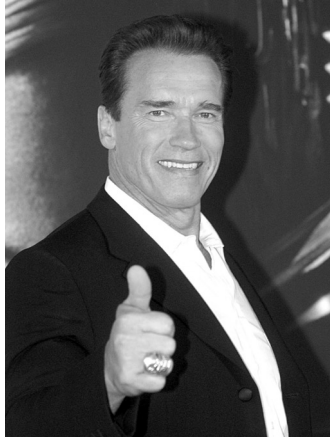


Chapter 1

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS



This is 'good' to Westerners, 'one' to Italians, 'five' to Japanese and 'up yours' to the Greeks

Everyone knows someone who can walk into a room full of people and, within minutes, give an accurate description about the relationships between those people and what they are feeling. The ability to read a person's attitudes and thoughts by their behaviour was the original communication system used by humans before spoken language evolved.

Before radio was invented, most communication was done in writing through books, letters and newspapers, which meant that ugly politicians and poor speakers, such as Abraham Lincoln, could be successful if they persisted long enough and wrote good print copy. The radio era gave openings to people who had a good command of the spoken word, like Winston Churchill, who spoke wonderfully but may have struggled to achieve as much in today's more visual era.

8 The Definitive Book of Body Language

Today's politicians understand that politics is about image and appearance and most high-profile politicians now have personal body language consultants to help them come across as being sincere, caring and honest, especially when they're not.

It seems almost incredible that, over the thousands of years of our evolution, body language has been actively studied on any scale only since the 1960s and that most of the public has become aware of its existence only since our book *Body Language* was published in 1978. Yet most people believe that speech is still our main form of communication. Speech has been part of our communication repertoire only in recent times in evolutionary terms, and is mainly used to convey facts and data. Speech probably first developed between 2 million and 500,000 years ago, during which time our brain tripled its size. Before then, body language and sounds made in the throat were the main forms of conveying emotions and feelings, and that is still the case today. But because we focus on the words people speak, most of us are largely uninformed about body language, let alone its importance in our lives.

Our spoken language, however, recognises how important body language is to our communication. Here are just a few of the phrases we use –

.....
Get it off your chest. Keep a stiff upper lip.
Stay at arm's length. Keep your chin up.
Shoulder a burden. Face up to it.
Put your best foot forward. Kiss my butt.

Some of these phrases are hard to swallow, but you've got to give us a big hand because there are some real eye-openers here. As a rule of thumb, we can keep them coming hand over fist until you either buckle at the knees or turn your back on the whole idea. Hopefully, you'll be sufficiently touched by these phrases to lean towards the concept.

In the Beginning...

Silent movie actors like Charlie Chaplin were the pioneers of body language skills, as this was the only means of communication available on the screen. Each actor's skill was classed as good or bad by the extent to which he could use gestures and body signals to communicate to the audience. When talking films became popular and less emphasis was placed on the non-verbal aspects of acting, many silent movie actors faded into obscurity and only those with good verbal and non-verbal skills survived.

As far as the academic study of body language goes, perhaps the most influential pre-twentieth-century work was Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, published in 1872, but this work tended to be read mainly by academics. However, it spawned the modern studies of facial expressions and body language, and many of Darwin's ideas and observations have since been validated by researchers around the world. Since that time, researchers have noted and recorded almost a million non-verbal cues and signals. Albert Mehrabian, a pioneer researcher of body language in the 1950s, found that the total impact of a message is about 7% verbal (words only) and 38% vocal (including tone of voice, inflection and other sounds) and 55% non-verbal.

.....
*It's how you looked when you said
it, not what you actually said.*
.....

Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell pioneered the original study of non-verbal communication – what he called 'kinesics'. Birdwhistell made some similar estimates of the amount of non-verbal communication that takes place between humans. He estimated that the average person actually speaks words for a total of about ten or eleven minutes a day and that the average sentence takes only about 2.5 seconds. Birdwhistell also

10 The Definitive Book of Body Language

estimated we can make and recognise around 250,000 facial expressions.

