



BUSINESS COMMUNICATION MASTERCLASSES



Two-hour Sessions, Max. 6 Participants



Personal English, Via Guglielmo Oberdan 1/A, Brescia
info@personal-english.com

2026 Edition

THE INSTRUCTOR



MARIACRISTINA NATALIA BERTOLI, PhD



Mariacristina holds a PhD in **American Literature**, has served as **Cambridge Examiner**, has taught Legal English for **Scuola Superiore della Magistratura di Brescia** and a Geopolitics course at **Università degli Studi di Brescia**. Over the last 10 years she has coached entrepreneurs, managers, lawyers, magistrates, surgeons, journalists and scholars across Northern Italy. She is fluent in both **English** and **French** and has studied **Russian** and **Finnish** – among others.

She pursued scholarly work abroad from 2008 to 2013 and travelled extensively worldwide before establishing **Personal English** in 2015. She also served as a **business representative** at international trade shows in Paris and Frankfurt for her family's company in her 20s. A published author of poetry and short stories in English, she has been a **public speaker** since 2008. A **Business Psychology**, **Nonverbal Language**, and **Business Etiquette** enthusiast, she has published numerous international papers and academic articles and has translated *Old and New Horizons of Sandplay Therapy* by Dr. Martin Kalff (Routledge).

