

PART I

Attentive body language

Listening

A person who is attentive is first of all listening. This can be of varying intensity though attentive listening is deep and interested.

Ignoring distractions

There are many competing stimuli that demand our attention. If a person ignores distraction, from phone calls to other people interrupting, then they send strong signal of attentiveness.

Stillness

Body movement often betrays distracting thoughts and feelings. When the listener is largely still, the implication is of forgetting everything else except the speaker, with not even internal dialogue being allowed to distract.

Leaning forward

When I am interested in what you have to say I will likely lean slightly towards you, perhaps better to hear everything you have to say.

Tilted head

An attentive head may be tilted slightly forward. It also may show curiosity when tilted to the side (although this may also indicate uncertainty).

Gaze

An attentive person looks at the other person without taking their gaze away. They will likely blink less, almost for fear of missing something.

Furrowed brow

Concentration may also be shown in the forehead as the eyebrows are brought together as the listener seeks to hear and understand the other person.

Wanting more

An attentive person seeks not just to hear but to be ready to listen to everything the other person has to say.

Patience

Even when you have something to say or when they(speaker) pause, you still patiently seek a full understanding of them and give them space in which to complete what they have to say.

Open body

Open body language shows that you are not feeling defensive and are mentally open to what they have to say (and hence not closed to their thoughts).

Slow nodding

Nodding shows agreement and also encourages the other person to keep talking. Fast nodding may show impatience, whilst a slower nod indicates understanding and approval.

Interest noises

Little noises such as 'uh huh' and 'mmm' show that you are interested, understand and want to hear more. They thus encourage the other person to keep talking.

Reflecting

When you reflect the other person back to them they feel affirmed and that you are aligned with them. Reflecting activities range from matching body language to paraphrasing what they say.

Bored body language

Distraction

A bored person looks anywhere but at the person who is talking to them. They find other things to do, from doodling to talking with others to staring around the room. They may also keep looking at their watch or a wall clock.

Repetition

Bored people often repeat actions such as tapping toes, swinging feet or drumming fingers. The repetition may escalate as they try to signal their boredom.

Tiredness

A person who feels that they are unable to act to relieve their boredom may show signs of tiredness. They may yawn and their whole body may sag as they slouch down in their seat, lean against a wall or just sag where they are standing. Their face may also show a distinct lack of interest and appear blank.

Reasons for boredom

Lack of interest

If the person is not interested in their surroundings or what is going on, then they may become bored. The disinterest may also be feigned if they do not want you to see that they are interested. Watch for leaking signs of readiness in these cases.

Readiness

A bored person may actually be ready for the actions you want, such as closing a sale. Sales people are known to keep on the sales patter long after the customer is ready to sign on the dotted line.

Open body language

A significant cluster of body movements are all about being open. This is sometimes misinterpreted solely as indicating being relaxed and untense.

Remember that perhaps the most significant part of being open or close is the act of opening or closing. When you open or close, you are signalling a change in the way you are thinking or feeling, which is likely to be in response to what the other person has said or done.

Language of openness

The open stance has arms and legs not crossed in any way. They may also be moving in various ways.

Arms open

Arms are not crossed and may be animated and moving in synchronization with what is being said or held wide.

Palms are also relaxed and may be quite expressive, for example appearing to hold things and form more detailed shapes. Open hands show that nothing is being concealed.

Legs open

Open legs are not crossed. Often they are parallel. They may even be stretched apart.

The feet are of interest in open legs and may point forward or to the side or at something or someone of interest.

Looking around and at the other person

The head may be directed solely towards the other person or may be looking around. Eye contact is likely to be relaxed and prolonged.

Relaxed clothing

Clothing is likely to hang loosely and actions to loosen clothing may take place, such as removing a jacket and unbuttoning a collar.

Reasons for opening

There can be several reasons for open body language. In particular look for the transition when the body opens and the triggers that may have caused this change.

Accepting

When arms rounded and palms are sideways, the person may be offering a 'mock hug', showing that they care for the other person. Gestures may be slower and symbolize gentleness.

