



It's been said, "a picture is worth a thousand words". While a picture doesn't verbally say anything, it can tell a story and express emotions. The same is true of our body language. When we communicate, we speak not only with our mouths, but also our bodies. It is through our body movement that we can become more effective communicators.

According to the Illinois Municipal Review, 55% of what people interpret when given information is based on gestures and expression, while 38% is based on tone of voice and only 1% is based on the actual words. This is especially true when making small talk, as opposed to a serious discussion. Because of this, it is essential that we know how to read and use body language to become more effective communicators, which can have an impact on our success.

GRACIOUS GREETING

It's essential to provide a warm welcome to every client. To do this, your body movement must support a welcoming nature; one that will make your clients feel at ease. According to Renee Gallart, Hairco Educational Director, the best welcoming position is standing balanced on both feet with your arms to your side. "In this position, you can do anything—you can move with a purpose," says Gallart. "While this is the best, most inviting position, it can feel awkward and unnatural. Just remember that what may be comfortable to you may appear as unfriendly or non-inviting to a client. So, at times it may be necessary to compromise your comfort to achieve the desired goal."

FIDGETING

While not enough body language can sometimes be interpreted as cold or aloof, too much can be distracting and counterproductive. Just like a person who talks on and on, it is possible to talk too much with your body as well. According to Gallart, movement should take place between the waist and the shoulders. Movements outside of this zone can often be unnecessary and distract your audience from your message. For example, touching your hair or face does not help convey your message but rather distract from your message. Ask yourself, "Do you want someone touching you that just rubbed his or her nose?"

When we are nervous, we can also be prone to make rough, antsy movements, such as foot tapping, excessive blinking or jerking. These types of movements can make the people around us uncomfortable. So, it's important to notice your body fluctuations and do your best to remain calm, even if you aren't.

SPACE INVADERS

Once you and your client are seated at your nail station, be conscious not to invade your client's personal space. If you sense that your client is moving away from you, it may mean they are feeling crowded and are making an attempt to retreat. Remedy this by moving away from them slightly, increasing the space between the two of you. Remember, the ultimate goal is to get the job done while providing the most comfortable environment possible for your client.

- 1. Arms folded against chest** *Meaning:* Form of a self-hug, closed off to others
- 2. Arms hanging down at sides, feet balanced** *Meaning:* Confident, inviting
- 3. Clenched hands** *Meaning:* Angry, scared
- 4. Hands behind back** *Meaning:* Militant, imposing stance that is not inviting
- 5. Hands clasped in front** *Meaning:* Insecure, not ready to invite anyone in
- 6. Hands in pocket** *Meaning:* Hiding something
- 7. Hands on waist/hips** *Meaning:* Stand-offish, annoyed, apathetic
- 8. Opened palm** *Meaning:* Inviting, open, friendly
- 9. Playing with hair, face** *Meaning:* Nervous, bored
- 10. Shifting weight** *Meaning:* Antsy, nervous

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Body language can also be a very useful selling tool, especially when suggesting retail products for your clients. Consider how products are showcased on QVC. Or what about Vanna White's body movement on *Wheel of Fortune*. For both, movements are very slow and controlled, with open palms focusing on the object. They draw you in; invite you to look at the object. The focus is on one object at a time, removing any extra props that can divert attention. You can use this same technique when showcasing retail products to your clients.

Now that you see how body language can impact your communication efforts, it's time to practice. Using all of the skills noted, reenact a client greeting in front of a mirror and then ask yourself, "Do you look friendly, inviting, mean or imposing?" Over the next couple of days watch the body movements of your friends and family. Begin to recognize how people around you are moving and how it makes you feel. The more you analyze other people's movements and understand how they effect you, the closer you will be to creating movements with purpose that enhance your life experiences.



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