

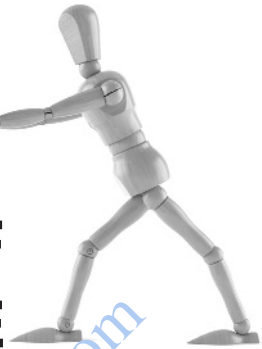
# PART ONE



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# 1



## THE BODY OF EVIDENCE

### ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Are you aware of the expression on your face right now? Are you aware of how you're sitting or standing, or who and what is around you?

Probably not – until I asked the question and your brain went to do a little check, or you had a look round.

Most people are oblivious, most of the time, to what their body is doing.

If you are one of these people, you'll be unaware just how much your body tells others about you. About your moods, emotions and attitudes.

These body movements, signals and gestures are forms of non-verbal communication, or what we commonly refer to as 'body language'.

In business, being aware of and understanding this subject can dramatically change people's perceptions of you – and consequently the results you achieve.

This book takes you through everyday business situations, pointing out what to observe, what to do with what you see, and how to turn it to your advantage.

I start right at the beginning with what body language is, and then take you through greetings, meetings, presenting, selling, negotiating, managing, leading and all the other key areas you need to understand in your business to make the best decisions and be successful.

Over the course of this book, I'll cover all of the situations and common behaviours, just as you would encounter them in your business and your personal life. By the end, you'll be an expert at interpreting what body language means in different situations, and you'll have a range of techniques and approaches to deal with people depending on the signals you see them exhibiting.

## **BODY LANGUAGE AND THE UNCONSCIOUS**

Body language is ubiquitous and affects us all – through our interactions with family, friends, colleagues, shop and restaurant staff, and government officials like police and traffic wardens. They all send us silent messages that tell us things about them, their job and how they feel.

I'm sure you can remember characteristics about certain people you've come into contact with throughout your life: a particular teacher who had a funny walk when you were knee high to a

grasshopper; a friend who always had their hands tucked up their sleeves when you were a teenager; or that bloody woman who kept clicking her pen at a meeting and annoying the hell out of you as you were trying to speak.

Whether we like it or not, we all react to these non-verbal messages. Sometimes we think about them consciously, other times we don't. And just because we aren't *consciously* aware of them doesn't mean that they don't have an effect on us!

Think for a moment about power and status. You walk in to just about any foreign embassy anywhere in the world (if you've not been in one then I'm sure you've seen them in films or on TV). What are you immediately greeted with? Usually the first things you see are the flags. At least one huge flag, if not several, right smack bang in front of you as you enter the building, and then dozens of others of varying sizes dotted around the place. Often you'll see the country's emblem on pictures of beautiful places. You'll see people in smart military uniforms or other security staff.

Then there's other things like security gates, car parking spaces marked for 'Visitors', others marked out especially for the important people who work in the building who may have their own names, initials or titles painted on their space, or, if they're really going for it, their own little etched plastic sign.

Why is all this there?

Simple, it's there to send out a non-verbal message. It's telling you, without it actually needing to be said or written down:

*'You are entering officialdom. Enter at your own risk because, once you are inside, we can do anything we like and you know it.'*

*We can choose to grant you a visa, or throw you in jail, or we could just be really nice and give you cups of tea and posh biscuits. We are all-powerful and strong. We are part of the Government.'*

OK so I'm exaggerating, but you get the point.

We've grown up with non-verbal messages all throughout our lives.

We learn them from the people we've met, especially from people we view as important to us, or have an influence on our lives: parents, grandparents, siblings, extended family, friends, teachers, sports coaches, Cubs, Brownies, Guides leaders, etc.

We learn as we grow up from all the different people we meet, the situations and circumstances we've been in, and the results of those interactions. Sometimes we take it in at a conscious level, sometimes it's totally unconscious.

Well, guess what?

Your own non-verbal communication is both conscious and unconscious too.

Sometimes you know exactly what you're doing and have free choice. Other times you haven't got a clue, you're not even aware of the signals you're sending out. But just because you're unaware of them, doesn't mean that others haven't picked up on them.