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE



INDIAN WORK & BUSINESS CULTURE

An Introduction

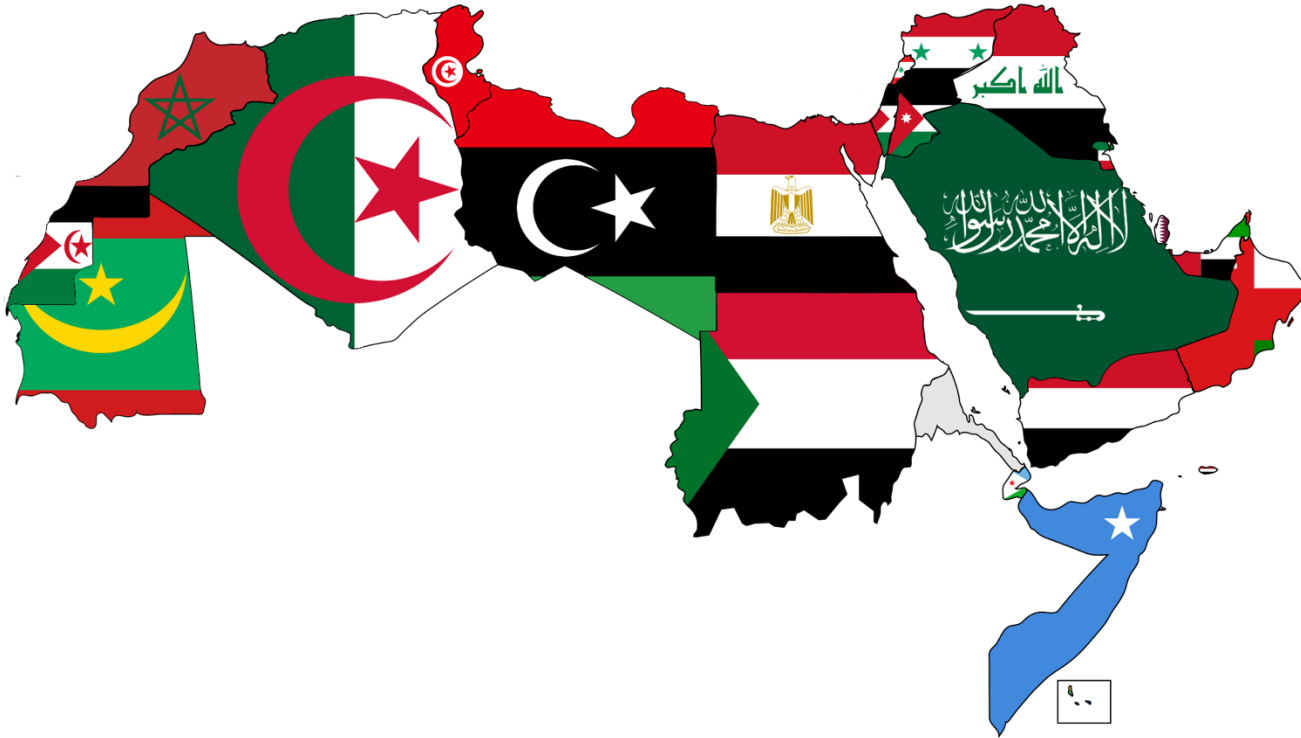


TAKEAWAYS:

- India is a (Sub)Continent, Not Just a Country
- Understanding Indian Core Values
- Hierarchy and the 'Face'
- Reading between the Lines
- Strategizing Communication
- Building Trust

WORK & BUSINESS CULTURE IN THE ARAB WORLD

The Basics

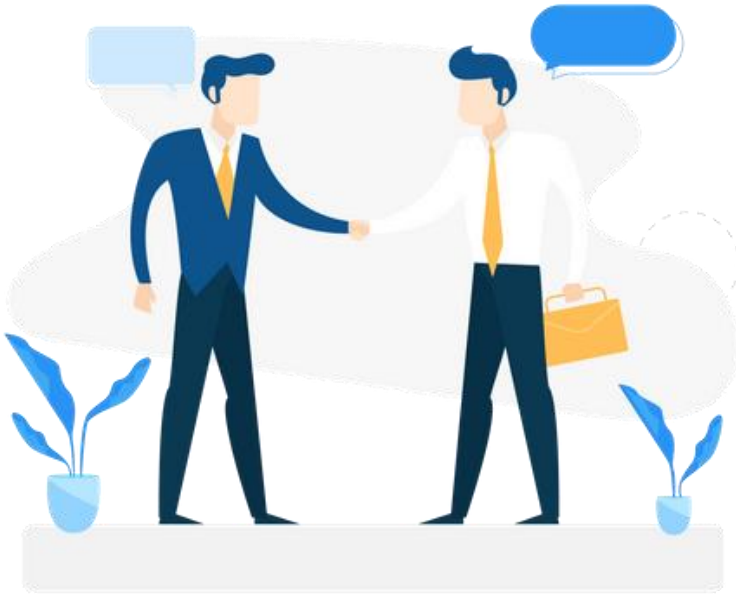


TAKEAWAYS:

- Time and Punctuality
- Understanding a Shame / Honor Culture
- Tribal Dynamics and *Wasta*
- Hierarchy and Relations
- Negotiating and Re-Negotiating
- Sunni, Shia, Salah Time, Secularism
- Drinking
- Gender and Communication
- Dress Codes

THE TRADE SHOW

Handshakes, Business Cards, and Communicating Strategies



TAKEAWAYS:

- Handshakes and Bows: When, How, and With Whom?
- Do's and Don'ts of Exchanging Business Cards on the international scene
- Drawing in Customers
- Small Talk Basics
- How to Improve at Networking

MISSTEP!

The Basics of International Business Etiquette



TAKEAWAYS:

- Gift Etiquette: East VS West
- Don'ts on the Chinese Business Scene
- Hints at the German, Japanese, French, Brazilian, and Indian business Scenes

ITALIAN BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Italy's Business and Work Culture Explained for Multinational Executives and Managers

