

# The advantages of being physically attractive philosophy essay



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Nowadays attractive people rule the world. We see them on television, on the covers of magazines, they are everywhere. They dominate all the fields that include a certain degree of public exposure. “What is beautiful is good”. This is the stereotype that plays an active role in our lives.

Physical attractiveness influences our relationships with other people. It influences social acceptance and the employment process.

People consider that less attractive children are more likely to grow up with bad behavior, but if an attractive child grows up with such bad behavior, people perceive this event like an unusual one.

On job interviews, attractive people seem to be more efficient. They are good communicators they speak faster and fluently; they enjoy social interactions and exchanges. These people show more confidence and develop more favorable images of them.

It is a fact that attractive people tend to be more successful than the less attractive ones. Attractive individuals are more sociable and happier. They tend to be more socially skillful because the favorable expectations of attractive people lead to better social exchanges, more favorable self-images, and better social skills.

## **2. 2. Head Positions**

Head shaking has its origins in bowing to appear superior. It can be a powerful persuasion tool; you can encourage someone to talk or to make him stop, only by nodding three to four times in certain intervals of time. The speed of nods determines the listener's patience or the lack of it. If the

listener is interested in what the speaker is saying he will give a slow deliberate nod. Fast nodding tells us that the listener wants to interfere or he is not interested anymore.

Head nodding can be contagious, if someone nods, you will return the nod, even if you don't agree with what he is saying.

Head nodding is also an excellent tool to get someone's cooperation and agreement; it is an unconscious outward reflection of our inner emotions so when you feel optimistic about something and you feel affirmative your head will start to nod as you speak. Positive emotions cause head nods and it goes the other way around, affirmative head nods can cause positive emotions. If you start to nod intentionally, you will experience those emotions.

In different cultures head nodding signifies " yes", yes you agree other person's point of view. This is not the case of Bulgaria where positive head nodding means " no". In Japan, for example, head nodding doesn't necessarily mean agreement; it can signify " yes, I hear you". In other countries, like India, the head movement differs; here people move their head from side to side to signal agreement.

There are three basic head position.

Head up

In this position, the head remains still; the conversation can be slightly punctuated by small nods. Usually, this position takes a person who has neither positive nor negative attitude about what the interlocutor says.

If someone lifts the head with the chin jutting forward, he signals arrogance and fearlessness. Anyone who adopts this position is intentionally exposing the throat to gain some height so they can “ look down their nose”.

### The Head Tilt

The head tilt displays the vulnerable necks; it makes a person’s look smaller and less threatening. It is believed that this position has its origins in the baby resting its head on his parents shoulder or chest, its submissive meaning is understood by everyone, especially women.

Many women use this position in order to get attention from man they fancy because a submissive woman is attractive to most men. It is recommended using head tilt along with head nods during presentation or while delivering a speech because you will appear nonthreatening and the listeners will begin to trust you.

### Head Down

People who have judgmental and negative attitude tend to keep their head down. It shows disapproval or disappointment. Sometimes, conference speakers confront situations when the listeners adopt this position, to make them lift their heads they involve them in action, they invite them to participate into a conversation before their actual presentation. If the method is successfully the next head position of the audience will be the tilt head.

## 2.3 Eye contact

The eyes are the windows of the soul. They are highly expressive region; their movement is allowing various expressions. We “ keep our eyes open,” “ turn a blind eye to certain events,” or we choose “ not to bat an eye”. Our eyes show what we think about a person, how we feel toward him, if we are comfortable or not.

Eye contact is one of the most primitive ways of communication, during social interaction all good communicators look at each other in the eye, without the gaze even if it is for several seconds, they don't feel like they are fully into the conversation. Georg Simmel described the phenomenon as “ a wholly new and unique union between two people” and that it “ represents the most perfect reciprocity in the entire field of human relationship” (Simmel).

The eye gaze may have a variety of meanings, such as friendship, submission, hate or attraction. The sources of variation are:

Point in the conversation: if a person is listening there is more eye contact than the situation where he is speaking. When people speak they tend to look up at the end of the speeches and phrases.

Nature of the topic. Topics of personal matter usually avoid the eye contact. Catholic confessionals and psychiatric couches for example are built in such manner, that the person who talks wouldn't be inhibited by the eye contact. The contact between the priest or the therapist and the individual in both of these locations is reduced; the individual can feel, but not see the presence

of the priest or the doctor so when he discuss shameful and embarrassing things those who are listening could not stare at them.

Relations between a pair of people. When two people like each other there is more eye contact than usual. The pupils are dilating when you look at a person whom you like more. Besides attraction, the gaze could mean threat, when one is cutting off or averting his gaze this signal could mean appeasement.

