

TECH

LOVE IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

WITH ALLAN PEASE

ALLAN Pease is known worldwide as ‘Mr Body Language’. He has written 18 bestsellers – including 11 number ones – and given countless seminars in 75 countries across the world. In 1991, he was invited to the Kremlin to host a body language training seminar for newly elected top Russian officials, among them, Vladimir Putin.

The observations Pease has made during his career – about men and women, relationships, body language, business and negotiations – can be distilled into evolutionary terms. Behavioural patterns formed from millions of years of biological evolution are the basis for an unspoken language we all unconsciously understand. But what was once shaped by the slow passage of time and gentle hand of Mother Nature has been hijacked and hacked by the synthetic claw of technology.

What then, are the effects of rapid technological progress on human behaviour? How does it impact our love life, interpersonal relationships and our workplaces?

“Badly,” says Pease.

When it comes to relationships, tech developments sandwiched between generational shifts have had profound negative impacts on the state of modern romance.

“For example, I’m part of the baby boomer generation,” Pease begins. “Baby boomers were raised without modern technology. Our communication with people and with the opposite sex was usually face to face. In a simple sense, we were raised in an environment that trained us to look at faces for signs: If somebody’s mouth moved a certain way, whether their skin colour changed or they moved in a particular fashion. With that awareness we unconsciously figured out the system.

“Brain scans show that millennials, and to a greater extent, Gen Z, have about 10 per cent fewer connections in the brain than their parents or grandparents that deal with

recognising emotions in another person. The reason for this seems clear: Gen Z kids are always looking at a screen and not a face.

“If you project that forwards, more of the younger generations will be raised looking at screens and not at people, you would expect that over a period of time, that they will be less and less able to identify emotions in someone, which means they’re likely to upset someone and not even know that they did it.”

Pease also points to the increased time we spend communicating through text messages as opposed to in person as placing strain on our relationships.

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“Body Language accounts for 60 per cent to 80 per cent of your message face-to-face and this is missing in texts. You’ve got no tone of voice either; you only have written words which can be easily misinterpreted. In written words, you can get into more trouble than you can without them.”

Pease recommends thoughtful use of emojis (especially men communicating with women, as women are more perceptive to body language signals than men).

“An emoji is a frozen expression, an attitude of body language. And if you don’t put them in your texts, then you’re likely to get somebody really upset with you.”

As for the future? Pease sees us already

moving back towards body language-focused media, like Skype.

“Skype, or any type of video messaging, lets you see the person like your parents and grandparents could do. Where the difference is with a Skype call, you can stare at that person and if you look at their face, you can analyse every part of their face. You can look at their pupils, and you can actually see pupil dilation and constriction. You can consciously look for these signals whereas, in a face to face encounter you can’t do that.”

As the tide of technological progress washes relentlessly upon our shores, we ask Pease

how we can mitigate its negative influence and continue to get the most out of our interpersonal relationships.

Unsurprisingly, he recommends a strong focus on personal development and learning what people want or are feeling through understanding their body language.

“For both personal and businesses, it’s the same thing,” Pease hums. “If you can sell yourself to someone – if they buy you, like you, feel comfortable with you – they’ll push to give you what you want.

“If you’re relating to a group of people through a group of likes, you won’t get what you want, which is recognition and friendship and love and business from another person.”

