



Body Language

By:

Marcia Hall

Our body language signals to others what we actually feel, versus what we are verbalizing. People form an impression about you based on what your body demonstrates.

The message you relay has three elements to it. Several researchers have found that people respond in the following way:

- 7 % verbal (words only)
- 38 % vocal (includes the tone of your voice, how you say the words, other sounds you might make, such as laughter)
- 55 % non-verbal – your body language

Therefore, body language is very important to both observe in yourself and other people for the message it sends.

1. Eye Contact

- a. *Avoid:* looking away often, especially as new people enter the room; looking over the shoulder of the person to whom you are talking
- b. *Use:* look directly at the person, 7-8 seconds before looking away, then glance to the side, not over his/her shoulder

2. Handshakes

- a. *Avoid:* wimpy or too forceful handshake.
- b. *Use:* confident, friendly handshake – look person in the eye. Extend your arm, slightly bent and firmly grasp the other person's hand. It is permissible to pump your hands up and down a few times.

- c. Always extend your hands when greeting another person. Stand up when I introductions are made, unless you are in a restaurant or other environment where it is difficult to do so.

3. Body Position

- a. *Avoid:* moving body away so that your shoulder faces the person; having no expression or a “poker face” which creates anxiety in other person; folding arms across your chest, or hanging your shoulders.
- b. *Use:* lean forward a bit to show you are interested in the conversation; smile and nod where appropriate; use your hands to add impact when you are talking; stand with your feet slightly apart and keep your weight centered so you don’t sway.

4. How Close to Stand

Different cultures have different expectations. In the United States, an acceptable distance at a networking function is one and one-half to four feet, the shorter distance is okay particularly when it is noisy in the room.

Watch to see if the person to whom you are speaking keeps moving back from you. If this is the case, step back.

5. Signs to observe in other people

- a. Extrovert versus Introvert

Extroverts: Sits with toes pointing out

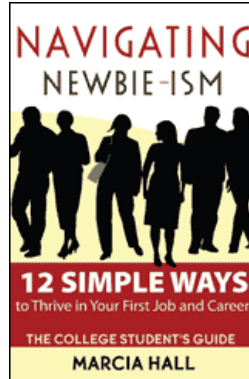
Introverts: Sits with toes pointing in

Shy people control their body and facial expressions, and do not “invite” people to themselves. Few, if any gesture, are used.

- b. Closed fists

This signals that the person is very intense.

Remembering that body language and tone affects people more than the words can help you convey the message you really want to give to others.



Marcia Hall, the *Reputation Pro* with **Reputation COUNTS**, is the author of *Navigating Newbie-ism: 12 Simple Ways to Thrive in Your First Job and Career, The College Student's Guide*. To receive the **FREE “9 Deadly Mistakes that Can Ruin Your Reputation” REPORT**, please visit <http://www.reputationcounts.com>