

UPPER
CORPORATION

Body Language

How to Use the Hidden Power
of Nonverbal Communication



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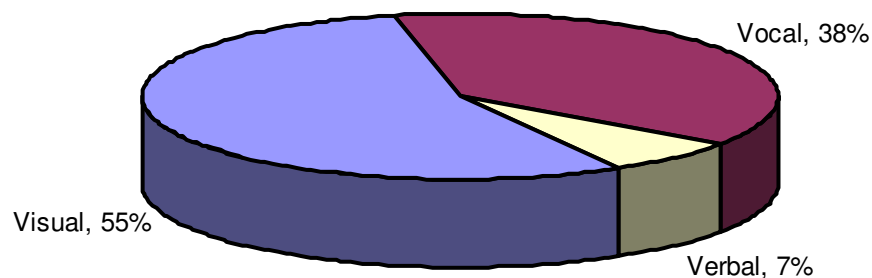
What Are You Saying by Not Saying Anything?

You may have great skills in running your business or presenting to clients, but are you paying attention to what *you aren't saying and what the effect is on other people*? You may think you're saying one thing, but in reality presenting something completely different with your nonverbal language. People don't always just listen to your words, but they do watch and interpret your body language. This can include pupil size, clothing and appearance, personal space and seating arrangements. But more about those later.

Words aren't the only way to communicate. It's important to know what else you're doing that has an impact on people's perception of you. Have you ever been with a prospect who says she is very interested in what you are selling but keeps looking at her watch? Which signal do you believe? Her words or her body language? Is she interested or not?

Most people trust actions over words. What you say is not nearly as important as what you do. Every time we communicate, we use three channels: visual, vocal and verbal. It has been estimated that 93% of our impact comes from body language—our gestures, facial expressions, clothing, personal appearance, physical distance, seating arrangements and anything else that can be seen or heard—and only 7% from the actual words we use.

Channel Impact of Your Messages



There are several ways to use body language to your advantage. You just need to know the major habits so you can use them to communicate more efficiently.

Does a Baby or a Wicked Witch Have Bigger Pupils?

Can your pupils reveal your thoughts? In a way, they sure can. When giving speeches or presentations, you know that making eye contact is an important factor. So you are great at scanning the audience while you speak, but what do you do with what you see? If you are really looking into someone's eyes, you may be able to tell what they are thinking. It's all about the size of the pupil.

Ekard Hess, a social scientist, was lying in bed one night next to his wife reading a favorite book about African animals. His wife looked over to him and said, "Your pupils are really dilated tonight." He turned back and said, "That's funny. Your pupils are small." In the same light, how could Hess' and his wife's pupils be different sizes?

Hess decided to conduct an experiment with one of his assistants the following day. He gathered a number of photographs and showed them to his assistant.

First, Hess showed the young man a giraffe, then a tiger, then other animals. The young man's pupils stayed the same size.

Next Hess showed the young man a nude centerfold. All of the sudden, the young man's pupils dilated. When Hess showed his research assistant more animals, the young man's pupils would get small again.

After seeing a second centerfold, the young man's pupils dilated again. And so it went. Every time Hess showed his research assistant a centerfold, the young man's pupils would dilate.

For the next 25 years, Hess performed additional experiments. For example, in a pediatric office, he artificially dilated the pupils of a nurse. As young children came in for their check-ups, he would count the number of times the baby fussed or cried. During the child's next scheduled visit, the nurse's pupils were artificially constricted. Again, the number of times the babies fussed or cried was counted.

The research showed that when the nurse's pupils sizes were large, the babies were calm and relaxed. When the pupil sizes were small, the babies fussed and cried much more of the time.

Experiment after experiment, Hess arrived at the same conclusion: When we like something, our pupils will dilate.

You can tell if a customer or prospect likes your product, service or idea by simply looking into his or her eyes. If they like what they are hearing, chances are that their pupils



will be large. If they don't like what they are hearing, their pupils will be smaller.