Like Mehrabian, he found that the verbal component of a face-to-face conversation is less than 35% and that over 65% of communication is done non-verbally. Our analysis of thousands of recorded sales interviews and negotiations during the 1970s and 1980s showed that, in business encounters, body language accounts for between 60 and 80% of the impact made around a negotiating table and that people form 60 to 80% of their initial opinion about a new person in less than four minutes. Studies also show that when negotiating over the telephone, the person with the stronger argument usually wins, but this is not so true when negotiating face-to-face, because overall we make our final decisions more on what we see than what we hear.

Why It's Not What You Say

Despite what it may be politically correct to believe, when we meet people for the first time we quickly make judgements about their friendliness, dominance and potential as a sexual partner – and their eyes are *not* the first place we look.

Most researchers now agree that words are used primarily for conveying information, while body language is used for negotiating interpersonal attitudes and in some cases is used as a substitute for verbal messages. For example, a woman can give a man a 'look to kill' and will convey a very clear message to him without opening her mouth.

Regardless of culture, words and movements occur together with such predictability that Birdwhistell was the first to claim that a well-trained person should be able to tell what movement a person is making by listening to their voice. Birdwhistell even learned how to tell what language a person was speaking, simply by watching their gestures.

Many people find difficulty in accepting that humans are

still biologically animals. We are a species of primate – *Homo sapiens* – a hairless ape that has learned to walk on two limbs and has a clever, advanced brain. But like any other species, we are still dominated by biological rules that control our actions, reactions, body language and gestures. The fascinating thing is that the human animal is rarely aware that its postures, movements and gestures can tell one story while its voice may be telling another.

How Body Language Reveals Emotions and Thoughts

Body language is an outward reflection of a person's emotional condition. Each gesture or movement can be a valuable key to an emotion a person may be feeling at the time. For example, a man who is self-conscious about gaining weight may tug at the fold of skin under his chin; the woman who is aware of extra pounds on her thighs may smooth her dress down; the person who is feeling fearful or defensive might fold their arms or cross their legs or both; and a man talking with a large-breasted woman may consciously avoid staring at her



Prince Charles finds a bosom buddy

12 The Definitive Book of Body Language

breasts while, at the same time, unconsciously use groping gestures with his hands.

The key to reading body language is being able to understand a person's emotional condition while listening to what they are saying and noting the circumstances under which they are saying it. This allows you to separate fact from fiction and reality from fantasy. In recent times, we humans have had an obsession with the spoken word and our ability to be conversationalists. Most people, however, are remarkably unaware of body language signals and their impact, despite the fact that we now know that most of the messages in any face-to-face conversation are revealed through body signals. For example, France's President Chirac, USA's President Ronald Reagan and Australia's Prime Minister Bob Hawke all used their hands to reveal the relative sizes of issues in their mind. Bob Hawke once defended pay increases for politicians by comparing their salaries to corporate executive salaries. He claimed that executive salaries had risen by a huge amount and that proposed politicians' increases were relatively smaller. Each time he mentioned politicians' incomes, he held his hands a yard (1m) apart. When he mentioned executive salaries, however, he held them only a foot (30cm) apart. His



President Jacques Chirac – measuring the size of an issue or simply boasting about his love life?

hand distances revealed that he felt politicians were getting a much better deal than he was prepared to admit.

Why Women are More Perceptive

When we say someone is 'perceptive' or 'intuitive' about people, we are unknowingly referring to their ability to read another person's body language and to compare these cues with verbal signals. In other words, when we say that we have a 'hunch' or 'gut feeling' that someone has told us a lie, we usually mean that their body language and their spoken words don't agree. This is also what speakers call audience awareness, or relating to a group. For example, if an audience were sitting back in their seats with their chins down and arms crossed on their chest, a 'perceptive' speaker would get a hunch or feeling that his delivery was not going across well. He would realise that he needed to take a different approach to gain audience involvement. Likewise, a speaker who was not 'perceptive' would blunder on regardless.

.....
Being 'perceptive' means being able to spot the contradictions between someone's words and their body language.
.....

Overall, women are far more perceptive than men, and this has given rise to what is commonly referred to as 'women's intuition'. Women have an innate ability to pick up and decipher non-verbal signals, as well as having an accurate eye for small details. This is why few husbands can lie to their wives and get away with it and why, conversely, most women can pull the wool over a man's eyes without his realising it.

