

Body Language

Body Language is the unspoken communication that goes on in every Face-to-Face encounter with another human being. It tells you their true feelings towards you and how well your words are being received. Between 60-80% of our message is communicated through our Body Language, only 7-10% is attributable to the actual words of a conversation.

Confident body language

Confident body language will make you appear calm and important to the audience.

Make a list of things that make people appear confident.

Body placement when you give a presentation is also very important. Do not stand behind a desk or lectern and don't hold onto the furniture as if you are on a sinking ship.



Nervous habits

When people get nervous they have different habits.

Make a list of these nervous habits.

It is important to know if you have a nervous habit, and how to stop it.

Typical Signs of Nervousness

- * Hands in pockets
- * Increased blinking of the eyes
- * Failure to make eye contact
- * Looking at the floor
- * Shaking legs
- * Licking and biting of the lips
- * Clenching teeth
- * Finger tapping
- * Jittery hands
- * Fist clenching
- * Faster, jerkier gestures
- * Sweaty hands and armpits
- * Cracking voice
- * Increased rate of speech
- * Clearing of the throat
- * Pulling at skin
- * Frequent smoothing of hair
- * Standing on sides of feet rather than flat on floor
- * Toes wiggling
- * Dry Mouth

Gestures

Gestures are movements of your hands that you use during a presentation to enhance the speech. It is used to focus the audience attention onto something, or used to act out the word you are using. Gestures have to be used at the right time to coincide with what you are saying. Well-timed, well-conceived hand gestures, can really enhance a speech.

What gestures would you use for the following:

“If you look at this picture...”

“I said NO, you can't do that...”

“We have to work together to achieve the goals...”

“.. and then it was gone.”

“She said it from her heart...”

“This report is very important to the marketing department...”

“and the fish was huge...”

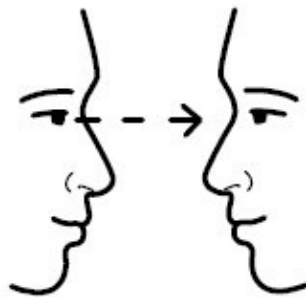
“point number three involves the relations between the company and its employees...”

Eye contact

Eye contact is a powerful communication tool. If someone avoids eye contact with us, we may find them untrustworthy or "sly." On the other hand, if they stare at us unrelentingly, we begin to feel uncomfortable. In a presentation, you want to strike a balance between these two extremes with each of the members of your audience.

Sometimes eye contact is sacrificed when a speaker has not practiced the presentation enough and must rely too heavily on notes, which is why you should always practice and use your cue cards. Another reason a speaker might not have strong eye contact is that the speaker is nervous.





Good eye contact helps you to carry your message individually to each person in the audience. Learn to scan the audience, stopping to make eye contact with each individual in the room. Pause two or three seconds with each listener. This ensures that your presentation feels more like a one-on-one conversation than a speech. Looking people straight in the eyes builds trust. If you are not comfortable doing that, look at the bridge of the nose or at the chin. The effect is exactly the same and it appears to others as if you are looking at them directly. Scan the room diagonally. From corner to corner. Left to right, right to left.

**Positioning and Stance**

Your body posture affects your emotions and how you feel determines your posture. They influence one another. If you are confident, happy, and ready, your body will show it.

How your body moves (or doesn't move) is extremely important to communication. A speaker who stays in one place could become boring. Lack of movement restrains your emotions. Don't hesitate to vary your position; shifting toward and away from your audience and from side to side can help emphasize your points.

Positioning and Stance**Shoulders and Head Positioning**

Confident and Positive	Nervous and Negative
	
Shoulders back	Shoulders drooping
Head up	Head down
Smile	Frown
Full of energy	Low energy
Ready to perform	Not ready
I am great!	I'm no good!
Yes I can!	No I cannot!
	
Life is great!	Life is rotten!

Movement will keep listeners interested in what you are saying - provided it doesn't distract them. Decide how much variety is appropriate. Experiment. Walk so the audience will be able to see your body better as well as hear you more clearly. If you are in a board room, walk around the table so that everyone is able to see you. Regular, physical movement is good for your breathing and circulation. It builds your energy level and helps keep you relaxed and feeling more confident in front of the group.