

Confession of a dangerous mind: body language essay



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There is a famous saying that goes: “ actions speak louder than words. ”

That means what you do is worth more than what you say.

The thesis that I mean to prove in this paper is that by simply reading the body language of a person, one can foretell this person’s actions before they occur. Furthermore, I will prove that in many cases body language is much more sincere than words themselves. Even further, I will bring evidence to support this theory by analyzing the film, “ Confessions of a Dangerous Mind,” based on the novel by Chuck Barris, Confessions of a Dangerous Mind.

The study of body language is called Kinesics. According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, body language is defined as any kind of “ gesture, movement, or mannerism by which a person or animal communicates with others. ” Gestures and body language have been called “ the silent language” (Axtell 11) because they are another form of communication. Mario Pei once estimated that humans could produce up to 700, 000 different physical signs (Axtell 10) making body language an easy form of communication. From the day that we are born and for the rest of our lives, we use body language as an obscure way of expressing our feelings and emotions.

Whether these feelings are expressed directly or not, it is easy to comprehend a person’s emotions by the way they handle their body.

Individual and cultural differences also affect how nonverbal cues are sent and received. Most of these nonverbal cues are done by a force of habit. In many cases, people are unaware of that they send and receive mixed

messages from other people. The way a person stands, positions his or her arms, or facial expressions can explain a lot about that person's attitude towards his or her surroundings. There are different ways of showing one's body language such as posture, distance, hand gestures, body gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. Men and woman typically have different movements, which tend to make it hard for the opposite sex to understand each other.

Body language is inherited within people from before they can even remember. Before young children can even talk, they bite when they are mad. Charles Darwin once described children as young crocodiles that "snap their little jaws as soon as they emerge from the egg" (Gay 15).

From infancy, babies learn that a nod means "yes" and a shake of the head means "no. People position their bodies in many different ways when standing. Posture is a great way of showing what a person is doing or how a person is feeling whether he or she is standing, sitting, or walking. If someone is standing straight, he or she is showing confidence. But when someone is slouching, he or she is showing a sign of disrespect or lack of care. As Frank van Marwijk once said, "there are two kinds of postures: open or closed. Someone who does not feel too comfortable when they are with someone else will often be in a closed position. He or she will possibly have crossed arms or legs or will hold an object in front of them.

It provides a bit of a barrier and protection for feeling vulnerable." (Body language) In the film, "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," body language plays an great part in understanding the plot. Chuck, the main character, is a

producer of several TV shows, including “ The Dating Game” and “ The Newlywed Game. ” While auditioning for his newest show, “ The Gong,” Chuck was slouching in his chair and resting his head on his palm which shows his boredom with what is happening. This boring situation was followed with two raised eyebrows and a look of amazement as thought of a great way to make the show better. “ Having a good posture is good for you socially and physically. ” (Body Language) A tip for having a good posture is to pretend you are against the wall with all your body parts touching the wall as much as possible.

“ The hands are probably used the most for sending nonverbal signals. ” (Axtell 80) Hand gestures are used to insult, explaining, point to something, and many more. When you ask someone to describe a piano, at least nine out of ten people will use their hands to describe the object. He or she would shape a box with his or her hands then move his or her fingers as if he or she were actually playing the piano. There are many other hand gestures. If you want to say the “ f” word to someone but do not want to say it, you could flip him or her “ the bird,” also known as, the middle finger. The middle finger is common in most countries. Middle Easterners, for example, modify it by pointing it downward (Axtell 100).

Another insult is the “ forearm jerk,” the right arm is bent at the elbow and the left hand is holding into the crook of the elbow while the fist in the right hand is jerked upward. This gesture is famous in North and Latin America and many parts of Europe. In “ Confessions of a Dangerous Mind,” at the beginning of the film, the girl Chuck is seeing tells him she might be pregnant. No words were needed to explain exactly how Chuck had felt

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because his wide open mouth, raised eyebrows, and the fact that his whole body just stopped moving as if he was in shock, seemed to explain his shock, terror, and confusion.

Later on in the film, Chuck hits on a girl. While he is doing this, he makes almost no eye contact with her and moves back and forth with his legs in the same place. His actions demonstrate his nervousness and somewhat intimidation towards women, this notion is emphasized at the beginning where the audience sees that he did not have much luck with women. There are numerous ways you can use your body to communicate.

Shrugging your shoulders shows that you do not know or care about your surroundings or a particular situation. Tapping your foot is distracting and a sure sign of boredom. When people get angry, they put their hands on their hips. If you were to lean forward with open arms, it means that you are responsive or eager. Because body language is a part of human nature, most body gestures are understandable to people all over the world. As it says in Argyle's book: Facial expressions are great indicators of what is on people's minds. It is important for expressing emotions and attitudes to other people.

Facial expressions change rapidly and play an important role in social interaction (Argyle 120). The face has 44 muscles, nerves, and blood vessels, which can twist into 5, 000 different expressions (Blum 34). Facial expressions are not always easy to read though. Dr.