Research by psychologists at Harvard University showed how women are far more alert to body language than men. They showed short films, with the sound turned off, of a man and woman communicating, and the participants were asked

14 The Definitive Book of Body Language

to decode what was happening by reading the couple's expressions. The research showed that women read the situation accurately 87% of the time while the men scored only 42% accuracy. Men in 'nurturing' occupations, such as artistic types, acting and nursing, did nearly as well as the women; gay men also scored well. Female intuition is particularly evident in women who have raised children. For the first few years, the mother relies almost solely on the non-verbal channel to communicate with the child and this is why women are often more perceptive negotiators than men because they practise reading signals early.

What Brain Scans Show

Most women have the brain organisation to out-communicate any man on the planet. Magnetic Resonance Imaging brain scans (MRI) clearly show why women have far greater capacity for communicating with and evaluating people than men do. Women have between fourteen and sixteen areas of the brain to evaluate others' behaviour versus a man's four to six areas. This explains how a woman can attend a dinner party and rapidly work out the state of the relationships of other couples at the party – who's had an argument, who likes who and so on. It also explains why, from a woman's standpoint, men don't seem to talk much and, from a man's standpoint, women never seem to shut up.

As we showed in *Why Men Don't Listen & Women Can't Read Maps* (Orion), the female brain is organised for multi-tracking – the average woman can juggle between two and four unrelated topics at the same time. She can watch a television programme while talking on the telephone plus listen to a second conversation behind her, while drinking a cup of coffee. She can talk about several unrelated topics in the one conversation and uses five vocal tones to change the subject or emphasise points. Unfortunately, most men can only identify

three of these tones. As a result, men often lose the plot when women are trying to communicate with them.

Studies show that a person who relies on hard visual evidence face to face about the behaviour of another person is more likely to make more accurate judgements about that person than someone who relies solely on their gut feeling. The evidence is in the person's body language and, while women can do it subconsciously, anyone can teach themselves consciously to read the signals. That's what this book is about.

How Fortune-Tellers Know So Much

If you've ever visited a fortune teller you probably came away amazed at the things they knew about you – things no one else could possibly have known – so it must be ESP, right? Research into the fortune-telling business shows that operators use a technique known as 'cold reading' which can produce an accuracy of around 80% when 'reading' a person you've never met. While it can appear to be magical to naïve and vulnerable people, it is simply a process based on the careful observation of body language signals plus an understanding of human nature and a knowledge of probability statistics. It's a technique practised by psychics, tarot card readers, astrologists and palm readers to gather information about a 'client'. Many 'cold readers' are largely unaware of their abilities to read non-verbal signals and so also become convinced that they really must have 'psychic' abilities. This all adds to a convincing performance, bolstered by the fact that people who regularly visit 'psychics' go with positive expectations of the outcome. Throw in a set of tarot cards, a crystal ball or two and a bit of theatre, and the stage is perfectly set for a body-language-reading session that can convince even the most hardened sceptic that strange, magical forces must be at work. It all boils down to the reader's

16 The Definitive Book of Body Language

ability to decode a person's reactions to statements made and to questions asked, and by information gathered from simple observation about a person's appearance. Most 'psychics' are female because, as women, as discussed previously, they have the extra brain wiring to allow them to read the body signals of babies and to read others' emotional condition.

.....
The fortune-teller gazed into her crystal ball and then started laughing uncontrollably. So John punched her on the nose. It was the first time he'd ever struck a happy medium.
.....

To demonstrate the point, here now is a psychic reading for you personally. Imagine you've come to a dimly lit, smoke-filled room where a jewel-encrusted psychic wearing a turban is seated at a low, moon-shaped table with a crystal ball:

I'm glad you've come to this session and I can see you have things that are troubling you because I am receiving strong signals from you. I sense that the things you really want out of life sometimes seem unrealistic and you often wonder whether you can achieve them. I also sense that at times you are friendly, social and outgoing to others, but that at other times you are withdrawn, reserved and cautious. You take pride in being an independent thinker but also know not to accept what you see and hear from others, without proof. You like change and variety but become restless if controlled by restrictions and routine. You want to share your innermost feelings with those closest to you but have found it unwise to be too open and revealing. A man in your life with the initial 'S' is exerting a strong influence over you right now and a woman who is born in November will contact you in the next month with an exciting offer. While you appear disciplined and controlled on the outside, you tend to be concerned and worried on the inside and at times you wonder whether or not you have made the right choice or decision.

