# What Is Culture? - Material and Nonmaterial Culture

Culture is a huge topic of study for sociologists. In this lesson, we define culture and distinguish between material and nonmaterial culture. As culture, nation, and society are often used interchangeably, we also distinguish between these three concepts.

**What Is Culture?**

How would you describe the culture where you live? Would you talk about the way we dress? The foods that originated here? The language?

Culture can be defined as the language, norms, values, beliefs, and more that, together, form a people's way of life. It is a combination of elements that affect how people think, how they act, and what they own. American culture, for instance, includes everything just mentioned. It also includes our history, architecture, accepted behavior, and so much more.

Culture is an essential part of being human. No one is completely without it; in fact, an individual can be part of many cultures and subcultures. For example, someone who lives in the U.S. could be part of the national culture in addition to the distinct culture of the South, a religious community, a heritage group, and more.

**Material Vs. Nonmaterial Culture**

There are many, many elements and aspects of culture. However, each can be categorized as either material or nonmaterial culture. Material culture includes all the physical things that people create and attach meaning to. Clothing, food, tools, and architecture are examples of material culture that most people would think of. Natural objects and materials (rock, dirt, trees, etc.) aren't considered to be part of material culture. However, how people view natural objects and how they use them are.

Nonmaterial culture includes creations and abstract ideas that are not embodied in physical objects. In other words, any intangible products created and shared between the members of a culture over time are aspects of their nonmaterial culture. Social roles, rules, ethics, and beliefs are just some examples. All of them are crucial guides for members of a culture to use to know how to behave in their society and interpret the world.

**Culture Vs. Nation Vs. Society**

The word culture is often used as a synonym for nation and society, but they aren't the same thing. A nation is a territory with designated borders. A nation can be found on a map. A society is a population in which people interact and share common interests. A society can be found in a nation. Culture, on the other hand, is a people's shared way of living. Culture can be found in a society, and it can also be shared between societies.

**Lesson Summary**

In summary, culture can be defined as the language, norms, values, beliefs, and more that, together, form a people's way of life. It is an essential part of being human. Although there are many elements and aspects of culture, they can all be categorized as either material or nonmaterial culture. Material culture includes all of the physical things that people create and attach meaning to. Nonmaterial culture includes creations and abstract ideas that are not embodied in physical objects.

The word culture is often used as a synonym for nation and society, but they aren't the same thing. A nation is a territory with designated borders. A society is a population in which people interact and share common interests. Culture, on the other hand, is a people's shared way of living. It can be found in a society, and it can also be shared between societies.

# Elements of Culture:
# Explanation of the Major Elements That Define Culture

Culture combines many elements to create a unique way of living for different people. In this lesson, we identify four of the elements that exist in every culture, albeit in different forms: symbols, language, values, and norms. We also differentiate between folkways and mores.

### Elements Of Culture

Culture is a huge topic of study for sociologists. Culture exists anywhere humans exist, and no two cultures are exactly the same. We've started talking about culture in another lesson and discussed its combination of elements that, together, form a people's unique way of life. In this lesson, we are going to take a closer look at those elements, specifically symbols, language, values, and norms. These elements look different across cultures, and many change with time as a society evolves.

### Symbols

The first element that exists in every culture is a variety of symbols. A symbol is anything that is used to stand for something else. People who share a culture often attach a specific meaning to an object, gesture, sound, or image. For example, a cross is a significant symbol to Christians. It is not simply two pieces of wood attached to each other, nor is it just an old object of torture and execution. To Christians, it represents the basis of their entire religion, and they have great reverence for the symbol.

### Language

The second element present in every culture is a language. Language is a system of words and symbols used to communicate with other people. This includes full languages as we usually think of them, such as English, Spanish, French, etc. But it also includes body language, slang, and common phrases that are unique to certain groups of people. For example, even though English is spoken fluently in both America and Britain, we have slang and phrases that mean different things. American French fries are British chips, American cookies are British biscuits, and so on.

Another example of how cultural languages differ beyond vocabulary is the fact that eye contact represents different meanings in different cultures. In America, eye contact suggests that you are paying attention and are interested in what a person has to say. In other cultures, eye contact may be considered rude and to be a challenge of authority.