Cooperation. There is also more direct gaze when two people tend to cooperate rather than competing. In this case, an important role plays the quantity of eye contact; a high level of it usually means that the gazer is interested in the subject. However, combined with other expressions it also means threat.

Personality. Depending on one's personality, he could look more or less. Extroverts look more often and for longer than their interlocutors and the introverts. There are also people that avoid the gaze; these are schizophrenic patients, depressed people and autistic children.

Distance. It is a certainty that eye contact is reduced when proximity is greater, in busses or elevators, for example it ceases at all. Reducing eye gaze helps us reduce the level of discomfort produced by invading our intimate zone.

## 2. 3. 1 The Functions of Eye Contact

The meanings of eye contact are various, and beside the hate, joy and domination signals that they could express there are several function that they have as well. These functions are:

Information-Seeking.

Our social behavior is an open book for others to read, it tells the world who we really are. We are the one that give information so it is important to us to receive a properly feedback. The speech could be a way, but sometimes if you look closely to the other's face you can find a lot more than he says, especially if you look at his eyes. At the end of the speech he looks at you to see how the information was received.

Signaling that the channel is open.

When you communicate and maintain the eye contact the speaker will understand that all your attention is his, and he may proceed further with the conversation. On the other hand, a simple flicker of the eye toward a third person indicates that the channel is closed.

Concealment and Exhibitionism.

Some people look to get attention and to keep it. These people according to Laing suffer from lack of such feelings like self-regard and ego-identity, they need to be seen so they could be "loved and confirmed as a person" (Laing). The eye contact is the only they need.

Establishment and Recognition of Social Relationship.

Argyle explained this function through the example of an A and B person. The eye contact plays a central role in the establishment of their relationship. If there is eye contact between A and B it means that there is attraction. If A wants to dominate B: A will stare at B with the appropriate expression, if B accepts A's dominance he will adopt a submissive expression and he will look away;

If some people want to see and to be seen some of them don't want to have eye contact at all. They hide communication signals and disguise the gaze by wearing sunglasses. Glasses are also used by blind people they wear tinted glasses to avoid the embarrassment of not being able to look a person in the eye whenever it is necessary. Mirrored glasses stay between traffic policeman and the drivers, by avoiding the eye contact policemen can reduce the possibility of an argument; the nervous drivers can be put off a confrontation if they are not seeing the officer's eye but, forced to see their own.

## **2. 4 Facial Expressions**

The interest in human expression of emotion dates from more than a century ago when Charles Darwin published his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Darwin believed that human's emotional expressions are defined by our evolution; therefore he couldn't understand the human emotions without understanding the emotional expressions of animals. Darwin returned to fundamentals, he built his theory of emotional expressions in animals, in infants and children, and in adults from different countries.



Although everybody read his book, it hadn't much impact on the scientific community over years. Only recently the scientists agreed that Darwin's ideas, his theoretical interpretations and forecasts are the premise of current knowledge in the field of human's facial expressions.

Scientists relate facial expressions with emotions they represent. Many anthropologists like Margaret Mead believed that the cultures of the world control these emotions. Paul Ekman on the contrary proved that facial expressions have natural origins therefore, they are universal.

### Surprise

Something unexpected triggers this emotion; it is the shortest one and it takes two or three seconds. It could last if the surprises continue. It is not a surprise when you have time to think if you are surprised or not, because this emotion feels like an explosion.

A surprised individual will raise the eyebrows so that the skin below will be more visible than usual. He will have wrinkles on his forehead; wrinkles that everyone shows except young children. The individual will also have the mouth opened; his lips will be smooth and relaxed. His mouth may be partly open or widely open it depends on how intense was the surprise.

The raised eyebrows, the relaxed open mouth can occur in combination with other expressions like neutral face, but it will no longer signify surprise, but doubt, fascination, or an astonishing moment.

### Anger

Anger is the most dangerous emotion of all. When you are angry you can say things or worse do things that later you will regret. When you are angry you are not yourself, your blood pressure increases, the veins on your neck and forehead become more visible, your muscles tense and you may move slightly toward the offender. This emotion may be developed step by step, from a simple irritation, to rage or fury, it can be accumulated or it may occur suddenly.

Anger's appearance can be determined when there are significant changes on the face. The angry person has his inner corners of the eyebrows lowered and drawn together. His eyelids are tense and his eyes look like he stares.

The mouth has two basic types:

The lip-pressed-against-lip mouth: it occurs when someone is starting some form of violence or when a person is trying to control his verbal anger; he presses the lips to prevent saying something unpleasant.

The open-mouthed anger happens when someone is expressing anger or when this person yells during a speech.