So how did we go? Did we read you accurately? Studies show that the information in this 'reading' is more than 80% accurate for any person reading it. Throw in an excellent ability to read body language postures, facial expressions and a person's other twitches and movements, plus dim lighting, weird music and a stick of incense, and we guarantee you can even amaze the dog! We won't encourage you to become a fortune-teller but you'll soon be able to read others as accurately as they do.

Inborn, Genetic or Learned Culturally?

When you cross your arms on your chest, do you cross left over right or right over left? Most people cannot confidently describe which way they do this until they try it. Cross your arms on your chest right now and then try to quickly reverse the position. Where one way feels comfortable, the other feels completely wrong. Evidence suggests that this may well be a genetic gesture that cannot be changed.

.....
*Seven out of ten people cross
their left arm over their right.*
.....

Much debate and research has been done to discover whether non-verbal signals are inborn, learned, genetically transferred or acquired in some other way. Evidence has been collected from observation of blind people (who could not have learned non-verbal signals through a visual channel), from observing the gestural behaviour of many different cultures around the world and from studying the behaviour of our nearest anthropological relatives, the apes and monkeys.

The conclusions of this research indicate that some gestures fall into each category. For example, most primate babies are born with the immediate ability to suck, showing that this is

18 The Definitive Book of Body Language

either inborn or genetic. The German scientist Eibl-Eibesfeldt found that the smiling expressions of children born deaf and blind occur independently of learning or copying, which means that these must also be inborn gestures. Ekman, Friesen and Sorenson supported some of Darwin's original beliefs about inborn gestures when they studied the facial expressions of people from five widely different cultures. They found that each culture used the same basic facial gestures to show emotion, which led them to the conclusion that these gestures must also be inborn.

.....
*Cultural differences are many but the basic
 body language signals are the same everywhere.*

Debate still exists as to whether some gestures are culturally learned, and become habitual, or are genetic. For example, most men put on a coat right arm first; most women put it on left arm first. This shows that men use their left brain hemisphere for this action while women use the right hemisphere. When a man passes a woman in a crowded street, he usually turns his body towards her as he passes; she instinctively turns her body away from him to protect her breasts. Is this an inborn female reaction or has she learned to do this by unconsciously watching other females?

Some Basic Origins

Most of the basic communication signals are the same all over the world. When people are happy they smile; when they are sad or angry they frown or scowl. Nodding the head is almost universally used to indicate 'yes' or affirmation. It appears to be a form of head lowering and is probably an inborn gesture because it's also used by people born blind. Shaking the head from side to side to indicate 'no' or negation

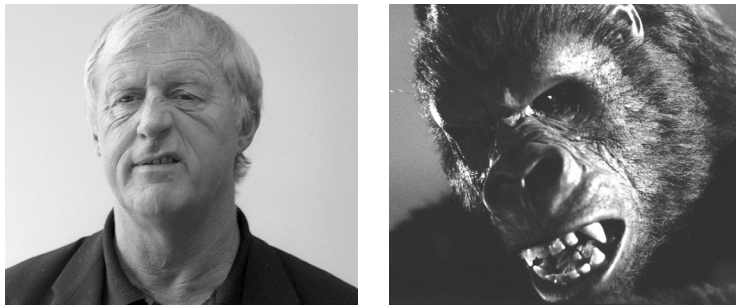
is also universal and appears to be a gesture learned in infancy. When a baby has had enough milk, it turns its head from side to side to reject its mother's breast. When the young child has had enough to eat, he shakes his head from side to side to stop any attempt to spoon-feed him and, in this way, he quickly learns to use the head shaking gesture to show disagreement or a negative attitude.

.....
*The head-shaking gesture signals 'no'
and owes its origin to breastfeeding.*
.....

