

Donald Trump's secret communication tactic to win over Vladimir Putin at Helsinki summit

Lexie Cartwright, News Corp Australia Network

17 July 2018

US President Donald Trump used a secret communication tactic to manipulate Russian leader Vladimir Putin during their Helsinki summit, according to a leading body language expert.

The notoriously pompous leaders exuded power, but despite strives for dominance Mr Trump was less “gorilla like” than normal in an intentional attempt to make Mr Putin feel important.

Body language expert Dr Louise Mahler told News Corp Australia that he did this through a Neuro-linguistic programming technique, a communication approach developed in the 1970s which creators claim can be used to achieve specific goals, and is often taught in management training courses.

It encompasses the idea that if you subtly ‘mirror’ someone’s behaviour, it makes the other person feel connected to you. In essence, Mr Trump really wanted Mr Putin to walk away feeling like they bonded.



U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Picture: AP

“I noticed Trump wasn’t puffing himself up as he did with the Queen and Kim (Jong-un),” Dr Mahler said.

“He wasn’t overly trying to overpower him. He was still quite strong and powerful but he didn’t go over the top. It was bizarre.

“My theory is he knew exactly what he was doing. Trump doesn’t do anything by accident.

“He was obviously intentionally pandering to Russia and it’s obvious this is part of a plan. The question is what that plan is.”

Dr Mahler said Mr Trump exposed his communication weapon by copying Mr Putin’s body language so the pair would come across as equals.

“Trump was accommodating him but not in a weak way, he was trying to do what Putin was doing by mirroring his hand gestures and things he said,” Dr Mahler said.

“Trump is the ultimate negotiator, and he was doing all the Neuro-linguistic programming mirroring techniques.

“When they went in for a handshake, Trump went in as a pure equal rather than putting his hand on top or underneath, and it was a real sword thrust.

“Putin’s legs were wide and firm, and they both fixed their eyes on each other and their mouths were tight.

“Trump was very much playing a game as he was really trying to build a rapport and connection with Putin.”



Dr Mahler pointed out the pair walked side-by-side often and identified as equals. Picture: Getty

Dr Mahler also said the pair quickly glossed over questions about Russia's alleged interference in the US election.

"This doesn't necessarily mean they were lying but Putin was fiddling with his fingers and looking down," she said.

Despite their seemingly level playing field summit, Dr Mahler said the pair both fought for an overall win when they said goodbye.

"When they walk off, Putin puts his arm around Trump which is a power trip, to get your arm on last," she said.

"Trump put his arm around Putin, and Putin did it again.

"It was like 'no, no, no, I'm winning. They were both determined to win that last one."

And when it came to Mr Trump and the First Lady, Dr Mahler thought the president treated her "like she was a piece of scum".



'Thank you dear friend'. Picture: AP



U.S. President Donald Trump, left, tosses a soccer ball to his wife first lady Melania Trump. Picture: AP

“When Putin threw Trump the soccer ball, that was done in a ‘person to person, equal to equal’ fun way,” Dr Mahler said. “But when Trump threw it to Melania, he just tossed it off like she was a piece of scum.



U.S. First Lady Melania Trump gets the soccer ball. Picture: AP

“If I was her I would’ve thrown it back at him.

“It’s fascinating how he treats her.

“Normally if you’d pass a ball to your wife you’d be like ‘are you ready, catch it’ kind of thing, but no, he just chucks it to her.

“It was weird.”