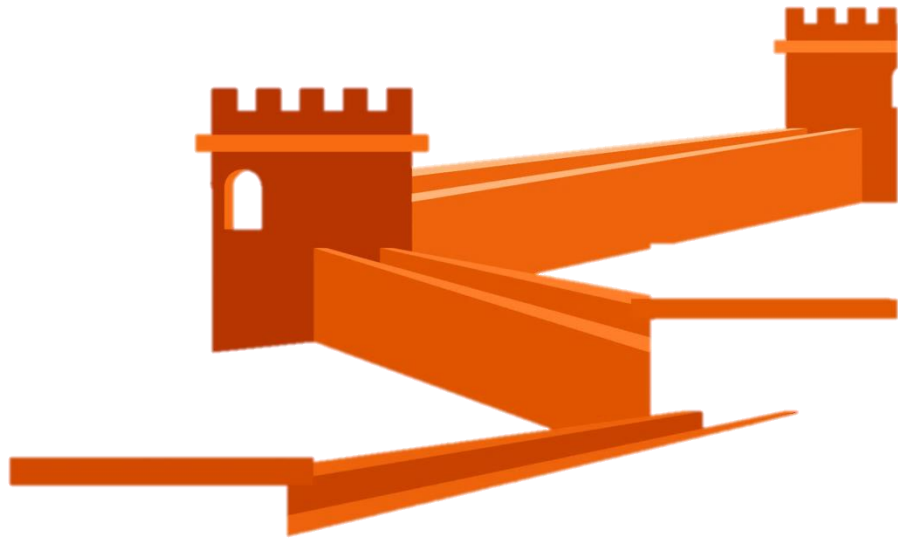


TAKEAWAYS:

- Hierarchy and Subtle Asymmetries
- Friendliness & Formality
- The Role of Coffee, Food, and Booze in Business Settings
- Guilt and Accountability
- Basic Communication Tips

DOING BUSINESS IN CHINA

Communication 101



TAKEAWAYS:

- Understanding the 'Face' (Mianzi)
- The Importance of *Guanxi*
- Gift Giving
- Building Relationships
- Negotiating
- Mutual Prejudices and Potential Risks

BUSINESS IN KOREA AND JAPAN

An Introduction



TAKEAWAYS:

KOREA

- Hierarchy (*Seonbae*) and Seniority (*Hu**bae*)
- Social Harmony and *Kibun*
- Understanding Hoesik

JAPAN

- Social Harmony and *Wa*
- Consensus Decision-Making
- Formal Honorifics

COFFEE

ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

The Word 'Coffee' Does Not Mean the Same Everywhere...



TAKEAWAYS:

- Introducing Geopolitics through Coffee Culture
- Exploring Diversity and Cross-cultural Issues on the International Scene
- Coffee Chat: What It Is and How to Excel at It Across Cultures

FINE DINING

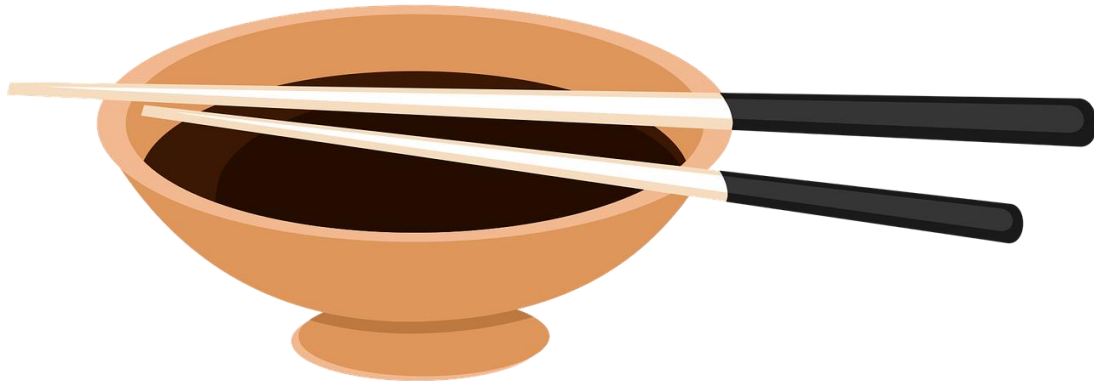
Western Table Manners



- Etiquette as a Means to Show Respect
- Tableware Vocabulary
- Meal Structures
- Personality Tests
- Fine dining Do's and Don'ts:
Continental and American Etiquette
- Culturally Appropriate Toasts
- The Check
- Tipping