The evolutionary origin of some gestures can be traced to our primitive animal past. Smiling, for example, is a threat gesture for most carnivorous animals, but for primates it is done in conjunction with non-threatening gestures to show submission.

Baring the teeth and nostril flaring are derived from the act of attacking and are primitive signals used by other primates. Sneering is used by animals to warn others that, if necessary, they'll use their teeth to attack or defend. For humans, this gesture still appears even though humans won't usually attack with their teeth.

Nostril flaring allows more air to oxygenate the body in preparation for fight or flight and, in the primate world, it



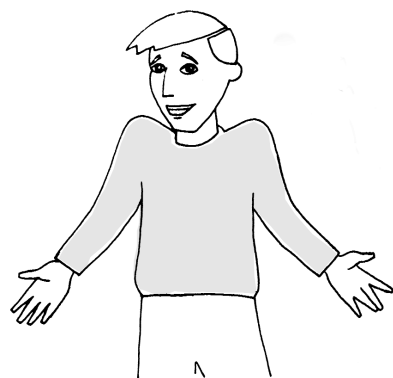
Human and animal sneering – you wouldn't want to go on a date with either of these two

20 The Definitive Book of Body Language

tells others that back-up support is needed to deal with an imminent threat. In the human world, sneering is caused by anger, irritation, when a person feels under physical or emotional threat or feels that something is not right.

Universal Gestures

The *Shoulder Shrug* is also a good example of a universal gesture that is used to show that a person doesn't know or doesn't understand what you are saying. It's a multiple gesture that has three main parts: exposed palms to show nothing is being concealed in the hands, hunched shoulders to protect the throat from attack and raised brow which is a universal, submissive greeting.



The Shoulder Shrug shows submission

Just as verbal language differs from culture to culture, so some body language signals can also differ. Whereas one gesture may be common in a particular culture and have a clear interpretation, it may be meaningless in another culture or even have a completely different meaning. Cultural differences will be covered later, in Chapter 5.

Three Rules for Accurate Reading

What you see and hear in any situation does not necessarily reflect the real attitudes people may actually have. You need to follow three basic rules to get things right.

Rule 1. Read Gestures in Clusters

One of the most serious errors a novice in body language can make is to interpret a solitary gesture in isolation of other gestures or circumstances. For example, scratching the head can mean a number of things – sweating, uncertainty, dandruff, fleas, forgetfulness or lying – depending on the other gestures that occur at the same time. Like any spoken language, body language has words, sentences and punctuation. Each gesture is like a single word and one word may have several different meanings. For example, in English, the word ‘dressing’ has at least ten meanings including the act of putting on clothing, a sauce for food, stuffing for a fowl, an application for a wound, fertiliser and grooming for a horse.

It’s only when you put a word into a sentence with other words that you can fully understand its meaning. Gestures come in ‘sentences’ called clusters and invariably reveal the truth about a person’s feelings or attitudes. A body language cluster, just like a verbal sentence, needs at least three words in it before you can accurately define each of the words. The ‘perceptive’ person is the one who can read the body language sentences and accurately match them against the person’s verbal sentences.

.....
*Scratching the head can mean uncertainty
 but it’s also a sign of dandruff.*

So always look at gesture clusters for a correct reading. Each of us has one or more repetitive gestures that simply reveal we are either bored or feeling under pressure. Continual hair

22 The Definitive Book of Body Language

touching or twirling is a common example of this but, in isolation of other gestures, it's likely to mean the person is feeling uncertain or anxious. People stroke their hair or head because that's how their mother comforted them when they were children.

To demonstrate the point about clusters, here's a common *Critical Evaluation* gesture cluster someone might use when they are unimpressed with what they are hearing:



You're losing points with this man

The main *Critical Evaluation* signal is the hand-to-face gesture, with the index finger pointing up the cheek while another finger covers the mouth and the thumb supports the chin. Further evidence that this listener is having critical thoughts about what he hears is supported by the legs being tightly crossed and the arm crossing the body (defensive) while the



Hillary Clinton uses this cluster when she's not convinced

head and chin are down (negative/hostile). This body language ‘sentence’ says something like, ‘I don’t like what you’re saying’, ‘I disagree’ or ‘I’m holding back negative feelings’.

