

Know how to speak through Body Language

By Moira Russell (Author) dated: 26/6/09

Body language is a form of non-verbal communication wherein one can send or receive messages through body movements, gestures, facial expression, and the like. There are general acts of body language that almost everyone does in his or her daily life. However, do you know how to speak this language? Can you understand other people by just reading their body language? The importance of knowing how to speak through body language is that you can have the ability to control any situation with anybody in any place and time.

Personal Space

Every one of us has his or her own personal space. It is somewhat like a comfort zone. It is an invisible region that surrounds you, and if someone tries to invade it, you will feel uncomfortable or threatened. But one's personal space is dependent upon certain situations. A person who grew up in the city with crowded streets has a smaller personal space compared to one who lives in the rural area. Learning how to respect one's personal space is one method to make communication through body language more effective between two or more people. There are body movements and gestures better appreciated and understood when there is an appropriate distance.

Body Gestures and Movements

Various body parts are used in the body language – the hands, arms, legs, head, and body posture. Hands can make several gestures, each with a difference in meaning; and you can express well through them. If you want to let another person know you are interested in him or in the conversation, the hands can emphasize it for you. Do not try to hide your hands, like putting them into your pockets. This gesture means that you are hiding something from him or you are already getting bored. Showing your palm upward or outward shows that you are comfortable and interested in your situation. Leaning your body or directing it towards that person is also a signal that you are indeed listening to him.

You can still give a good impression even in the tensest situation, like in a job interview. You simply have to avoid gestures that are giving signals that you are nervous, uncomfortable, or anxious. Never slouch, fidget, drum your fingers, shuffle your feet, or tremble. These actions take the word “confidence” away from you.

You can also speak through handshakes. A firm one with the palm pointing downwards and arm slightly extended indicates confidence or power. Meanwhile, a weak handshake pointing upward is an indication of tension or shyness or nervousness.

You must also be aware of the message you are trying to convey whenever you cross your arms. This is one of the actions that you must avoid. This will tell another person that you might be hiding something, lying, or being impatient. It may indicate that you may be protecting yourself from a verbal attack, simply feeling cold, or even probably lying. But it may also indicate that you are disagreeing with another person if you are the one talking.

Another common hand gesture is the clenched fist. This indicates anger, frustration, defensiveness, resistance, or confidence.

Your emotions can also be reflected by the way you stand or sit. Proper posture is with the shoulders squared and pulled back, but without too much tightening of the back muscles. With the back muscle rigid and stiff, you will appear very tense and nervous. Do not slouch as well. Slouching signifies laziness or boredom.

Make Your Eyes Talk

Your eyes can clearly express what you feel or desire. Eye contact is the most important eye body language since it could mean interest, confidence, eagerness to listen, and sincerity. The inability to hold long eye contact indicates dishonesty or discomfort.

When one can maintain the eye contact and even prolong it, it is indicative that his focus of attention is in listening to the other person. The inability to maintain it has many meanings, depending on the situation. When there is sudden breakage of eye contact and the eye wanders off to another direction, it may mean that he is distracted by a certain object, like another person entering the room. It may also mean that he is losing interest, getting bored, and would like to get out of the conversation.

The eyes are also used in flirting, especially in knowing if the person is attracted to you or not. When your eyes meet across the room, and then one of you looks away but looks back, it is a signal of attraction. It is also reflected when the eyes would go down to the lips and then back to the eyes again.

If the eyes would look up to the forehead of another person, it means he is talking to someone with superiority. When the eye would go down to the nose, it means that there is no figure of authority in both parties.

Culture: A Very Important Consideration

In conversing with another person, it is a great advantage that you know their culture. Prolonged eye contact, act of raising voice volume, and touching may be rude to other countries, especially in Asia. Also, there are a number of gestures that mean differently in other cultures.

Learn how to speak using your body. Body language is indeed much more convincing than words and is very useful in giving impressions in certain situations. But the only trick in learning how to speak and understand body language is that what books or research say may not necessarily be the intentions or real message of one person.

Body language involves many gestures and movements, and each one with different meanings. It is a complex method of communicating. But the art of body language is that when you learn the interpretations and indications of different body signals, you are able to determine one's inner feelings and emotions. Thus you can control the situation by knowing how to react in advance.

It is indeed beneficial if you know how to decipher the meanings of another person's body language. However, the indications are not true at all times. Not all impressions from reading body language last. This will only be supportive if you already have an idea on the personality of the person.

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