



UNIT 1: BODY LANGUAGE, GROOMING AND LEADERSHIP FOR ENGINEERS

A Lecture By: Dr. Vagisha Mishra

What do we mean by “Personality”?

- The word personality itself stems from the Latin word **persona**, which refers to a **theatrical mask worn by performers in order to either project different roles or disguise their identities**.
- Personality is defined as the **characteristic sets of behaviors, cognitions, and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors**.
- Personality is the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that make a person unique. **It is believed that personality arises from within the individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life.**



What Kind of Personality Do Employers Search For?

- Employers are searching for more than just a long a resume. It's not only about what an employee can do, but also about how he does it, and how he carries himself while doing it.

1. Confidence
2. Professionalism
3. Openness to New Experiences
4. Intellectual Curiosity
5. Willingness
6. Self-monitoring

Body Language

- We use body language whenever we communicate face to face. It's a nonverbal language that emphasizes or alters the meaning of the direct language we use. We speak to others through our **body movements, posture, eye contact, hand gestures, tone and volume of voice, facial expressions, and micro-expressions that hold meaning for us as well as for our audience.** Understanding body language can help improve communication.
- Body language is not only powerful, it's usually **reliable for revealing your true feelings**, too. However, body language isn't completely reliable if the person expressing it knows how to manipulate it well.

Why is Body Language Important for Engineers?

- **Communication** is critical in any engineering work. It is that component which allows for the effective implementation of tasks and smooth flow of work operations. But more often than not, the term is limited to verbal and written means, forgetting that there is a third category which is equally important: **nonverbal communication**.
- **Nonverbal communication** is one which expresses messages through **facial expressions, gestures, and body language**. It also includes how we modulate the **tone and pitch of our voice** and how we place ourselves relative to others.
- For one, nonverbal communication can give clues and additional information and meaning over and above verbal communication. It helps people to **reinforce** or modify what is said in words, convey information about our emotional state, define or **reinforce our relationship with others**, **provide feedback to the other person**, and **regulate the flow of communication**.
- Body language, being the best form of nonverbal communication, is **manifested** through different expressions as listed below. Engineers should be careful in making these expressions because they can affect impressions.

• Posture: It Speaks Before You Do!

- When in meetings or casual conversations, engineers should always appear confident. One way to do this is to **move around with a good posture**. “In business, you’ve got to remember that when you walk into a boardroom, people have already made a decision about you by the time you sit down,” Eliot Hoppe, an author and expert on body language, told CNBC. “**Stand upright, have a brisk walk, you want to convey that you want to be there and are confident. If you slump your shoulders—what message will that give?**” he said.
- A brisk walk is a relative term, since “brisk” for some, is either **slow or quite speedy for others, depending on levels of fitness**. One measure to quantify brisk walking is “steps per minute,” and **100 steps per minute is considered moderate intensity or brisk walking**.
- Your posture and other body language makes you feel more powerful and boosts confidence. A study from **Ohio State University** found that those **who sat up straight had more confidence** in their own abilities and believed more strongly in positive statements they had written about themselves.
- When your body is out of balance, that is to say, when you are **hunched over that keyboard or your head is pushed forward** when you are standing or walking, **you can’t perform to your true potential**. This is especially true if you end up with neck or back aches later on in your day because you are **slouching**. When you feel good, you look good, and you can perform like a champion!
- This should be fairly obvious to everyone. Have you ever seen a CEO slumped over their computer? Think of the movie **Shawshank Redemption**, when escaped prisoner Andy Dufresne sits in front of the bank executive to cash out his account. His posture screams confidence and authority in that scene. Imagine if he had been a quiet mouse, staring at his feet, with slumped over posture. Your posture can make a huge difference in how you are perceived.
- Try to be mindful of the way you’re sitting, standing and sleeping, and avoid any unnatural positions. Ask friends and family to remind you to stop slouching, too!

• Handshake and Power Play

- There is also politics in handshakes, Hoppe implied by saying that there is “power play” that can take place.
- If the handshake is firm, if the other person tries to turn the handshake so that his or her hand is on top, or if he or she uses the second hand to shake your hand and pat your arm, there is a meaning: the one you are shaking hands with is trying to be dominant or aggressive towards you. If you subconsciously do this, it could also leave the same impression to others.