Passive threat

An open posture may also be associated with a passive threat. When the person casually 'exposes themselves', for example by opening their body and looking away they are opening themselves for attack. When this is relaxed, it may be saying 'I am so powerful and you are so weak, you are unable to attack me even when I am exposed.'

Males with knees apart are also doing a crotch display, which, as well as casually exposing vulnerabilities is effectively says to other males 'Look: I have a large penis than you!'

Aggression

When there is tension in the open body, especially if fists are clenched, then this may be a sign of significant aggression. The person is effectively holding their body open in readiness for a fight.

Aggression is also seen when the body is square on to the other person and is relatively close to them. Movements may be particularly sudden and designed to test the other person's reactions.

Supplicating

When palms are held upwards, this may form a pleading gesture and may be combined with lowering of the body. This is saying 'Please don't hurt me'.

Opening the body in supplication is also saying 'Here, you can hurt me if you wish' and is equivalent to a dog who rolls over on its back and exposes itself to indicate that it is not a threat.

Relaxing

And finally, the open body may simply be the body at rest, relaxed and comfortable.

Closed body language

Language of closure

Closure literally closes the body up. It may range from a slight bringing together of the limbs to curled up into a tight ball. Extreme cases may also include rhythmic rocking of the body to and fro.

Arms across

In a closed positions one or both arms cross the central line of the body. They may be folded or tightly clasped or holding one another. There may also be holding one another.

Lighter arm crossing may include resting an arm on a table or leg, or loosely crossed with wrists crossing.

Varying levels of tension may be seen in the arms and shoulders, from a relaxed droop to tight tension and holding on to the body or other arms.

Legs across

Legs, likewise can be crossed. There are several styles of leg crossing, including the ankle cross, the knee cross, the figure-four (ankle on opposite knee) and the tense wrap-around.

Legs may also wrap around convenient other objects, such as chair legs.

When legs are crossed but arms are not, it can show deliberate attempts to appear relaxed. This is particularly true when legs are hidden under a table.

Looking down or away

The head may be inclined away from the person, and particularly may be tucked down.

Reasons for closing

There can be several reasons for closed body language. This is one reason why reading body language can be hazardous and you should take into account other factors. In particular look for the transition when the body closes and the triggers that may have caused this change.

Defending

When we feel threatened, our body language becomes defensive. We use closure to place the barriers of our arms and legs across in front of us to defend ourselves from attack. When we close, we also make our body smaller, reducing the size of the target. When we tuck our chin down, we are protecting the exposed throat.

We also may be signaling to the other person that we are not a threat to them. Thus the held-in arms shows that we are not attacking and looking away from them removes aggressive staring.

In a variant of this, particularly where the person is holding themselves, a closed position may indicate self-nurturing. The person is effectively holding or hugging themselves in an imitation of a parent or other caring person.

Hiding

Closing also may serve the purpose of hiding something that we do not want the other person to see. Holding the body still prevents it from betraying our thoughts. Looking away prevents the other person from seeing our expression that may show dislike or lying.

Cold

A more pragmatic form of closure is when we are cold. Huddling up reduces exposed body area and reduces heat loss. Holding warmer parts of the body against colder parts evens the temperature and prevents extremities from being chilled too much.

Relaxing

And we also cross our arms and legs when we are relaxing. It can just be a comfortable place to put those gangly limbs. We may look away because we are thinking, nothing more.

Language of deception

Anxiety

A deceptive person is typically anxious that they might be found out (unless they are psychopathic or good at acting), so they may send signals of tension. This may include sweating, sudden movements, minor twitches of muscles (especially around the mouth and eyes), changes in voice tone and speed.

Many of us have hidden anxiety signals. For example: Biting the inside of the mouth (George W. Bush), patting head (Prince William), hands in pockets (Tony Blair). These signals are almost impossible to stop as we start them very young.

Do remember that anxiety can be caused by many other factors other than deceptiveness.

Control

In order to avoid being caught, there may be various signs of over-control. For example, there may be signs of attempted friendly body language, such as forced smiles (mouth smiles but eyes do not), jerky movements and clumsiness or oscillation between open body language and defensive body language.

