

Good news- If you're tired of hearing me say, "if your arms are crossed, you're in a closed position and likely in a defensive mode" this may be the body language book for you! Did I really say that?? Anyway, the material in this book was drawn from current academic research, rather than rehashed material from the 1970s. The author never talks down to his audience, but rather presents the material with just the right amount of complexity to convey the full meaning of his subject, without getting bogged down in a lot of behavioral jargon.

Bad news- It is kind of like a textbook and, like most textbooks, could be a little shorter.

Good news- There are loads of down-to-earth, immediately usable strategies revealed in this book and as usual, I have gleaned the best and most practical ideas from it, and offer you some meaningful applications. Hopefully you can put them to use in three minutes if not the three seconds the author claims!

Summary:

Doing business is a lot like playing poker; you make calculated risks and tough decisions based on the best information you have. In poker or business, it always helps to know what the other person is thinking. Are they for real or not? Are they telling you the truth, or just telling you what you want to hear? Whether you're negotiating a deal with a client or collaborating on a project with a colleague, knowing what the other person is thinking will always give you an edge and even better, enhance the communication going on.

The Secret Language of Business reveals the secrets of body language and nonverbal communication. Successful professionals need more than just good communication skills. They also need the ability to interpret the nonverbal signals that everyone displays. The author demonstrates how to master and manipulate our own body language, read the body language of others, and influence people through new skills and perception. No matter what business you're in, this is a valuable guide to achieving more in life and business.

The author reveals the basics of body language and how they expose and influence attitudes, actions, and outcomes. Everyone conveys information through body language, whether they know it or not. Interpreting body language isn't magic, but rather a science you can master. The book explores the meaning of what people wear and the symbols they surround themselves with. It also details the importance of various contexts and environments in which communications take place.

Non-verbal communication happens deliberately and consciously as well as spontaneously and unconsciously, and it happens as the sender and as the receiver

- Children, teenagers, young adults and expressive, extroverted adults exhibit the most spontaneous non-verbal behaviors
- More reserved, introverted adults are less spontaneous or have learned to be so

There are six main categories of body language:

- Repeating (what someone else is doing)
- Conflicting (with others)
- Complementing (staying in synch)
- Substituting (other non-verbals)
- Accenting/Moderating (for emphasis)
- Regulating (not going too far)

Applications:

(some a little more whacky than others, but all usable)

The basics still matter

- Non-verbals represent up to 90% of face-to-face communication
- Closed body positions really do mean that communication is being shut down
- Open positions, palms up, etc. mean that people are listening
- Gestures really count. Shrugs and hand movements mean a lot. "Palms up" is a good sign. "Palms down" is not.
- Touching comes in four categories: Professional, Social, Friendship and Intimacy. Be careful. Know where you are at all times!
- Posture matters too; head, shoulders, arms, hips and legs say a lot. Aim for openness.

People might be lying if:

- Their normal foot position and movement changes (we have learned to control most other parts of our anatomy when telling a lie)
- The size of their pupils changes (either getting larger or smaller)
- They DON'T stumble over their words, sequence or chronology (since we all stumble a bit and a rehearsed lie can come out pretty cleanly)

Not everyone is the same

- Culture really affects non-verbal behavior. This applies to personal space, touching, eye contact, gestures and more. Be aware of people's cultural backgrounds.

Proxemics (personal space) differs.

There are four areas of space:

- Intimate space (0-18 inches)
- Personal space (18 inches to four feet)
- Social space (four feet to 12 feet)
- Public space (12 feet to 25 feet and beyond)
- Men stand and sit further away from others for comfort
- Women stand and sit closer for comfort
- Women sit further away from men for comfort
- Know your own "bubble" and respect others'

What people wear speaks volumes

- Most people want to blend into or match with their work environment, whether it is conservative, casual, industrial or academic.
- Be aware of how you look at all times, dress appropriately and pay attention to others too.

So does what their work space looks like

- If you want to be seen as organized, focused, friendly, open, etc., then make sure your work space reflects these characteristics
- The opposite applies as well and people will make assumptions and judgments

First impressions

- People form opinions of you instantly without a single spoken word
- To make a good first impression dress neatly and appropriately, make sure you are clean and fresh, make good eye contact, walk up to the person confidently, smile, say hello and reach out to shake hands and shake firmly. Stand about four feet away and turn slightly sideways to avoid an aggressive stance.



The Secret Language of Business: How to Read Anyone in 3 Seconds or Less

By Kevin Hogan

Meetings

- Decide where to sit; at the head if you are the leader, beside rather than directly across from someone with whom you are likely to disagree, and not in the back of the room
- Sit up. Don't slouch. Pay attention. Carry as little as possible with you so you don't look disorganized.
- Follow the meeting ground rules, both verbal and non-verbal.

Is it influence or manipulation?

- All of these tips are intended to enhance communication and personal influence
- Do NOT overuse or inappropriately use any of them to manipulate

And Finally:

I work with many clients on Communication, Team Building, Conflict, Executive Coaching and Organization Change issues and have already put aspects of this book to use with some of them. I intend to continue using what I learn about non-verbal communication with more clients in the future. If you want more thoughts about this book, or want to add your own, check out my blog. You can visit it at <http://richsteel.blogspot.com> This opinion and others are posted on my web site: www.rsbvc.com

To talk more about this and other topics, e-mail me (Rich Steel) at rsbvc@aol.com or call me at my office on 610 388 3680 or on my cell at 610 324 8466.