

The Body Language

Dr. Haya Bint Ali Bin Hassan Al Noaimi
Vice President of Community & Alumni Affairs
University of Bahrain



Career Counselling Office – Career Guidance Division
Phone: 17437442 – 17438054
Email: amyousif@uob.edu.bh or bzaiman@uob.edu.bh

What is Body Language?

Body language is nonverbal communication that involves body movement. "Gesturing" can also be termed as body language which is absolutely non-verbal means of communication. People in the workplace can convey a great deal of information without even speaking; through nonverbal communication.

Not all of our values, beliefs, thoughts and intentions are communicated verbally. In an ongoing communication, most of those are communicated non-verbally. In Non-verbal communication, our human body expresses our feelings and intentions through *conscious and unconscious movements and postures, accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts and touch*. This collectively forms a separate language of the body within the ongoing communication. This is called *Body Language*.

How Does the Body Speaks?

Our human body speaks through the conscious and unconscious movements and postures, hand gestures, facial expressions, eye movements and touch. Each of these physical movements of the body parts could be seen as separate words and can be interpreted differently by other human beings within a given context of communication.

Why is Body Language Important?

Since interpretations of body language differ from people to people and cultures to countries it is important to learn about them. Body language alone comprises of 55% of total communication whereas spoken words comprise of 7% and tone of voice comprise 38%.

Types of Body Language

What types of body language can be distinguished?

Body language is usually grouped along two lines...

1. Parts of the body
2. Intent

So what types can be found in each group?

Parts of the body

From head to toe, here are the groups when grouped for body parts:

- **The Head** - Movement and placement of the head, back to front, left to right, side to side, including the shaking of hair.
- **Facial Expressions** - The face has many muscles (anywhere between 54 and 98, depending on who you ask) that move several areas of the face. Each combination of movements of the following face elements communicates a state of mind:
 - Eyebrows - Up, down, frowning.
 - Eyes - Left, right, up, down, blinking, eye dialiation.
 - Nose - Wrinkle (at the top), flaring of the nostrills.
 - Lips - Smiling, snarling, puckered, kissing, opened, closed, tight.
 - Tongue - In, out, rolled, tip up or down, licking of lips.
 - Jaw - Open, closed, clinched, lower jaw left or right.
- **Body Posture** - The way you place your body and arms and legs, in relation to each other, and in relation to other people:

- Body proximity - How far or close to other people.
- Shoulder movements - Up, down, hanging, hunched.
- Arm placement - up, down, crossed, straight.
- Leg and feet placement - straight, crossed, weight placement, feet towards speaking partner or pointing elsewhere, dangling of shoes.
- **Hand and finger gestures** - How you hold and move your hands and fingers are particularly insightful in reading people.
- Handling and placement of **objects** (eg. pens, papers, etc). - The odd one out... technically not a body part, but objects do play a big role in reading body language.

Intent

Another way to group types of body language is along **Intent**:

- **Voluntary/Intentional movements** - Usually called "Gestures". These are movements you intended to make, like shaking a hand, giving the finger, blinking with one eye...
- **Involuntary movements** - Usually called "tells", but "ticks" also fall into this category. Any body movement you have no control over falls in this category. While technically not a body movement, sweating also applies.

So where is Tone of Voice?

While usually seen as body language, **tone of voice** and **intonation** are a separate group from body language.

For completeness sake, these are the groups that are found in tone of voice:

- **Pitch of voice** - high voice, low voice, intonation.
- **Loudness** - Everything from shouting to whispering.
- **Breathing** - Slow, fast breathing, shaky voice.

The Body Language of Gestures

“It is an expressive movements of a part of a body especially hands or heads”.

- It has vital effect or part in oral communication.
- Gesture of a person convey much more than what he speaks.