This proves to be a valuable tip when meeting with clients or giving presentations. If you are skilled at reading people through their eyes, so to speak, then you may be able to tweak your presentations or thoughts to please the client. If you can see that their eyes are dilated, they are enjoying what you are saying and you can stay on that track, but if their pupils are small, you may be able to change your strategy on the spot to improve their liking.

What Would Happen If You Showed Up to Work in a Bikini?

Another way of displaying those nonverbal communications is through appearance. The visual aspect is a big part of what impacts the message. The way you look or dress may mean more than you think. If you went to a meeting dressed in a bikini a client would not take you seriously—they may even be offended. Same goes for in the office. You may not have a clearly defined dress code, but people have a general idea of what is acceptable or not to wear to work.

You may not think appearance means a great deal, but in reality it does. So, I ask the question, “Does every business require its employees to wear a uniform?”

Responses from business professionals are usually half and half. The ones that say no give examples of how some organizations like the U.S. Postal Service might wear a uniform, but it is not required by all businesses.

I then ask, “If you went to work in a bikini, would you be sent home?” Most respond by saying yes.

It’s my contention that every business does require its employees to wear some sort of a uniform. Even if the uniform is business casual dress or a three-piece suit. There is some standard. And if we get to far away from that standard—like wearing a bikini to the office—we are either told directly or indirectly that we haven’t dressed appropriately.

The Power of Uniforms

A college student pretended his car had broken down along a busy freeway. He was dressed in jeans and a tee shirt. After lifting the hood and standing in front of the car, he looked at his watch and started waiting. More than 30 minutes passed before he gave up and drove away.

The next day, the college student returned to the same spot with the same car and put up the hood. This time, he was dressed as a catholic priest. Within two minutes, someone stopped to help him.

This is a perfect example of the effect of your clothing choice—to the extreme of course—but it really does matter what you wear.

You will get more respect—and feel better about yourself—if you are dressed appropriately.

When we wear a uniform or dress in a certain way, it communicates to others the kind of work we do and our status. Let's face it, you don't see too many people in a three-piece suit running a jackhammer.

What "uniform" does your business, industry or customers require you to wear? Knowing and following the "unspoken" dress code can make all the difference in how easily and passionately others accept your ideas.

Take your appearance seriously. If you look "put together," your employees will follow suit and your clients will appreciate it and take you more seriously.

Looking like you just finished running a marathon in sweatpants and a t-shirt would leave an impression, but not the right one.

Dressing appropriately sends the message that you take your company seriously. If you take the time to put yourself together, clients know that you will take time to do a good job with your business.

Why Do Kids Always Ask, “Are We There Yet?”

The answer is in our perception of time, which feels much shorter the older we get. Time itself is not a part of the way you communicate, but how you use it is. The perception of time can affect many things for individuals like waiting periods, or being late. It is different for everyone but here are a few examples of how time can affect you.

How long is a day? In a 2-year-old's life it feels a lot longer than in a 50-year-old's life. But why is that? Because the proportion of time is much greater and much more substantial to the 2-year-old.

Kids are always asking if we are there yet, because to them, time feels like it is moving more slowly than the adults feel.

Have you ever delivered a proposal or been interviewed for a job and have to wait for a reply? Days can seem like months. But to the people in the company, time feels like it is flying, because they have other priorities and projects that they are working on. It is not that they are not concerned with your proposal or application. It's just that it is not their only priority.

Why do so many people get angry when they have to wait for a long time at the doctor's office? Because we are the center of our lives. We are our own CEO. When we have to wait, it communicates that the other person is more important. In our minds, the doctor is not more important than we are.

Likewise, when we show up late for meetings or appointments, it communicates that we are more important than the people we are meeting with. Which may, in fact, not help us accomplish our goals. Showing up on time communicates volumes about our respect and the level of importance we feel toward other people.

You can use these situations to your advantage. Realize that it might just be the illusion that time is moving faster than it really is. Show up on time for meetings to show respect for clients. It makes a greater impression right off the bat and communicates to them that they are important and you are taking them and the meeting seriously. It shows that you are good with managing your time and will be good at handling deadlines with their business.

Why Don't More Strangers Talk on Elevators?

