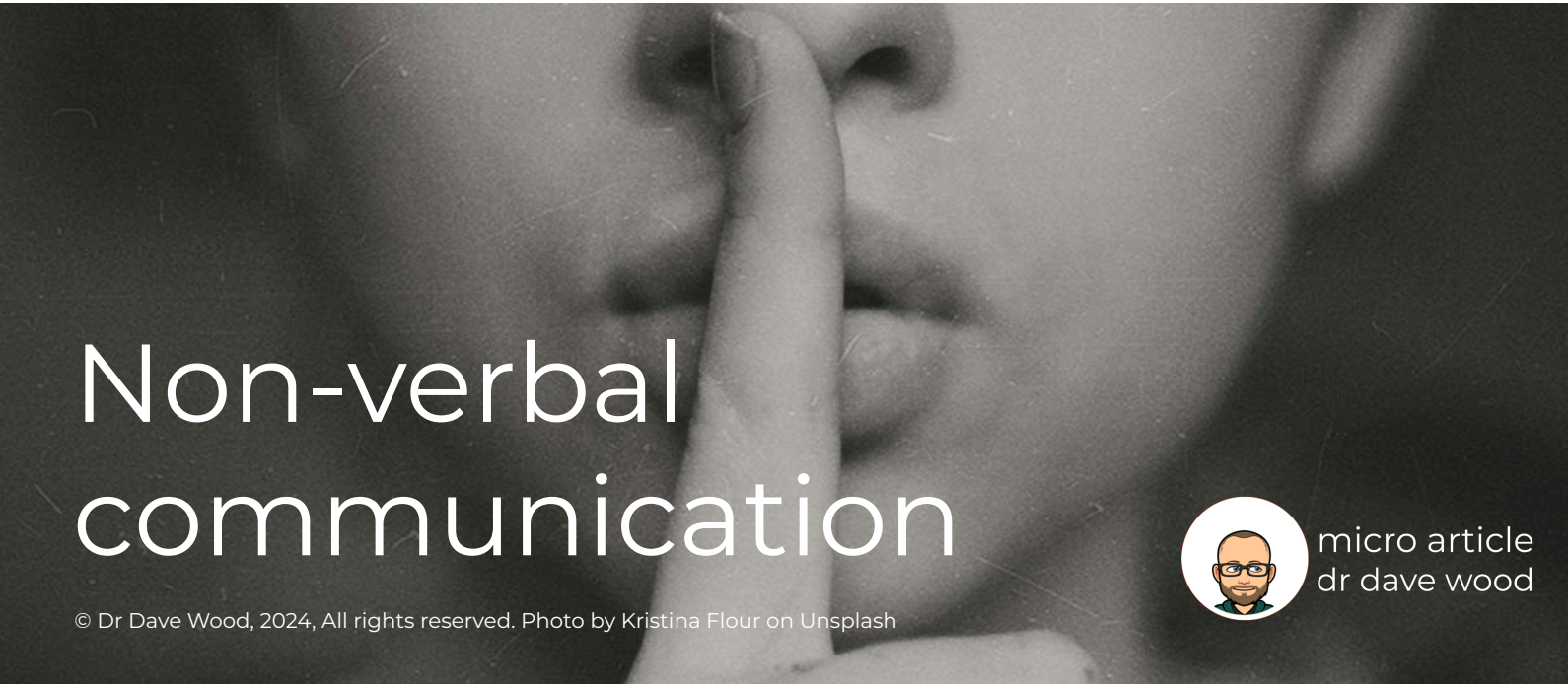

Non-verbal communication

micro article
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Words like violence, break the silence.

(Depeche Mode, *Enjoy the Silence*)

The words we use hold power. They can reflect meaning, spark empathy, and create understanding. However, words can also be harmful, intrusive and distracting. Yet words alone are only part of the story when working with people.

Body language and movement

It looked like a first date, it was obvious.

We read a lot into body language and movement. We might read aggression, confidence, empathy, disinterest. Yet all these readings are formed within a contextual and cultural framework. When we subtly observe and interact with the other person non-verbally we build rapport.

Expressions

Have you ever felt manipulated by your dog?

I think for most of us dog owners we've probably felt that sensation at one time or another. They use their puppy dog eyes and angle their head and we're like putty in their hands. Similarly, as humans, our complex range of expressions can either support or contradict the message we are trying to communicate.

Emotional warmth

Is touch the only medicine for the soul?

Rudi Richardson spoke of how being treated like a human through being offered a cup of tea became the initial spark of change. We don't have to hug people to make them feel loved and valuable.

Environmental factors

Is there such a thing as healing architecture?

A study showed people heal quicker in nicer looking hospitals than they do in drab ones. The environment in which we meet with people has an impact on the work we do with them.

Enjoy the silence

Words are very unnecessary, they can only do harm.

Ultimately, sometimes it is our lack of words which helps people change. Words can interrupt internal processing or disrupt a direction of travel. So, don't be afraid to enjoy the silence.