TABLE MANNERS

An Introduction to Chopstick Etiquette

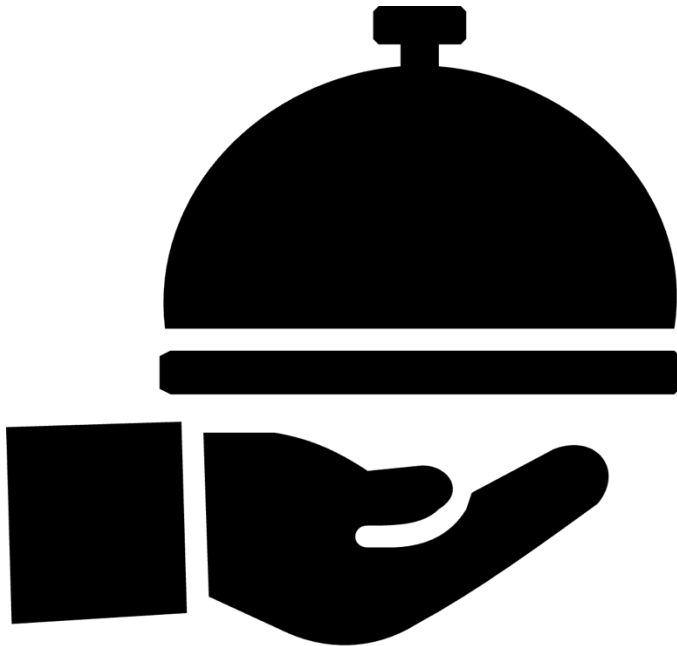


TAKEAWAYS:

- Japanese, Korean, and Chinese Chopsticks: Differences
- How to Use them Correctly (Practical Session)
- Lazy Susan Etiquette (China)
- Toasting
- How to Properly Eat Noodles (in Theory and in Practice)

TABLE TALK

Business Dinner Rehearsals



TAKEAWAYS:

- Chit Chat, Weather Talk, the News
- Wittiness, Humor, Sarcasm
- Cultural Competence 101
- Food talk #1: Likes & Dislikes
- Food talk #2: Discussing Traditions
- Food Talk #3: A Barrage of Food Vocabulary
- Food Quiz by Category
- Cooking Methods

DRINKING ETIQUETTE



TAKEAWAYS:

- Toasting across Nations
- Wine Vocabulary Basics
- Beer 101
- Drinking in the UK
- Drinking in Canada and USA
- Drinking in Northern Europe
- Drinking in Japan, China, Korea
- Indian Drinking Etiquette
- Drinking in the Muslim World
- Drinking in South America

THE INDIAN DINNER

Table Manners Explained

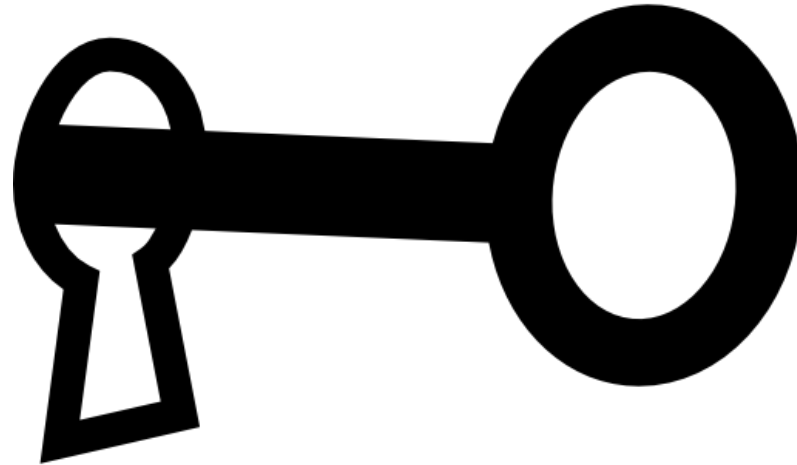


TAKEAWAYS:

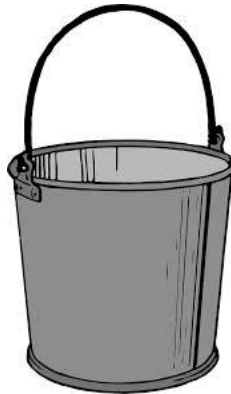
- Introducing Ayurveda & Mindfulness
- Hand etiquette in Theory and in Practice
- Types of bread
- North VS South India
- The *thali*, North to South



CORPORATE PSYCHOLOGY



FROM BUCK-PASSING TO BUCKET-PASSING



TAKEAWAYS:

- The Horizontal Brigade and the Vertical Corporate Hierarchy
- Looking Up and Looking Down
- Going Up: Getting Promotions Right
- Breaking the Vicious Circle
- Real Authority = Authoritativeness
- The Ingredients of Leading by Example

FAUXPOLOGY



TAKEAWAYS:

- The Language of Fauxpology
- 5 Ways Opportunism Make the Work Environment Toxic
- Confronting the Fauxpologist
- Phrasing the Confrontation
- Strategies to Foster Accountability on Your Team

WORKPLACE PERSONALITY TYPES



TAKEAWAYS:

- The Difference between Typewatching and Name Calling
- Identification: Detecting and Connecting Relevant Behaviors
- Assessing Potential Risks and Benefits
- Matching: Assessing Compatibility
- Devising Appropriate Communication Strategies

CONDUCTING A JOB INTERVIEW



TAKEAWAYS:

- Brainteasers or Predictive Questions?
- Tricks to Gauge a Fit
- Learning to Observe the Non-Verbal
- Quickly Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses

CULTURE-SHOCK-FREE ONBOARDING



TAKEAWAYS:

- Preparing the Orientation Meeting
- Optimizing the Orientation Meeting
- Q&A
- Some Tips to Devise and Implement Cross-cultural Training



VERBAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES





SELLING ICE TO ESKIMOS



TAKEAWAYS:

- Connotation and Denotation: an Introduction
- Utilizing Connotation for your Target market
- Creating a Need
- Persuasiveness 101: Practical Exercises



HEDGING AND SUGARCOATING

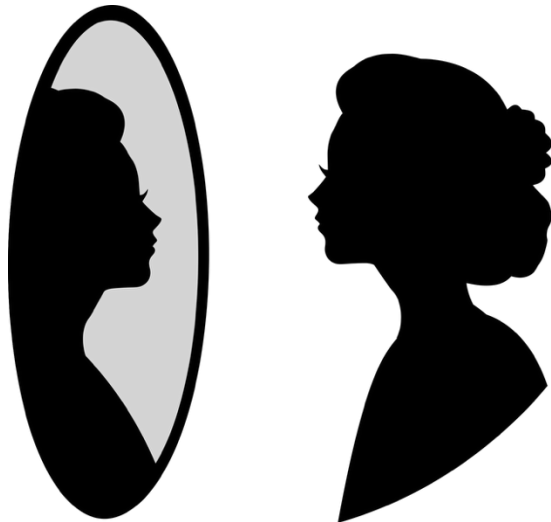


TAKEAWAYS:

- The Specifics of Tactful and Cautious
- Softeners: the Basics of Hedging
- Sugarcoating: Euphemisms, Metaphors, and Litotes in Day-to-Day Business Communication



ASSERTIVENESS AT WORK



TAKEAWAYS:

- Setting Boundaries
- Recognizing Passive Communication Attitudes
- Avoiding Aggressive Language
- Shaping Your own Assertive Voice



personal & english languages CONSULTING

POKER OR CHESS?