• Touch

- When you see someone touch their face you instantly distrust them or feel uneasy about them. This is why you should **never touch your face when talking with others: it conveys deceit, insincerity, and mistrust.**
- It is common for people to use their hands to **touch their faces when they feel insecure.** The gesture might be the result of an uncomfortable situation, which could be social or professional.
- Touching nails, or playing with hair.

Tonality

- There are two things that you should be mindful about the tone of your voice. “When you’re making a statement, command or directive, **your voice goes down at the end of the sentence**. So if you’re trying to convince someone of something, make sure it goes down.”
- Meanwhile, a person who is trying to **deceive** someone will tend to raise the voice at the end of a sentence – trying to convince either himself or you.
- Examples: Arguments and conflict in team management, taking accountability of the mistake

Power Dressing

- Think twice about wearing anything **red and yellow** as they are considered to be **colors of power**. They can either be **interpreted as confidence or arrogance by your boss**.
- Why Formal Dressing is addressed and highlighted?

If you want to make the right impression (and land the job), you've got to dress the part.

- Let's say you're going to an interview at a company where no one ever wears a suit—not even the CEO. Should you still dress formally for the occasion, or will you look out of place?
- And if you do decide to go for a more casual look, how can you make sure that you still appear professional and respectful?



- Feeling Vulnerable

- **When we feel vulnerable we protect our neck area.** When another person feels vulnerable too they will try to protect themselves—holding a book or papers over their chest or touching their neck—these are all self-assurance techniques.
- In this aspect, it is also important to note how your items could affect impressions: if you have a pen or glasses or pen with chewed ends, it could say something about your thought process and confidence.

- # Standing position

- There is research indicating 75% of the people being more comfortable when they talk to a person with the right eye directly facing his or her colleague's right eye. For this, he recommends that you take a small step to your left for a higher chance of the other end to experience comfort while having a conversation with you.

• Arms Crossed Across The Chest

- Your arms and legs are perhaps one of the first types of nonverbal communication that people notice when they see you. You can use them for positive body language or negative body language.
- Sitting or standing with your **arms crossed across your chest** is nearly always seen as **defensive body language**. Universally, people view a person that has crossed arms as **insecure, annoyed, or closed off**. When you do it, you're **closed off and disengaged**. You may appear **angry or stubborn**.
- If you see someone with their **arms and legs crossed for a long period of time**, remember that it could indicate that the **temperature where you are is too cold**. It could also mean **they're tired or simply supporting their shoulders in an armless chair**.



Smile

- Smiles can mean different things, depending on the exact facial expression. There are happy smiles, shy smiles, warm smiles, and ironic smiles. The Duchenne smile consists of pulling up the corners of your mouth while squeezing your eyes. It's considered a genuine smile, as opposed to a fake smile where you just expose your teeth. Have you ever heard of the term, “smiling eyes?” Some people are really good at sending a smile through direct eye contact. When you display an authentic Duchenne smile, you let people know you're approachable and friendly.

. Tapping Your Fingers

- When you tap your fingers, you appear **impatient and possibly nervous about waiting**. If you're a finger tapper, be aware that it's **one of those nonverbal signals that can grate on others' nerves**.

• Tilting Your Head to One Side

- When you tilt your head to the side, it usually means **you're listening intently and deeply interested in finding out the information you're being told.** It can also mean **you're concentrating very hard.**

• Steepling Your Fingers

- Holding your fingertips together and your palms apart let people know you have **authority and control**. Bosses and politicians use this gesture often to show they're in charge.



• Crossing Your Legs

- The way you cross your legs can tell others a lot about you and how you're feeling at any given moment. If you **cross them at the ankle**, it may show that **you're trying to hide something**. If you cross them at the **knee but point your knees away from the other person**, you show **you're uncomfortable with them**. In most cases, the **best option** is to **plant your feet firmly on the floor**.



• Putting Your Head In Your Hands

- When you put your head in your hands, it might mean that you're **bored**, as if you're so **weary** of life that you just can't hold your head up anymore. Or, it can mean that you're **upset or so ashamed you don't want to show your face**.



