

Body Language

"Body language is a very powerful tool. We had body language before we had speech, and apparently, 80% of what you understand in a conversation is read through the body, not the words." DEBORAH BULL

If only a small percentage of our communication is what we say, how can we control the rest? Body language is very telling, revealing if you are secure or self-assured, shy or quiet and even whether you're telling the truth or not!

The interviewer is not looking to interrogate their body language but without them even realising it, their perception of you will be greatly influenced by your body language. Learn to pay attention to your body language, without becoming over sensitive about it, and use it to your advantage. Here are a few golden rules to follow;

Handshake:

- ⚡ Keep it firm but regulated, too hard or too soft and you're off to a bad start.
- ⚡ Make sure your hands are clean and dry, your hands may be slightly wetter than usual due to nerves and so a quick pat down before you say hello is probably wise.

Facial Signals and Eye Contact:

- ⚡ Smile, it shows you at your very best, implies confidence, and will immediately put you on a good footing.
- ⚡ Eye contact is good. Averting eye contact raises suspicion!
- ⚡ If you're a nodder, some people are, keep it slow and sparing. Rapid nodding implies impatience and a lack of focus.
- ⚡ Although eye contact is good, don't stare your interviewer down, you'll make them feel uncomfortable.
- ⚡ Don't cover your mouth with your hand when speaking and ensure you always speak clearly.

Seating:

- ⚡ Generally the interviewer will direct you to a seat. If not, then it is appropriate to ask the interviewer where you should sit, whatever you do ensure that you keep a comfortable personal space.
- ⚡ On sitting down, try not to cross your arms as this is seen as a defensive or insecure gesture.
- ⚡ One unconscious response to nervousness can result in our body language over compensating. In this instance, we tend to slouch, sit with our legs open or put our arms behind our heads to appear casual. Be aware of this as it gives off the wrong signals.

Posture:

- ⚡ Sit with your shoulders back, as this suggests confidence, smile and maintain eye contact.
- ⚡ When you take your seat, sit up straight but lean forward when speaking to show that you are interested, slouching or hanging sideways in your chair can be interpreted in that you are bored or uninterested.
- ⚡ Don't worry too much about your arms or hands; leave them where they're most natural. Moving your hands about or your arms can sometimes be the default used to try and communicate security and being relaxed and may do anything but!

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