## Values

Another cultural element is a system of values, which are culturally defined standards for what is good or desirable. Members of the culture use the shared system of values to decide what is good and what is bad. For example, in America, we are individualistic - we encourage competition and emphasize personal achievement. A person who accepts a promotion in our culture is praised for their individual hard work and talent. But our values are in stark contrast with the collectivistic values of other cultures, where collaboration is encouraged, and a person's success is only as good as their contributions to the group. The same person that is offered a promotion who lives in a collectivistic culture would consult with his family before accepting to ensure that it would be the most beneficial to the group as a whole.

## Types Of Norms

The last element of culture we'll discuss in this lesson is a collection of norms. Norms are culturally defined expectations of behavior. They are guidelines we use to determine how we should behave in any given situation and what would be considered inappropriate behavior. For example, we know that we should stand in line to use the restroom without even thinking about our behavior. If someone cuts in front of us, we are certainly irritated - if not angry - that the other person has not followed the norms of our culture.

Norms vary in their perceived importance and in the way that others react to their violation. Some norms are turned into formal rules and laws, while others are simply unwritten rules of etiquette for everyday behavior. These unwritten rules can typically be categorized as either folkways or mores. Folkways are norms that dictate appropriate behavior for routine or casual interaction. In our culture, boys wear pants instead of skirts, and we all know not to pick our nose in public. These are casual rules for behavior; although we may think that people who violate them are weird or rude, we don't think they should be imprisoned for their behavior.

On the other hand, mores are norms that dictate morally right or wrong behavior. These are rules for behavior that are so important that they usually don't even get written down because they go without saying. Using loud profanity at a funeral is a fairly mild example. More serious mores are considered taboo, and people who violate them are considered unfit for society. For example, there are no formal laws against cannibalism in the United States, yet those who participate in cannibalism violate such an important norm that they are punished and severely ostracized from society.

## Lesson Summary

In summary, some of the common elements that make up individual cultures are symbols, language, values, and norms. A symbol is anything that is used to stand for something else. People who share a culture often attach a specific meaning to an object, gesture, sound, or image. Language is a system of words and symbols used to communicate with other people. This includes not only fully spoken or written languages but also body language, slang, and common phrases that are unique to certain cultures.

Values are culturally defined standards for what is good or desirable. Members of the culture use the shared system of values to decide what is good and what is bad. Similarly, norms are culturally defined expectations of behavior. They are guidelines we use to determine how we should behave in any given situation and what would be considered inappropriate behavior.

# Cultural Subsets: High Culture, Popular Culture, Subculture, Counterculture & Multiculturalism

In this lesson, we identify several categories of cultures that can exist within a large culture. We define and discuss subcultures, high culture versus popular culture, and countercultures. We also discuss the view of multiculturalism in the U.S.

### Cultural Subsets

There are many, many different cultures throughout the world. Interestingly, we are all typically part of several cultures at the same time. For example, someone who lives in the U.S. could be part of the national culture, in addition to the distinct culture of the South, a religious community, a heritage group and more. In this lesson, we are going to focus on identifying different subsets or categories of cultures that can exist within a larger one and also discuss how these subsets are viewed.

### Subcultures

First, it's important to understand the concept of a subculture. A subculture is a unique culture shared by a smaller group of people who are also a part of a larger culture. A larger culture often contains many subcultures, and an individual can be part of several of them. Each subculture has distinct norms and customs that aren't a part of the broader culture in which it is enveloped. Think of the Amish, or bikers, or hippies or Whovians. Each of these groups has unique cultures, yet they all exist within the broad culture of the United States.

### High Culture Vs. Popular Culture

T term high culture is used to describe a subculture shared by the elite in a society. In fact, many associate the word 'culture' with high culture - someone who attends the ballet and collects museum-quality artwork is often considered 'cultured.'

High culture isn't considered to be better by sociologists - just interestingly different from popular culture, which is the dominant subculture shared by the majority of a society's population. The elements of popular culture have mass accessibility and appeal. For example, high culture includes expensive restaurants that serve caviar and play classical music. This isn't typically appealing to the bulk of citizens. On the other hand, popular culture includes cheap fast-food restaurants that serve hamburgers and play top 40 pop music. These restaurants are so appealing that they are everywhere you look.

**Multiculturalism**

Of course, our entire country does not consist only of high culture and popular culture. It's well known that we have immigrants from many countries who bring their culture with them and make our population quite diverse. It could be said that our national culture is a blend of many cultures. They are like soup ingredients that, once mixed together, contribute to the whole and are difficult to separate from each other.