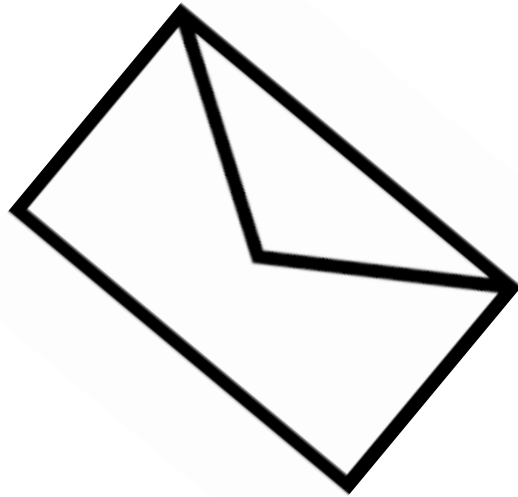


TAKEAWAYS:

- Introducing Poker and Chess Negotiation Strategies
- How to tell Bluffing and Inauthenticity
- Analyzing how Someone Feels about what they are Saying: The Chiara Ferragni Case Study
- Emotional Rationality and Logical Rationality
- Strategizing: the Basics



NEWSLETTER WRITING



TAKEAWAYS:

- Creating Valuable Content
- Encapsulating and Captivating
- Color-Coding: an Introduction to the Psychology of Colors
- Diversifying: The Basics
- Standing out from the Crowd: Wordplay, Visual Puns, and Other Devices



INTERPERSONAL SKILLS





INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



TAKEAWAYS:

- Greetings and Introductions
- Coffee Chat and Small Talk
- Practising Small Talk in the Waiting Room
- Civilities in Theory and in Practice



THE COFFEE BREAK



TAKEAWAYS:

- Leveraging Chit Chat and Small Talk in Business Settings
- Do's and Don'ts on the international scene
- Weather Talk
- Bonding and Sympathizing
- (Cautiously) Commenting the News

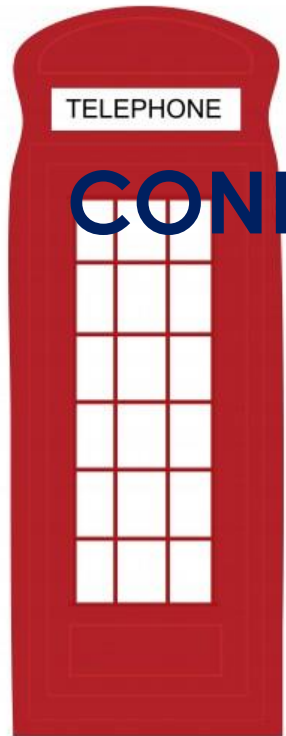


personal & english languages CONSULTING

PHONE

&

CONFERENCE CALLS



TAKEAWAYS:

- Telephone Expressions
- The Language of Hitches and Glitches
- Blind Listening
- Roleplay & Feedback
- Continuous Learning and Improvement



personal & english languages CONSULTING

EMAIL WRITING



TAKEAWAYS:

- Basic email Phrases
- What AI Doesn't Help You Control: the Tone
- Delivering Effective Customer Service
- Extending Apologies and Invitations
- Congratulating
- Inquiring
- Urging, pressuring, bluffing



MAKING APPOINTMENTS

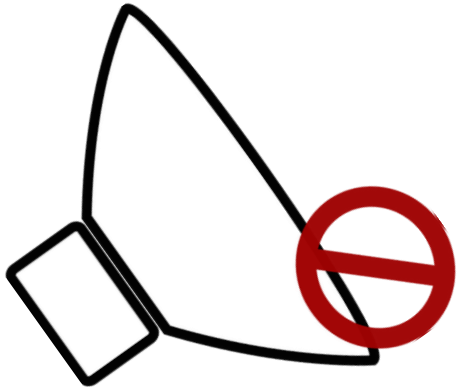


TAKEAWAYS:

- Collocations and Useful Expressions:
Respect or Meet a deadline?
In time or on time?
Postpone or put off?
- Clear and Correct use of Future Forms
- Planning and Scheduling Like a Pro



Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh





personal & english languages CONSULTING

POKER FACE

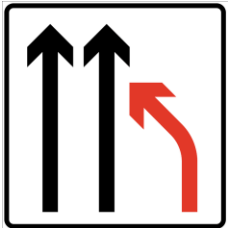


TAKEAWAYS:

