

>>FastForward BODY LANGUAGE™

Discover & Learn How to Read Body Language



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Chapter 1 – Introduction

From infancy, we begin to use body language to express ourselves. It is our first level of communication and how we learn to get our needs met. As we learn to talk, we continue to use body language signals -- along with a grunt here and there -- to entertain, have a need met, or show an emotion that we are not yet able to express verbally. If, while we are young, our caretakers pick up our body language signals easily, as we age we are more apt to continue to refine the skill of using body language.

However, when our body language signals go unnoticed as a child, in adulthood, the use of body language is often underdeveloped. Those are the adults you hear people refer to as “hard to read”. Although they can make great poker players, it does little for the art of subtle communication.

You can increase your odds in the game of life if you practice your communication skills including developing your ability to send and read messages with body language. The ability to communicate effectively is of key importance in life. It can make the difference between landing a dream job or that dream mate and many other factors.

Studies by Albert Mehrabian indicate that less than 10% of understanding is gained from the spoken word. It is considerably less than the meaning that people gain from listening to a person's tone of voice and looking at their non-verbal communication (see Appendix A page 42).

7%	Spoken words
38%	Tone of voice
55%	Non Verbal

If you cannot pick up the subtle nuances of the body language someone is giving, the message you may be receiving verbally could be quite different than what they intended on it being. The more you use and learn how to pick up on body language signals the better you will get at it. If you don't get it the first time, keep trying (people watching is a great way to brush up on your ability to read body language. - go to a mall and just sit on a bench and try).

There are several main types of body language. Two of the most common types of body language people can typically pick up on easily are romantic and greeting body language. Other forms of body language are aggressive, attentive, bored, closed, deceptive, defensive, dominant, emotional, evaluating, open, power, ready, relaxed, and submissive. We will look at each category (listed alphabetically), and explain signals used in each.

Chapter 2 – Aggressive Body Language

Aggressive body language is way more than simply pushing, punching and other physical interaction. Aggressive body language can be a signal to a possible physical threat. There are many types of aggressive signals that if recognized early can save you from being a receiver of a physical attack or give you time to diffuse a potentially dangerous situation. As we were taught early on, physical confrontations are typically best avoided, so learning to pick up the threat signals early can be very beneficial. If you work in a setting where there are volatile people, law enforcement for example, knowing signals of aggressiveness could even save your life.

Facial signals that can alert you to aggression and a possible threat are frowns, pursed lips, reddening of face, sneer look, clinched jaw, stare downs with a squint, and jerking of head towards you much like one would jerk their body towards you in an aggressive advancement. Another common (and obvious) facial threat signal is a person putting their face very close to your face

With all of these gestures, it is best you step back a couple feet to put a bit of distance between you and the aggressive person to give you a chance to possibly calm the situation.

The attack stance of body language is typically the positioning of feet for stability, and clinching of fist and muscles. Some may even get a bit ‘dancey’ or bouncy with their feet, much like a boxer.

This body language is the norm, but there are people that display very subtle outward physical cues that indicate they are in an aggressive mode. People who present with a flat affect may show very little to no indication that they are about to physically attack another. As always, body language is about half of communication, you must also listen to word cues and tone as well.

Another form of aggressive body language is crossing the communications comfort zone: personal space, mental or emotional boundaries. Fake friendships are an example of crossing all three of these boundaries. By pretending to be a friend to another with intent of harm, aggressive body language takes on a chameleon effect in the beginning. Smiles, and friendly gestures are used to gain closeness.

When personal space is violated physically (e.g. getting up in someone’s face, bumping chest, physically touching another without permission etc.) that invasion of space is an aggressive body language move. People generally do this to get into

close proximity of their prey so they can have power over another by making them uncomfortable and to make it easier for them to get in the first physical strike.

There are, of course, far less subtle physical aggressive body language gestures that indicate your risk of becoming the target of aggressive behavior. Hand gestures are often used to incite another into a physical confrontation, from the use of “flipping someone off” with the flagging of the middle finger, hand gang signs, thrusting of arms to the head roll/thrust generally followed with verbal insults. Another obvious great indicator is the mock attack such as shadow boxing, slamming fist on table (wall, door, etc.), head butting gesture, kicking, etc without actually making physical contact with you.

Body language is essential for an actress, even if you don't use your body in an athletic way. Just to be free, to use it like your voice. A body can be small and have incredible violence. A body talks.

–Anne Parillaud

Chapter 3 – Attentive Body Language

Attentive body language is the act of showing through body language that you are listening and hearing what another is saying. Yawning or nodding off would be an example of inattentive body language. Being able to properly exhibit attentive body language can make a huge impact if you are applying for a job, or are in any field of employment that requires personal contact with people such as sales and customer service.

Another situation where having great skills in attentive body language is in personal relationships and intimate situations. Strong attentive body language shows that you have a sincere interest in what another is saying, is flattering, and will most likely result in mutual attention.

One way to demonstrate active listening to another through body language is by leaning in towards the person who is talking (remember to respect personal boundaries when doing so). You will be able to tell if a person is listening to you attentively if their gaze is on you and does not reflect away sporadically during the conversation. Also, they will also blink less than normal.

Often times when a person is attentively listening to another their frown line will be indented showing that they are concentrating on what you are saying. You will notice a nodding of the head in agreement or disagreement of things you are saying along with positive verbal utterances such as “uh huh, hm-mm, etc”. The person listening may also mimic your body language.

Deafness has left me acutely aware of both the duplicity that language is capable of and the many expressions the body cannot hide.

– Terry Galloway

Chapter 4 – Closed Body Language

One of the first cues that someone is tuning you out is their gaze level. If they are constantly distracted by every little noise or movement, chances are they are not truly paying attention to you, regardless of how many times they tell you they are listening.

Watch for fidgety hands and feet and twitching eyes, these are other indicators you have not captured your audience's attention. An obvious clue is when a person begins to yawn or slouch. Granted, yawning is can be an indicator that a person is lacking oxygen, however, when bored, a person will also yawn. If you regularly get this type of reaction, consider some speech or affective communication classes.

Also, question whether or not the topic you are discussing with them is something they do not want to listen to or that they have heard repeatedly from you in past. If a person has no stake in what you are discussing, it is very easy for them to lose interest and become bored quickly.

When speaking to a group or on a one-on-one basis it is important to augment your communication through the use of proper body language. Facial, and hand movements can help to emphasize what you are trying to get across as well as stimulate both the visual and audio senses in your audience.

Too much detail and long drawn out explanations are also quick ways to lose your audience attention. Keep it short and to the point. You do not need to re-explain the same thing too many different ways to get your point across. Always ask questions when discussing important points, it is a good indicator of the interest level as well as comprehension.

Often, if a person is bored you may also see closed body language. Closed body language tells you that your audience has shut down (or is in the process of shutting your message out). Closed body language can also present a defensive action for people as well. If you are confronting a person and they exhibit closed body language, it may be because you are scaring them and in order for you to get across what you are trying to say effectively, you should change your approach.

Examples of closed body language are rocking, tightly folded arms (almost in a self hug formation), legs tightly crossed or even twisted/intertwined with one another, or with a chair or table leg, and a downward gaze or fixated gaze at an object, wall, or even feet. There may be many reasons why you receive closed body language from an individual. Do not automatically assume it is all about you or what you are saying.

The person may have just had an extremely difficult day. When you experience someone who appears to close up during a discussion, note what was being said at the time that the body language changed. It can be a good indicator as to what is possibly going on with them that might result in your message being blocked.

When a person feels threatened, even verbally, their body will react. They will get into either a defensive mode or an aggressive mode. In the defensive mode, it is a self-preservation mode. In the extreme, curling up in a ball protects vulnerable organs and body parts in case of an attack. It can also act as a self-nurturing affect, to sooth a person.

Another reason people may exhibit closed body language is that they are trying to hide something from the other person such as tears or facial expressions. Ways to move a person from a closed body language to a more open and accepting body language is to offer them something to hold such as a drink (or with a child, a toy). Another way is to mimic their body language, however not in a demeaning manner. Move in closer while still respecting personal space and gradually work into copying their closed body language. This can build a non-verbal bond. As the person begins to relax their closed body position, you also begin to relax the body language you are imitating (at their rate and comfort level).