Yet, multiculturalism, which is the view that cultural differences should be respected and celebrated, is on the rise. In contrast to the melting pot metaphor, multiculturalism promotes diversity through the recognition and continued celebration of separate cultures that co-exist peacefully. Rather than creating one culture from aspects of other cultures, multiculturalism focuses on the preservation of separated individual cultural traditions and customs.

**Counterculture**

Multiculturalism seems like a welcoming, inclusive sentiment, but the inclusion may not extend to countercultures. A counterculture is a type of subculture, which strongly opposes one or more elements of the dominant culture. In other words, those who share a counterculture reject conventional values or behavioral norms accepted by the majority in a society. For example, polygamists believe in marriage to more than one person. This contradicts the value - and even law - of the dominant American culture. Many people react very negatively to the culture of polygamists and other countercultures as well.

**Lesson Summary**

In summary, a subculture is a unique culture shared by a smaller group of people who are also a part of a larger culture. A larger culture often contains many subcultures, and each subculture has distinct norms and customs that aren't a part of the broader culture in which it is enveloped.

There are so many subcultures in America that it would be extremely difficult to identify all of them. However, the term high culture is used to describe a subculture shared by the elite in a society. High culture isn't considered to be better by sociologists - just interestingly different from popular culture, which is the dominant subculture shared by the majority of a society's population. The elements of popular culture have mass accessibility and appeal.

Perhaps more than any other country, we have a great diversity of people and backgrounds. Multiculturalism is the view that cultural differences should be respected and celebrated. In contrast to the melting pot metaphor, multiculturalism promotes diversity through the recognition and continued celebration of separate cultures that co-exist peacefully. Although that may seem like a welcoming, inclusive sentiment, it may not extend to any counterculture, which is a type of subculture that strongly opposes one or more elements of the dominant culture.

# Perceptions of Culture: Ideal Culture and Real Culture, Ethnocentrism, & Culture Relativism

The way we perceive culture - both our own and that of others - is affected by many things. In this lesson, we define and discuss the difference between perceptions of ideal culture and real culture. We also examine ethnocentrism and compare it to the idea of culture relativism.

## Perceptions Of Culture

When we think of American culture, it's easy to picture certain symbols and rituals, such as the American flag, baseball, apple pie, and so on. But, for many, it's not as easy to identify norms and values that are shared by most Americans. The behavior of those around us often seems to contradict what they say is important. In this lesson, we will discuss this contradiction by defining ideal and real culture. We will also discuss how we typically view our culture in comparison to other cultures by examining the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.

## Ideal And Real Culture

First, think again about the gap between the values that people profess to have and the behavior that contradicts it. This gap exists at a bigger level between ideal culture and real culture. Ideal culture includes the values and norms that a culture claims to have. It involves an idealized, uncompromising value system that dictates perfect behavior. Using ideal culture as a standard, you are either right or wrong. Rules are black and white, with no gray areas and no exceptions.

Real culture, on the other hand, includes the values and norms that are actually followed by a culture. It involves an adaptable value system that is used mostly as a set of guidelines for preferred behavior. Right and wrong are separated, but exceptions exist for pretty much everything.

To illustrate the difference between ideal and real culture, just think about the American value of equality. Growing up in the U.S., we were told that equality is very important - it's part of our ideal culture. Yet, we see inequality everywhere. Women are paid less than men, minorities are given less opportunities, and so on. Unfortunately, our real culture doesn't include much equality.

## Ethnocentrism

We continue to see a trend of idealizing our culture when we look at the prevalence of ethnocentrism, which is the tendency to assume that one's own culture is good, while that of another is strange or even immoral. Usually, we are so used to the values and behavioral norms that we've grown up with that they seem to be human nature rather than just elements of our own culture.

For example, in America, eye contact suggests that you are paying attention and interested in what a person has to say. This may seem like something obvious that everyone would know. Yet, in other cultures, eye contact can be considered rude and a challenge of authority.

Even language shows our tendency for ethnocentrism. Americans have referred to China as the 'Far East' for a long time. This expression uses our own country as the point of origin - we put ourselves in the center, with every other culture located relative to us. At the same time, the Chinese name for their country translates as 'central kingdom' - an indication that they do the exact same thing.