• Eye Contact

- You need to **make eye contact with the person you're talking** to if you want them to **feel comfortable with the conversation** and accept what you have to say. Scientists suggest that most people are comfortable with eye contact of about **3.2 seconds** at a time if you're a stranger. When you become a friend, they usually don't mind having eye contact with you for longer at a time.

• Looking Down

- **Looking at the floor** or ground makes you appear **weak and unconfident**. Unless there's something you need to discuss down there, you need to keep your eyes on the level of the other person's face. When you break eye contact, as you should every few seconds, try looking to the side.

Microexpressions

- Microexpressions are extremely brief facial expressions that happen in about **1/25th of a second**. They happen when you're **trying to hold back your emotions**. When you see someone showing a microexpression, it usually means that they're trying to conceal something from you. However, if you **learn to spot them, you can gain an advantage in any type of interaction**.

Lower your vocal pitch

- In the workplace, the quality of your voice can be a deciding factor in how you are perceived. Speakers with **higher-pitched voices are judged to be less empathic, less powerful and more nervous** than speakers with lower pitched voices. One easy technique I learned from a speech therapist was to put your lips together and say “Um hum, um hum, um hum.” Doing so relaxes your voice into its optimal pitch. This is especially helpful before you get on an important phone call – where the sound of your voice is so critical.

Try Power Priming

- To display confidence and be perceived as upbeat and positive, think of a past success that fills you with pride and confidence. Then recall the feeling of power and certainty – and remember or imagine how you looked and sounded. Recalling that genuine emotion will help you embody it as you enter the meeting room or walk up to the podium.

• Talk with your hands

- Brain imaging has shown that a region called **Broca's area**, which is **important for speech production**, is active not only when we're talking, but also when we wave our hands. Since gesture is integrally linked to speech, gesturing as you talk can actually power up your thinking.
- Whenever I encourage people to incorporate gestures into their deliveries, I find that their verbal content improves, their speech is less hesitant, and their use of fillers ("ums" and "uhs") decreases. Experiment with this and you'll find that the physical act of gesturing helps you form clearer thoughts and speak in tighter sentences with more declarative language.

• Reduce nervous gestures

- When we're nervous or stressed, we all pacify with some form of **self-touching, nonverbal behavior**: We **rub our hands together, bounce our feet, drum our fingers on the desk, play with our jewelry, twirl our hair, fidget -- and when we do any of these things, we immediately rob our statements of credibility.**
- If you catch yourself indulging in any of these behaviors, **take a deep breath and steady** yourself by **placing your feet firmly on the floor** and your hands palm down in your lap, on the desk or on the conference table. Stillness sends a message that you're calm and confident.

• WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

- Here's the thing about leadership that a lot of people either don't understand or refuse to believe: Everyone can be a leader. There is no single answer to "What is leadership?" because it isn't something you're either born with or without, but a powerful skill that can be developed over time.
- Great leaders don't follow a single path or personality type. In fact, you've probably taken on leadership roles in your life that you didn't realize at the time. So what makes a good leader, really? And how can you sharpen those skills and put them to work for you in your career and your life?
- **Leadership is the ability to inspire a team to achieve a certain goal.** It's usually discussed in the context of business, but leadership is also how you, as an individual, choose to lead your life. **The definition of leadership is to influence, inspire and help others become their best selves, building their skills and achieving goals along the way.** You don't have to be a CEO, manager or even a team lead to be a leader. Leadership is a set of skills – and a certain psychology – that anyone can master.
- **Leadership is not a zero-sum equation.** When one person harnesses their powers to lead, it strengthens the leadership opportunities of others, rather than diminishing them. That's because the **ultimate definition of leadership is empowering others to become effective leaders as well.** That's why many iconic leaders have incredible mentors they cite for their success. As one person begins to embrace their role as a leader, they inevitably connect with others who have already mastered the art of leadership.

• THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

- In short, the importance of leadership lies in the ability to get things done. Leadership allows you to communicate a clear vision and then unite your team around that vision.
- Companies with great leaders are creative, innovative and agile. They also have positive company cultures with a sense of purpose and passion. Ultimately, effective leadership improves your company's bottom line, resulting in less turnover and a mindset of continuous improvement.
- But the importance of leadership also shows in other aspects of life. It's a set of skills you can take with you into relationships and on your path to personal improvement. And you can start learning them today.