

Decoding body language for effective communication

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How many times have you met a person and instantly liked the way they talk and carry themselves? And even vice versa. What is it that distinguishes a speaker from an effective speaker? Communication skills will be the knee-jerk response, and it is correct. However, one needs to understand that communication is not just, about what you speak; it is more about how you speak too. Most English learning courses lay stress on learning the right body language as well.

If you have ever wondered about how to improve communication skills, keep in mind that body language makes up for a good 50 percent of effective communication, and in this article, we will enunciate on how you can decode the body language to improve English communication.



Things to remember

Here are a few pointers that you can utilize to enhance your body language:

Understand your own body language: Do you have the habit of playing with your hair or looking askance while you are, say, giving an interview or talking to a colleague? What you are saying and what your body is communicating may be poles apart.

The best way of studying your own body language is to do it in front of a mirror. Imagine you are talking to someone, and pay attention to your stance, how you use your hands, what are your eyes communicating, etc.

In the above picture, which person do you think appears confident and sure of what they are saying? You reckon the person on the right. When confidence can be reflected through a mere picture, imagine what a good body posture can contribute to your communication skills! Always, make sure that your body language is in sync with what you say.

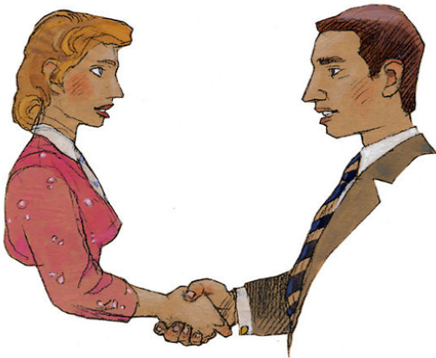
Use gestures effectively: When two people are debating, have you noticed how rigorously the participants shake their hands or heads? While, when the same people are having a more friendly conversation, they will be more relaxed. Gestures form a very important part of body language. How you place your arms to how you use your eyebrows, everything has an impact on the way you communicate.

Here is a simple exercise for you:



communicate with the right gestures!

Eye contact and facial expressions: Go to any body language expert and the first tip they will give you is to always maintain eye contact when communicating. Maintaining eye contact is a sign of honesty and attentiveness. However, it is also important to ensure that you do not appear imposing.



The above picture effectively shows how to maintain eye contact; correct body posture and a firm handshake to spell out that you are confident, approachable and cordial. Yes, all this is communicated simply through the right body language!

Be yourself: While you need to consciously cultivate a positive body language, at the same time it is important to make sure that whatever you do, comes naturally to you. Nothing appears to be more fake, than you trying to be someone you are not.

For example, many people understand the importance of a firm handshake, but do not understand just how firm. Many people's handshakes are way too hard or way too limp! The key here is to practice, practice, and practice some more. Get a partner with whom you can have mock conversations wherein the other person can read and judge your body language, and vice versa.

An effective body language will go a long way in enhancing your [English communication skills](#).

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- By Chander Madan

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