How close is too close? Everyone has different preferences when it comes to space—some people enjoy closeness and some don't. You've been around the people that are "close talkers"—the ones that get into face when they talk to you—and it may have made you uncomfortable. Same goes for any situation. Have you ever been standing on an elevator that is jammed packed? Finally the door opens and everyone except the person standing next to you gets off. What happens? Immediately you dart for opposite sides of the elevator floor. It's as if there is an imaginary line down the middle. You have your half; they have their half.

The reason we feel uncomfortable on the elevator and in other situations when someone gets too close to us is because we each have a personal space—a little two-foot bubble around our bodies. This space is reserved for the people we want to be intimate with. The rest of the time it is our space and our space alone. When someone violates our personal space, we feel awkward. Not only are we sensitive about our own personal space but we also notice what people do with their own space.

Have you ever gone in for a job interview and felt at a disadvantage? The person interviewing you is sitting across the room in a chair. Their seat is bigger and sits higher than yours. Let's face it. This is a room that was arranged to give the person behind the desk the clear and decisive advantage.

Anytime I go to meet a prospect or have look for a job, the first thing I like to do is move furniture. Politely, I ask the person if it would be alright if I moved my chair up so I could take notes. In no time, I've taken over a little corner of their desk. I have started to level the playing field.

The same message can be interpreted differently depending upon the location in which it happens. Intimate distance is about 18 inches, personal is 18 inches to 4 feet, social 4 feet to 12 feet and public 12 feet or more. Revealing something personal about yourself is more appropriate in personal space. The same information said in a public setting might cause others to think you're coo coo.

Who Has More Power? The Person Standing or the Person Sitting?

Does where you are seated make a difference on the effectiveness of your communication? You'd better believe it!

Here are some examples. When we sit or stand directly across from each other, we are in a confrontation stance. There is a barrier between us. It is easier to disagree with that person.

Conversely, when we sit or stand on the same side of the table—or at a slight angle—as the person we are speaking to, research as shown that the communication tends to be much more cooperative and problem solving focused.

Have you ever watched strike negotiations being covered on the evening news? The union representatives march in together and sit on one side of the table. Management walks in together and sits on the other side. The table is about 12-feet across. No wonder it seems like they are always shouting at each other. The seating arrangement encourages it.

When I am on a sales call, and there are several people in the room, I always try to sit at the same side of the top decision-maker. Over the years, I have found that it is much more difficult for a decision-maker to disagree with me and resist my ideas when I am seated next to him or her. But when he or she is seated across the table and there is a physical barrier between us, the sale is always harder to close.

Tips about Space

- **Angles:** People (whether in a doctor's office, in the boss's office or at home) are more comfortable conducting conversation when they are at right angles and about 4 feet apart.
- **Group Projects:** When working closely together, cooperating on a task, people prefer corner seating or side-by-side seating.
- **Competing:** When people are competing, they prefer to sit opposite each other.
- **Group Meetings:** Individuals are more likely to participate if the group is seated in a circular pattern. They are also more likely to ask questions.

How Can You Improve Your Body Language?

We've talked about just a few of the ways you can use body language to your advantage. So, how do you get started? Try these suggestions for helping you become more aware of your nonverbals and how you're using them:

1. **Eye-Contact:** Practice looking at other people's eyes, in general, and their pupil sizes, in particular. Notice how they change throughout the course of a conversation. Observe the same principle at work with pets. The pupils of cats and dogs dilate noticeable when they are being petted.
2. **Appearance:** Notice the different level of service you get when you walk into the same store dressed in a suit or dress and when you are in painting clothes.
3. **Time:** Realize that everyone interprets time in different ways. Especially as adults, you may think time is taking longer than it really is. Also, be prompt to meetings to show that it is important—it makes a great impression.
4. **Space:** Realize that everyone values personal space in different ways. Take this into account during meetings with employees or clients and plan accordingly. Make the atmosphere more comfortable and it will go smoother.
5. **Seating:** Plan your seating arrangements before arriving at a meeting. When one team is meeting with another team, sitting in a straight line as a team across the table from the other team is often the kiss of death. Break up the seating by placing members from both teams next to each other, and create an atmosphere of cooperation.