

Synthesis Essay on the movie Goodfellas- "*Scene: I'm funny how, I mean funny like I'm a clown.*"

Name

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Communication is an important element in video analysis. Ideally, a careful study of the different parts of a video and their role in enhancing interpersonal communication is much more important. In consideration of this concept and the underlying principles of communication, there is a need to assess its applicability to a scene in the movie; Goodfellas. The three-minute scene is a clear reflection of how verbal and non-verbal communication work together in the context of dyadic communication.

In Goodfellas, the scene starts with a man talking to a group of people in the joint. He communicates loudly as if he is communicating with all the people at the bar. Therefore, the individual can be perceived to have a high self-esteem. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to probably feel good regarding themselves. For this reason, their communication behavior will be positive and this helps them to communicate successfully. Ideally, this explains why the individual is able to communicate with various people successfully. However, despite his verbal communication, the response from those he is addressing varies as some communicate back verbally while others non-verbally. While communicating with the others, he seems to be in charge as everybody is listening closely as he uses both his hands and mouth to narrate the story. Sometimes non-verbal communication accompanies vocalizations (Adler et. al., 2010). To agree with the storyteller, some of the listeners seem to shake their heads. This is nonverbal communication which involves communication without vocalization of words. Therefore, the two communication styles can be used in answering the other.

However, the way individuals view themselves may differ with the perceptions of others (Adler et. al., 2010). This explains why self-concept is a subjective idea. In this scene, Tommy Devito appears to differ when Henry Hill calls him a 'funny guy'. Devito, therefore, goes on to

ask Hill to clearly explain how or why he is funny (TheJeremyKyIeShow, 2009: 0:42). Devito appears to differ with how Hill perceives him and also the fact that it can be clearly observed that he is a 'funny guy'. Adler et. al. (2010), outlines that there exists various reasons as to why people have a self-esteem level that others would consider unrealistically favorable. In this scene, Devito's self-esteem can be said to have developed over the course of his social interaction with others. The people in this scene appear to laugh and pay attention to Devito's actions and stories. This could be the source of his high self-esteem. A high self-esteem is considered to be the reason as to why people feel good about themselves. (Adler et. al., 2010). A high self-esteem positively affects one's behavior.

Nonetheless, emotion management is important as it can have a great impact on individuals in the course of communication. To manage emotions, it is imperative to carry out perception checking. For example, the man who approaches Devito about the waiter; who was worried about the check, continues to talk to him despite Devito trying to 'waive' the conversation between them. Then Devito gets angry and hits him with a glass bottle (TheJeremyKyIeShow, 2009). Consequently, had the man carried out perception checking then he would not have been attacked by Devito. Thus it can be said that he lacked empathy. Empathy is defined as the ability to understand other people (Adler et. al., 2010). Through empathy, an individual is able to identify with other peoples' emotions through the emotional contagion model. In short, it helps to understand other's sadness, joy, and fear among others.

Furthermore, emotion management can save life or prevent 'ugly' incidences from occurring. It is reported that another way of empathizing with other people is to experience physically a similar reality to them (Adler et. al., 2010). Nevertheless, the other characters in the scene do not identify or understand the waiter's fear and that is why they laugh when Devito

throws bottles at him (TheJeremyKylieShow, 2009). However, for them to intervene, they should have imagined to be experiencing the same reality as the waiter. Ideally, by spending time on the virtual body of another person, a person's perception on that race changes (Adler et. al., 2010). However, in this case, the 'watching' individuals did not feel any empathy.

Even more, impression management denotes the use of communication strategies to influence how others view them (Adler et. al., 2010). Individuals use these strategies which in turn change the perception people had about them. For instance, the 'main' speaker at first tells a funny story that makes people laugh. However, he infuriates the waiter by the communication strategy he adopts. Devito feels offended when the bill is brought by the waiter and he says, 'c'mon do no embarrass me in front of my friends.' This is closely related to the self-disclosure theory (Adler et. al., 2010). Self-disclosure is defined as the information about an individual that is communicated purposefully to another individual.

In short, verbal and nonverbal communications are crucial in a dyadic communication. From the scene, it is evident that Devito has a high self-esteem since individuals with this kind of esteem tend to feel good about themselves. He seems to be the center of attention and the communication process appears to include both verbal and nonverbal styles of communication. Devito appears to perceive himself differently from what others think of him. This shows the subjectivity of self-concept.

## References

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TheJeremyKyeShow. (2009, August 18). *Goodfellas - "I'm funny how, I mean funny like I'm a clown?"* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E84VqqCPI7w>



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