Rule 2. Look for Congruence

Research shows that non-verbal signals carry about five times as much impact as the verbal channel and that, when the two are incongruent people – especially women – rely on the non-verbal message and disregard the verbal content.

If you, as the speaker, were to ask the listener shown above to give his opinion about something you’ve said and he replied that he disagreed with you, his body language signals would be congruent with his verbal sentences, that is, they would match. If, however, he said he *agreed* with what you said, he would more likely be lying because his words and gestures would be incongruent.

.....
*When a person’s words and body language
 are in conflict, women ignore what is said.*

If you saw a politician standing behind a lectern speaking confidently but with his arms tightly folded across his chest (defensive) and chin down (critical/hostile), while telling his audience how receptive and open he is to the ideas of young people, would you be convinced? What if he attempted to convince you of his warm, caring approach while giving short, sharp karate chops to the lectern? Sigmund Freud once reported that while a patient was verbally expressing happiness with her marriage, she was unconsciously slipping her wedding ring on and off her finger. Freud was aware of the significance of this unconscious gesture and was not surprised when marriage problems began to surface.

Observation of gesture clusters and congruence of the verbal and body language channels are the keys to accurately interpreting attitudes through body language.

Rule 3. Read Gestures in Context

All gestures should be considered in the context in which they occur. If, for example, someone was sitting at a bus terminal with his arms and legs tightly crossed and chin down and it was a cold winter's day, it would most likely mean that he was cold, not defensive. If, however, the person used the same gestures while you were sitting across a table from him trying to sell him an idea, product or service, it could be correctly interpreted as meaning that the person was feeling negative or rejecting your offer.



Cold, not defensive

Throughout this book all body language gestures will be considered in context and, where possible, gesture clusters will be examined.

Why It Can be Easy to Misread

Someone who has a soft or limp handshake – especially a man – is likely to be accused of having a weak character and the next chapter on handshake techniques will explore the reason

behind this. But if someone has arthritis in their hands it is likely that they will also use a soft handshake to avoid the pain of a strong one. Similarly, artists, musicians, surgeons and those whose occupation is delicate and involves use of their hands generally prefer not to shake hands, but, if they are forced into it, they may use a 'dead fish' handshake to protect their hands.

Someone who wears ill-fitting or tight clothing may be unable to use certain gestures, and this can affect their use of body language. For example, obese people can't cross their legs. Women who wear short skirts will sit with their legs tightly crossed for protection, but this results in them looking less approachable and less likely to be asked to dance at a nightclub. These circumstances apply to the minority of people, but it is important to consider what effect a person's physical restrictions or disabilities may have on their body movement.

Why Kids are Easier to Read

Older people are harder to read than younger ones because they have less muscle tone in the face.

The speed of some gestures and how obvious they look to others is also related to the age of the individual. For example, if a five-year-old child tells a lie, he's likely to immediately cover his mouth with one or both hands.



The child telling a lie

26 The Definitive Book of Body Language

The act of covering the mouth can alert a parent to the lie and this mouth-covering gesture will likely continue throughout the person's lifetime, usually only varying in the speed at which it's done. When a teenager tells a lie, the hand is brought to the mouth in a similar way to the five-year-old, but instead of the obvious hand-slapping gesture over the mouth, the fingers rub lightly around it.



The teenager telling a lie

The original mouth-covering gesture becomes even faster in adulthood. When an adult tells a lie, it's as if his brain instructs his hand to cover his mouth in an attempt to block the deceitful words, just as it did for the five-year-old and the teenager. But, at the last moment, the hand is pulled away from the face and a nose touch gesture results. This is simply an adult's version of the mouth-covering gesture that was used in childhood.



Bill Clinton answering questions about Monica Lewinsky in front of the Grand Jury

This shows how, as people get older, their gestures become more subtle and less obvious and is why it's often more difficult to read the gestures of a fifty-year-old than those of a five-year-old.

Can You Fake It?