#### 2. 4. 3 Fear

Fear is the innate emotion induced by a certain threat or sense of danger. We learn how to avoid the possibility of harm by analyzing what occurs around us. However we can't anticipate everything and even it can be prevented we still fear any events or ideas that seems dangerous.

Fear is a sudden emotion just like surprise, you can't pause a moment to think if you are afraid or not, it occurs immediately something harms you and you are afraid. Unlike surprise fear is a terrible experience even a mild fear is unpleasant and it is the most traumatic of all emotions. Another difference between fear and surprise consist of its duration. Fear if it is unexpected it can have short duration but it can also occur gradually, you can know very well the fear-inspiring event and still be afraid of it.

During fear there are distinctive appearances in the three areas of the face. The eyebrows appear raised and straightened with the inner corners drawn together, there are also wrinkles but not on the entire forehead. When the brows are held in the fear position the meaning of the expression is either worry or controlled fear.

Fear eyebrows are joined by fear eyes and fear mouth. Eyes during fear are tense, the upper eyelid is raised the lower eyelid is also tense. In both fear and surprise the upper eyelid is raised but these emotions differ in regard to the lower eyelid which in surprise is relaxed and in fear is tense and raised. In fear the mouth also may be opened the difference between surprise and fear are the lips in surprise they are relax, but in fear they are tense and also may be drawn back.

#### 2. 4. 4 Disgust and Contempt

Disgust is an emotion of aversion. There are many things that may cause this aversion, the taste of something that you don't like, the smell of it sometimes even the thought could cause disgust. Not only the tastes or the smell can bring someone disgust but also the actions and the appearance of <https://assignbuster.com/the-advantages-of-being-physically-attractive-philosophy-essay/>

another person. Some people feel disgust when looking a deformed or an ugly person. You may be disgusted by what a person does for example if that someone is torturing an animal.

Even if the emotion of disgust is universal, the things that one person thinks disgusting are not universally. What in one culture is disgusting in another culture may seem attractive and the other way around. These kinds of things are not the exactly in the same culture or in the same family. A disgusted person has lowered eyebrows and raised cheeks. However, the important clues that show disgust happen in the nose and mouth area. The upper lip may be raised, and the nose has wrinkles.

Disgust may range from a slight form of disgust to an extreme one. The difference between these forms is that in the slight type, the wrinkles on the nose and raised lip are less pronounced.

A close form of disgust is the contempt facial expression. This emotion is triggered by other people's actions not smells, food or touches. Contempt's appearance consists of a closed mouth with corners a little bit raised, and lips pressing each other.

## 2. 4. 5 Happiness

Happiness is a positive emotion that everyone wants to experience. We like when we are happy, it feels so good that we search it, and we try to build our lives around this emotion.

Most of the people think that the signal of happiness is the smile. It is not quite true. Sometimes, behind a smile there is pain hiding or even fear.  
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Smiling in these cases, you make the unpleasant situations more comfortable for you.

Happiness' intensity is determined by the position of the lip; this position is always accompanied by deepening the region between the lips and the nose also by more pronounced lines under the lower eyelid.

The intensity of happiness varies from a simple smile to an abroad one from ear to ear. The extreme form of happiness is laughter with tears.

#### 2. 4. 6 Sadness

Sadness means suffering. People when are sad have a distinct way of showing it, they don't cry they don't yell they just suffer in silence.

Anything can make a person sad but in the most of cases what triggers this feeling is the loss of somebody.

Sadness' appearance has distinctive clues in each area of the face. A sad person will lower his face; the inner corners his eyebrows are will be raised. "The inner corner of the upper eyelid is drawn up, and the lower eyelid may appear raised. The corners of the lips are drawn down, or the lips appear to tremble". (Ekman and Friesen p121)

All the emotions mentioned above can blend with each other creating more ways to express our feelings, to underline or punctuate something in a conversation. It is known that people learn to control their facial expressions and sometimes you can be misled.

## **Gestures**

Hands arms and even legs can produce a variety of signals. These signals are used either to help you improve your interaction skills or to negotiate. As we grow up our signals become more subtle and less obvious and that is making them harder to read.

There is a debate among the researchers wherever some gestures are genetic or they are learned. The conclusion they got is that gestures are learned and they are culturally determined.

### The open palm

Hands have been an important tool in human evolution and it is believed that there are more connection between the brain and the hand than between the brain and any over part of the body.

If you try to see if a person is honest or not, an important thing is to look at palm displays. The open palm was associated with truth and honesty throughout history. In ancient times open palms used to show that there are no weapons concealed and therefore there is no threat. Nowadays different kinds of oaths are taken in this way by placing the palm over the heart, in courts when somebody testifies the right palm is held up for the member of the court to see while in the left hand is the Bible.

