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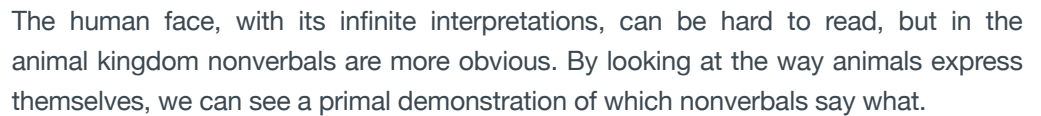
# The Comprehensive Interview Body Language Guide

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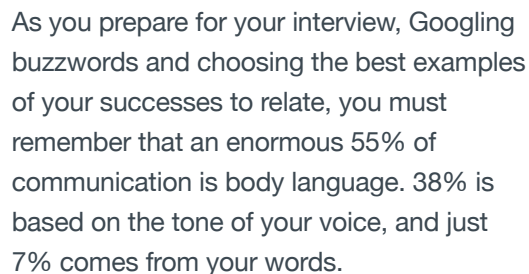
## Introduction

This guide is intended to follow on from our introductory interview guide in which we show you how best to prepare and present yourself, and shed light on the thought-processes of the Hiring Managers. In this new, comprehensive guide, we will explore the realm of nonverbal communication, drawing on new research to help you apply this knowledge and nail your next job interview.

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We behave in a very similar way. When we are feeling powerless and uncomfortable we close up, we make ourselves smaller and we avert our eyes. We have all seen a subordinate monkey submit to the alpha, or a guilty puppy try to avoid eye contact after leaving a surprise in the corner. Your job, as the interviewee, is to come across as the alpha, even if you feel like a puppy!



Body language is the most universal lingua franca in the world; a 'bridge' language used to make communication possible between people who do not share a common language.

## 1 The Benefit of Power Posing Before a High-Stakes Social Evaluation

# Head, shoulders, knees and toes



## Hair

Fiddling with your hair can be a stress-reliever when thinking about an answer or searching for the right word, but to an interviewer it can look distracted or evasive. Get it out of your face and out of the way! There will be obstacles to your success, but you don't want something as easily fixed as hair to be one of them.



## Eyes

If the eyes are the window to the soul, then don't make it look like you have something to hide by dodging eye contact. We are programmed to drop eye contact early, a social instinct which developed very early in our evolution to help us avoid aggravating those with a higher social status than ourselves. The next time you're in a conversation or meeting someone new, try holding eye contact one second longer than you normally would; this will demonstrate confidence, announcing yourself as a self-assured person who is worth listening to. You can even practice this on friends or strangers, whichever you feel most comfortable with! This is a good way of finding the balance between dodging eye contact and staring.



## Face

Touching our faces is something we do constantly. The average person touches their face 3,000 – 5,000 times a day (that's twice a minute), so don't worry about avoiding this at all costs; you can bet the interviewer will do it at some point. Just be aware that you are probably doing this to try to distract yourself from a difficult question or an awkward moment, so keep your hands comfortably in your lap and take your time to think about your answer.



## Nose

Do your best to keep yourself free of cold if you have an interview coming up. Eat lots of vitamins to keep a runny nose at bay.



## Mouth

Smile! This may be obvious, but its importance cannot be stressed enough. Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin Group, said that 'great grades count for nothing if they aren't partnered with... a winning personality'. Thankfully, the vast majority of employers would rather hire someone with a friendly, cooperative personality than one who is fully-qualified!



## Shoulders

If it is at all avoidable, don't shrug. This demonstrates indifference and uncertainty. Leaning back can look arrogant, leaning forward can seem aggressive and slouching is just lazy! Luckily, there is a very simple way of fixing this almost instantly; straighten your back, roll your shoulders a few times and imagine a thread coming out of the top of your head, gently pulling you towards the ceiling. This will inevitably leave you with good, positive posture.



## Feet

Whether you find interviews stressful or not, your hands can become over-active. They seek ways of relieving stress by fiddling, clenching and annoyingly, sweating. Whilst we can't help with that, we can suggest that you keep your hands deliberately in your lap, or let them rest on the arms of your chair. Be aware that your subconscious uses fidgeting to provide a distraction from awkward moments or difficult questions; keep your hands resting in your lap, and take your time to think about your answer. This kind of advice is useful for those who are nervous before an interview, but those with over-confidence and zealotry can benefit from these ideas too. Use your hands to open yourself up and gently demonstrate your points, and let them show how relaxed and happy you are to be there!

## Can our own body betray us?

### Can our mouth say one thing, while our face or hands say another?

As research into how the body communicates grows in sophistication and depth, we are beginning to unearth and challenge many body language myths. 'What Every Body Is Saying', a book co-authored by ex-FBI agent Joe Navarro who specialised in nonverbal communication (making him very successful in the interrogation room), explores some of these myths.



For instance, certain movements such as avoiding eye contact or fidgeting have come to be understood as indicative of deception, as they distract from a fib. But fidgeting can also act as a pacifier or comforting technique to help relieve stress. This presents a problem; when a criminal is lying, they will fidget. When an innocent is nervous because they are being accused of lying, they will fidget\*. Unfortunately for you, the jobseeker, this can betray you in the interview room, as well as in the interrogation room. Many people may interpret your body language to be saying 'I am unsure, I am lying', though what your body is actually trying to say is 'I am nervous, I am stressed, please be nice'! In case your interviewer is under the impression that fidgeting is a bad sign, you need to manage it.



## Power Posing

**"Our bodies change our minds, and our minds can change our behaviour, and our behaviour can change our outcomes"**

Humans can express themselves through a smile, a frown or the 'immeasurable nuances in between'. These tiny movements around your eyes and mouth, which help us to distinguish between the 10,000+ expressions which human beings can recognise in each other, are called microexpressions. These are difficult to control, so the expression of the confidence which leads to interview success has to come from within. This is where power posing can help.

**'Failing to prepare is preparing to fail'**

A job interview is one of the few social situations in which there is a huge power asymmetry, as the interviewer has complete control over your future. So successful job interviews are all about preparatory power.

2 Navarro, Joe/Karllins, Martin. What Every Body Is Saying: An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Speed Reading People. William Morrow Paperbacks, 2008.

3 Navarro, Joe/Karllins, Martin. What Every Body Is Saying: An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Speed Reading People. William Morrow Paperbacks, 2008. Page 165.



Although you may not be feeling very powerful, it is possible to fill yourself with the ‘psychological and physiological perks typically associated with high power’!

In a recent TED Talk, social psychologist Amy Cuddy explored the value of standing in a powerful position for two minutes before entering a job interview. Her goal was to see if ‘power posing’ could free people from the psychological constraints that stop them from performing to their full potential . Her research showed that this releases more testosterone (don’t worry, you won’t grow a beard in two minutes!), the dominance hormone, and reduces your levels of cortisol (the stress hormone).

Find somewhere you can be alone before your interview, such as the loo or a waiting room, and try holding one of these positions for just two minutes before going in:



### **The Superhero**

Legs just over shoulder-width apart, hands on hips



### **The Athlete**

Arms up in a V-shape



### **The Tiger**

Hands spread wide on a surface, leaning forward



### **The CEO**

Hands clasped behind head, leaning back

You will find that the sense of power this will send through your body will come across to your interviewer, making you seem 86% more confident and more hireable!

## **Conclusion**

Body language is simple, free and very powerful tool. Absolutely anyone can use it to their advantage! Simply spend a little time thinking about your body and how they can help you, and take a moment to power pose before your next interview. All you need is yourself, privacy, and two minutes. See the difference it makes!