Examples of gesture:

- **Waving of hand** to indicate good bye or draw the attention of a person



Examples of gesture:

- **Shaking Hands** display the friendship



Examples of gesture:

- **Shrugging of shoulders** indicates indifference & unconcern



Examples of gesture:

- **Pointing index finger** indicates allegation or charge



Examples of gesture:

- **Thumbs up sign** indicates wishing "Good Luck"

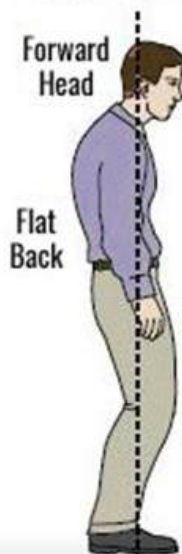


The Body Language of Posture

- Means "an attitude or position of body"
- Each movement of body has expressive & defensive functions.
- The way, in which we sit or stand, walk in walk out tells a lot about us.
- A good posture indicates confident attitude.



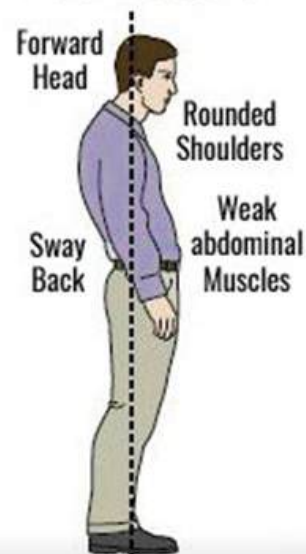
Poor Posture



Good Posture



Poor Posture



The Body Language of Movement

Facial Expression

- All facial organs on human face indicates facially expressive message.
- These are hair, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, mouth, chin, nose, lips, ears, teeth, tongue etc.
- Facial expressions comes naturally hence it is beyond the control of speaker.



Examples of Facial Expression

- A Smile expresses friendliness & affection



Examples of Facial Expression

- Raised eyebrows convey surprise



Examples of Facial Expression

- Furrowed forehead expresses worries & anxiety



Examples of Facial Expression

- Frown shows dislike or suspicion

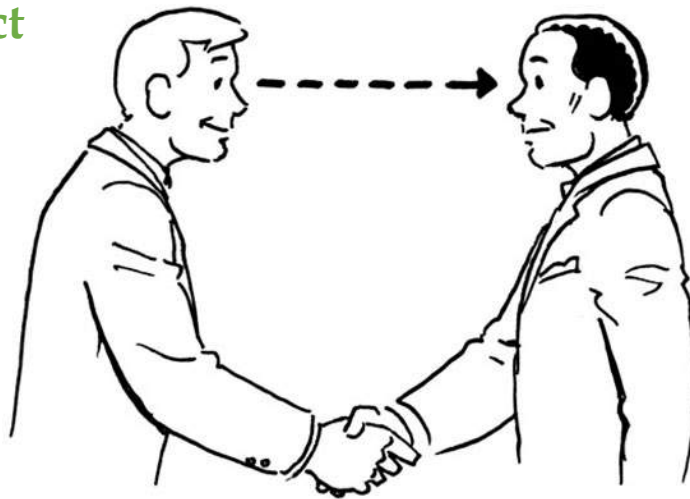


Dress & Appearance

- The kind of dress we use & the way in which we groom ourselves shows our status & attitude.
- We influenced how others look & clothes they wear
- Physical attractiveness plays an important role in our assessment of people.
- Persons dress & physical appearance conveys great deal of information about him.



Eye Contact



- Eye contact has very much in face-to-face communication.
- Absence of eye contact shows lack of interest & understanding.
- We look faster than listen or talk.
- Eyes are human windows except them there is no life.
- The speaker must look in to the eyes of the audience from right to left & left to right this will built up the confidence & eliminate the nervousness.
- It build the rapport between the speaker & the listener.

Silence

- “speech is silver but silence is golden”.
- It establishes the relationship between the communicators.
- Moments of silence – do not know how to continue



Voice Modulation

- The speaker must use his voice effectively.
- Someone wants to become a effective speaker, a good is must.
- A good voice is natural gift.
- One can take the training of phonetics to improve his own voice.



More Body Language Examples and Their Meaning

Arms Crossed in front of the Chest

This is one of the body language examples that indicate that one is being defensive. The body language meaning of crossed arms may also show disagreement with opinions and actions of other people with whom you are communicating.



Biting of nails

Nail biting demonstrates nervousness, stress, or insecurity. Many people bite nails without realizing they have the habit.



Hand on cheek

This body language example indicates that one is lost in thought, maybe considering something. When your hand is on your cheek and your brows are furrowed you may be in deep concentration.



