

USING BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is an important part of communication which can constitute 50% or more of what we are communicating. If you wish to communicate well, then it makes sense to understand how you can (and cannot) use your body to say what you mean.

Message clusters

Body language comes in clusters of signals and postures, depending on the internal emotions and mental states. Recognizing a whole cluster is thus far more reliable than trying to interpret individual elements.

- Aggressive Body Language: Showing physical threat.
- Assertive Body Language: Adult expression of desire.
- Attentive Body Language: Showing real interest.
- Bored Body Language: Just not being interested.
- Closed Body Language: Many reasons are closed.
- Confident Body Language: Appearing assured and comfortable.
- Deceptive Body Language: Seeking to cover up lying or other deception.
- Defensive Body Language: Protecting self from attack.
- Dominant Body Language: Dominating others.
- Emotional Body Language: Identifying feelings.
- Evaluating Body Language: Judging and deciding about something.
- Greeting Body Language: Meeting rituals.
- Open Body Language: Many reasons for being open.
- Power Body Language: Demonstrating one's power.
- Ready Body Language: Wanting to act and waiting for the trigger.
- Relaxed Body Language: Comfortable and unstressed.
- Romantic Body Language: Showing attraction to others.
- Sales Body Language: Using your body to sell.
- Submissive Body Language: Showing you are prepared to give in.
- Trustworthy Body Language: Showing you can be trusted.

Core patterns:

A number of core patterns in body language can be identified that include clusters of movements:

- Crossing, Expanding, Moving away, Moving forward, Opening, Preening, Repeating, Shaping, Striking and Touching

Parts-of-the-body language

You can send signals with individual parts of the body as well as in concert. Here's details of the contributions of each part of the body.

- Head: Face, Cheek, Chin, Mouth, Lips, Teeth, Tongue, Nose, Eyes, Eyebrow, Forehead, Hair
- Arm: Elbow, Hand, Finger
- Torso: Neck, Shoulder, Chest, Back, Belly, Bottom, Hips
- Legs: Thigh, Knee, Foot

Remember that body language varies greatly with people and especially with international cultures (so be very careful when applying Western understanding to Eastern non-verbal language).

- 5 Cs of Body Language: How to effectively understand body language.
- Body as Cue, Evidence, Persuasion: How we shape changes how we feel.
- Body Control: Can you control your body?
- Body Language Caveat: You can't control all of your muscles. So why bother?
- Emphasis with Body Language: Adding emphasis to what you are saying.
- Micro-expressions: Flashes of movement speak volumes.
- Social Distances: The space between us.
- Satir's Five Positions: Speaking positions.
- Touching: Using physical touch.
- Hugging: Close comfort and affection.

cf. http://changingminds.org/techniques/body/body_language.htm