

BODY LANGUAGE CLUES



HANDSHAKES



- A firm web-to-web handshake indicates confidence.
- A limp handshake strongly implies that a person is ill at ease or uncomfortable.
- A downward facing palm implies control; an upward facing palm suggests submissiveness.
- A double clasp (using both hands) denotes heartfelt feelings for another.
- A left-forearm hold during a handshake seemingly anchors you to the other person, signals your presence and sincere goodwill in the greeting.
- An individual should square his shoulders directly with his partner's shoulders during the handshake.

DEFENSIVENESS/DISAGREEMENT

- Arms firmly crossed on chest (no visible hands), scowl on face.
- Double crossed: Arms tightly crossed on chest (no visible hands); legs rigidly crossed at knees.
- Solidly clinched fists.
- Compressed lips.
- Sitting backwards (straddling) in a chair.
- Quickly kicking motion of crossed leg (boredom/impatience).
- Angling your body away from or crossing your legs away from your conversation partner.



OPENNESS/ACCEPTANCE



- Visibly open hands with occasional displays of palms facing upward.
- Body angled toward conversation partner.
- Direct eye contact.
- Slight sporadic head nods and smiles.
- Feet flat on floor, legs not crossed.
- Leaning body slightly forward.
- Open and relaxed arms.

EVALUATION



- Leaning body slightly forward and titling head to one side.
- Back and forth stroking of the chin.
- Critical evaluation is exhibited when a person places his hand under his chin and points his index finger upward along the side of his cheek.
- Direct eye contact strongly implies interest and respectfulness.
- Neck scratches (implies uncertainty).

SUSPICION/SECRETIVENESS /DECEPTION



- Excessive facial touching with the left hand (left hand is controlled by the right creative hemisphere of the brain) is highly associated with dishonesty.
- A person who avoids eye contact while speaking is likely concealing information (gaze aversion).
- Touching or rubbing the nose (manipulative gestures) with the left hand implies doubt or deception
- Rubbing behind or beside the left ear with the left index finger when speaking or weighing an answer suggests doubt and insincerity.
- Tugging at the left eye with the left index finger denotes that the individual is implying: “Do not see very clearly what I’m saying, because I’m uncomfortable even telling it to you.”
- Fake coughs or yawns, increased or deep swallows, unnecessary facial touching, mouth shrugs (displacement gestures/micro-expressions) suggest deceptiveness.
- An increase in emblems (gestures used in place of words); a decrease in illustrators (gestures used to illustrate speech) and an increase in manipulators (unnecessary gestures) are highly indicative of discomfort and deception.
- Over control of limbs, minor twitches around the mouth, specific eye behaviors, changes in voice tone and speed of speech, moisture above upper lip, nose wrinkle.
- Micro-expressions and incongruent facial reactions to emotional facial expressions.
- Asymmetrical facial expressions (smiling only on one side of the face; displaying a different emotion on each side of the face; revealing multiple emotions all at once).

HONESTY/TRUSTWORTHY/ACCEPTANCE



- Right hand (fingers fanned out) placed over heart.
- Palms-up gestures.
- Direct eye contact.
- Uncrossed legs and arms.
- Anchoring gestures (slightly touching forearm or shoulder of conversation partner).
- Feet flat on floor or pointed in the direction of negotiating partner

FRUSTRATION

- Short breaths; a person who is angry will take short breaths and expel air through his nostrils.
- “Tsk”; the sound usually made to communicate disgust.
- Tightly clenched hands.
- Wringing of the hands.
- Rubbing slowly back and forth behind the neck.
- Kicking the ground or an imaginary object while walking.
- Pulling collar away from neck.



COMMANDING/DOMINANT/POWERFUL

- Gesturing as though you are holding an imaginary basketball between your hands indicates that you have the facts at your fingertips and that you are willing to share them with others.
- Downward-facing palms while speaking (strong, assertive).
- Expansive postures (upright sitting pose, resting one’s ankle on the opposite leg’s knee, or one arm on armrest and the other hand on desk while seated).
- Standing and widely spreading hands on desk.
- Propping feet up upon desk during a meeting (rudeness, arrogance).
- Expansive/exaggerated gestures.
- Hands placed behind one’s head, fingers interlocked and elbows spread out wide.
- Wide stance (signals confidence, control and fearlessness).



CONFIDENCE/SELF-ASSURED /COMPOSED

- Relaxed pyramid hands (hands or arms brought together to seemingly form a church steeple).
- Goal-post steeple (hands held wide apart in an exaggerated pyramid formation).
- Containing all gestures inside an imaginary box (between the shoulders and hip line).
- Hands joined together at waist behind back (military stance).
- Upright posture, direct eye contact, genuine smile.
- Hands on hips (readiness pose).
- Avoidance of fidgeting or displacement (unnecessary) gestures.
- Brisk, erect walk.
- Appearing to take up more space (large gestures, widened posture) than usual.
- Hands placed behind one's head, fingers interlocked and elbows spread out wide.
- Wide stance (signals confidence, control and fearlessness).



NERVOUSNESS/ANXIETY

- Excessive throat clearing.
- Constricted posture.
- Sitting on the edge of your chair.
- Arms wrapped around one's own body.
- Sitting with hands under thighs.
- Scratching the side of the neck (uncertainty).
- Placing objects in front of your body (notebook, iPad, purse)
- Uttering the "whew" sound, whistling, smoking cigarettes.
- Tugging at pants while sitting (decision-making thoughts).
- Jingling money in pockets.
- Tugging at ear.
- Wringing hands together.
- Tapping fingers, feet or pen.
- Fidgeting with pencils, pens, notebooks.
- Twisting hair or placing eyeglass temples in mouth.
- Frequent displacement gestures (unnecessary gestures).
- Gazing eyes downward or avoiding eye contact when speaking.
- Rocking, fidgeting or slouching while sitting or standing.



BOREDOM

- Drumming on table with fingertips.
- Tapping feet.
- Head resting in full palm.
- Doodling



BECOME A SKILLFUL COMMUNICATOR /BUILDING RAPPORT AND AGREEMENT

- Perfect your handshake; always extend your hand first.
- Provide nonverbal feedback (nod, smile, mirror positive gestures).
- Vary vocal pitch based on your meeting partner's preferred learning style (visual, auditory, or action).
- Redirect questions if your meeting partner signals doubt (ask open-ended questions, restate decided outcomes, and continue to display confident, supportive gestures).
- Mirror or match only the positive gestures/reactions (the physical and verbal behaviors) of your negotiating partner.
- Create clear symmetry in your face and body; shoulders straight, weight balanced equally on both feet.
- Use gestures to punctuate specific points; keep your hands within an imaginary box that stretches no wider than your shoulders and no lower than your hipline.