In fact, most of what you do with your body is completely unconscious most of the time. Micro-expressions flash across your face in less than half a second, but that's enough for someone to realize things are not what they seem.

Hopefully, as you read through each chapter, you'll start to notice the world around you more. You'll start to pick up on the non-verbal messages you are exposed to day in and day out. You'll understand that non-verbal communication is not just about physical body movements, signals and gestures. It's all that and much more.

## **BODY LANGUAGE HAS TAKEN OVER!**

Unfortunately, the term 'body language' has become a sweeping term for all non-verbal communication. The problem with this is that most people interpret it as applying only to physical body movements.

You don't hear people say, 'Did you see his/her non-verbal communication?' No, instead they say, 'Did you see his/her body language?' It basically means the same thing, although it's a more limited expression.

Pick up just about any national newspaper when there's a big story on, and somewhere in the column inches you'll find a reference to the person's body language. If not directly, then indirectly:

*'They left the Magistrates Court with their heads down to avoid eye contact with the waiting press.'*

*'She was all smiles as she walked confidently waving to the waiting crowd at the premiere of her new film.'*

Non-verbal communication is just as it sounds: an unspoken message that has meaning behind it. By systematically breaking down these types of messages you will learn to read people and situations

better, improve the results you achieve and benefit from the ability to decode what is really going on around you.

So from here on in I'm going to be talking about body language but I'll actually be taking its wider definition, and going through all the different elements this covers. There are two main components:

- *Kinesics*: the term anthropologist Ray Birdwhistle first used in 1952 for his studies on how people interact through their body signals, movements and gestures.
- *Proxemics*: a term coined by anthropologist Edward T. Hall back in 1966 referring to the study of distances between people interacting with each other.

By the time you get to the end of this book you'll realize just how much actually comes under the heading 'body language'.

## THE THREE MAIN USES OF BODY LANGUAGE

What is all this body language that's going on around us all about? What are its main functions? Well, we use body movements, signals and gestures in three main ways: as code or instruction, as an *emphasizer* and as an *indicator*.

### 1. Body language as code or instruction

There are certain jobs or circumstances where body language is used to replace words. In situations where verbal communication doesn't work, body movements can be used to relay information to

others. Ground crew show the pilot where to go when the plane is taxiing. Bookies at a race course use 'Tic Tac' (their very own secret code which only they and their associates know) to convey changing odds on horses or greyhounds.

Lots of different sports have their own set of body movements that mean something to the initiated and nothing to anyone else. Referees in most sports use hand and arm signals. Some get to wave flags as well.

## **2. Body language as an emphazer**

In other situations, body language is used to draw attention to things. A presenter might use their hand and arm like a plane taking off as they mention the growth figures for next year; and many of us use status symbols to emphasize our place in the world. There are all sorts of emphazers, especially in the brand-conscious business world. Look out for 'things' and items that are intended specifically to impress – from clothing to certificates and accolades, from briefcases to gadgets and gizmos. They're all clues about who you're dealing with and, while they're not absolutes, they are little pieces of the jigsaw that you can use to construct the whole scene.

## **3. Body language as an indicator**

Body language is like an additional level of commentary that can either confirm or undermine the words being used. You've probably seen people say 'Yes' while shaking their head from side to side indicating 'No'. It works the other way round too – you'll hear the word 'No' accompanied by a nod of the head.

You'll typically see this sort of incongruence between words and body language when people are under pressure to do something they don't really want to do. It's often accompanied by a 'shoulder shrug', which generally indicates one of two things: either 'indecision', being caught between a 'Yes' and a 'No'; or an outright contradiction of the verbal 'Yes'.

## INTRODUCING THE YODA SYSTEM

This book concentrates on body language in everyday business situations, starting at 'Hello, how are you?' and taking you all the way through to 'Goodbye'.

I'll cover all the common scenarios and roles we play in our jobs, meetings, presentations and negotiations; in the way we manage, motivate, lead and discipline others. By the time you finish you will have the knowledge and understanding of YODA.

