

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: BODY IM

Truth or Lie

Today in the business world, people are so politically correct it can be difficult to know when they are telling you the truth. Words are stored in the left hemisphere, a section of the brain that we have more conscious control over. Thus, people can choose their words carefully. When you need to know the feelings behind those selected words, look beyond the words.

The right hemisphere of the brain controls body language and tone of voice. We have less conscious control over these avenues of communication. Most people send true messages through their body language first, and if you miss that, it will be sent through tone of voice. Below is TLC's version of Truth for Dummies.

Strong emotions are revealed in the mouth area, around the lips. When a person has let their guard down, you may see a slight quiver in the corner of the mouth. If you see this, feel confident that the person is being up front with you. The only problem is that this gesture usually occurs just before the person is in meltdown mode. So when you notice the lips quivering, give the person an opportunity to recover. Taking a sip of water, looking for something in your briefcase, or tying your shoe can accomplish this. Now that you know the truth, also know this is not the time to dive into it.

The eyes are another area to watch for the truth. While talking, people tend to look up and to their left when remembering information and up and to their right when creating information. If the question is "What do you think?" either eye movement is appropriate. Looking to the left means the person is thinking about a similar experience in the past, while a look to the right can signify they are thinking out of the box. However, if the question is "What happened?", then looking to the right would be inappropriate. The truth would be to the left.

Quick postural changes can also reveal if a person agrees with what is being said. The person may be saying what he or she thinks you want to hear or what is politically correct. When that occurs, there is usually

a sudden shift in the feet whether the person is sitting or standing. While this does not mean they are lying, it does indicate they are holding something back.

If you are talking to a person who is demonstrating a repetitive habit, it usually means they are feeling quite negative at the time. They may be nodding their head and verbally agreeing with you. If they are also mutilating a paper clip or playing with jewelry, don't count too much on that agreement. When you do notice it, ask a question that will bring out the objection or concern. It is better to deal with it out in the open.

And speaking of head nods, if someone is rapidly nodding their head up and down as you are talking, please do not mistake this gesture for agreement. It usually means the listener is tired or already knows what you are speaking about. They are just being polite instead of interrupting you.

Now you know some of the truth of body language. Put it to good use and you will be at an advantage during your next important conversation. ❖

What Our Clients Are Saying

The TLC training is effective because they made it applicable to what we do everyday.

Gil Francis, TVA, Media and TVA Spokesman

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on
Focusing on Solutions.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in
our [Being a Human Polygraph](#)
or read other [previous issues of
The Exchange](#).

*"You cannot shake hands
with a clenched fist."*

Indira Gandhi

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Clothes Make the Man - Or Do They?

Therese Padgett

I arrived at a meeting early last night and the three or four of us there started talking about generation gaps. One lady, neatly and casually dressed, said her teen-aged daughter commented as she was going out the door, "Mom! You're not going dressed like THAT are you? That outfit is so old and out of date!" This mother, obviously used to these fad discussions with her daughter and also very self-confident, simply stated in reply, "It looks good on me and I'm wearing it."

And she did look good in it. Another in our small group said, "Yes, you hold your head up high and throw your shoulders back, put a smile on your face and walk with a bounce in your step, and it really doesn't matter what you have on."

Several nights before, I was deep in conversation with a friend when we suddenly realized we had ten minutes to get to a concert at a large down town church. We had to rush out the door before I had time to change clothes. I was dressed in casual slacks and a black tee shirt, printed in glitter that read, "Duck Head Jeans." At the reception following the concert, folks were dressed in everything from tuxedos to Sunday best. I casually mixed and mingled, greeted old and new friends and generally had a wonderful time, never once giving thought to how I was dressed so "out of step" with the rest of the crowd. I was comfortable with myself. It was not until I arrived back home and caught a look at myself in a mirror that I was a bit chagrined at my inappropriate attire.

Some say, and believe, that "clothes make the man." Yes, clothes can make or break opportunities for one to step up or down the ladder of success. Fortunately, a good attitude, a happy and positive approach to life, and a mixture of sincerity and persistence can take you a whole lot further in life than just the right clothes.

I am also fortunate to be at that age where I am more interested in skipping stones than I am in stepping over people. If you would like to be where I am (not age-wise, of course), change your body language: hold your head up high and throw your shoulders back, put a smile on your face and walk with a bounce in your step!

Need help with an attitude adjustment? Contact TLC today and ask about our short program entitled, "Change your Attitude and Change your Altitude!" (Appropriate body IM included.) You may reach us at 1-888-BECAUSE (because you always communicate) or through our website at <http://www.talklisten.com>. ❖

Happy Birthday!

TLC wishes a Happy Birthday to clients celebrating in August!

- » Melinda Sublett
- » Chris Mayo
- » Kimberly Bidy
- » Karen Whaley
- » Russell Martin
- » Buck Gentry
- » Jill Robertson
- » Don Bates
- » Larcenuia Hills
- » Danna Cannon
- » Christopher Rownd
- » Carla Akhlaghi
- » Charles Stiner
- » Neil Kjos
- » Danny Camp
- » John Stamps
- » Tony Ray
- » Donna Wong
- » Gordon Morehouse
- » Larry Samuels
- » Jeff Miller
- » Andrew Hunt

Meanings of Body Language in Meetings

Vincent Ivan Phipps

Are too many meetings draining your energy? Our research tells us that managers feel 60% of meetings are a waste of time. One of the fastest indicators that intellectual energies are fading is evident in body language.

