
The Importance And Meaning Of Body Language

Introduction

In today's world, where many important organizations and individuals have established themselves on the foundation of fraud and deceit, it becomes indispensable to resort to other ways to interpret one's intentions. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate a topic that isn't touched on enough - Body language and the significance it holds. This paper scrutinizes what the importance and meaning of body language is and whether or not it is accurate. It will also explore certain gestures and what are they interpreted as.

What is Body Language?

Body language is the movement and gestures of the body that communicate to another person non-verbally. There are two aspects of body language; involuntary and voluntary. Involuntary body language often takes the form of a facial expression. This suggests that one is engaged with the emotions of the person one is communicating with (for example raising the eyebrow often means one is skeptical or surprised). Voluntary body language comprises poses, movements and gestures that a person makes with full or partial intention (for example smiling or hand movements). Body language is extremely vital for marketers to study and comprehend, particularly those engaged in customer research and interviewing. One of the aspects of nonverbal communication is kinesics. Kinesics, which is often called body language in the popular vernacular, is the study of a type of nonverbal communication which interprets body movement (posture, gestures, facial expression) as communication.

The Study of Body Language

According to Meeren, H. K. van Heijnsbergen, "Body language includes your posture, your facial expressions, and your hand gestures. The ability to understand and to interpret body language can help you to pick up on unspoken issues, problems or negative feelings that other people might have. You can also use it in a positive way to add strength to your verbal messages." A face is usually encountered not as an isolated object but as an integrated part of a whole body. The face and the body both typically contribute in conveying the emotional state of the individual. Observers judging a facial expression are strongly influenced by emotional body language. When face and body suggest conflicting emotional information, judgment of facial expression is hampered and becomes biased toward the emotion expressed by the body.

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There are several gestures that may indicate how a person is feeling; here are some examples on what certain gestures are interpreted as:

1. Hand / arm gestures. Sitting forward with your arms crossed on the desk could indicate a defensive and closed position and could mean you're probably not open to starting a conversation. Furthermore, somebody holding their arms behind their backs suggests that they are feeling tense and uncomfortable. Moreover, if you suspect someone isn't telling you the whole truth, you could try watching what they do with their hands. If they're rubbing their eyes or the back of their neck, these can be signs of deception.
2. Leg positioning. The way we position our legs can be a big indicator of how we are feeling. A person who is sitting with their bottom on the edge of the chair, knees bent, and hands poised on the edge of the seat – as if they are about to stand up at any moment are people who are likely itching to get away. Nevertheless, sitting up straight with your feet on the floor and your hands in front of you makes it easier to communicate with others.

Is it always accurate? A quote from Dr. Birdwhistell, former professor of research in anthropology at Temple University (who initiated basic work in science of kinesics) warned that “no body position or movement, in and of itself, has a precise meaning”. In other words, we cannot always say that rubbing the nose with a finger means disapproval or rejection or that crossed arms mean, ‘I will not let you in’, that patting the hair means approval and steeping the fingers superiority.

What are some examples of the meaning of body language in famous people and the significance it holds? One of the biggest lies told in the past was that spoken by Hitler to Chamberlain, which went undetected and became the reason for World War II. World War II could have been avoided if the deceit would have been detected and Hitler's lie would have been unmasked. This incident tells us how crucial lie detecting is, to protect oneself from being deceived.

In conclusion, even though body language interpretations are contradictory, it cannot be denied that it holds connections to one's thoughts.

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