*Fie, fie upon her!
There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.*
– William Shakespeare

Chapter 5 – Deceptive Body Language

It is necessary for those who wish to be effective communicators to learn and understand deceptive body language. It can help you to distinguish whether or not someone is being honest with you. One common way to tell if a person is being deceptive by their body language is to watch for anxiety cues. Some common anxiety cues are sweating, tension, rubbing back of the neck or other body parts, sudden movements, body twitches, voice change and increase in speed of speech, chewing on the inside of one's mouth, and shoving hands in pockets or and increasing level of fidgety behavior.

A person, when lying, will often times try to hide their deception by attempting to gain control over their body language through forced smiles and exaggerated hand gestures. This may present as odd clumsy or jerky presenting movements. Their speech may present hesitated in their attempted to slow it down and thinking intensively as to what to say next. They will often speak as if distracted and avoid eye contact. If standing, they may shift their weight from one foot to another more often than normal.

Eye movement can be helpful in “reading” a person's veracity when taken into consideration along with other body language cues and the verbal and intonation cues.

Many experts believe that it is an instinctive action to look to the right when one is utilizing the left side of their brain -- the logic and analytic side -- and to look to the left when using the right side of your brain -- the emotional and creative side. Although there is documentation stating differing views on lying and eye gaze, typically it is thought that when a person lying they utilize the left part of their brain to create the lie which causes their eyes to gaze to the right.

Typically when we are trying to recall a memory, we use the right side of our brain, making our eyes gaze to the left. When you are seeking visual memories our eyes gaze upward, and when a person gazes downward, they are trying to recall emotional memories.

You can read somebody's attitude - it's either a pleasant attitude or it's a negative one and you can spot that in their body language, their eye contact and the way they march in, ... Business Unusual.

– Camille Lavington

Chapter 6 – Defensive Body Language

Defensive body language expresses a person's feeling of physical or emotional threat or personal space being invaded. Automatically when a person feels like they are at risk of physical attack, they cower to protect vital body organs. The extreme form of that is curling up into a ball with head tucked in.

Defensive body language includes posting in a fending off stance with arms drawn out and jaw/nose region protected; muscles will tense in order to withstand an attack. Items being held will be gripped tighter and drawn in close to the body (e.g., if a woman is uneasy she will often grip and draw in her handbag).

Some people, when uneasy, will display defensive body language by putting a barrier between them and the person or situation that is making them uncomfortable. This could be a chair, table, or even holding a package out in front of them making an obstacle between them and the perceived threat. In extreme cases, they may grip their keys in between their fingers to use as a weapon.

Another defensive body language cue is when someone becomes stiff or rigid. They will attempt to remain still so as not to draw attention to themselves. At the opposite side of the spectrum, a person in a defensive mode might scan a room or location for an escape route, or may even flee the room if they perceive the threat level too high. Some individuals, when faced in a possible threatening situation, may not exhibit signs of defensive body language; instead they present with either submissive or aggressive body language.

a blur of blinks, taps, jiggles, pivots and shifts ... the body language of a man wishing urgently to be elsewhere.

–Edward R. Murrow

Chapter 7 – Dominant Body Language

Dominant body language is closely related to aggressive body language but at a less intense emotional level. The ultimate goal of dominant body language is to impress power over another, more in an authoritative manner than in an aggressive one. A person demonstrating dominant body language will often try to make their body appear bigger than what it really is, especially men.

Often times they will cross their arms with their hands under their biceps in an attempt to push them out more to give a larger appearance. Men and women will hold their hands on their hips with elbows out wide while standing chest out and chin up. You will see many mothers in this position when disciplining their children.

A great example of using dominant body language over another is a detective over a suspect in an interrogation room. In interrogation rooms, detectives often intimidate the suspect by standing while the suspect sits, thus establishing a dominating height over the suspect. The detective may pace the room, much like marking territory designating where exactly the suspect is to sit also while walking around or coming up behind the suspect, leaning over the suspect's shoulder to talk rather than sitting at the table with the suspect.

By invading the personal space of the suspect they make the suspect feel uncomfortable, and, with the height difference, of being talked down to. By making these moves, the detective achieves a dominant stance over the suspect as well as dominance over the territory. The detective makes a point to make sure the suspect knows they are on the detectives' territory and working from the detectives' rules.

You will also see a detective use facial expression to taunt, control, and dominate the situation. It can be in the form of stare downs, rolling of eyes every time the suspect says something, yawning, squinting at the suspect while holding a stare down, as well as smirking at the suspect's responses.

Make eye contact. Eye contact emphasizes sincerity and without sincerity your point will not be received. All animals, including humans, use eye contact to read intentions and many have said that the eyes are the windows to the soul. A strong gaze also captivates the audience. You demand attention by giving it.

-Heather Lyman

Chapter 8 – Emotional Body Language

Emotional body language is a very broad area as people have the capacity for so many different emotions. There are many non-verbal signs that can help you to determine what another person is feeling emotionally, however they are not exclusive and no two people necessarily react the same way to the same stimuli.

Anger can present in many ways. Common body language signals of anger are a flushed (red) face and/or neck, clenched jaw and/or fist, pacing, invasion of personal space of another, and the use of aggressive or power body language.

Fear, anxiety, and/or nervousness can all present in a very similar body language. Knowing a bit about the situation while reading the person's body language can help you get a better idea of exactly which of the three emotions they are experiencing. Fear, anxiety, and/or nervousness body language can present in a person through their body by breaking out in a cold sweat, paled face, dry mouth, diverting from eye contact, or they can appear as they are on the verge of tears with damp eyes. They may exhibit trembling lip, twitching eye, voice tremors, stuttering, cracks in voice, sweating, heightened pulse, clenched fist, muscles, and/or jaw, and extended periods of holding their breath. Some may present as fidgety while others may take on a defensive or ready body language stance.

As you can see, many of these body language signals also present under emotions other than fear, anxiety, and/or nervousness, however, as stated before, if you have some context for the situation, you can generally determine the exact emotion the person is feeling and exhibiting through their body language before even having to speak to them. It is helpful to know if the person fears you or if they are just nervous or having anxiety about the particular situation.

Sadness body language generally presents with slouching or drooping of the shoulders or body, almost limp like, possible trembling lip, tears, and a flat speech tone.

Embarrassment can present with a reddened face, avoidance of eye contact, grimaced face or a meek smile. Embarrassment can also cause withdrawal in some people. Surprised body language will present with the widening of the eyes and raised eyebrows. Their mouth may drop open and even appear started or make a sudden movement back.

Emotional body language expressing happiness can present in tears of joy, smiling mouth and eyes, and an overall relaxed manner.

Chapter 9 – Evaluating Body Language

Evaluating body language is how a person uses their body when evaluating a situation. This could present in hand movements when discussing how a backyard deck design should go, or in a determination of which direction one should turn while driving. People who generally do a lot of talking with hand gestures will exhibit an increased amount of body language when evaluating or explaining.

Another form of evaluating body language is the formation of palm-to-palm “praying hands” while thinking. They may tap a finger on their chin or even rub their chin. Their lips may purse some and for those you encounter that wear eyeglasses, you may notice that while evaluating a situation that they peer over the top of them when in discussion rather than through them.

Professors, teachers, and doctors who wear eyeglasses are known for this. Generally, their body will present relaxed and comfortable although they are concentrating intensely.

The language of the body is the key that can unlock the soul.

–Konstantin Stanislavsky

Chapter 10 – Greeting Body Language

Everyone knows waving at another person or shaking their hand is a way of greeting however, there are many other forms of greeting body language used you may not be as aware of.

It is said that you can tell a lot about a person through their handshake. Of course, the handshake offered depends on the person, type of day the person is having and several other factors. A firm handgrip in a handshake is meant to show confidence where as a limp wrist with a light grip is thought to show timidity.

The double grip hand shake where not only is the extender shaking the hand but with their other hand gripping the persons elbow or encompassing the others hands between both of theirs is meant to show dominance. However, there are several people who while shaking the hand of someone they are truly grateful to will encompass the persons hand in both of theirs to show sincerity.