In this case YODA isn't the little green pointy eared character in *Star Wars*. It's a simple approach to understanding what you see, which gives you the opportunity to change things if you want.

- **You:** you have to be fully engaged.
- **Observe:** just notice things you didn't before.
- **Decode:** work out what it means.
- **Adapt:** change your behaviour to get better results.

## BODY LANGUAGE AT WORK

Body language is pretty universal, with slight variations and meanings depending on the circumstances and culture.

Business in particular has its own culture. Most people act differently in their business lives and their private lives.

One set of behaviours exhibited in a social situation may have a totally different meaning in a business setting.

For instance, you may be sitting back in a chair with the fingers of both hands interlinked behind your head or neck.



If this is you sitting at home late in the evening watching TV then chances are it's a relaxing position as you let the woes of your day wash away.

However, if you're in a business meeting which you think is going well, when the person you're talking to adopts this position, it could be a sign of arrogance.

## You

Now I have to say at this point that some people are absolutely awful at reading the signs people send. This can lead to all sorts of problems with relationships, social life and work. Others are just naturally good at picking up on the signals without ever having read a single book or done any training on body language.

Those that are good at reading it are generally the ones that seem to know just how to react or behave in any situation. More often than not, they look comfortable with themselves. People warm to them because they feel at ease in their company. They exude confidence.

Whether you are good at reading body language right now or not, you will understand that *you* are the key to how people react around you. You also have choices about how you react to *them*, but only if you learn to observe more...

## Observe

Observation is the starting point for reading body language. Once you can read it, you have choices about what to do with the information.

For instance, if you know someone is lying to you because you've been observing the changes in their body language, you have the choice of calling them out on it, or just tucking that bit of information away for future reference.

If you're oblivious to it then you have no choice, you have to go along with the lie. That could cost you in all sorts of ways: emotionally,

financially, even spiritually. Let's face it, no one likes being taken for a mug.

Believe it or not, lying is part of our daily lives. If you say to yourself at this point, 'I don't tell lies', then you are lying to yourself. We all do. Admittedly some are white lies, which are OK because they generally protect someone's feelings, but not all lies have positive intentions.

In business, the truth is not always told and it's sometimes deliberately withheld. For example, in negotiations you don't give away everything up front. You withhold certain information for later.

The more observant you are, the more adept you will be at avoiding pitfalls and understanding when you've pushed a situation to the limit.

## **Decode**

Closely connected to observing is decoding. It's essential that you develop the skills to decode what you are seeing. That way, you stay in control and have the opportunity to choose how to handle a situation.

Decoding starts at the beginning, when you meet someone. That's true whether it's the first meeting or the fifty-first. A person's body language, like their moods and attitudes, changes from moment to moment depending on what's being talked about.

They'll have an opinion on what you are saying. If they like it, their body language will be open, positive and encouraging. But if you

suddenly stray onto a tricky subject where you have opposing views, the body language will change in an instant.

I've done experiments on the courses I run, where we've hooked participants up to heart and blood pressure monitors then taken readings while talking about non-controversial subjects. After a while, we've gone into more controversial territory where there's disagreement and, again, we've taken readings.

Surprise, surprise. Heart and blood pressure stay in a nice comfortable relaxed zone when the topics are non-controversial, but introduce any controversy and heart rate and blood pressure rise almost instantly.

What's interesting is that when they're relaxed and comfortable body language is fluid and usually mirrors the other person but as soon as any controversy sneaks in, the body language changes. When asked to try to maintain the mirroring, participants find it extremely difficult and their body movements become more jerky and angular. You might have noticed this in yourself or others.

A quick example is the hand and wrist. When relaxed and fluid the hand rolls loosely at the pivot point of the wrist. This stops the moment someone starts gets more serious about something. At this point, their hand, wrist and forearm begin to move as one, pushing forward with jabbing, sweeping gestures.

If you observe this, you are in a position to decode it and make sense of it. In this situation, a sudden rigidity in someone's gestures will tell you that whatever has just been said or done prior to the change is important to that person. With this insight into their

thoughts, you then have the option either to go back and cover it in a different way or change the subject completely and talk about something less important or controversial.

