

WHAT IS BODY LANGUAGE?

Body Language is the unspoken, non verbal 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 *50-100%* of our message is communicated through our **Body Language**. A simple roll of the eyes or hand gesture may be all it takes to convey *100%* of what we mean, no words, no tone, in fact *only 7-10%* is attributable to the actual words we use.

Your ability to read and understand another person's **Body Language** can mean the difference between making a great impression or a very bad one! It really doesn't matter how clever or knowledgeable you are in your field, if you can't get your point across effectively or decode other people you work with then you're at a disadvantage to those that do.

Here are ten practical tips on using **Body Language** to improve your life.

1. Eye contact

Eye contact is one of the most important aspects of dealing with others, especially people we have just met. Maintaining good eye contact shows respect and interest in what they have to say. In the UK we tend to keep eye contact around 60-70% of the time giving a feeling of comfort and genuine warmth in your company. Any more eye contact than this and you can be too intense, any less and you give off a signal that you are lacking interest in them or their conversation.

2. Posture

Posture is the next thing to master, get your posture right and you will automatically start feeling better, as it makes you feel good almost instantly. Next time you notice you are feeling a bit down, take a look at how you are standing or sitting. Chances are you will be slouched over with your shoulders drooping down and inward. This collapses the chest and inhibits good breathing, which in turn can help make you feel nervous or uncomfortable.

3. Head Position

When you want to feel confident and self assured keep your head level both horizontally and vertically. You can also use this straight head position when you want to be authoritative and have what you are saying to be taken seriously. Conversely, when you want to be friendly and in the listening, receptive mode, tilt your head just a little to one side or other.

4. Arms

In general terms the more outgoing you are as a person, the more you tend to use your arms with big movements. The quieter you are the less you move your arms away from your body. So, try to strike a natural balance. When you want to come across in the best possible light, crossing the arms is a no, no in front of others. Obviously if someone says something that gets your goat, then by all means show your disapproval by crossing them!

5. Legs

Legs are the furthest point away from the brain; consequently they are the hardest bits of our bodies to consciously control. They tend to move around a lot more than normal when we are nervous, stressed or being deceptive. Be careful too in the way you cross your legs. If you bring your leg up to rest on the knee of the other this is known as the "Figure Four" and is generally perceived as the most defensive leg cross.

6. Angle of body

Angle of the body in relation to others gives an indication of our attitudes and feelings towards them. We angle toward people we find attractive, friendly and interesting and angle ourselves away from those we do not, it is that simple!

7. Hand Gestures

Basic rules, Palms slightly up and outward is open and friendly. Palm down generally seen as dominant and possibly aggressive. This palm up, palm down is very important when it comes to handshaking and where appropriate I suggest you always offer a handshake upright and vertical and equal grip, which should convey equality.

8. Distance

Stand too close and you will be marked as "Pushy" or "In your face". Stand or sit too far away and you will be "Keeping your distance" or "Stand offish". Neither situation is what we want, so observe in a group situation how close all the other people are to each other. Also notice if you move closer to someone and they back away, you are probably just a tiny bit too much in their personal space, their comfort zone. "You have overstepped the mark" and should pull back a little.

9. Ears

Ears, yes your ears you have got two ears and only one mouth, so try to use them in that order. If you listen twice as much as you talk you come across as a good communicator who knows how to strike a balanced conversation.

10. Mouth

We purse our lips and sometimes twist them to the side when we are thinking. On another occasion we might use this movement to hold back an angry comment we do not wish to reveal. Nevertheless, it will probably be spotted by other people and although they may not know the comment, they will get a feeling you were not to pleased.

About the Author

A renowned international platform speaker, trainer, and [body language](#) expert, Robert Phipps is in constant demand by both the media and business worlds. Robert has more than 100 television shows to his credit and has appeared on the Good Morning America and the Glenn Beck Show and his corporate clients is a Whoâ€™s Who in Business. For more information Robert Phipps go to: www.robertphipps.com or contact Robert on Office: 44+1233 335078

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