Another body language greeting signs thought to be a gesture of dominance are shaking another hand with the palm down, where as the palm up shows submission and palms sideways shows equality.

Extended handshakes where one person makes it difficult for another to end the greeting is also a sign of dominance. If you pay attention to photographs of politicians, or of people in authority positions, handshake photos will be taken with the individuals standing shoulder to shoulder with their arm/hand stretched out across their front to greet the others hand. The dominate person will stand to the left of the other person, shaking with the right hand, so that when the picture is taken it is their back of the hand that appears visible in the picture.

Other forms of greeting through hand body language is the “high five” where two people slap hands in the air, tapping fronts of fists, or a touch as a person walks by another say at a party to show acknowledgement. Other forms of greeting body language are in the form of honor, such as the military salute where the hand is brought up towards the forehead or a brim of a hat and back down to the side again. Bowing can also show honor (or it can show appreciation or thanks such as at the end of a performance).

Hugging and kissing are also other forms of greeting body language, but should be used only when appropriate.

Facial expression is key to greeting body language. A frown would be a good indicator that something is wrong. While a genuine smile indicates that the person is happy to see you, a tensed face with clenched jaw should indicate to you that the person is upset or angry (perhaps at you). A blank facial affect can indicate that the person could care less about you or has their mind on matters that don't concern you.

When you see another person squeezing their eyebrows together, more than likely they are trying to recall your name prior to approaching you. This is a great time to go up, remind them politely what your name is, and greet them with a friendly handshake.

Looking at people and meeting their eyes are the first steps toward striking up friendships and making positive impressions. The best advice is to make short frequent glances in social situations. Making eye contact for too long a duration can be seen as threatening; the subtext of interest becomes distorted. Failing to look at others causes suspicion as they wonder what signals are being asked. Refusing to make eye contact also sends messages of arrogance and contempt communicating to the other person that they are insignificant, a non-person. There are subtle, silent rules to eye contact and they vary from culture to culture.

– Jill Bremer

Chapter 11 – Open Body Language

Open body language generally expresses relaxation or higher comfort form. Open arms and hands express the persons desire not to hide anything from another. They are relaxed in their current situation.

However, if a person is exhibiting a closed body language and then quickly changes to an open presentation, it exhibits an extreme change in emotion (and perhaps calculated deception). If you are talking to a person exhibiting closed body language (arms folded across chest. Legs tightly crossed) and then all of the sudden they spring up to a upright stance with open arms, you more than likely said something that triggered a extreme mood change. In this situation, the open body language may not be presenting as relaxed but more of an aggressive or defensive body language.

Determine quickly what was said that possibly caused the sudden mood swing so you can direct the conversation in a fashion that calms the situation.

The time to stop talking is when the other person nods his head affirmatively but says nothing.

- Henry S. Haskins

Chapter 12 – Relaxed Body Language

Relaxed body language and open body language mimic each other in the relaxed aspects. A person's breathing is slower than normal and muscle tension is low. Skin tone will be even. Hands, feet, and arms are not fidgety or twitching and are laid loosely in their lap or rested.

Facial expression is relaxed with a possible slight smile or relaxed mouth. Voice tone is steady with no exaggerated high or low tone fluctuations. The face will present without exaggerated frown lines, the eyes will mimic the mouth; if a slight smile is on the mouth, there will be a slight smile in the eyes, and the eyebrows will present at their natural level without tension.

And I have to work so hard at talking positively to myself. If I don't, it's just real hard to get through the day, and I'll get really down, and just want to cry. My whole body language changes. I get more slumped over.

.-Dela Burke

Chapter 13 – Power Body Language

Power body language is a form of dominant body language but also has a rescue/hero aspect to it as well. People who use power body language on a regular basis are those who are in a position of authority or like to act as if they are. If a person appears to have control over your time and space, they are more than likely exhibiting power play body language, and is one way they have achieved and maintain power over you.

Power handshakes are one way a person will demonstrate their power over another. Upon greeting someone they feel is of lesser status, the power player will give a firm handshake, draw the person in physically, grip the elbow of the arm they are shaking with opposite hand and hold the shake longer than a normal shake.

Some suggest the following way to counteract a power handshake: offer a limp, weak grip. As an extended handshake can make one feel uncomfortable, when exerting a power handshake and receiving a weak limp grip in return, the uncomfortable feeling is turned back on the power player. Another, less passive way is to grip the fingers of the “power handshaker”; this give you control because your hand is not in the strength of their grip and their thumb is no longer part of the handshake. NOTE: read more about handshakes in Chapter 20 – Let’s Shake on It – page 30)

Power players will hold a gaze longer than normal, another way of making the receiver feel uneasy. Although the gaze is not threatening, it is just enough to make the receiver squirm a bit. Counteraction for a power gaze, just look away or not engage. Do not fall for the power play and get into a stare down. Breaking the gaze yourself gives you back your personal power.

Power players will also dictate where another will sit, either by pulling out a chair for you with a gesture to sit, or gesturing with their hand towards a seat when offering you a chair. Whenever possible, if you want to counteract the power play, choose where and how you will sit before being directed. If you are meeting a person who is known for power plays, go early and get your seat first.

Power players are great at making others wait for them. If there is a planned meeting, you can bet the power player will make everyone wait. Other common traits of power body language are invasion of personal space by standing close to another, touching while speaking such as putting a hand on another’s shoulder, and an aggressive walk.

Chapter 14 – Ready Body Language

Ready body language is just what it reads as; ready for anything that may come their way. Think of a baseball player in the outfield, ready for whatever ball may come their way. Think of their stance, that is ready body language.

Ready body language presents when a persons' body is poised for action. The body will be turned towards the direction of where the action is taking place or where the perceived action will come from. Their body will be tense and they may be fidgeting with their hands or twisting on a piece of clothing or another object while waiting for the action in high anticipation.

How we look at other people, meet their gaze and look away can make all the difference between an effective encounter and one that leads to embarrassment or even rejection.

-Dr. Peter Marsh

Chapter 15 – Romantic Body Language

Romantic body language is not just what a couple do when they are close and personal.

Romantic body language from outside the personal comfort zone incorporates all the different forms of flirting one does with their body, from batting eyelashes to how one holds their body to how one even preens and preps to get ready for the occasion of flirting.

Both men and women will pull in their stomach to make it look smaller than what it is and sticking the chest out to make it look larger than what it is. Men will also cross their arms with hands under biceps to push them out to make them look bigger than what they actually are.

When using romantic body language from afar, a person will position himself or herself to be in eyes view of target of interest by turning their full body, head, or a meeker person may only turn a foot towards their interest gradually working up the courage to become more visible.

Up close and personal body language should only be done if you are already in a personal relationship with the other party. If you are not in a personal relationship with the other party, you risk having a sexual harassment lawsuit filed against you if not worse. With close romantic body language a mutual comfort level allows the other to enter into ones personal space without the other feeling threatened. Close romantic body language can exhibit in a couple mocking each other's moves or body positions, gazing into one another's eyes, holding hands, massages, caressing, kissing, to intimate encounters and sexual exploration.

Romantic body language when a relationship goes wrong can be a vast mixture between numerous types of body language and is far too complex to cover in this e-book.

I speak two languages, Body and English.

– Mae West

Chapter 16 – Submissive Body Language

Submissive body language exhibits as conquered and conveys weakness, anxiety and/or lack of confidence. It can also signal fear with the person exhibiting closed body language until the perceived threat has passed.

Some specific submissive body language signals one may notice are the holding of the head down avoiding eye contact with others while in public, widening of eyes to appear more innocent, much like the bright wide eyes of an infant, and attentively looking into the eyes of someone who is speaking to them that is their dominant. Often the palms are held upwards forming a pleading gesture; this may be combined with the lowering of the body as if to say “please don’t hurt me”.

As submissive person might also show open body language in a form of supplication (equivalent to a dog that rolls over on its back to expose itself and indicate that it is not a threat).

Although a submissive person will engage in conversation with someone more dominant, generally they will always agree with them. They will make eye contact with a dominant and smile; however, their smile will be subdued.

Certainly, being aware of what your own body language is -- not showing intimidation, making eye contact, leaning forward -- shows that you're interested and want to say something.