If you want to see this change in action watch TV programmes like *Question Time*, *Prime Minister's Question Time*, *The Apprentice* or any other show that features people with opposing views. One minute they'll be all relaxed and fluid and the next they're stiff and rigid.

## **Adapt**

You will have picked up by now that the greatest gift to come from understanding someone through their body language is that it gives you choices.

It gives insight into how they are feeling at any moment. Once you've learned to tap into someone's emotions, you can build a much deeper level of trust and rapport with them. In business, that means people are more likely to enjoy working with you.

- Adapting can only be done if you observe and decode first.
- Adapting can bring surprising results very quickly.
- Adapting is your free choice.

But what exactly is adapting? Adapting means changing your default reaction to something more consciously designed to shift the other person from their position to a different one – one that is better for you.

## YODA IN A NUTSHELL

YODA is a simple system that covers reading, interpreting and acting on body language cues – both that you spot around you, and that you display yourself.

### You

- You need to be fully aware that the signals you give off will have an effect on others.
- You need to understand that your moods affect the signals you give out and, in turn, receive.

### Observe

- You will already be observing body language at some level depending on your innate awareness of it.
- Start looking deeper at smaller details you may have been missing to expand your knowledge.

### Decode

- Decoding gives you choices about how to handle different individuals and different situations.

### Adapt

- When you've mastered body language you will be able to adapt the signals you send out yourself, and your responses to other people's body language.

- Empower yourself by increasing your range of options in different situations.

Mastering body language can literally transform relationships:

- You're more in tune with everyone around you.
- You become the one that everyone likes to be around.
- You become the one people trust.
- You become the person other people recommend to their business colleagues.

### **Why?**

Simple. If you can adapt it shows flexibility. It means you have the personality to get on better with a wide range of people. This is a key skill in every walk of life, because we live and work in a rapidly changing world.

We do this all the time, in most cases without realizing that we've already been through the process of observing and decoding a set of signals to get there.

Here's a really simple example. Let's say two guys are standing face to face talking about football and one is winding the other up about the results the previous Saturday. The butt of the jokes starts to get annoyed and their body language changes: eyes glare, teeth become gritted, shoulders are tensed and fists clench. It's a physical reaction which says, 'Don't push me or I'm going to explode'.

If you've noticed it, which you almost certainly would because that particular set of signals spells danger, you have a choice right there and then, whether to keep pushing their buttons or back off. Unless you want them to vent their anger you'd be a fool to keep pushing. Sometimes in a fight it's better just to back down.

That's the adapting part. This is an extreme example, but as you can see, it's not rocket science. It's what we do automatically.

This book is all about making you more aware of opportunities to adapt, through your observation and decoding skills.

## **SUMMARY**

In brief, this book will give you a thorough understanding of the importance of body language in the workplace, but it will help in every area of your life.

It will help you see the body language behind your interactions with others, and this insight in turn will give you many more choices in how you engage with and react to people.

You will learn how to change and adapt your own body language to give you more confidence when you need it.

You'll learn how to play with body language to discover what works best for you.

You'll learn about the gaps in our minds and the unconscious effect non-verbal communication has on us all.

You will also learn the answers to two of the most common questions I'm asked when training people or giving speeches.

*'How do you know when someone is physically attracted to you?'*

and

*'How do you know when someone is lying to you?'*

Yes, this book focuses on body language in business situations, but everyone wants to know if someone finds them attractive! It's part of human nature. It's part of the future survival of the human race. Maybe it's something you could use in your next negotiation too.

When one person finds another attractive, there's a whole set of common signals they both display. Lots of relationships start through business interactions, and this can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. You need to know what to look out for.

The same can be said for lying. Everyone would love to know when they're being sold a lie. After all, honesty is one of the basic building blocks of relationships. When it breaks down and the trust goes, the relationship is generally doomed. It doesn't matter if it's a friendship or a business relationship, there has to be a certain level of trust between people.

Understanding body language will help you build trust and rapport. It will certainly give you more choices, which will empower you, in every area of your life.

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