Finger tapping or drumming

This action demonstrates that one is growing tired or impatient while waiting.



Touching the nose

Touching or rubbing the nose signifies disbelief, rejection, or lying about something.



Prisk rubbing of the hands

This may show that the hands are cold, which may mean that one is excited about something, or waiting eagerly.



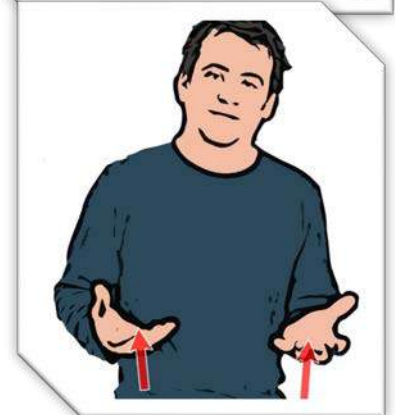
Placing Finger tips together

This is called “steeping,” or placing fingertips together to demonstrate control or authority.



Open palms, facing upward

This gesture is a sign of honesty, submission, and innocence. This is how some people show submission and respect.



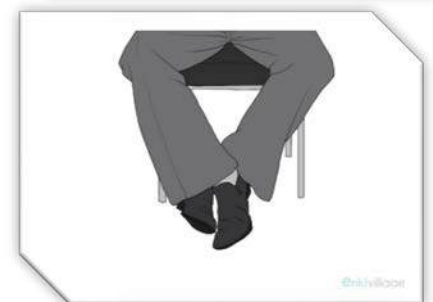
Head in hands

The body language meaning of this gesture may be that of boredom, being upset, or being ashamed, so one does not want to show their face.



Locking of ankles

Whether you are sitting or standing, when your ankles are locked, you are communicating apprehension or nervousness.



Stroking the chin or beard

This communicates that one is In deep thought. This action is often done unintentionally when one is trying to come up with some decision.



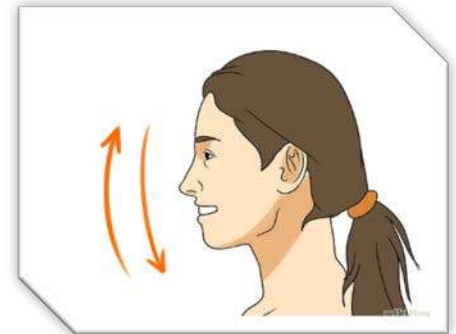
Ear Pulling

Pulling an ear lobe can mean one is trying to make a decision, but remains indecisive about something.



Head nodding

This gesture usually signifies agreement or bowing, a submissive gesture that shows one is going along with another person's opinions.



Lint picking

Picking of imaginary lint is another one of the body language examples of displacement gestures, which one uses to show disapproval of the attitudes or opinions of other. This action makes one look away from the other person while doing some irrelevant action.



Catapult posture

This seated version of the "Hand-on-Hip" male poster with the hands behind the head and elbows pointed out is used to intimidate or show a relaxed attitude. Thus giving a false sense of security before an ambush is made.



Lowered head

This indicates one is hiding something. When you lower your head while you are being complimented, you may be showing shyness, shame, or timidity. It may also convey that you are keeping distance from another person, showing disbelief, or thinking to yourself.



HOW TO READ BODY LANGUAGE

1. Raised eyebrows often signal discomfort.

2. If their voice goes up or down, they're most likely interested.

3. Eye contact shows interest – both positive and negative.

4. But if they look into your eyes for too long, they might be lying.

5. Crossed legs are usually a sign of resistance and low receptivity.

6. If they mirror your body language, the conversation is probably going well.

7. Look for a lack of crinkles around the eyes to detect a fake smile.

8. If they're laughing with you, they're probably into you.

9. Expansive, authoritative postures show leadership.

10. A shaking leg signals a shaky inner state.



Body Language Speaks Volumes

Keep your Body Language "Receiver Friendly"		
Friendly (+ve)	Body Language	Non Friendly (-ve)
Smiling	FACIAL	Tight Lipped
Relaxed Mouth		Grim Smile
Alert		Raised Eyebrows
Ready to Listen		Jaw Muscles Clenched
Pupils Dilated	EYES	Looking Down Nose
Good Contact		Lack of Contact
Wide Open		Narrowed
Straight	HEAD	Bowed
Mildly Nodding		Shaking
Open	BODY POSITION	Crossed Arms
Erect		Legs Crossed Away
Leaning Forward		Cold Shoulder
Open Hands	HAND GESTURES	Tapping Fingers
Touching		Closed Hands
Hand to Chest		Finger Wagging

How to Use BODY LANGUAGE to Score in an Interview

Non-verbal communication can play a huge role in helping HR managers identify possible issues. Here are some tips on how to use your body language to score in an interview.

