
- Tone of voice
- Gestures
- Body position
- Movement
- Use of touch
- Gaze

Step 1: Decide who will be the EXPRESSER (the person who will try to communicate emotions nonverbally) and who will be the INTERPRETER (the person who will try to interpret the meaning of the nonverbal behavior of their partner).

Step 2: The expresser will repeat the following line, each time saying it with a different emotion, and each time allowing the interpreter a moment to try to guess what emotion is being expressed:

"I can't believe this is happening to me."

The expresser can use any of the nonverbal cues listed above to help them communicate their emotion. This is your chance to ham it up like a real Hollywood actor, so have some fun with it!

Here is a list of emotions you might try expressing (some will be easier to express and interpret than others):

- Anger
- Contempt
- Disgust
- Fear
- Frustration
- Happiness/Joy
- Pride
- Sadness
- Sarcasm
- Surprise

Step 3: Switch roles and try it again using the following line:

"I don't know him."

Think about it: Which nonverbal cues were most helpful in decoding emotions? Facial Expressions? Tone of voice? Body language? Did it depend on the emotion?