The person may also try to hold their body still, to avoid tell-tale signals. For example they may hold their arms in or put their hands in their pockets. This can be particularly seen when they emphasizing something with their voice and their body does not align, showing limited (or exaggerated) emphasis.

Distracted

A person who is trying to deceive needs to think more about what they are doing, so they may drift off or pause as they think about what to say or hesitate during speech.

They may also be distracted by the need to cover up. Thus their natural timing may go astray and they may over- or under-react to events.

Anxiety may be displaced into actions such as fidgeting, moving around the place or paying attention to unusual places.

END OF PART I

PART II

Interested

- They maintain eye contact more than 60% of the time. The more wide-opened the eyes are, the more interested the person is.
- Their heads are inclined forward.
- They are nodding their heads. Such action means that they're agreeing with you. That means they're attentive and listening.
- Their feet are pointing towards you.
- They smile frequently. But take note, not all smiles convey the same feeling. An oblong smile is not genuine. It is used to show courtesy, but not necessarily happiness or friendliness. The lips are withheld completely back from the upper and lower teeth, forming the oblong shape. This is usually the smile that many people exhibit when they feign to enjoy a lame joke.

Receptive.

- Their hands are flat on the table.
- Their palms are open.
- If they're stroking their chin, they're thinking. They may agree with you after careful evaluation.
- Their heads are inclined forward.
- They are nodding their heads.
- Their legs are spaced out from each other.
- They smile frequently.
- They unbutton their jackets. This indicates friendliness and willingness to collaborate with you.
- Their hands are open. This also indicates genuineness.
- They place their hands in their chest. This signifies openness and conveys sincerity, honesty, or dedication. However, at times chest is a defensive position and may indicate surprise or astonishment.

Thinking

- They're stroking their chin. This means they are assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal/idea being presented.
- They take their glasses off, after which they may either (1) clean them, or (2) put the tip of the frame in their mouth. They are buying themselves some time to think things over. A frame in the mouth would also likely indicate that they need more details and they are willing to listen.
- They are pinching the bridge of the nose most likely with eyes closed. People doing this are engaged in very deep thought. They may be involved in a difficult situation, where they are aware of the consequences that may occur as a result of making crucial decisions.
- They put a palm below the chin, index finger pointed and extended along the cheek, while other fingers placed beneath the mouth. This gesture more likely indicates thoughts that are criticizing or antagonizing other people.
- They walk with the head down and hands behind the back. People who walk this way are probably worried about their problems, and they are thinking of ways to solve them.

Frustration.

- They are scratching/rubbing the hair or the back of the neck.
- You often hear the word “Tsk/Chk”

- They kick/punch the dust or air.

Action-Oriented

People who are goal-oriented and highly motivated may not only be recognized by how they speak. Their actions actually speak louder.

- They walk at a fast rate while swinging their arms loosely.
- They put their hands on their hips, usually with legs apart.
- They walk with hands on their hips. This may indicate a spurt of vitality at the moment, but may be followed by sluggishness.

Defensive/Hiding Something

The mouth might keep a secret, but certain gestures could indicate that people are hiding something they don't want others to find out, such as:

- They walk with their hands in their pockets.
- They cross their arms.
- They hide their hands any way they can.

Bored and disinterested

- Head supported by the palm, often accompanied by drooping eyes.
- They show inattentiveness by staring at a blank space (eyes not blinking) or by looking around frequently.
- They are pulling their ears. This may also signify that they want to interrupt while another person is talking.
- They are clicking a pen non-stop.
- They are tapping their hands or feet.
- They yawn incessantly.
- Their feet or other body parts are pointing to the exit, as if they are very eager to leave.
- They move restlessly in their seats. This could also mean that they are not cozy or at ease, or they might just be exhausted.
- They cross their legs and constantly kick their foot in a very slight motion

Excited

- They rub their palms against each other, to show excitement follows.
- They clap their hands (often to release excitement)
- Their heads are tilted forward.
- Their cross their fingers (usually comes with the hope that something big or special will happen).