– Richard Frankel

Chapter 17 – Reading Body Language

Now that we have briefly reviewed the primary types of body language, let's put our knowledge to work. Our goal is to be able to look at another person and pick up their nonverbal signals, while, at the same time, not making the other person uncomfortable by letting the person know that we are actively reading their body language.

Understanding that all these signals depend entirely on the circumstances at hand, the following gives you the first steps in your evaluation:

Step 1. Look at the Arms

Are they closed (folded) or open? When folded the person is possibly angry or disapproving. When their arms are open the person is in an honest position and is accepting of the situation.

Step 2. Look at the Hands

Generally when some ones hands are open it means that their defenses are relaxed.

Step 3. Look at the Eyes

The poet's say, "the eyes are the windows to the soul." Maybe so, but the eyes can exhibit so many expressions with so many meanings that it's easy to make the wrong evaluation. Start with the basics:

Open pupils - the person is interested in the topic.

Gazing to the side – the person is feeling guilty

Gazing down – the person is feeling shame.

Those 3 areas (arms, hands, eyes) are the start. Once you have those signals properly read, move on to:

Step 4. – Look at the Legs

Legs are a good indicator of confidence:

Standing

Legs shoulder width apart – the person is relaxed.

Legs in a stance wider than shoulder width – the person is confident and in a grounded position (exhibiting control).

Legs crossed– the person is most likely shy.

Sitting

Legs are crossed – the person is in protective mode (often used with crossed arms).

Legs are open – the person is in a relaxed position (as when standing).

Step 5. Look at the Fingers

Fingers can create many gestures that help you “read” a person’s body language.

Pointing finger – the person is indicating anger (or pointing to an item, person or place).

Curling fingers tightly – the person wants or is pleading for something.

Chin rubbing – the person is thinking or considering.

Tapping fingers – the person is frustrated (the faster the tapping, the greater the frustration and tension).

Step 6. Look for Mimicking Behavior

If, when you are talking to someone, they are mimicking your body position and action it means that they are comfortable in the situation and most likely interested by you and what you are saying.

Chapter 18 – From the Neck Up

The face and the head can be very communicative. First let's look at the head itself which can send a wide range of signals based on movement of the neck muscles. Then we'll discuss the face and various features and how they are used to communicate emotion.

THE HEAD

Lowering:

1. Covering neck with chin can be a defensive posture indicating a perceived threat (not limited to a physical threat)
2. This also lowers the eyes which could be a sign of submission, affection or fear. If eye contact is maintained, this can be a signal of flirtation (typically by women), defiance or caution.
3. Sagging head could be a sign of exhaustion.
4. A nod (or quick lowering) can be a greeting or a sign of agreement

Raising:

1. Raising from a lowered position can indicate interest.
2. Raising from a level position, a quick move upwards can be indicate a questioning.
3. Raising and looking at the ceiling may indicate boredom or might indicate a visual thinker who is looking at images internally

Tilting:

1. Sideways can indicate be interest.
2. Tilting with the head pushed forward can indicate curiosity, uncertainty or questioning. The greater the tilt, the greater the uncertainty or the greater the desire to send this signal.
3. Tilting and pulled back can indicate suspicion or uncertainty.
4. Tilting with the head propped up by the hand, typically indicates either exhaustion or greater interest.

Nodding/Shaking:

1. Nodding up and down indicates agreement -- vigorous nodding most likely indicates strong agreement; slow nodding probably indicates conditional agreement.
2. Shaking from side to side indicates disagreement or disapproval -- vigorous shaking most likely indicates strong disagreement; slow shaking probably indicates conditional disagreement. Shaking from side to side with the head tilted down whilst typically indicates disapproval .
3. Nodding or shaking while talking encourages the other person to agree . Nodding while the other person is talking is a signal of approval and encouragement. Shaking the head while the other person is talking is a signal of disagreement.
4. Shaking the head when saying something positive can indicate that the person does not believe what they are saying.

Rotating:

1. Rotating in a circle is typically either loosening a stiff neck or an indication of boredom.
2. Turning away indicates dismissal.
3. A slight turn to divert focus to one eye is an act of dominance.

Touching:

1. Touching the face is typically a sign of anxiety (people tend to have preferred places they touch or stroke when they are concerned).
2. Covering eyes, ears or mouth indicates the desire not to see, hear or say something.
3. Touching the side of the nose or stroking the chin indicates decision making or judging.

Now let's look at the face uses about 1/3 of its 90- muscles for expressing emotion.

THE FACE

The following chart shows typical facial signals for different emotions.

Emotion	Facial signals
Anxiety	Eyes damp; eyebrows pushed together; lower lip trembling; chin wrinkled; head tilted down
Fear	Eyes wide, closed or looking down; eyebrows raised; mouth open or corners turned down; chin pulled in; head down; face white
Anger	Eyes wide and staring; eyebrows pulled down (particularly in middle); forehead wrinkled; nostrils flared; mouth flattened; teeth clenched (often showing; chin jutting; face red
Happiness	Mouth smiling, wrinkles at sides of welcoming eyes; eyebrows slightly raised; head level
Sadness	Eyes cast down (possibly damp or tearful); head down; lips pinched; head down or to the side
Envy	Eyes staring; mouth corners turned down; nose turned in sneer; chin jutting
Desire	Eyes wide open (dilated pupils); eyebrows slightly raised; lips slightly parted, puckered or smiling; head tilted forward.
Interest	Eyes Steady gaze (may be squinting); eyebrows slightly raised; lips lightly pressed together; head up or pushed forward
Boredom	Eyes looking away; face generally immobile; mouth corners turned down or lips pulled to the side; head propped up with hand
Surprise	Eyes wide open; eyebrows raised high; mouth dropped wide open; chin lowered; head held back or tilted to side
Relief	Eyebrows tilted outwards (lowered outer edges); mouth either tilted down or smiling; head tilted
Disgust	Eyes and head turned away; nostrils flared; nose twisted in sneer; mouth closed (sometimes with tongue protruding); chin jutting.
Shame	Eyes and head turned down; eyebrows held low; skin red
Pity	Eyes steady gaze (possibly damp); eyebrows slightly pulled together in middle or downwards at edges; mouth turned down at corners; head tilted to side.
Calm	Eyes steady gaze; mouth turned up slightly at sides; relaxed facial muscles

Chapter 19 – How Use Body Language When Selling

When selling it is key to manage the non-verbal portion of your communication, here are some useful tips:.

Be Open and Assertive

- Stand openly, welcome them, display readiness to listen.
- Try not to be either dominating or submitting (you might present slightly in either directions depending on the specific circumstances).
- Keep body language clear. Use it to emphasize key points (don't contradict).
- Limit unnecessary movement which could confuse your audience or indicate nervousness on your part.

Mirror

- Create an emotional bond by matching body language and using a similar verbal style. Once they have bonded, you can move and speak differently and have them follow you instead of you following them ... don't close until they are following you.
- Stay at their level – when they are standing, you should be too; when they sit, sit at the same time (don't slump below them).
- Lean in
- Create a bond by leaning in towards the customer. Not only does this get you closer but it can indicate respect.
- Be aware of distance. Don't be too far away, but don't invade their personal body space.

Be Subtle

- When using body language to influence proceedings, do so with care; send negative messages with muted subtlety whilst being larger and more open with positive signals.

Some recommended actions:

- Raise eyebrows or tilt head slightly to support questioning
- Press lips slightly together with light frown to show disagreement.
- Smile gently to show a bond with the customer and comfort with the situation.
- Show a relaxed face to show confidence (include slow and deep breathing).
- Offer a slight wince when they mention things that are outside your intent.
- Gesture with open palms to show openness (avoid pointing or the use of fists).
- Don't stare; don't look away. Maintain a regular soft eye contact that shows caring and attentiveness.

Be Careful with Power

- Assuming superiority must be used with care because it can result in an antagonistic reaction.

Don't Contradict

- You will appear deceitful if your body language does not match what you say.

Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much.

-Robert Greenleaf

Chapter 20 – Let's Shake on It

Of course you know how to shake hands, but do you know how to do it right?

