

21 TIPS FOR UNDERSTANDING BODY LANGUAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS!

Here are 21 things you need to know so you can understand body language in negotiations.

1 Eye contact



Maintain strong eye contact for around 70% of the time. This will show that you're **confident**, determined and **self-assured**, which is important when negotiating.

2 Ears



Listen closely to what the other person says. The more you do this, the more information you'll obtain, which will help with your **bargaining** position.

3 Palms



Keep your palms face down to appear confident and decisive; upward facing palms show the opposite – that you're open and interested.

4 The steeple



Use the "steeple" (a triangle shape formed by your hands) to show strength, confidence and knowledge.

5 Nodding



Studies have shown that **nodding** when asking someone a question can make that person agree with you. So, as you ask a question, or explain your idea, nod gently.

6 Movement



While sitting, you need to appear relaxed and confident. So, avoid **fidgeting** and don't **bounce** your legs up and down. Be extra careful not to do this when you hear some good or bad news as your opponent could realise that it's a sensitive topic for you.

7 Touching



Touching or scratching a part of the body (particularly the face) is often a sign that someone is under stress or nervous. And a quick touch to the ear or nose can be interpreted as a sign that someone is lying. So, try to keep your hands under control.

8 Sitting position



For **collaborative** negotiating (where you're both trying to reach a **win-win situation**), lean in and make eye contact to show interest. If there's a table, sit next to each other at one corner rather than opposite. To show **displeasure**, disinterest or distance simply do the opposite: lean back, cross your arms and avoid too much eye contact.

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When standing, keep your shoulders relaxed and your feet firmly on the ground and a little bit apart. If you feel yourself getting nervous or uncomfortable, do some "toe push-ups" – **scrunch** your **toes** and release 10 times to make the tension disappear.



10 Alignment



If you're both standing while negotiating, show that you're interested by keeping your body facing the person you're talking to, with your shoulders, feet and knees **angled** towards them. Do the opposite to show disinterest or distance.

11 Walking



When entering into a room, smile, keep your shoulders back, and walk with slow confident steps, maintaining direct eye contact with the person you're going to meet.

12 Waiting



Before the negotiation, if you're in the reception area or a waiting room, make sure you appear confident too. Some companies have CCTV cameras in these areas and may use them to watch you; or they might ask the receptionist to report back on what you were doing before the meeting.

13 Poker face



During tense negotiations, use a poker face to hide your emotions. This is a neutral expression that people use when playing poker so other players can't see what they're thinking. To help you, try doing a complex maths problem in your head, such as 397 times 23.

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14 The handshake



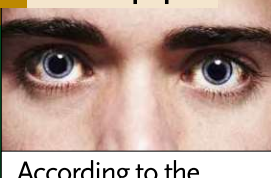
Make sure you give a firm handshake. In most English-speaking countries this is a sign of confidence, trust and strength. A limp handshake shows weakness. When giving the customary three pumps, look the other person in the eye without blinking.

15 Handshake wars



Watch out for people who try to establish dominance through their handshake. They could do this by turning your hand down so their hand is on top, or by **squeezing** your hand really hard. If any of these things happen, make a joke about it: "Wow! Impressive handshake! You must have spent hours working on it!" This will let them know that you're aware of what they're doing.

16 Dilated pupils



According to the experts, when we're interested in something, our pupils involuntarily dilate (become bigger). The opposite happens when we're disinterested (our pupils become smaller). So, if you notice the other person's pupils dilate, it could be a sign that you're saying the right things.

17 Eye movement

When you ask someone a question, watch which way they look when they respond. According to body language experts, we look **right and up** when we're **guessing**, lying or inventing something (accessing the right-side of the brain – the creative side); and we look left and up when we're trying to remember facts (accessing the left-side of the brain – the logical side). This could help you decide whether someone is telling the truth or not.

GLOSSARY

confident *adj*
someone who is "confident" feels sure about their abilities, skills, capabilities...

self-assured *adj*
someone who is "self-assured" feels sure about their abilities, skills, capabilities...

to bargain *vb*
if two people "bargain", they negotiate and talk about the price of something, etc.

decisive *adj*
someone who is "decisive" can make quick decisions

to nod *vb*
if you "nod" your head, you move it up and down as a way of saying yes

to fidget *vb*
if you "fidget", you move your hands or body a lot

to bounce *vb*
if you "bounce" your leg, you move it up and down a lot

collaborative *adj*
if two people are being "collaborative", they're working together

a win-win situation *exp*
a situation in which both people get something positive – they both win

displeasure *n*
if you feel "displeasure" you feel angry about something

to scrunch *vb*
if you "scrunch" something, you put pressure on it so it's smaller

a toe *n*
one of the five "fingers" on each foot

to angle *vb*
if you "angle" something, you move it to a different position or direction

CCTV *abbr*
closed-circuit television – little cameras that record things in the street, shops, etc.

firm *adj*
if your handshake is "firm", it is strong

limp *adj*
if someone's handshake is "limp", it is weak

a pump *n*
each "pump" in a handshake is each time you move your hand up or down

to blink *vb*
when you "blink", you close your eyes very quickly

to squeeze *vb*
if you "squeeze" something, you push down on it or put pressure on it

to dilate *vb*
if the pupils in your eyes "dilate", they become bigger

to guess *vb*
if you "guess", you try to answer something, even though you aren't sure

wrinkled *adj*
when your nose is "wrinkled", lines appear on it because you're tightening the muscles around it

18 Voice



When negotiating collaboratively, speak softly and calmly and explain things carefully. Also, smile a lot so your voice sounds warm and friendly. When responding, or making a comment, pause for a while to show you're thinking about what your counterpart has said, and keep your response nice and calm.

19 Silence



Don't be afraid of silences. At tense moments, when you're asked a direct question, remain silent for as long as possible. This may cause the other person to start negotiating with themselves and they could end up improving the offer. Remember the saying, "The person who speaks first, loses!"

20 Mirroring

Mirroring involves copying what someone does with their body. For example, if your counterpart folds their arms, leans forward, or places a hand on their leg, you do the same. Experts have shown that mirroring someone can make the other person like you, or even think that you're honest and trustworthy. However, be careful when mirroring – if the other person knows about this technique, they might notice you doing it.

21 Micro-expressions

Micro-expressions are very tiny movements on the face of the mouth, eyes, eyebrows, lips, nose... that are really hard to notice. However, if you can detect them, they could give you with some useful information. For example, a quick opening of the mouth could be sign of surprise; a rapid movement at the corner of the mouth could mean pleasure; a wrinkled nose could be a sign of displeasure...