

WHAT YOU REALLY MEANT TO SAY WAS...



(the study of body language)



I. INTRODUCTION

Body language not only supplements what we say but usually dominates our conversation with small gestures, eye movements, facial expressions, and posture changes. For the most part, we know this language, many of us just don't know how to properly speak it. Most specialists in this field agree that 60-90% of our communication is body language.

II. WHAT DOES OUR BODY SAY TO OTHERS?

A. Proxemics-the study of the effects of spatial distance between persons interacting with each other. There are four boundaries that most people recognize:

1. *Intimate space* is considered 0-1 1/2 feet. This is the zone in which people who are very close can easily touch. (John 21:20)
2. *Personal space* extends from 1 1/2 to 4 feet. This is within arm's length and is the handshaking zone. This space is for those you like but are not intimate with. (Matthew 19:13-14)
3. *Social space* generally extends from 4-10 feet. Most commonly this is the everyday encounter space which most of the population is generally invited to be in. (John 8:1-9)
4. *Public space* extends from 10 feet outwards. A good example would be a speaker in front of an audience. (Matthew 5:1)

B. During our conversations, especially during the first minute, only 7% of the first impression we give is via words. The remaining 93% will be based upon body language, pitch, amplitude, rate, and voice quality of speech. (Tonya Reiman renowned body language expert)

Let's practice! What does the following body language events tell you about the person?

1. They walk into a room briskly and with purpose holding their head up high. For drama, they pause momentarily at the door before entering.

2. They stand erect with excellent posture. When seated, they sit up straight and never slouch backwards. During conversation they lean slightly inward.
3. They know that gazing can be nice but outright staring can be insulting. They try visualizing a triangle on the other person's face and keep their eyes focused in this area.
4. They fold their arms while someone is talking to them which may indicate a defensive posture.
5. They shake a leg while they are conversing. This may indicate boredom, nervousness, or insecurity.
6. They sit in front of you and during conversing they cross and recross their legs which may indicate unease.
7. They are talking to you and filling spaces in the conversation with um and uh. (A silent pause gives the indication that you are really thinking about your answer and are confident enough to allow momentary silence.)



C. How do you tell when someone is lying?

1. Most people associate lying with looking away or shifty eyes. Actually, a good liar will maintain strong eye contact to get around that stigma.
2. Some other indicators to watch for are:
 - a. a quick nose touch
 - b. rapid eye blinking
 - c. a change or shift in posture
 - d. pupil dilation
 - e. rubbing the eye
 - f. covering the mouth
 - g. scratching their neck
 - h. grabbing or tugging of the ear
 - i. pulling at their shirt collar



D. How do you tell when someone is angry?

1. You will see the eyebrows squish together and vertical lines might form in between the brows.
2. The nostrils appear to be flared and look wide open.
3. The lips are tightly pressed together and get tighter as the anger get more intense.

E. What are the top ten body language turn offs according to most experts?



1. Toupees- these give the perception of insecurity and low self esteem. Balding individuals are seen as secure, braver, stronger, and more powerful.
2. Perfume- recognition of overbearing scents can carry memories of happiness or sadness.
3. Poor/limp handshakes- indicate an individual is weak and has poor self-esteem.

Rules for handshakes: To properly shake someone's hand, lean forward, extend the right hand vertically and simultaneously introduce yourself. How you grip the hand is also significant. You are looking for the "middle of the road" type grip which can suggest self-confidence and enthusiasm. In addition, make sure your hand stays vertical. It can be seen as overassertive to clamp your hand down onto someone else's with your palm down. On the flip side, allowing your hand to be palm up when going to shake hands can be a sign of submission. Offer a full palm to palm handshake. To ensure you maintain control of the handshake, move to left side as the person approaches and extend your arm horizontally. The person who stands to the left of the hand shake has the ability to dominate with the palm down if he/she so chooses. The handshake should not last more than 2-3 pumps up and down which is approximately 2-3 seconds.

Traditional Kiss Greetings- Some women choose to kiss hello. They kiss once softly on the right cheek when greeting you hello or goodbye. Women will greet men usually with a nod or handshake the first meeting then on subsequent meetings will sometimes kiss men on the cheek. Some do not actually kiss instead they touch cheeks and kiss into the air.)

4. Avoiding Eye Contact- Eye contact is crucial to establishing rapport trust and demonstrating sincerity. Eye contact shows an individual that you are interested in them.
5. Poor Voice Quality- Monotone pitch throughout an entire conversation can be a strong indicator of boredom or indifference. A high pitch would indicate excitement, nervousness and sometimes lying whereas a low pitch might be indicative of anger.



6. Biting the Nails- Usually indicates nervousness, impatience and mental boredom. It can be construed as a lack of confidence, control and competence.
7. Biting your...-Biting your anything can indicate anxiety, nervousness, deception and a whole host of other negative displays. Lastly, chewing on a pen-cap, pencil, straw, toothpick, necklaces, or the flesh of the inner cheek, all indicate insecurity.
8. Superior gestures- Have you ever seen someone lean back in a chair with their arms folded behind their head and their legs extended out. Superiority is also demonstrated by the individual who steeples their fingers together while you speak to them or while they speak to you. An individual who holds their hands behind their back while speaking to you is exposing their vulnerable front while establishing their audacity and courage. Some people will let their thumbs express superiority; using the thumbs indicates you feel in control of yourself and are filled with confidence.
9. Talking too much- The majority of the time, people who talk too much are considered self-absorbed, narcissistic, oblivious or “all about me” types of people. In addition, most people who talk too much do not think they are perceived as talking too much.
10. Fake smiles- A real smile shows in the zygomaticus muscles which pulls the corners of the mouth upward. The muscles surrounding the eyes, orbicularis oculi, begin to squint which causes crow’s feet to occur at the edges. Also, the eyebrows and the skin between the upper eyelid and the eyebrow come down very slightly. A genuine smile is usually more symmetrical than a fake smile and does not last as long.

A fake smile uses the risorius muscles which pull the lips horizontally apart. The zygomaticus muscles are only used a little bit, to pull the corners of the mouth up slightly. In the United States, the best way to judge a real smile from a forced smile is to look at the crinkles in the eyes.