Body Language Tip #1 The Resting Face

The formation of your mouth is an indicator of your overall demeanor.

An upward mouth means you smile a lot.

A downward mouth means you frown a lot and a composed, straight mouth means you do both.

Keep your mouth upward at best or at least straight!



Body Language Tip #2 Watch Your Walk

The way you make your way to the interview room says a lot about your demeanor.

Upright and confident with a quick stride means you are enthusiastic and confident about the interview.

If you are **slow and hesitant**, you are nervous, which is normal, but being too nervous might mean you aren't convinced you can do the job.

Portray yourself as upright and confident!

Body Language Tip #3

The Good Old Hand Shake

The hand shake has long been a signal used by HR professionals. Check out these telling signals:

A firm palm-to-palm handshake with eye contact and a sincere smile means confidence and honesty.

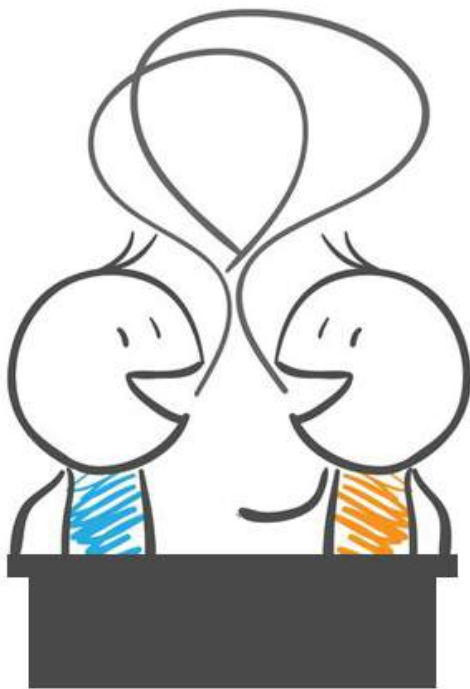
A limp handshake with no eye contact tends to indicate that the person lacks enthusiasm, and may be passive and not people-oriented.

An aggressive handshake with tight squeezing shows an overly aggressive personality that lacks sensitivity. aggressive handshake with tight squeezing shows an overly aggressive personality that lacks sensitivity.

A crazy pumping handshake conveys insecurity. A hand-over-hand handshake is too familiar – and therefore inappropriate – for a professional setting.



Go with the firm
palm-to-palm
handshake!



Body Language Tip #4

Observe Posture During the Interview

Watching how you sit is another easy way to pick up on non-verbal communication in interviews. The sloucher lacks interest, whereas the percher is far too nervous.

The candidate who sits upright with head erect and still looks relaxed is the confident candidate who is totally comfortable with the interview (and most likely most sure of their abilities for the job).

The candidate that **kicks back on their chair with their hands behind their head** is quite disrespectful and may even be indicating they aren't taking the interview seriously. And if the direction that those feet are pointing makes a sudden change towards the door, that means they just want to get out of there.

Sit supright with your head erect!