Paul Elkman has said, " in a sense, the face is equipped to lie the most and leak the most, and thus can be a very confusing source of information"

(Blum 34). There are six emotional expressions, and they are happiness, <https://assignbuster.com/confession-of-a-dangerous-mind-body-language-essay/>

surprise, fear, sadness, anger, and disgust/contempt (Argyle 121). In “Confessions of a Dangerous mind,” facial expressions are used to display each character’s emotions. In one scene, Chuck has started seeing a woman named Penny. As she is sitting on the bath tub in a very sexual way, Chuck looks at her with comforting eyes, a tilted head, and a mild smile, expressing his growing feelings for her. In another scene, as the presentation for his ABC show, “The Dating Game,” comes to an end, Chuck notices that the look on the board’s faces are fixed in a frown and their eyebrows, slightly quenced.

All are foreshadowing signs that the board does not approve of the show.

William Nolen suggested that the “single most powerful cue in promoting social attractiveness perceptions is the smile, followed by the head nod, and the eyebrow raise.” People should be careful that if they give an insincere smile, they are sending the opposite impression. A smile usually says, “I like you. There are three types of smiles: simple, upper, and broad. The simple smile is usually showing a little part of the upper teeth or not showing the teeth.

There is a low intensity and a high intensity of a smile. The low intensity of a simple smile can show a lack of confidence, while a high intensity is used to show friendliness to strangers. Then there is the upper smile where you are only showing the upper teeth. The low intensity of the upper smile shows a stronger, friendly, and confident impression, and the high intensity shows an amused impression. Finally, there is the broad smile, which is the biggest smile you can give.

It shows pleasure, joy, and delight. A grocery store clerk gives a customer a smile that is a lot different than the smiles on the face of a person that just won a lottery. Smiling inappropriately or continuously can result in not being taken seriously.

Eye contact plays a big part in "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind."

Throughout the movie, if Chuck is not staring at someone's eyes or looking around, he is giving cow eyes to his girlfriend. However, each of these eye gestures explains something about what Chuck is feeling and thinking.

When Chuck meets his spy connection, Patricia, they do not take their eyes off of each other, they stare straight at each other without flinching or blinking. This eye contact expresses the connection between them and that their relationship will play a big role in the scenes to come. Of all the features of the face, the eyes are the most important in the communication process. The eyes have been called "the windows to the soul." Listeners make the assumption that if a person looks directly at a speaker, the speaker is being honest and knows what he or she is talking about. On the other hand, if a speaker looks away before actually speaking and before answering a question, the speaker is perceived as being dishonest or as having difficulties answering the question.

In Richmond's book, *Nonverbal Behavior in Interpersonal Relations*, it is proved that the eyes can also predict if you are lying, especially if you are looking down when you answer a question. The eyes provide signals concerning emotions, attitudes, and relationships where no other body cues

may be found (Richmond 75). Looking at people in the eye can mean a mixture of things.

It can show trust, interest, attentive, and annoyance. When you do not look at people in the eye, they think you do not care. Sometimes strangers will stare at people in a threatening way which makes the person being stared at very uncomfortable. Couples will sometimes stare at each other to show that their love. When your eyes are wide open, this shows terror or fear. If you have liked a person across the room, you might wink to show your affection. If you want to show disinterest or disrespect, you might roll your eyes at the person.

In the film, when Chuck meets Patricia, though her words show blatant disinterest in him, she touches his hand gently before leaving. By doing so she tells a different story of what she is thinking and feeling. Touch is important in everyone's life. When children are six months old mothers touch girls much more than boys, and at thirteen months, girls seek bodily contact with mothers more than boys do (Argyle 215). Infants who do not have enough bodily contact become disturbed. Handshaking is a common greeting behavior and is often the first greeting you make when you meet someone. A handshake can be used to congratulate, apologize, or greet someone. Some handshakes can be firm, strong grasped, moist, dry, long, short, or limp.

If your hands are moist, you are probably nervous or tense. Handshakes should have a pressure equal to the other person. Body language can also be your appearance. Ripped pants, short skirts, or tailored suits sends

messages to people about what type of person you are. In "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," Chuck shows his evolution as a CIA hitman by the clothes he wears. At the beginning of the film, he wears clothing of an immature man, sweats and such, but as he develops as a killer, he gets accustomed to his job and begins to wear more rugged and manly clothing, such as a leather jacket and dark sunglasses. If you wanted to show a person that you like them but do not want to tell them, you could give them a signal by using body language. If you were a girl, you can do a "hair toss," where the hair is flicked to one side.

If you were in a sexy mood, you could give the guy the "sideways glance," which is to look at the guy over your shoulders through partially closed eyelids. For men, you could use the "cowpoke posture," which is when you have your thumbs hooked onto your belt or you can lean against the wall with your hands on your pockets. Then there is the famous "wink," that is usually used by men but is also used by women. Body language can also be used for entertainment. Actors and actresses use body language to help the audience know what they are feeling. The audience pays more attention to the body language than the dialogue. If actors and actresses did not use body language, it would not seem real to the audience.

People make constant movements every second of the day without realizing it. Trying to read facial expressions can be very hard because they are so quick. But body language, on the other hand, is more easily read. Body language is an amazing tool; it seems like magic if one reads it well.

People will swear that he or she is reading their minds, when really he or she is just looking at them. Body language is something that helps people make sense of a situation where the words said are not necessarily truthful and honest. And, above all, it is a wonderful form of communication.