We are regularly asked, 'Can you fake body language?' The general answer to this question is 'no', because of the lack of congruence that is likely to occur between the main gestures, the body's micro-signals and the spoken words. For example, open palms are associated with honesty but when the faker holds his palms out and smiles at you as he tells a lie, his micro-gestures give him away. His pupils may contract, one eyebrow may lift or the corner of his mouth may twitch, and these signals contradict the open palm gesture and the sincere smile. The result is that the receivers, especially women, tend not to believe what they hear.

.....
*Body language is easier to fake with men
than with women because, overall, men
aren't good readers of body language.*
.....

True-Life Story: The Lying Job Applicant

We were interviewing a man who was explaining why he had quit his last job. He told us that there had been insufficient future opportunity available to him and that it was a hard decision to leave as he got on well with all the staff there. A female interviewer said she had an 'intuitive feeling' that the applicant was lying and that he had negative feelings about his former boss, despite the applicant's continual praising of his boss. During a review of the interview on slow-motion

video, we noticed that each time the applicant mentioned his former boss a split-second sneer appeared on the left side of his face. Often these contradictory signals will flash across a person's face in a fraction of a second and are missed by an untrained observer. We telephoned his former boss and discovered the applicant had been fired for dealing drugs to other staff members. As confidently as this applicant had tried to fake his body language, his contradictory micro-gestures gave the game away to our female interviewer.

The key here is being able to separate the real gestures from fake ones so a genuine person can be distinguished from a liar or impostor. Signals like pupil dilation, sweating and blushing cannot be consciously faked but exposing the palms to try to appear honest is easily learned.

.....
Fakers can only pretend for a short period of time.
.....

There are, however, some cases in which body language is deliberately faked to gain certain advantages. Take, for example, the Miss World or Miss Universe contest, in which each contestant uses studiously learned body movements to give the impression of warmth and sincerity. To the extent that each contestant can convey these signals, she will score points from the judges. But even the expert contestants can only fake body language for a short period of time and eventually the body will show contradictory signals that are independent of conscious actions. Many politicians are experts in faking body language in order to get the voters to believe what they are saying, and politicians who can successfully do this – such as John F Kennedy and Adolf Hitler – are said to have ‘charisma’.

In summary, it is difficult to fake body language for a long period of time but, as we will discuss, it's important to learn how to use positive body language to communicate with others and to eliminate negative body language that may give out

the wrong message. This can make it more comfortable to be with others and make you more acceptable to them, which is one of the aims of this book.

How to Become a Great Reader

Set aside at least fifteen minutes a day to study the body language of other people, as well as acquiring a conscious awareness of your own gestures. A good reading ground is anywhere that people meet and interact. An airport is a particularly good place for observing the entire spectrum of human gestures as people openly express eagerness, anger, sorrow, happiness, impatience and many other emotions through body language. Social functions, business meetings and parties are also excellent. When you become proficient at the art of reading body language, you can go to a party, sit in a corner all evening and have an exciting time just watching other people's body language rituals.

.....
*Modern humans are worse at reading
body signals than their ancestors because we
are now distracted by words.*
.....

Television also offers an excellent way of learning. Turn down the sound and try to understand what is happening by first watching the picture. By turning the sound up every few minutes, you will be able to check how accurate your non-verbal readings are and, before long, it will be possible to watch an entire programme without any sound and understand what is happening, just as deaf people do.

Learning to read body language signals not only makes you more acutely aware of how others try to dominate and manipulate, it brings the realisation that others are also doing the same to us and, most importantly, it teaches us to be more

30 The Definitive Book of Body Language

sensitive to other people's feelings and emotions.

We have now witnessed the emergence of a new kind of social scientist – the Body Language Watcher. Just as the bird-watcher loves watching birds and their behaviour, so the Body Language Watcher delights in watching the non-verbal cues and signals of human beings. He watches them at social functions, at beaches, on television, at the office or anywhere that people interact. He's a student of behaviour who wants to learn about the actions of his fellow humans so that he may ultimately learn more about himself and how he can improve his relationships with others.

.....
*What's the difference between an observer and a stalker?
A clipboard and pen.*
.....

The Definitive Book of
BODY LANGUAGE

Allan & Barbara Pease