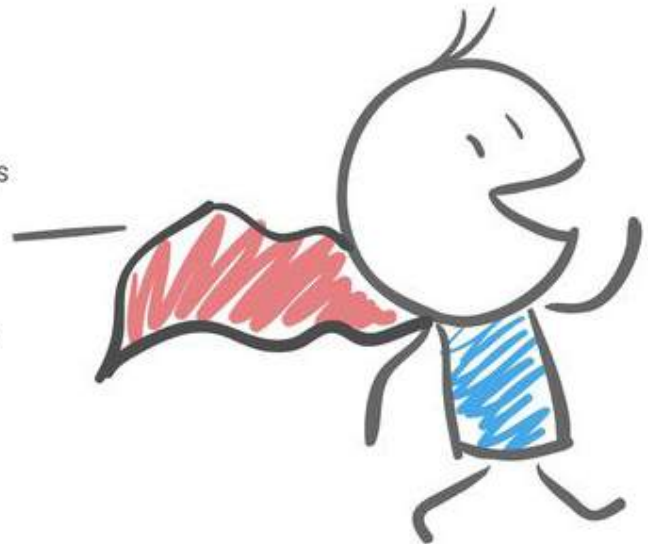
Body Language Tip #5

Your Exit Walk

If you **slump when leaving an interview**, it portrays you think you've blown it, or are letting your confident facade down.

If you are **still walking upright**, your confidence is intact and you sincerely feel you can do the job.

Walk upright!



Body Language Quiz

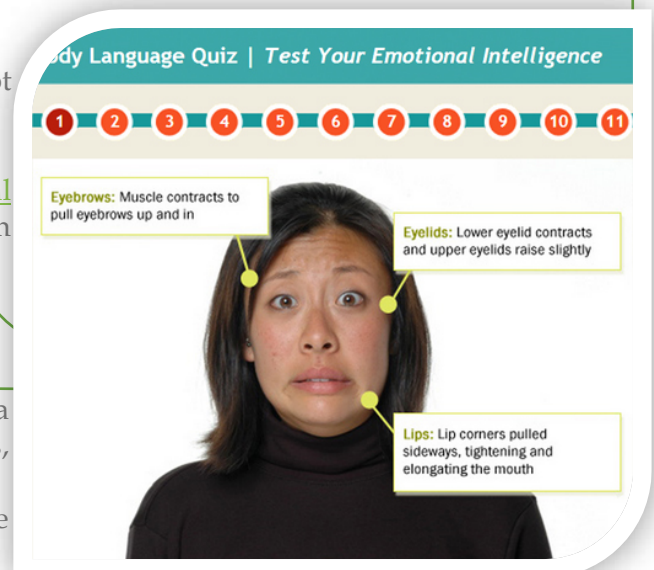
You probably think you're pretty good at reading other people. But you might be surprised to learn that you're not as good as you think you are. Yes, I'm serious!

As we gear up for [webinar on Emotional Intelligence \(EQ\)](#), this [Body Language Quiz](#) from [Greater Good](#) caught our attention. <http://www.mycareertopia.com/body-language-quiz/>

In it, you'll be asked to determine what emotion a person is feeling: embarrassment, happiness, anger, amusement, etc. And it gets a little tricky when they introduce disgust, pain & contempt.

The real value of the quiz is in the guidance they give after you submit each answer. Clues about the subject's facial expressions will help you better identify emotions in the future. As you can imagine, this is a valuable skill in the workplace.

A 2001 study by Lisa Feldman Barrett concluded that individuals who are able to recognize & differentiate between negative emotions are better able to regulate their own negative emotions. As you can imagine, this is a valuable skill in the workplace. So give this quiz a shot and see how *you* do. And if you'd like to learn more about how Emotional Intelligence impacts your career



10 Tips

To Improve Your Body Language

- 1- **SMILE!** :::::::::::☺
- 2- **Keep an open space before your upper torso.** E.g. don't fold your arms, hug your bag, or put things on your lap.
- 3- **Have eye contact.** Important to establish connection.
- 4- **Be comfortable in your space.** Don't fidget, don't squirm, or don't lose yourself in your body.
- 5- **(For ladies) When resting on your hand, keep the insides of your hand faced outwards.** This makes you appear more open.
- 6- **Minimize movement that distracts.** Don't finger drum, nail bite, skin peel, or scab pick.
- 7- **Slow down your pace.** (for fast talkers). Move slowly if you have to adjust your position.
- 8- **Be inclusive in your actions.** E.g. reduce the physical distance between you and the other person, smile, maintain eye contact, and make occasional gestures towards the other person.
- 9- **Be open with your emotions.** If you are sad, happy, or surprised, show that on your face.
- 10- **Pace yourself to much the other person.** At the end of the day, everyone is different. Assess each person individually and adopt the body language that will help you best connect with him/her.

