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Body Language

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Your body language doesn't merely reflect your emotions. By learning some of the principal ways that your own posture, gestures, facial expression and even tone of voice affect your mind, you will be more aware of the factors influencing your mood, and give yourself an edge in presentations and negotiations. Let's see some examples. Opening up your body and filling more space – known as a «power posture» – has been shown in studies to have a range of confidence-boosting effects [1, 2].

Body language is also very relevant to relationships outside of work, for example in dating and mating, and in families and parenting.

The way you listen, look, move, and react tells the other person whether or not you care, if you're being truthful, and how well you're listening. When your nonverbal signals match up with the words you are saying, they increase trust, clarity, and rapport. When they do not, they can generate tension, mistrust, and confusion. Each gesture or movement can be a valuable key to an emotion a person may be feeling at the time. For example, the person who is feeling fearful or defensive might fold their arms or cross their legs or both.

First of all it is good to realise that we do not talk continuously, but do give out signals continuously through body language when we are in someone else's company. Furthermore it is useful to look at the different levels on which we communicate. For the most part we communicate on the

content as well as relational level at the same time. Specifically we express the content through words and the relation through body language.

Content level

Of course we are talking about something when we talk to other people. We want to make something clear to the other person about a particular subject. This is the content of the conversation. At content level we say, or portray, what the message is about. It is usually the easiest to convey the content of a message through spoken language or commonly understood gestures. Due to the fact that the meaning of words, figures or signals that we use have been agreed to unilaterally, its form of expression does not need to bear any resemblance with what is denoted. The word clock for example has nothing to do with time. To understand the other person you need to speak his language. When the words or signals that we use to communicate do not bear any resemblance with what it denotes, we call this digital language [3].

The farther away from the brain a body part is positioned, the less awareness we have of what it is doing. For example, most people are aware of their face and what expressions and gestures they are displaying and we can even practise some expressions to *put on a brave face* or *give a disapproving look, grin and bear it* or *look happy* when Grandma gives you ugly underwear again for your birthday. After our face, we are less aware of our arms and hands, then our chest and stomach and we are least aware of our legs and almost oblivious to our feet [4].

Children were often told by their grandmothers to *put on a happy face, wear a big smile* and *show your pearly whites* when meeting someone new because Grandma knew, on an intuitive level, it would produce a positive reaction in others. The first recorded scientific studies into smiling were in the 66 The Magic of Smiles and Laughter early part of the nineteenth

century when French scientist Guillaume Duchenne de Boulogne used electrodiagnostics and electrical stimulation to distinguish between the smile of real enjoyment and other kinds of smiling. He analysed the heads of people executed by guillotine to study how the face muscles worked. He pulled face muscles [5, 6].

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