First, why do we shake hands? Originally the handshake was a quick way and non aggressive way to show that both people were unarmed (nothing hidden behind the back). Now, used in greeting and acknowledging agreement, the handshake is a critical gauge of confidence, trust, mood and sophistication.

Let's start with the basics

1. With your hand perpendicular to the floor, offer your right hand to meet the other person's right hand.
2. Extend your arm at a slight downward angle with your thumb pointed upward toward the other person's arm.
3. When the thumb joints come together, wrap your hand around the other person's hand.

Grasp the hand firmly and squeeze gently once while giving the hands one or two easy downward shakes (moving the hands about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch). Too much shaking can convey over-excitment which can give the impression that you are desperate.

Grip with your whole hand, not just the fingertips or just the thumb. Avoid gripping too hard or not hard enough – limp handshakes or a bone-crushing clenches are not acceptable. Pretend the other person's hand is a bird ... grip it hard enough so the bird can't move, but not so hard as to crush it. NOTE: Return the grip of the other person, but if the person squeezes too hard, do not get into a power struggle.

Shake from your elbow, by shaking from the shoulder and using your upper arm instead of just your forearm, you can uncomfortably jolt the person.

4. Hold the handshake for 2 to 3 seconds. A handshake should be inviting but not rushed; if you let go too quickly, it can be seen as an insult or give you a perception of untrustworthiness. Hold on for long enough to show the person that you are excited to see/meet them.

5. When greeting a person with a handshake, make friendly eye contact to communicate non-verbally that you are happy to see the person or to see your friend; your feelings should show in your eyes and be communicated with a sincere verbal greeting.
6. Oops! If you made a mistake or are worried that your handshake did not convey the right message, you can save the situation by changing the focus of the moment by offering a quick compliment or asking the person a question
7. Option 1: To convey sincerity, pump your hand up and down a few times.
8. Option 2: To convey power, grasp the person's right elbow with your left hand and guide them closer to you.
9. Option 3: To convey affection, gently add your left hand to the handshake to cover the back of the person's hand, effectively sandwiching the person's right hand between your two hands. A variation of the two-handed handshake is the left hand being placed under the right hand to "cup" the clasped hands. This adds an extra dimension of enthusiasm and trust to the shake (good for an "agreement" shake).

When appropriate, you can also use the left hand to touch the person on the shoulder while shaking with the right. For a "good-bye" shake, you can use your left hand to pat the person on the upper back as they walk away.

Only use the two-handed handshake with people you know well. The use of two hands with strangers can be perceived as intrusive, and too personal. The two-handed shake is called the "politician's shake," because it seems to be artificially friendly when used on people you don't know well.

NOTE: Responses to a person using the two-handed shake to establish dominance can include counter-touching (use your left hand to hold their hand, wrist, elbow, arm or shoulder), hugging (pull them in), thrusting (push them away by pushing your hand towards them) and stepping the side.

10. Not an Option: even if the other person's hand was sweaty, never follow a handshake by wiping your hand on your pants. If your hands are sweaty, wipe them off, but never in front of the person with whom you're about to shake.

11. Test the impression your handshake makes by shaking hands with a few close friends and business associates; ask them "If you could change something about my handshake, what would it be?".

REMINDER: Consider cultural appropriateness. If you're traveling in a foreign country, do your homework on whether or not a handshake is an appropriate form of greeting. In some countries, shaking hands is seen as far too intimate a contact to initiate with a stranger.

Interpreting a Handshake

- *Firm grip* - indicates confidence; indicates a sensation seeker
- *Limp grip* - indicates timidity, particularly in men (women may be expected to be more gentle). A firm grip by a man also indicates he is more sensation-seeking.
- *Palm down* - indicates dominance and a feeling of superiority NOTE: Don't get into a wrestling match with a palm-down offerer. Always offer your hand vertically.
- *Palm sideways* - indicates equality
- *Palm up* - indicates submission
- *Long handshake* - indicates pleasure; can signal dominance (particularly if one person tries to pull away and the dominant person does not allow them to).
- *Using left hand* - indicates affection or pleasure; can show dominance (using left hand to sandwich the person's hand or to grip the wrist, elbow, arm or shoulder).

NOTE: A variant of the two-handed shake is used by politicians who are being photographed and must shake hands side-by-side: positioning themselves to stand on the left hand side of the other person. By doing this, their hand will be on the outside and it will look like they are the dominant party to those viewing the photograph.

Ninety percent of what we think about a person is determined in the first ninety seconds we meet them.

-Anonymous

Chapter 21 – Conclusion

Every part of one's body is used in body language, each movement or lack of movement can mean something. Not everyone exhibits the exact same body language as another to express something, such as in greetings, for one it may be customary to kiss another on both sides of the cheek, but for another a simple wave of the hand suffices.

Some people use less emphasis with their body language where others can over exaggerate the same gesture. Some people require larger personal space where others are quite comfortable with others moving in close. There are so many different facets to body language that one can never stop learning. By watching people, I am sure you will be able to pick up even more communications via body language being used than the brief introduction I have given you here.

Learning and knowing how to read and use body language will help you in all aspects of your life.

I once worked with a client preparing for a major presentation to his company's largest investors. His body language was a mess—eyes cast downward, hands awkwardly tucked in his pockets, swaying back and forth. This guy was a poster boy for poor body language. He seemed insecure and out of his league.

By showing him a videotape of what he looked like and working on eye contact, hand gestures, animation, posture and staying open, this executive went on to rock the house during his presentation. He made solid eye contact with everybody in the room, he pulled his hands out of his pockets and used purposeful, assertive hand gestures. His posture and stance exuded power, confidence, and competence—he had charisma.

- Carmine Gallo

APPENDIX A – Further Detail, References & Links

Want to Learn More about Nonverbal communication? For some excellent source material, check out Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication

Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless (mostly visual) messages. Messages can be communicated through gestures and touch (Haptic communication), by body language or posture, by facial expression and eye contact. Meaning can also be communicated through object or artifacts (such as clothing, hairstyles or architecture). Speech contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, rate, pitch, volume, and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Likewise, written texts have nonverbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, or the physical layout of a page. Dance is also regarded as a form of nonverbal communication.

However, much of the study of nonverbal communication has focused on face-to-face interaction, where it can be classified into three principal areas: environmental conditions where communication takes place, physical characteristics of the communicators, and behaviors of communicators during interaction.^[1]

Verbal versus oral communication

Scholars in the field of nonverbal communication usually use a strict sense of the term "verbal", meaning "of or concerned with words", and do not use "verbal communication" as a synonym for oral communication. [Sign languages](#) and [writing](#) are generally understood as forms of verbal communication, as both make use of words — although like speech, both may contain paralinguistic elements and often occur alongside nonverbal messages. Nonverbal communication (and learning based on such communication) can occur through any [sensory channel](#) — [sight](#), [sound](#), [smell](#), [touch](#), [proprioceptive or kinesthetic channel](#) or [taste](#). Nonverbal communication is important as:

"When we speak (or listen), our attention is focused on words rather than body language. But our judgment includes both. An audience is simultaneously processing both verbal and nonverbal cues. Body movements are not usually positive or negative in and of themselves; rather, the situation and the message will determine the appraisal." (Givens, 2000, p. 4)

History

The first scientific study of nonverbal communication was [Charles Darwin](#)'s book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). He argued that all mammals reliably show emotion in their faces. Seventy years later [Silvan Tomkins](#) (1911-1991) began his classic studies on human emotions in *Affects Imagery Consciousness* volumes 1-4. [Rudolf Laban](#) (1879-1958) and [Warren Lamb](#) (1923-) raised body movement analysis in the world of dance to a high level. Studies now range across a number of fields, including, [linguistics](#), [semiotics](#) and [social psychology](#).

Characteristics of nonverbal communication

1. Non-verbal messages primarily communicate [emotions](#), [attitudes](#).
2. Non-verbal cues substitute for, contradict, emphasize or regulate verbal message.
3. Non-verbal cues are often ambiguous.
4. Non-verbal cues are continuous.
5. Non-verbal cues are more reliable.
6. Non-verbal cues are culture bound.
7. Non-verbal behavior always has communicative value.
8. Non-verbal communication is powerful.

