

Body language

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Have you ever been in the situation when you really didn't believe what someone was saying? Did you have a sense that something didn't ring true or a gut feeling that all was not right? Perhaps they were saying " Yes" yet their heads were shaking " No"? The difference between the words people speak and our understanding of what they are saying comes from non-verbal communication, otherwise known as " body language." By developing your awareness of the signs and signals of body language, you can more easily understand other people, and more effectively communicate with them.

There are sometimes subtle — and sometimes not so subtle — movements, gestures, facial expressions and even shifts in our whole bodies that indicate something is going on. The way we talk, walk, sit and stand all say something about us, and whatever is happening on the inside can be reflected on the outside. By becoming more aware of this body language and understanding what it might mean, you can learn to read people more easily. This puts you in a better position to communicate effectively with them.

What's more, by increasing your understanding of others, you can also become more aware of the messages that you convey to them. There are times when we send mixed messages — we say one thing yet our body language reveals something different. This non-verbal language will affect how we act and react to others, and how they react to us. This article will explain many of the ways in which we communicate non-verbally, so that you can use these signs and signals to communicate more effectively. First Impressions and Confidence Recall a time when you met someone new at work. Or think about the last time you watched a speaker deliver a presentation. What were your first impressions? Did you sense confidence or

a lack of confidence in them? Did you want to associate with them or not? Were you convinced by them? Did they stride into the room, engage you and maintain eye contact or were they tentative, shuffling towards you with eyes averted, before sliding into a chair? What about their handshake — firm and strong or weak and limp? Moving along in the conversation, did they maintain solid eye contact or were they frequently looking away? Did their face appear relaxed or was it tight and tense? What about their hand and arm movements? Were their gestures wide, flowing and open or were they tight, jerky and closed? As you observe others, you can identify some common signs and signals that give away whether they are feeling confident or not. Typical things to look for in confident people include: - Posture — standing tall with shoulders back. - Eye contact — solid with a " smiling" face. - Gestures with hands and arms — purposeful and deliberate. - Speech — slow and clear. - Tone of voice — moderate to low. As well as deciphering other people's the body language, you can use this knowledge to convey feelings that you're not actually experiencing. For example, if you are about to enter into a situation where you are not as confident as you'd like to be, such as giving a big presentation or attending an important meeting, you can adopt these " confidence" signs and signals to project confidence. Let's now look at another scenario

Key Points

Body language impacts a great deal of how we communicate, and can reflect quite accurately what's going on inside us. Body language includes body movements and gestures (legs, arms, hands, head and torso), posture, muscle tension, eye contact, skin coloring (flushed red), even people's breathing rate and perspiration. Additionally, the tone of voice, the rate of speech and the pitch of the voice

all add to the words that are being used. It is important to recognize that body language may vary between individuals, and between different cultures and nationalities. It is therefore essential to verify and confirm the signals that you are reading, by questioning the individual and getting to know the person.