

How to Use Body Language to Get What You Want

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Get a preview of ASAE & The Center's Springtime Expo keynote speaker Janine Driver. Driver tells you how to understand and use body language in business and offers quick and easy tips on better body language.

Do you know how leaders of top Fortune 100 companies use their body language and visual image to convey confidence instantly? When it comes to building business relationships, how important is it for you to quickly connect with others while remaining authentically you? What would it mean to your personal and professional success, if you were to radiate even more confidence, poise, and authority than you already have (all in the time it takes to watch a movie or commute to work)?

The polished total leader has these skills, and those on their way up the ladder are being sent to week-long training sessions to find it. It's an essential prerequisite for career advancement, and it matters just as much as impeccable credentials and an impressive track record. Let's face it ... *You Say More Than You Think: Use the New Body Language to Get What You Want, By Janine Driver, Mariska Van Aalst.*

Nonverbal communication comprises more than 90 percent of all signals that people send to each other when communicating. Although it may seem that words are the easiest way to communicate with people, they are not always the most honest or direct. This is an easy problem to fix; all you have to do is R.O.A.R.: rapport building, observe and listen, ask questions, and reach your full potential.

Rapport Building

Building a strong rapport is critical to generating strong relationships. Remember, people like others who are like themselves. A simple way to encourage this thought is to mirror another person's actions. However, if you are too overt in your mirroring, they may think you are being condescending. You should mirror their actions while also talking with them in the way that helps them to best understand you. People process the world in one of three ways, and speaking to them in a manner reflective of their processes helps you to connect better:

- Visual (sight): "I see..."
- Auditory (sound): "I hear..."
- Kinesthetic (touch): "I feel..."

For example, when working on a math problem, a visual person would look at the numbers, while an auditory person would count the numbers in their head, and a kinesthetic person would use their fingers. And, although 60 percent of the population represents things visually, you should always keep in mind your intended audience rather than using what seems most comfortable.

In building rapport, it is also important that you establish positive connotations between yourself and others. You can do this by changing how you communicate, either in method or in location. This creates the illusion of a greater lapse of time in your relationship and may help alleviate discomfort or stress. If you are meeting with clients, you do not have to conduct the entire meeting in the same place; move around! Go to other parts of the office to change scenery and help increase comfort.

Similarly, contact people in different ways—email, call, or talk in person. While each form of communication offers different advantages, combining them may help you gather different information each time.

Observe and Listen

When interacting with others, it is critical that you have an understanding of their body language preferences, or else miscommunications may occur. For instance, while crossing one's arms is usually an indication of being closed off, disapproving, or uncomfortable, it may simply be a more comfortable position for some to be in. Similarly, blinking does not always mean that someone is lying or shifty; he or she might just have dry eyes.

In order to make accurate assessments of body language cues, it is a good idea to find out a person's normal behavior, or baseline. Even something as simple as small talk can help to show how a person normally acts; since they are in a relaxed environment, there is no need to be defensive, aggressive, or deceptive.

The areas that are the most important to pay attention to follow the old children's song: head, shoulders, knees, and toes. Someone's head position and facial characteristics, posture, leg spacing, and foot direction are key indicators of body language symbols. All of these parts work together to give a message of intent, although you should also remember The Bellybutton Rule:

The Bellybutton Rule (a.k.a. Navel Intelligence): A person's bellybutton often faces the direction of something or someone that they are interested in, admire, or are focused on.

As long as the bellybutton is on you when you want it to be, this is a good thing. When we see parallel bellybuttons, this means that the conversation between the buttons' owners is private, or that they do not want outside attention. If they are perpendicular, feel free to join in. Be aware that a wandering navel may be a sign of indifference, a lack of interest, or a desire to leave.

Base lining also is reflected in how people may process information. Once a pattern is established in most anything, from conversations to news stories to personalities, we begin to assume that this is the normal behavior or sequence of events. When a shift in perceptions occurs that deviates from this behavior, we are quick to notice and act on it. Body language works the same way.

Ask Powerful Questions

Asking the right questions can make all the difference in understanding others and delivering the right message. For example, a client may tell you that what you are doing is fine, but they are slightly shaking their head while adopting a reserved and enclosed posture.

By asking questions beginning with phrases like "Is there any reason why ...", "Maybe I'm wrong here, but ...", and "Is there something else ...", you can find out more and make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Reach Your Potential

A great way to make sure that your confidence level is high is to speak, think, and act in positives. By removing negative words from discussion and your thoughts, things become more achievable and realistic. For example, telling a child "keep your hand off of the stovetop" is more effective than "don't touch the stovetop," as the focus is on the action rather than any positive or negative prefixes. This also

can help with telling stories and outlining plans, as it shifts focus away from the task one is trying not to do or on a subject that one does not want to give attention.

Additionally, removing conditional phrases adds authority and power. Like Yoda from *Star Wars* said, “Do or do not, there is no try.” Adding words or phrases like “try” or “consider doing” or “thinking about” distract and delay doing the actual action. Next time you are given a task, don't try to get it done; do it! Language like this also can make people skeptical of motives or commitment, and may cast doubt on your actual abilities.

In closing, there's an old saying that I love; “It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you're not.”

Janine Driver, is the founder, president, and lead instructor for the Body Language Institute (www.bodylanguageinstitute.com) and a recognized international communications expert, published author, and popular media guest.