Clothing and bodily characteristics



[Uniforms](#) have both a functional and a communicative purpose. This man's clothes identify him as [male](#) and a [police](#) officer; his [badges](#) and [shoulder sleeve insignia](#) give information about his job and rank.

Nonverbal elements such as physique, height, weight, hair, skin color, gender, odors, and clothing send nonverbal messages during interaction. For example, a study,^[2] carried out in [Vienna, Austria](#), of the clothing worn by women attending discotheques showed that in certain groups of women (especially women who were without their partners), motivation for sex and levels of sexual hormones were correlated with aspects of their clothing, especially the amount of skin displayed and the presence of sheer clothing. Thus, to some degree, clothing sends signals about interest in courtship.

Research into height has generally found that taller people are perceived as being more impressive. Melamed and Bozionelos (1992) studied a sample of managers in the United Kingdom and found that height was a key factor in who was promoted.

Physical environment

Environmental factors such as [furniture](#), architectural style, [interior decorating](#), lighting conditions, colors, temperature, noise, and music affect the behavior of communicators during interaction. Furniture itself can be seen as a nonverbal message^[1]

Proxemics: physical space in communication

[Proxemics](#) is the study of how people use and perceive the physical space around them. The space between the sender and the receiver of a message influences the way the message is interpreted. In addition, the perception and use of space varies significantly across cultures^[3] and different settings within cultures. Space in nonverbal communication may be divided into four main categories: intimate, social, personal, and public space.

The term territoriality is used in the study of proxemics to explain human behavior regarding personal space.^[4] Hargie & Dickson (2004, p. 69) identify 4 such territories:

1. Primary territory: This refers to an area that is associated with someone who has exclusive use of it. An example is a house that others cannot enter without the owner's permission.
2. Secondary territory: Unlike primary territory, there is no "right" to occupancy of secondary territory, but people may still feel some degree of ownership of such space as they develop the custom of occupying it. For example, someone may sit in the same seat in church every week and feel irritated if someone else sits there.
3. Public territory: this refers to an area that is available to all, but only for a set period, such as a parking space or a seat in a library. Although people have only a limited claim over that space, they often extend that claim. For example, it was found that people take longer to leave a parking space when someone is waiting to take that space.
4. Interaction territory: this is space held by others when they are interacting. For example, when a group is talking to each other on a footpath, others will walk around the group rather than disturb their interaction territory.

Chronemics: time in communication

[Chronemics](#) is the study of the use of time in nonverbal communication. The way we perceive time, structure our time and react to time is a powerful

communication tool and helps set the stage for communication. Time perceptions include [punctuality](#) and the willingness to wait, plus the speed of speech and how long people are willing to listen. The timing and frequency of an action as well as the tempo and rhythm of communications within an interaction contributes to the interpretation of nonverbal messages. Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988) identified two dominant time patterns: monochronic time and polychronic time.

Monochronic Time

A monochronic time system means that things are done one at a time and time is segmented into precise, small units. Under this system time is scheduled, arranged and managed.

The United States is considered a monochronic society. This perception of time is learned and rooted in the Industrial Revolution, where "factory life required the labor force to be on hand and in place at an appointed hour" (Guerrero, DeVito & Hecht, 1999, p. 238). For Americans, time is a precious resource not to be wasted or taken lightly. "We buy time, save time, spend time and make time. Our time can be broken down into years, months, days, hours, minutes, seconds and even milliseconds. We use time to structure both our daily lives and events that we are planning for the future. We have schedules that we must follow: appointments that we must go to at a certain time, classes that start and end at certain times, work schedules that start and end at certain times, and even our favorite TV shows, that start and end at a certain time."

As communication scholar Edward T. Hall wrote regarding the American viewpoint of time in the business world, "the schedule is sacred." Hall says that for monochronic cultures, "time is tangible" and viewed as a commodity where "time is money" or "time is wasted." The result of this perspective is that Americans and other monochronic cultures, such as the German and Swiss, place a paramount value on schedules, tasks and "getting the job done." These cultures are committed to regimented schedules and may view those who do not subscribe to the same perception of time as disrespectful.

Monochronic cultures include Germany, Canada, Switzerland, the United States, and Scandinavia.

Polychronic Time

A polychronic time system is a system where several things can be done at once, and a more fluid approach is taken to scheduling time. Unlike European-Americans and most northern and western European cultures, Native American, Latin American, Arab and African cultures use the polychronic system of time.

These cultures are much less focused on the preciseness of accounting for each and every moment. As Raymond Cohen notes, polychronic cultures are deeply steeped in tradition rather than in tasks—a clear difference from their monochronic counterparts. Cohen notes that "Traditional societies have all the time in the world. The arbitrary divisions of the clock face have little saliency in cultures grounded in the cycle of the seasons, the invariant pattern of rural life, and the calendar of religious festivities" (Cohen, 1997, p. 34).

Instead, their culture is more focused on relationships, rather than watching the clock. They have no problem being "late" for an event if they are with family or friends, because the relationship is what really matters. As a result, polychronic cultures have a much less formal perception of time. They are not ruled by precise calendars and schedules. Rather, "cultures that use the polychronic time system often schedule multiple appointments simultaneously so keeping on schedule is an impossibility." [2]

Polychronic cultures include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Mexico, the Philippines, India, and many in Africa.

Movement and body position

Kinesics



Information about the relationship and [affect](#) of these two skaters is communicated by their [body posture](#), [eye gaze](#) and [physical contact](#).

The term "[kinesics](#)" was first used (in 1952) by [Ray Birdwhistell](#), an anthropologist who wished to study how people communicate through posture, gesture, stance, and movement. Part of Birdwhistell's work involved making films of people in social situations and analyzing them to show different levels of communication not clearly seen otherwise. Several other anthropologists, including [Margaret Mead](#) and [Gregory Bateson](#), also studied kinesics.

Posture

[Posture](#) is understood through such indicators as direction of lean, body orientation, arm position, and body openness. It can be used to determine a participant's degree of attention or involvement, the difference in status between communicators, and the level of fondness a person has for the other communicator.^[5] Studies investigating the impact of posture on [interpersonal](#)

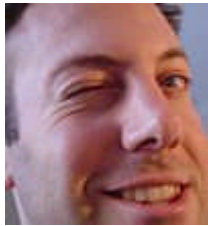
relationships suggest that mirror-image congruent postures, where one person's left side is parallel to the other person's right side, leads to favorable perception of communicators and positive speech; a person who displays a forward lean or decreases a backward lean also signifies positive sentiment during communication.^[6]

Gesture

A [wink](#) is a type of [gesture](#).

A [gesture](#) is a non-vocal bodily movement intended to express meaning. Gestures may be made with the hands, arms or body, and also include movements of the head, face and eyes, such as [winking](#), nodding, or rolling one's eyes. The boundary between language and gesture, or verbal and nonverbal communication, can be hard to identify.

Although the study of gesture is still in its infancy, some broad categories of gestures have been identified by researchers. The most familiar are the so-called emblems or quotable gestures. These are conventional, culture-specific gestures that can be used as replacement for words, such as the hand wave used in western cultures for "hello" and "goodbye." A single emblematic gesture can have a very different significance in different cultural contexts, ranging from complimentary to highly offensive.^[9] For a list of emblematic gestures, see [List of gestures](#).



Another broad category of gestures comprises those gestures used spontaneously when we speak. These gestures are closely coordinated with speech. The so-called "beat gestures" are used in conjunction with speech and keep time with the rhythm of speech to emphasize certain words or phrases. These types of gestures are integrally connected to speech and thought processes.^[10] Other spontaneous gestures used when we speak may echo or elaborate the meaning of the speech occurring at the same time. For example, a gesture that depicts the act of throwing may be synchronous with the utterance, "He threw the ball right into the window."^[10]

Gestural languages such as sign language for the deaf operate as complete natural languages. They should not be confused with finger spelling, in which a set of emblematic gestures are used to represent a written alphabet.

Gestures can also be categorized as either speech independent or speech related. Speech-independent gestures are dependent upon culturally accepted interpretation and have a direct verbal translation.^[7] A wave or a [V_sign| peace sign] are examples of speech-independent gestures. Speech-related gestures are used in parallel with verbal speech; this form of nonverbal communication is used

to emphasize the message that is being communicated. Speech-related gestures are intended to provide supplemental information to a verbal message such as pointing to an object of discussion.

