**Chapter 5 Putting together a shared code book**

As an effective communicator you are daily pulling on many sources of information to guide your understanding and ‘create meaning’ from what you see and hear around you through your understanding of the contexts in which you work, your awareness of the norms and conventions that apply values assumptions and attitudes. In fact, you are calling on many ‘intelligences’ - your Intelligence (IQ) of course; your Emotional Intelligence (EQ); your Social Intelligence (SQ); your Political Intelligence (PQ); your Cultural Intelligence (CQ). We’ll be talking in more detail about these in other chapters of the book. Suffice it to say these intelligences can act both as enhancers *and* filters, in the communication process. The more you can find out about how these intelligences work and how they can enhance your communication skills, the more effective your own communication will be.

Others around you will of course will be doing the same, but how sure can you be that their information sources are the same as yours? Do you really share the same context and understanding? How do you know? The only way to establish a shared ‘code book’ is to communicate! Get to know the other person, talk through potential similarities and differences, and establish common ground. Opening up the communication in a way that is both clear and compassionate will raise your skills as a communicator to a whole new level and set the foundations of a good working relationship.

**Non-verbal communication cues**

Part of the complexity of our interactions is the range of non-verbal cues that we assimilate, often unconsciously, when interacting with others and conversational habits are to some extent culturally determined. The subject of non-verbal communication is another fascinating and complex subject, but briefly we read non-verbal communication cues on multiple levels and often unconsciously from a range of sources:

A brief overview of non-verbal signals:

**Use of space (Proxemics)**: Your personal space is your ‘bubble’, the space you create between yourself and others, an invisible boundary that you notice immediately when it’s invaded.

**Body language (Kinesics)**: posture, gesturing, body movement – side to side, forward and backward, facial expression, eye contact & orientation in relation to the other person.

**Sounds (Paralanguage):** sounds, including the tone, pitch, quality of voice, and rate of speaking and silence can be a positive or negative influence in the communications process.

**Use of time (Chronemics):** the way in which you allocate your time – generously, or not, can be an indicator of attitude towards the other person.

**Physical contact (Haptics):** touch, including shaking hands, holding, embracing, pushing, or patting on the back all convey messages.

**Objects (Artefacts):** the environment you inhabit, the objects in that environment, and the way in which they are arranged, as well as telling you something about the person, can enhance or inhibit communication.