Confidence/Authority/Power

- They maintain firm eye contact and rarely looks on other body parts underneath the nose.
- They speak with a low-pitched, slow-paced, downward-inflected voice.
- Chin tilted upwards.
- Chest projected outwards.
- They maintain an erect posture, whether standing or sitting.
- They sit in reverse, with the back of the chair serving as their support or shield. People who sit in this position are known to be bossy and aggressive.

- Their hands are clenched behind the back.
- Their hands are placed beside the hips.
- Their feet are on top of the table.
- They have a firm handshake, palms pointing downwards.
- They lean back with both hands supporting the head.
- They move with precision and with no hesitation.
- They walk solidly with forceful arm swings.
- They join the fingertips of both hands together. Palms of both hands are not in contact with each other. The higher the hands are elevated, the more confident they are.
- They extend one leg over the arm of a chair they're sitting in. When they do this, it may also mean that they are apathetic, disinterested, or unconcerned. They may be exhibiting the "I don't care" attitude. Moreover, you can declare your domination over other people by rising or elevating yourself from them.

Anger/Resistance

- Their fists are clenched.
- Their hands or feet are tapping.
- One hand is clutching the other hand, arm, or elbow.
- Their arms are crossed over the chest.
- Their eyes are blinking constantly.
- Collar pulled away from the neck, like letting some air in during a hot day in the summer.
- They kick the dust or air.
- Their arms are vertically placed on the table while the hands are gripping the edge. Beware when they do this because it might mean something like "You better get this done or else!" or "Better listen or you'll regret this!"

Nervousness/Tension

- Their fists are clenched.
- Their hands or feet are tapping.
- The bottom edges between the fingers of one hand are clenched with the bottom edges between the fingers of the other hand. This is the position of the hands when praying.
- Hands are interlocked (flesh between thumb and index finger of one hand joined with flesh between thumb and index finger of another hand) and pressing each other.
- They speak in a high-pitched, fast-paced, stuttering voice.
- They whistle or sing to conceal and fight their nervousness.
- They are often clearing their throat.
- One hand is clutching the other hand, wrist, arm, or elbow.
- Their arms are at the back, where one hand is pressing the wrist or arm.
- Their arms are crossed, but they are gripping their biceps.
- Their legs are crossed while standing.
- They have a wilted handshake, palms pointing upwards.
- Their eyes evade you.
- By clenched fists, this may indicate that they are holding back
- They smoke.

When you hear them say "Whew," it means they are previously nervous but are now relieved because their problems have been solved or they have survived a big challenge.

Doubting/Suspecting You

- They glimpse sideways from the corner of one eye.
 - They are rubbing or touching their eyes or ears.
 - Their hands are tucked in their pockets.
 - Their arms are crossed over the chest.
 - Their glasses are dropped to the lower bridge of the nose, with eyes peering over them. This movement may indicate that you are being examined closely (to the point that you get conscious).
- There's one act you usually do when you are the one doubting yourself - rubbing or touching your nose. This subconsciously occurs when you are uncertain of how to answer a critical question or when you are concerned of other people's reaction to your answer.

Signals Made When They Need Reassurance

- They stick a pen in their mouth.
- They squeeze the chunky part of their hand.
- They rub the back of the chair (while sitting).
- They clamp their hands with thumbs touching against one another.
- They bite their nails (in some cases).
- They touch their throat (for women).
- They jiggle the coins in their pockets.

Giving Reassurance / Showing concern

- Hug
- Handshake and shoulder touch.
- Glove handshake

Lying

- They speak in a high-pitched, fast-paced, stuttering voice.
- They are constantly swallowing and clearing their throat.
- They try their best to avoid having eye contact. This applies particularly to people who want to avoid discussing a certain topic.
- They look somewhere else and glimpse from the corner of their eye.
- They stick their tongue out to moist their lips.
- They are blinking rapidly.
- They rub their throat.
- Their arms are crossed over the chest.
- They are constantly touching parts of their face, especially the mouth, ear, and nose as if covering them.
- They scratch their head or the back of the neck.
- Their poses are closed, descending, and insecure.
- Their hands or feet are tapping.
- They always look down with shrugged shoulders.
- They are constantly moving from one place to another or changing their poses.
- They are projecting parts of their body (feet) to an escape route (door).