



THE ART OF BODY LANGUAGE

Body language, also known as kinesics, is a powerful form of nonverbal communication that makes people understand and communicate more effectively and reveal one's true feelings and emotions. Body language consists of facial expressions, posture, eye contact, hand movements, amongst other things.



EXAMPLES OF BODY LANGUAGE



THE MEHRABIAN MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

In the 1960s, Prof. Albert Mehrabian of the University of California conducted two experiments and formulated the 7-38-55% communication rule. His studies suggested that as human beings, we primarily deduce our impressions and feelings about a conversation based on the speaker's body language, rather than the actual words being spoken. According to the Mehrabian model, only 7% of personal communication relies on the literal content of the message. The use of voice, such as volume and intonation make up 38% and body language makes up 55% of the message conveyed.

HOW TO MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

1 TILT YOUR HEAD TO ONE SIDE

A tilted head shows the speaker that the listener is actively and keenly listening to what is being said and is genuinely interested in the process of communication.

2 LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD

When you lean towards the direction of the speaker, it demonstrates a trust in them and a liking and interest in the discussion. However, do not lean too much so as to invade the speaker's personal space

3 MAKE DIRECT EYE CONTACT

Making direct eye contact shows that you are confident and you trust that person. However, make sure to look away occasionally to avoid looking creepy or to give an impression that you are staring.

4 NODDING YOUR HEAD

Nodding your head is a very effective way to show that you're listening and are in agreement with what is being said. You can nod where a verbal answer is not necessary. Smiling makes this action even more positive.

5 A FIRM HANDSHAKE

A firm handshake indicates trust, self-confidence and respect. Reach out for the handshake first, if you want to signal an interest in the communication. Ensure that the handshake is firm but not painful.

AVOID! NEGATIVE BODY LANGUAGE

1 ARMS CROSSED OVER CHEST

This indicates that the listener is being defensive or disagrees with the opinions or actions of the people participating in the communication.

2 NAIL BITING, FIDGETING

Nail biting indicates stress, insecurity or nervousness. It also comes across as unhygienic. Similarly, fidgeting with jewelry, pens or other accessories indicates nervousness or boredom.

3 TOUCHING NOSE OR PULLING EARLOBES

Touching your nose can be a signal of disbelief or rejection of what the speaker is saying. It could also mean that an individual is being untruthful about what they are saying. Pulling your ears or earlobes could mean indecisiveness.

Understanding the nuances of body language can go a long way towards helping you better communicate with others and interpreting what others wish to convey. When you look at these nonverbal cues in addition to the verbal communication, you will get a far better understanding of what is not being said. This will help you be a better and more attentive listener, improve your relationships and also align your body language with what you wish to convey to others.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN COMMUNICATION IS HEARING WHAT ISN'T SAID." – PETER F. DRUCKER