- How Will Expressing Emotions Help or Hinder our Goals?
- Identify your Tells
- Learning to Respond Instead of Reacting
- Practical strategies: Grounding, Visualization, Cold Exposure
- Assessing, not Feeling Assessed



READING THE SIGNS



TAKEAWAYS:

- Telling Codified from Non-codified Verbal Language
- Establishing the Baseline
- Some Basics:

The 'Ripple Effect'

The Tongue Jut

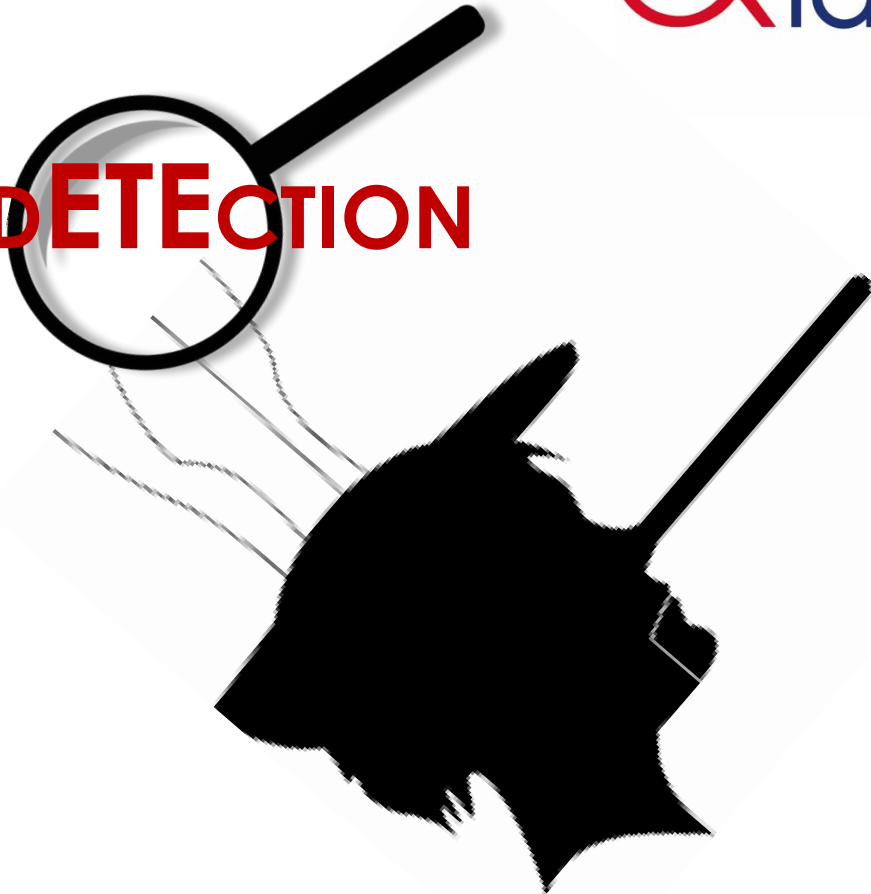
The Duping Delight

The Chin Tuck



personal & english languages CONSULTING

LIE DETECTION



TAKEAWAYS:

- The Baseline
- Distancing
- Generalizing
- Overemphatization
- Repetition
- Case Studies
- Applied Analyses



EMBODYING POWER



TAKEAWAYS:

- Owning the Situation
- Withstanding Stress
- Awareness of One's own Surroundings
- Responding, not Reacting
- Assessing instead of feeling Assessed



personal & english languages CONSULTING

POWER POSING



TAKEAWAYS:

- The Animal Kingdom and Tribe Psychology
- Opening up
- Eye Contact
- The Thumb of Power
- Feet in the Game
- Assessing instead of Feeling Assessed
- The Mr. Clean, the Loomer, the Obama
- The Steve Jobs Case Study