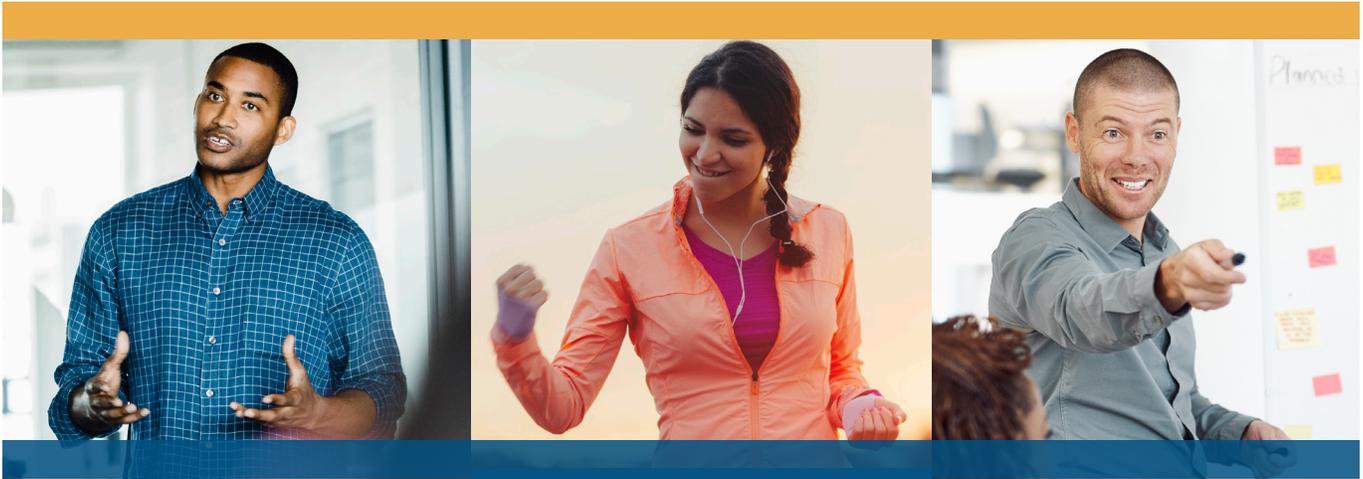


Healthy & Resilient You



ACTIONS ARE LOUDER THAN WORDS

How to improve your body language vocabulary



As the saying goes—Actions speak louder than words.

Most of us probably agree, at least in principle. But take for example, someone who says, “Let me help you lift that,” and then turns around to run the other way. That person is sending a clear signal that they are not interested in helping you one bit.

That’s a blatant example, but what if we told you that body language manifests in subtler ways too, influencing interactions and decisions to a degree we’re not aware of? (Did we just detect some body language on your part? Perhaps your eyebrows rising?)

Reading Between the Lines, and the Words

Consider a study out of MIT that captures just how influential body language can be. The subjects of this study were asked to present business plans to their peers. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the participants, a device called a sociometer was

monitoring and measuring variables in participants’ body language. Relying exclusively on the data it had collected, the sociometer was able to predict which plans would be chosen with nearly 100% accuracy.

A second part of the study had others read the business plans without a live presentation, basing their selections solely on the plans’ written content. They chose a completely different set of plans.

The MIT researchers concluded that, in the presentation group, the presenters’ attitudes and social cues had greater impact than the rationale of their plans. Conversely the audience, who thought they were making a rational decision, were unknowingly paying more attention to the presenters’ body language and social input than the quality of the content.

This really hammers home the importance of nonverbal communication in both the business world and the real world.



Body language helps us:

Build trust and connection • Build stronger relationships
Communicate our true feelings • Interpret others' feelings and intentions

Nothing Left Unsaid

The ability to understand and project the right messages through body language and social cues is an important component of developing **emotional intelligence**. Observing the following social cues can help you regulate body language and nonverbal communication to prevent you from conveying unintentional messages, as well as make sure that, when you do speak, your words and your intent are in harmony.



Show Your Enthusiasm

When speaking, it's important to be enthusiastic but not over the top.

- Keep vocal tone in the lower range, emphasizing important words and thoughts.
- Use hand gestures to emphasize a point, but keep your hands between waist and shoulder height for best impact.
- When speaking live, feel free to move around, but stand perfectly still when making an important point.



Project Warm Confidence

People react well to confidence but are turned off by arrogance. Strike the right balance by tempering confidence with warmth.

- Sit or stand straight, leaning forward a bit when speaking to someone.
- Gesture with open palms rather than pointed fingers or fists.
- Make eye contact, smile, and mirror your listeners' positive expressions or gestures.



Be Mindful of Engagement

People give very specific signals when they are engaged in a conversation. Being mindful of those signals can help maintain a good connection.

- Maintain eye contact for three seconds or more.
- Face your listener(s) directly and keep your posture open to show engagement and notice if they're doing the same to you.
- If you notice any indicators of disengagement, that's a good time to check in with the person or people you're speaking to. Ask them a specific question to make sure they heard or understand what you just said or ask if they have any questions in general.



Keep Words and Intent Aligned

If emotional cues and body language don't match what you're saying, it confuses your listeners, causing them to believe what they see over what they hear.

- Smile when talking about positive or neutral topics, but handle serious subjects with a slightly tilted head, and relaxed, neutral lips.
- Watch yourself. Literally. Record a practice session of a meeting or presentation on your phone camera and play it back. Look for the different social cues discussed above and make sure they align with who you are and what you want to say.

Visit the **Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Toolkit** in the Resilience Hub for even more tips on building connection and understanding with others.

For even more ways to help cultivate mindfulness and resilience in 2018, visit the Resilience Hub™ at www.ConcernResilienceHub.com regularly. First time users may be asked to enter their company ID.

This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.

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