### Cultural Relativism

With today's continued emphasis on globalization, it's more important than ever to rid ourselves of the cultural biases that can come with ethnocentrism. Some social scientists even believe that, ideally, we could reach a point where each of us could fully accept and even appreciate the cultures of others. This is cultural relativism, which could be defined as the practice of understanding and judging a culture from the viewpoint of that culture instead of one's own. This perspective promotes the idea that there is no universal right or wrong and that we should not judge behavioral norms and values that exist in another culture based on our own cultural standards.

For example, polygamy is illegal in the U.S. and is considered immoral by many. Yet, it's a common practice in certain cultures. If we were to practice cultural relativism, we would shed our own rules and expectations and fully accept that polygamy is normal and appropriate in other cultures (without trying to change that fact).

### Lesson Summary

In summary, sometimes there is a gap between the culture - including values - that a society professes to have and the culture that they actually possess. Ideal culture includes the values and norms that a culture claims to have, while real culture includes the values and norms that are actually followed by a culture.

We tend to not only idealize our culture, but also think that it is better than others. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to assume that one's own culture is good while that of another is strange or even immoral. With today's continued emphasis on globalization, it's more important than ever to rid ourselves of the cultural biases that can come with ethnocentrism.

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# Socialization and Social Isolation: Definition & Case Studies

Interestingly, socialization seems to be the process that makes us act human. Here we define socialization and discuss its importance to human development. We also contrast it to social isolation and discuss several case studies regarding what happens when humans don't or can't socialize.

### Nature Vs. Nurture

You have probably heard about a famous debate in psychology and sociology that is known as 'nature vs. nurture.' The question is if human behavior is a product of our genes and evolution or of experience and social contact. The majority of sociologists believe that the answer to this question is likely a combination of both but that nurture plays the most important role in at least our social behavior. So let's talk more about nurture - specifically, about the importance of socialization.

# Socialization

Socialization is a lifelong process during which we learn about social expectations and how to interact with other people. During socialization, we learn about our own culture, including behavioral norms and values that teach us how to fit in to our society. As children, we learn to walk, talk and feed ourselves and also the difference between right and wrong from the people around us. Through socialization, we acquire a personal identity and learn to value our connections with others. This process continues for an entire lifetime.

Nearly all of the behavior that we consider to be 'human nature' is actually learned through socialization. For example, it is easy to assume that standards of beauty are the same all over the world. Surely, a woman who Americans 'instinctively' find attractive would also be considered attractive by other cultures, right? Yet there are cultures in which women go to drastic measures to elongate their necks and shrink their feet in order to obtain their cultural standards of beauty, which clearly are not the same as ours. Therefore, beauty may not be instinctive after all, but culturally defined and learned from others.

## Social Isolation

Socialization is such a basic part of our lives that it is easy to overlook its importance. But it is the reason we laugh, cry, talk and do many of the other things we think of as just a part of being human. Socialization doesn't always happen, though, and certainly can't happen in social isolation. This is a state that occurs when someone experiences a complete lack of contact with the social world. We are talking about no communication with humans, no visual sighting of them - no access to society whatsoever.

Social isolation would be horribly lonely for someone used to being around people. Imagine what a man would be like if he lived in a city for 30 years and was then stranded completely alone on a deserted island for the rest of his life. But social isolation from the beginning of one's life seems to be just as bad, if not worse. From what sociologists have been able to tell from case studies, individuals who grow up in social isolation have no chance to learn all of the feelings and behaviors we mistakenly believe that we are born with, so although they look human, they don't act human.

## Socialization Studies

An example can be seen in the tragic, well-known case of Anna, an unwanted child of a farmer's daughter. Her mother confined Anna to a dark, windowless room and, although she provided her with enough milk to keep her alive, had no other contact with her. When social workers found Anna, she was five years old and had lived her entire life tied to a chair in that room. She didn't know how to walk, talk or even chew. She was also extremely apathetic and never laughed, cried or had much of a reaction to other people at all.

Unfortunately, what happened to Anna is not a solitary instance. There have been many other cases in which children have been found in similar circumstances. Each time, the child seemed almost inhuman because of the lack of socialization.

Even studies involving monkeys show us the importance of socialization and the negative effects of social isolation. Harry Harlow conducted a famous experiment in which he split into groups baby monkeys who had been separated from their mothers at birth. Long story short, he discovered that

monkeys who were placed in isolation for just six months had a dramatic effect on their development. These monkeys were unable to interact and socialize once exposed to other monkeys - they had never learned how!