There are three main palm gestures: the submissive palm position, the palm is facing up and it is used as a non-threatening gesture if you ask something from a person he will not feel the pressure of the request like in a superior situation. You will gain authority if you turn the palm to face downwards, the

person whom you addressed the request will feel it like an order. The third gesture and the most irritating is that in which the palm is closed into a fist except the pointed finger, with whom the speaker creates a negative effect on other people he beats them into submission.

#### Rubbing the palms together

This gesture is the way in which people communicate their positive expectations. Before the dice are thrown the thrower rubs them between palms, it signals his positive expectation of winning. Also a positive expectation signals a waiter at the end of the evening when he is asking "anything else, sir" while rubbing his palms, this usually is the non-verbal sign of a tip. However when a person rubs his palms while he is expecting the bus in freezing winter it means that his hands are cold not that he is expecting the bus. It is all about the context in which these gestures are made.

#### Hands clenched together.

This gesture seems to be a confidence one because people are smiling and sound happy when using it. The research showed however that behind that smile the person is holding back a negative attitude and therefore it is a gesture of frustration. The person may hold his hands clenched in three main positions: hand clenched in front of the face, resting on the desk or on the lap when seated.

#### Steepling hands

All gestures come in groups that are called clusters. This gesture represents an exception. It can be used in isolation from other gestures by people who <https://assignbuster.com/the-advantages-of-being-physically-attractive-philosophy-essay/>

use minimal or restricted body language. When it used it signals confident attitude. The gesture has two versions: the raised steeple used when the steeper is doing the talking and the lowered steeple when he is listening.

### The Mouth Guard

This is a gesture learned from childhood and it is as obvious as it was then. The hand covers the entire mouth and the thumb is presses the cheek. What is happening is that the brain automatically tries to block deceitful words. As we grow up we try to disguise it by giving a fake cough or to minimize this gesture, instead of hand slapping over the mouth the finger rub around it.

### Folded Arms

Folded arm gesture stands for a barrier against threatening situations. “ When a person has a nervous, negative or defensive attitude, he will fold his arms firmly on his chest, a strong signal that he feels threatened”. (Pease)  
The researchers have found that the person who folds his arms has not only a negative attitude toward the speaker but he also is paying less attention to what is being said. Many people said that they fold their arms because it is cozy. “ Any gesture will feel comfortable when you have the corresponding attitude; that is if you have a negative, defensive or nervous attitude, the folded arms position will feel good”. (Pease)

### Standard arm-cross gesture

This is a gesture that signifies the same universally negative attitude that people have in public events, meetings where they are surrounded by strangers; they have their both arms folded across the chest, it feels like an  
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attempt to block an unfavorable situation. Beside the negative attitude this gesture also means that the person who folds his arms may disagree with what the speaker says. To bring this person into a more open position you have to make him unfold his arms and reach forward. Sometimes this gesture comes in cluster with clenched fists, clenched teeth, it indicates a hostile attitude and it makes possible a verbal or even a physical attack.

To make the arm barrier less obvious people disguise their arm-cross gestures. These people don't want for other to know their insecurity or nervousness so their instead of folding their arms or grasping the other arm they just touch some of their personal objects like; handbags, bracelets watches everything near the arm.

The standard leg-cross position

Arms are not the only body part that can be used to form a barrier between you and the world. In most of European countries in Australian and New Zealand cultures the right leg is neatly crossed over the left one. It is a gesture that shouldn't be read out of context because people use it when they sit for a long time in uncomfortable chairs or when it is freezing outside.

Leg-cross positions may indicate that a defensive attitude exists but not so negative and obvious like arm-crossed gesture. Used together these gestures indicate that the person is not paying attention that he is withdrawn from the conversation.

The same meaning of negative attitude has the ankle lock gesture. This gesture is different in male and female version. In male version it appears

together with clenched fists placed on the knees or with hands grasping the chair's arms. In women's case the knees are held together, the hands are resting side by side or one on the top of the other on the upper legs.

When individuals start to feel comfortable in a certain group they start to open up through a set of movements. This set has five stages:

Stage: the arms and legs are crossed in the defensive position.

Stage: the feet are placed in a neutral position.

Stage: the arm that is folded on top comes out and the palm is flashed during the conversation.

Stage: arms unfold and they can be placed either in pockets or on the hips.

Stage: the person is leaning forward to the speaker whom he finds interesting and not a stranger anymore.

It is important to know that all kind of gestures or facial examples should be considered in the context that they occur, because it is really easy to misread a signal. If for example a man has a soft handshake you most likely will be tempted to accuse him of having a weak character, not taking into consideration that he may be a surgeon or a musician and he has to be delicate with his hands in order to protect them.