Often there are attempts to mask these feelings by not saying anything. Although we remain silent, our bodies are designed to be genuine. Some times, our minds tell us during a meeting, "This idea didn't work last time and it won't work this time. I have other things I could be doing instead of being stuck here." Those internal feelings manifest and are observed in our body language. You may never say those words aloud but your changes in posture, amount of interaction, and even your level of eye contact can indicate your true feelings.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Ask questions and avoid assumptions when someone makes a confused facial expression. Keep the questions open and positive.
- ✓ Pause when someone is thinking. Speaking too quickly could break their thought.
- ✓ Relax your posture by uncrossing arms and legs. Take up more physical space. This will increase circulation and make you look more approachable.

"Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion and knowledge."

Plato

"Eyes can speak and eyes can understand."

George Chapman

"There are some faces that have no more expression than any other part of the body--the hand of one person may express more than the face of another."

Nathaniel Hawthorn

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Meanings of Body Language in Meetings

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If you are a leader, it is important to understand how to recognize those body language indicators. It is equally important to know how to handle it when you see them.

Here are some common body language indications that focus is being lost in meetings and some suggestions as to what you can do about it.

Body Language Meeting reaction: Eye Rolls
What it could mean: Disbelief of what is being shared.
What you should do: Speak informatively without opinion or ambiguity stating what facts you have to support the idea. Instead of saying, "We've made several changes and are ready to move forward," say, "The third quarter will be different than the first two because now we have the software, tech support, and marketing plan to measure our results."

Body Language Meeting reaction: Nodding off
What it could mean: Fatigue or boredom.
What you should do: Stand up. Keep the meeting going but ask others to stand briefly to stretch. If the meeting has endured over an hour, allow for a short break. This offers a chance to walk around or just get a quick snack or beverage to boost energy.

Body Language Meeting reaction: Silence or All Heads Facing Down
What it could mean: Disinterest.
What you should do: Make the topic relevant by asking open-ended questions, such as, "How do we make sure they bring that knowledge back to the job?"

Body Language Meeting reaction: Checking watches
What it could mean: Wandering thoughts or feeling meeting is too long.
What you should do: Announce the time remaining based on the topic's agenda. If there is not an agenda (although effective meetings have one), announce the time remaining for the meeting using numbers not in increments of 5. For example, instead of saying, "We have about 10 more minutes remaining." Say, "We have 11 more minutes before we conclude."

The average meeting lasts one hour and forty minutes. I am sure you have had some that last even longer! Since so much time is spent in meetings, make the most of the meetings you have. Make adjustments when your team is fading or unfocused. Better a focused 30-minute meeting than a wasteful 2-hour meeting.

For more tips or training to improve meetings or body language contact TLC at 1-888-BECAUSE and ask about our modules: "It's Not What You Say But How You Say It" or "Meetings That Matter."

"You know about a person who deeply interests you more than you can be told. A look, a gesture, an act, which to everybody else is insignificant tells you more about that one than words can.

Henry David Thoreau

"It needs no dictionary of quotations to remind me that the eyes are the windows of the soul."

Max Beerbohm

"Men who are out of humor with themselves often see their own condition reflected in the world outside them, and everything seems amiss because it is not well with themselves.."

James Anthony Froude

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CEO Corner

Beverly Inman-Ebel

In July, my husband and I went to Nova Scotia to celebrate our anniversary. The locals that I interacted with there were relaxed and unhurried. Their manner was friendly and genuine. Sure, they make a lot from the tourist industry during the summer months, yet I am pretty good at discerning when nice is dressed up in Sunday best or when it is down to the skin.

In June, a friend and I went on a shop-hop visiting 17 quilting stores in East Tennessee. The 7th store we went to, I noticed that no one had greeted us. The only smiles returned to me were from other customers. When I asked a question, the store clerk asked another worker to help "the woman in the orange shirt." The store was not that busy. My friend and I decided not to buy there or return even though their merchandise was incredible.

When I take tours of customer facilities, most people think I am looking at the processes, equipment, and products. While I do take all of this in, I focus upon the people completing the process, using the equipment, and making the products. I get a good feel for the culture of the company by seeing how they interact.

In this world of instant messaging, we need to realize that we are making and sending instant impressions. Perhaps it is not a science for everyone, yet most people participate in this pastime. Do you want to be the shop that has incredible merchandise that customers will pass up?

Your people and how they message to customers, vendors, and co-workers defines who you are. It is important for you to get out of your office, off the corporate floor and just watch. Take it all in with the inquisitive eye of a young child. See it for the first time. For me, the ABC's of management include Always Be Curious.

Be curious to understand what is going on around you. This requires you to look up from what you are currently doing and just watch. Being curious also

means thinking about the possibilities. How can it be done differently? While you're watching, ask some questions. Be willing to learn from those that are close to the source.

Always implies consistency. It is tough to be curious 24/7. Think of it as developing a curious attitude. When you increase your curiosity in areas outside of work, then it becomes more natural to apply that attitude when you are on the job.

One way to increase your curiosity is to ask more questions. Keep the questions open and non-threatening. Instead of asking, "Why do you do it that way" ask, "What are your reasons for doing it that way?" You can ask your neighbor the reasons she/he chose a certain product or your child's teacher the inspiration behind the theme of her/his decorations within the classroom.

So, be curious. Ask questions. Be aware of the instant messages that you, your team, and your office send. Make improvements. It doesn't happen instantly. Instant messages take time to send correctly. Plan ahead and live your dreams!



"The face is the index of the mind. Saying (Latin)."

Saying (Latin)

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by e-mail tlc@talklisten.com or phone 1-888-232-2873. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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