### Lesson Summary

In summary, socialization is a lifelong process during which we learn about social expectations and how to interact with other people. Nearly all of the behavior that we consider to be 'human nature' is actually learned through socialization. It is such a basic part of our lives that it's easy to overlook its importance.

Yet we see just how important it is when we look at cases of individuals growing up in social isolation, which is a state that occurs when someone experiences a complete lack of contact with the social world. Like Anna and similar human case studies, and the monkeys observed by Harlow, those who grow up in social isolation have no chance to learn all of the feelings and behaviors we mistakenly believe individuals are born with.

# Agents of Socialization: Family, Schools, Peers and Media

The socialization that we receive in childhood has a lasting effect on our ability to interact with others in society. In this lesson, we identify and discuss four of the most influential agents of socialization in childhood: family, school, peers, and media.

### Socialization

How do we learn to interact with other people? Socialization is a lifelong process during which we learn about social expectations and how to interact with other people. Nearly all of the behavior that we consider to be 'human nature' is actually learned through socialization. And it is during socialization that we learn how to walk, talk, and feed ourselves, about behavioral norms that help us fit in to our society, and so much more.

Socialization occurs throughout our life, but some of the most important socialization occurs in childhood. So let's talk about the most influential agents of socialization. These are the people or groups responsible for our socialization during childhood - including family, school, peers, and mass media.

### Family

There is no better way to start than to talk about the role of family in our social development, as family is usually considered to be the most important agent of socialization. As infants, we are completely dependent on others to survive. Our parents, or those who play the parent role, are responsible for teaching us to function and care for ourselves. They, along with the rest of our family, also teach us about close relationships, group life, and how to share resources. Additionally, they provide us with our first system of values, norms, and beliefs - a system that is usually a reflection of their own social status, religion, ethnic group, and more.

## Schools

The next important agent of childhood socialization is the school. Of course, the official purpose of school is to transfer subject knowledge and teach life skills, such as following directions and meeting deadlines. But students don't just learn from the academic curriculum prepared by teachers and school administrators. In school, we also learn social skills through our interactions with teachers, staff, and other students. For example, we learn the importance of obeying authority and that, to be successful, we must learn to be quiet, to wait, and sometimes to act interested even when we're not.

Alexander, like other children, might even learn things from his teacher that she did not intend to teach. For instance, he might learn that it's best to yell out an answer instead of raising his hand. When he does so, he gets rare attention from the teacher and is hardly ever punished.

## Peers

Another agent of socialization that relates to school is our peer group. Unlike the agents we've already discussed - family and school - peer groups give us an opportunity as children to form relationships with others on our own terms plus learn things without the direction of an adult. Our peers have an incredible amount of influence on us when we're young, so it's understandable that parents worry about the type of friends we choose. Often, we discuss topics and learn behavioral norms from our peers that our parents do not or would not approve of.

However, our peers also give us a chance to develop many of the social skills we need as adults. For instance, Alexander will certainly experience moments when his friends' behavior and/or values contradict the norms and values he obtained from his family. He has to learn to decide which norms and values to keep, reject, or use and follow in certain situations.

## Mass Media

The last agent of childhood socialization we're going to discuss in this lesson is mass media, which includes television, Internet, radio, movies, books, and magazines - just to name a few. This is another agent that our parents are understandably concerned about. As with our peers, we often learn things through mass media that our parents would probably rather we didn't. Especially today, children are exposed to a wide variety of content, including violence and sex, which many deem inappropriate. Mass media also seems to reinforce gender and other stereotypes.

For example, Alexander loves to watch cartoons, but they perpetuate the idea that men are more important than women. Women are usually portrayed as supporting characters - mothers, girlfriends, or damsels in distress. As a result, Alexander is continually provided with evidence that women are not as brave and intelligent as men.

## Lesson Summary

Socialization occurs throughout our life, but some of the most important socialization occurs in childhood. Four of the most influential agents of socialization during that phase of our lives are the family, school, peers, and mass media.

Family is usually considered to be the most important agent of socialization. They not only teach us how to care for ourselves but also give us our first system of values, norms, and beliefs.

Schools are agents of socialization that not only teach us subject knowledge and life skills but also social skills through our interactions with teachers, staff, and other students.