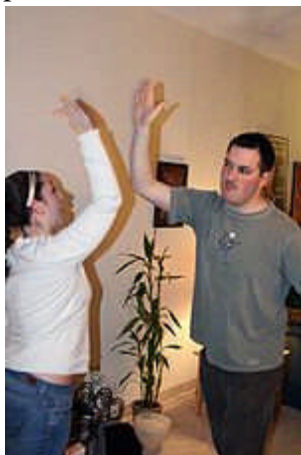
Gestures such as [mudras](#) encode sophisticated information accessible to initiates that are privy to the subtlety of elements encoded in their tradition.

Haptics: touching in communication

A [high five](#) is an example of communicative touch.

[Haptics](#) is the study of touching as nonverbal communication, and haptic communication refers to how people and other animals communicate via touching.

Touches among humans that can be defined as communication include [handshakes](#), holding hands, kissing (cheek, lips, hand), back slapping, [high fives](#), a pat on the shoulder, and brushing an arm. Touching of oneself may include



licking, picking, holding, and scratching.^[7] These behaviors are referred to as "adapters" or "tells" and may send messages that reveal the intentions or feelings of a communicator. The meaning conveyed from touch is highly dependent upon the culture, the context of the situation, the relationship between communicators, and the manner of touch.^[8]

Touch is an extremely important sense for humans; as well as providing information about surfaces and textures it is a component of nonverbal communication in interpersonal relationships, and vital in conveying physical intimacy. It can be both sexual (such as kissing) and platonic (such as hugging or tickling).

Touch is the earliest sense to develop in the fetus. The development of an infant's haptic senses and how it relates to the development of the other senses such as vision have been the target of much research. Human babies have been observed to have enormous difficulty surviving if they do not possess a sense of touch, even if they retain sight and hearing. Babies who can perceive through touch, even without sight and hearing, tend to fare much better. Touch can be thought of as a basic sense in that most life forms have a response to being touched, while only a subset have sight and hearing.

In chimpanzees the sense of touch is highly developed. As newborns they see and hear poorly but cling strongly to their mothers. Harry Harlow conducted a controversial study involving rhesus monkeys and observed that monkeys reared with a "terry cloth mother," a wire feeding apparatus wrapped in soft terry cloth

that provided a level of tactile stimulation and comfort, were considerably more emotionally stable as adults than those with a mere wire mother. (Harlow, 1958)

Touching is treated differently from one country to another and socially acceptable levels of touching vary from one culture to another (Remland, 2009). In Thai culture, for example, touching someone's head may be thought rude. Remland and Jones (1995) studied groups of people communicating and found that touching was rare among the English (8%), the French (5%) and the Dutch (4%) compared to Italians (14%) and Greeks (12.5%).^[9]

Striking, pushing, pulling, pinching, kicking, strangling and hand-to-hand fighting are forms of touch in the context of physical abuse. In a sentence like "I never touched him/her" or "Don't you dare touch him/her," the term touch may be meant as a euphemism for either physical abuse or sexual touching. To "touch oneself" is a euphemism for masturbation.

Stoeltje (2003) wrote about how Americans are "losing touch" with this important communication skill. During a study conducted by University of Miami School of Medicine, Touch Research Institutes, American children were said to be more aggressive than their French counterparts while playing at a playground. It was noted that French women touched their children more.

Eye gaze

The study of the role of eyes in nonverbal communication is sometimes referred to as "oculesics". [Eye contact](#), when two people look at each other's eyes at the same time, can indicate interest, attention, and involvement. Studies have found that people use their eyes to indicate their interest and not just with the frequently recognized actions of winking and movements of the eyebrows. Eye contact is a form of nonverbal communication that has a large influence on social behavior. Frequency and interpretation of eye contact vary among cultures and species. Eye aversion is the avoidance of eye contact. Eye contact and facial expressions provide important social and emotional information. People, perhaps without consciously doing so, probe each other's eyes and faces for positive or negative mood signs.^[8] Gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking and listening. The length of a gaze, the frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil dilation, and blink rate are all important cues in nonverbal communication.^[10]

Paralanguage: nonverbal cues of the voice

[Paralanguage](#) (sometimes called vocalics) is the study of nonverbal cues of the voice. Various acoustic properties of speech such as tone, pitch and accent, collectively known as [prosody](#), can all give nonverbal cues. Paralanguage may change the meaning of words, for example, from sincere to sarcastic.

The linguist [George L. Trager](#) developed a classification system which consists of the voice set, voice qualities, and vocalization.^[11]

- The *voice set* is the context in which the speaker is speaking. This can include the situation, gender, mood, age and a person's culture.
- The *voice qualities* are volume, pitch, tempo, rhythm, articulation, resonance, nasality, and accent. They give each individual a unique "voice print."
- *Vocalization* consists of three subsections: characterizers, qualifiers and segregates. Characterizers are emotions expressed while speaking, such as laughing, crying, and yawning. A voice qualifier is the style of delivering a message - for example, yelling "Hey, stop that!" as opposed to whispering "Hey, stop that." Vocal segregates such as "uh-huh" notify the speaker that the listener is listening.

Functions of nonverbal communication

Argyle (1970)^[12] put forward the hypothesis that whereas spoken language is normally used for communicating information about events external to the speakers, non-verbal codes are used to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. It is considered more polite or nicer to communicate attitudes towards others non-verbally rather than verbally, for instance in order to avoid embarrassing situations.^[13]

Argyle (1988) concluded there are five primary functions of nonverbal bodily behavior in human communication.^[14]

- Express emotions
- Express interpersonal attitudes
- To accompany speech in managing the cues of interaction between speakers and listeners
- Self-presentation of one's personality
- Rituals (greetings)

In regards to expressing interpersonal attitudes, humans communicate interpersonal closeness through a series of nonverbal actions known as immediacy behaviors. Examples of immediacy behaviors are smiling, touching, open body positions, and eye contact. Cultures that display these immediacy behaviors are considered high-contact cultures.

Concealing deception

Nonverbal communication makes it easier to lie without being revealed. This is the conclusion of a study where people watched made-up interviews of persons accused of having stolen a wallet. The interviewees lied in about 50% of the cases. People had access to either written transcripts of the interviews, or audio tape

recordings, or video recordings. The more clues that were available to those watching, the larger was the trend that interviewees who actually lied were judged to be truthful. That is, people that are clever at lying can use voice tone and face expression to give the impression that they are truthful.^[15]

However, there are many cited examples of cues to deceit,^[16] delivered via nonverbal (paraverbal and visual) communication channels, through which deceivers supposedly unwittingly provide [clues to their concealed knowledge or actual opinions](#). Most studies examining the nonverbal cues to deceit rely upon human coding of video footage (c.f. Vrij, 2008^[17]), although a recent study also demonstrated bodily movement differences between truth-tellers and liars using an automated body motion capture system^[18]

The relation between verbal and nonverbal communication

The relative importance of verbal and nonverbal communication

An interesting question is: When two people are communicating face-to-face, how much of the meaning is communicated verbally, and how much is communicated non-verbally? This was investigated by [Albert Mehrabian](#) and reported in two papers.^{[19][20]} The latter paper concluded: "It is suggested that the combined effect of simultaneous verbal, vocal, and facial attitude communications is a weighted sum of their independent effects - with coefficients of .07, .38, and .55, respectively." This "rule" that clues from spoken words, from the voice tone, and from the facial expression, contribute 7 %, 38 %, and 55 % respectively to the total meaning, is widely cited. It is presented on all types of popular courses with statements like "scientists have found out that . . .". In reality, however, it is extremely weakly founded. First, it is based on the judgment of the meaning of single tape-recorded words, i.e. a very artificial context. Second, the figures are obtained by combining results from two different studies which potentially cannot be combined. Third, it relates only to the communication of positive versus negative emotions. Fourth, it relates only to women, as men did not participate in the study.

