

Non-Verbal Communication

When you talk to your business partners, employees, journalists, spouse or friends, you certainly hear what they say, but can you also hear what lies beneath the words?

Have you ever had the feeling that someone is trying to fool you, or that the ones you were talking to don't give a damn on what you have to say? Guess what? Your feeling was right.

In a face-to-face communication words do the talking and the body sends out the message. If you take a careful look at the gestures, body pose and facial expressions displayed by your interlocutor you'll certainly be able to understand his/her real feelings.

On the other hand, if a person is tired, nervous, worried or has any other negative feelings (for personal reasons) the gap between the verbal message and the non-verbal signals is often misleading, especially if you cannot interpret body language correctly.

Reading body language is not an easy task. Women, who are more perceptive than men, are able to notice body language warnings faster and interpret them (often unconsciously) quite accurately. When a man is lying to his wife she is almost always able to tell, because she "sees the signs": his Adam's apple jumps, he is not able to look her in the eyes, he is faking a smile, he is rubbing his hand for no reason, his body bends away, etc. You shouldn't read each gesture separately. To make sense of what you see, you need to take the signs as a whole. Words have deeper and more accurate meanings within a context. So do gestures. The moment you are able to make sense of gestures you will be able to tell whether your dialogue partner agrees with you or not.

You should always read gestures in the context. People do cross their arms when they have negative feelings towards a certain issue, but they also cross their arms to show superiority or because they are cold.

Reading body language is an art, but you'll be able to master it in time. All you need to do is to learn the meaning of each gesture and then start looking at people, seeing what they do and "translate" their feelings.

The purpose of learning body language should not be reduced to "reading others". Body language is the key to good communication. By learning it, you will know what negative non-verbal signs to eliminate from your behavior. You will not be able to "fake" body language - there are micro signals that sooner or later will give you away. But you will be able to communicate clearly, without sending out the wrong messages by accident.

About the Author

For more body language and public relations related articles, visit Mihaela Lica's blog at <http://www.ewriting.pamil-visions.com/>

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