Another agent of socialization that relates to school is our peer group. Unlike family and school, peer groups give us an opportunity as children to form relationships with others on our own terms plus learn things without the direction of an adult. Our peers give us a chance to develop many of the social skills we need later in life.

The last agent we discussed was mass media, which includes television, Internet, books, and more. As with our peers, we often learn things through mass media that our parents would probably rather we didn't, such as violence, sex, and the reinforcement of gender and other stereotypes.

# Presentation of Self: Methods to Presenting The Self

All of us like to present ourselves to others as someone who is likable and successful. In this lesson, we discuss the concept of dramaturgical analysis as proposed by Erving Goffman. We also talk about the practice of idealization and how nonverbal communication can sometimes sabotage our presentation efforts.

### Dramaturgy

'All the world's a stage.' Have you ever heard this quote from one of William Shakespeare's plays? It's part of a speech that draws parallels between actors in a play, and the way we perform for others in real life. A sociologist named Erving Goffman made the same comparison in his theory about dramaturgical analysis, which is the study of human social interaction in terms of theatrical performance. According to Goffman, sociologists are like directors, observing and analyzing what happens on the stage of life. Every social status that humans have is like a part in a play, and the role associated with that status serves as our script, giving us direction as to how to behave and what to say on stage.

Typically, we care about how the 'audience' reacts and how they'll judge our performance. So, we have parts that we volunteer for and different methods of presenting ourselves. In other words, we try to create a certain impression by presenting 'the self' to others the way we want to be seen. We try hard not to slip out of character and reveal how we would really act 'behind the scenes.' Let's look closer at this concept, known as impression management, as well as idealization and how nonverbal communication can sometimes sabotage our efforts.

### Impression Management

Impression management can be defined as the attempt to control the impressions and opinions that other people have of one's self. For example, a woman 'cast' in the part of job seeker tries hard to influence her impression on potential employers. First, she tries to influence their opinion through a resume by wording her experience just so and then tries to control their impressions through an interview by 'dressing for success' and answering questions correctly.

Of course, impression management isn't just confined to more formal situations such as job interviews. It actually happens all the time as we attempt to control how others see us as in a variety of roles,

including parent, spouse, employee, church member, athlete and many more. As we play each part, we vary our performance depending on the expectations of others. For instance, you probably act differently at a funeral than you would at a 21st birthday party!

**Idealization**

Of course, the reason that impression management is so important is because we want others to think well of us. Therefore, we practice idealization, which is the exaggeration of our positive qualities. It is our attempt to present the best possible version of ourselves and convince others that our actions and intentions are not selfish. Just think of the typical view of politicians as an example. They put the best possible spin on their actions and try to make everything appear to be for the good of their constituents.

Of course, it's not just politicians. Idealization also involves attempting to conceal our negative feelings and the secrets that others wouldn't approve of. Most (if not all) of us tend to smile and act friendly towards people we don't like because it's polite, and we do not want to seem like a rude or unlikeable character.

**Nonverbal Communication**

Interestingly, we can portray certain characters even without words. Nonverbal communication is the use of anything other than words to communicate something. It includes what we think of as body language - facial expressions, postures, gestures, eye contact and so on - and other things such as tone of voice and even appearance.

Although nonverbal communication can help us portray a character correctly, it can also betray us. I'm sure you've heard the saying that 'actions speak louder than words.' If someone says, 'I love you' with a disgusted look on his or her face, would you believe that person? Probably not. Sometimes, we read our script and verbally communicate correctly, but unintentionally allow nonverbal communication to portray a different message - avoiding eye contact while lying is a good example.

**Lesson Summary**

In summary, dramaturgical analysis is the study of human social interaction in terms of theatrical performance. You can think of sociologists as directors, observing and analyzing what happens on the stage of life. Every social status that humans have is like a part in a play, and the role associated with that status serves as our script.

Typically, we care about how the 'audience' reacts and how they'll judge our performance. Impression management is the attempt to control the impressions and opinions that other people have of one's self. It happens all the time as we attempt to control how others see us. As we play each of our parts, we vary our performance depending on the expectations of others.

Of course, the reason that impression management is so important is because we want others to think well of us. Therefore, we practice idealization, which is the exaggeration of our positive qualities. However, sometimes nonverbal communication, which is the use of anything other than words to communicate something, can portray how we really feel.