



Do you ever wonder what people really mean when they are talking to you? Are they telling the truth or is there some hidden message or meaning that you simply are missing or don't understand. How do you get to the bottom of what they are really thinking?

Wouldn't it be great to have the power to be able to tell truth from lies, to know what your boss or partner really thought of you. **Mark Shields** explains.

When Doctor Richard Bandler and John Grinder were investigating the art and science of human behaviour and NLP back in the 1970s several lessons were learned. One of the most notable was the lessons learned in the art of communication.

Up until this point we communicated by talking to each other consciously. Bandler and Grinders findings suggested we communicated far more unconsciously than we had ever realised. Their studies along with others paved the way for the progression of our understanding of how we communicate unconsciously most obviously with our body language.

Body language is the means by which human beings convey information to each other through conscious or unconscious gestures bodily movements or facial expressions. Body

language seems to have several broad uses as a conscious and knowing replacement of speech. Using body language in place of speech in its basic and most recognised form includes giving people the thumbs up as a signal of approval, and on the reverse the V sign in place of insults.

Very often hand signals and gestures are used to re enforce points being made vocally.

Certain people may sit in business meetings or at social gatherings and may not speak a word but their body language can speak volumes. Just by looking at people's eyes, face, hands, torso, legs and arms can improve our understanding of what they are expressing on the inside.

Body language is much more important and powerful than most people realise. Bandler and Grinders research shows that

what people say is often less impactful than how they move their body rather than how they say it. Here are some basics which will help you read what people are really saying or telling you unconsciously without realising it.

Look Into My Eyes

The eyes say it all and give away a lot.

Blinking – Increased blinking correlates with heightened anxiety or attentiveness.

Controlled blinking, even if only milliseconds slower than spontaneous blinking together with longer I.e. closure is often associated with deception.

Pupil dilation – eyes enlarge when light dims but also when someone is excited, aroused, happy or engaged in problem solving activities.

Sporadic eye contact suggests a lack of confidence general accompanied by lots of shuffling and looking away.

Lets Face it

The most obvious and commonly used and recognised body language is that of facial expressions. Our faces disclose a range of feelings from anger to sadness disappointment to elation, jubilation to surprise and so on.

Let's now look at a selection of typical examples of slightly more complex body language and see what they mean.

Are they really listening?

Lowering body, averting eyes and moving away are nonverbal cues that signal submissiveness.

Someone standing nearby points her feet near or towards you it indicates they probably have positive feelings for you. If the feet are pointed away from you while their body faces you that is a sign of discomfort.

A person wrapping their foot behind their leg during a conversation can suggest a defensive posture as a result of part of the conversation.

When you find someone leaning away from you, or looking up at you from the chair that can suggest they are uncomfortable in the situation or with the conversation. Others of the same to watch out for are hand over the mouth, crossing of the legs, or arms, dry mouth or a slightly more obvious sign in underarm or facial sweats.

An old favourite of mine is when someone appears to be listening to you intently however has a hand placed on one of their face cheeks or a finger on one of the temples, which immediately suggests there is an awful lot of inner dialogue going on and they are probably not listening to you at all. Playing with the nose is a definite indication they are miles away and touching of the watch or movement of the watch

face or strap definitely confirms they want to be as far away as possible and haven't taken in a single word over the last few minutes and can't wait to leave.

Positioning of either foot at right angles in the air suggests impatience or anxiety and a difficulty in staying focused. Racing through the agenda and focusing on the back page within seconds of it being given out indicates we are working out when we will be free to leave and go and do something else.

Whose in Charge?

A person with higher status may pat you on the back, shake your hand or place hand on your arm. You will have always remembered president bush putting his hand on his visiting king or prime ministers back and lead him into the room or meeting indicating a higher status belief. You will I am sure recall president Obama doing the very same thing on his first visit to number 10 recently.

Can you imagine putting your hand on your bosses back and leading him into a meeting? Why not try it and see what happens.

In the same way lowering the body, averting the eyes, shuffling or moving away indicates and signals submissiveness.

Does She Like Me?

Courting signals can include a crossing of the legs, playing with ones hair, fiddling with a pen, stand or sit with legs apart or one leg tucked under the other. And one most definitely for the ladies sitting with legs crossed dangling a shoe half off.

Does He Like Me?

Smoothing the hair, continual straightening of the tie, playing with the shirt or collar, perhaps its hot in here, and sweeping imaginary specks of dust off of the shirt sleeve or jacket.

Watch What People Do not What They Say

So there you have it some of my own basic personal body language gems, which I am sure will help you on your way. With further study and understanding you will be able to really know with confidence what someone is thinking and feeling, whatever they are saying. An old favourite saying of mine has always been "watch what people do, not what they say, that way you will never be far out.

A great point of reference that will give you all the tips you know about body language and is small enough to carry in your back pocket so you can check to see what people mean all the time can be found in The Collins Gem Series, aptly named body language.

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