Since then, other studies have analysed the relative contribution of verbal and nonverbal signals under more naturalistic situations. Argyle,^[12] using video tapes shown to the subjects, analysed the communication of submissive/dominant attitude and found that non-verbal cues had 4.3 times the effect of verbal cues. The most important effect was that body posture communicated superior status in a very efficient way. On the other hand, a study by Hsee et al.^[21] had subjects judge a person on the dimension happy/sad and found that words spoken with minimal variation in intonation had an impact about 4 times larger than face expressions seen in a film without sound. Thus, the relative importance of spoken words and facial expressions may be very different in studies using different set-ups.

Interaction of verbal and nonverbal communication

When communicating, nonverbal messages can interact with verbal messages in six ways: repeating, conflicting, complementing, substituting, regulating and accenting/moderating.

Repeating

"Repeating" consists of using gestures to strengthen a verbal message, such as pointing to the object of discussion.^[22]

Conflicting

Verbal and nonverbal messages within the same interaction can sometimes send opposing or conflicting messages. A person verbally expressing a statement of truth while simultaneously fidgeting or avoiding eye contact may convey a mixed message to the receiver in the interaction. Conflicting messages may occur for a variety of reasons often stemming from feelings of uncertainty, ambivalence, or frustration.^[23] When mixed messages occur, nonverbal communication becomes the primary tool people use to attain additional information to clarify the situation; great attention is placed on bodily movements and positioning when people perceive mixed messages during interactions.

Complementing

Accurate interpretation of messages is made easier when nonverbal and verbal communication complement each other. Nonverbal cues can be used to elaborate on verbal messages to reinforce the information sent when trying to achieve communicative goals; messages have been shown to be remembered better when nonverbal signals affirm the verbal exchange.^[24]

Substituting

Nonverbal behavior is sometimes used as the sole channel for communication of a message. People learn to identify facial expressions, body movements, and body positioning as corresponding with specific feelings and intentions. Nonverbal signals can be used without [verbal communication](#) to convey messages; when nonverbal behavior does not effectively communicate a message, verbal methods are used to enhance understanding.^[25]

Regulating

Nonverbal behavior also regulates our conversations. For example, touching someone's arm can signal that you want to talk next or interrupt.^[25]

Accenting/Moderating

Nonverbal signals are used to alter the interpretation of verbal messages. Touch, voice pitch, and gestures are some of the tools people use to accent or amplify the message that is sent; nonverbal behavior can also be used to moderate or tone down aspects of verbal messages as well.^[26] For example, a person who is verbally expressing anger may accent the verbal message by shaking a fist.

Dance and nonverbal communication

Dance is a form of nonverbal communication that requires the same underlying faculty in the brain for conceptualization, creativity and memory as does verbal language in speaking and writing. Means of self-expression, both forms have vocabulary (steps and gestures in dance), grammar (rules for putting the vocabulary together) and meaning. Dance, however, assembles (choreographs) these elements in a manner that more often resembles poetry, with its ambiguity and multiple, symbolic and elusive meanings.

Clinical studies of nonverbal communication

From 1977 to 2004, the influence of disease and drugs on receptivity of nonverbal communication was studied by teams at three separate medical schools using a similar paradigm.^[27] Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh, Yale University and Ohio State University had subjects observe gamblers at a slot machine awaiting payoffs. The amount of this payoff was read by nonverbal transmission prior to reinforcement. This technique was developed by and the studies directed by psychologist, Dr. Robert E. Miller and psychiatrist, Dr. A. James Giannini. These groups reported diminished receptive ability in heroin addicts^[28] and phencyclidine abusers^[29] was contrasted with increased receptivity in cocaine addicts. Men with major depression^[30] manifested significantly decreased ability to read nonverbal cues when compared with euthymic men.

In some subjects tested for ability to read nonverbal cues, intuitive paradigms were apparently employed while in others a cause and effect approach was used.^[31] Subjects in the former group answered quickly and before reinforcement occurred. They could not give a rationale for their particular responses. Subjects in the latter category delayed their response and could offer reasons for their choice. The level of accuracy between the two groups did not vary nor did handedness.^[32]

[Freitas-Magalhaes](#) studied the effect of smile in the treatment of depression and concluded that depressive states decrease when you smile more often.^[33]

Obese women^[34] and women with premenstrual syndrome^[35] were found to also possess diminished abilities to read these cues. In contradistinction, men with bipolar disorder possessed increased abilities.^[36] A woman with total paralysis of

the nerves of facial expression was found unable to transmit or receive any nonverbal facial cues whatsoever.^[37] Because of the changes in levels of accuracy on the levels of nonverbal receptivity, the members of the research team hypothesized a biochemical site in the brain which was operative for reception of nonverbal cues. Because certain drugs enhanced ability while others diminished it, the neurotransmitters dopamine and endorphin were considered to be likely etiological candidate. Based on the available data, however, the primary cause and primary effect could not be sorted out on the basis of the paradigm employed.^[38]

A byproduct of the work of the Pittsburgh/Yale/ Ohio State team was an investigation of the role of nonverbal facial cues in heterosexual nondate rape. Males who were serial rapists of adult women were studied for nonverbal receptive abilities. Their scores were the highest of any subgroup.^[39] Rape victims were next tested. It was reported that women who had been raped on at least two occasions by different perpetrators had a highly significant impairment in their abilities to read these cues in either male or female senders.^[40] These results were troubling, indicating a predator-prey model. The authors did note that whatever the nature of these preliminary findings the responsibility of the rapist was in no manner or level, diminished.

The final target of study for this group was the medical students they taught. Medical students at Ohio State University, Ohio University and Northeast Ohio Medical College were invited to serve as subjects. Students indicating a preference for the specialties of family practice, psychiatry, pediatrics and obstetrics-gynecology achieved significantly higher levels of accuracy than those students who planned to train as surgeons, radiologists, or pathologists. Internal medicine and plastic surgery candidates scored at levels near the mean.^[41]

Distress

One recent study set out to find how well people could communicate distress signals non-verbally. The research shows that you can identify certain social cues that can help you to predict that person's behavior. This is not always true though. The cues depend on the mindset of the person and cannot be predicted. The study was able to find 55 identifiable distress cues.^[42]

Difficulties with nonverbal communication

People vary in their ability to send and receive nonverbal communication. On average, to a moderate degree, women are better at nonverbal communication than are men.^{[43][44][45][46]} Measurements of the ability to communicate nonverbally and the capacity to feel empathy have shown that the two abilities are independent of each other.^[47]

For people who have relatively large difficulties with nonverbal communication, this can pose significant challenges, especially in interpersonal relationships. There exist resources that are tailored specifically to these people, which attempt to assist those in understanding information which comes more easily to others. A specific group of persons that face these challenges are those with [autism spectrum disorders](#), including [Asperger syndrome](#).

Footnotes

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See also

- [Albert Mehrabian](#)
- [Asemic writing](#)
- [Behavioral communication](#)
- [Body language](#)
- [Chinese number gestures](#)
- [Desmond Morris](#)
- [Doctrine of mental reservation](#)
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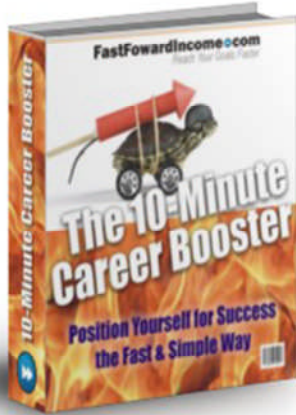
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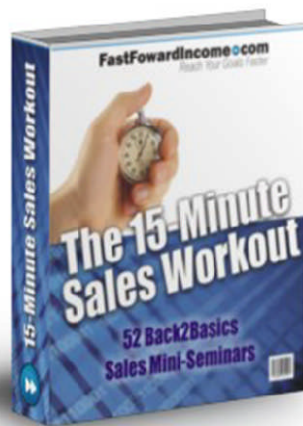
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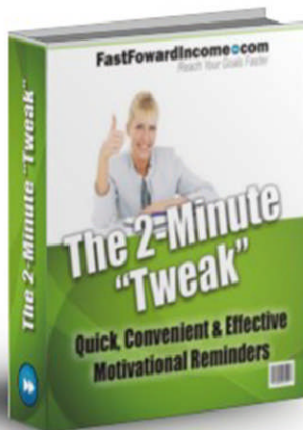
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