



BODY LANGUAGE AND DICTION



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PREFACE

Dear Students,

Welcome to this module on Body Language and Diction. We hope that it will help you to learn some effective techniques for communicating well in a variety of situations. It can be fascinating to observe human social behaviour and we hope this module will be interesting as well as instructive.

The four units are organised as follows. Unit 1 is mainly about first impressions, in terms of your appearance and expressions, and what you say when you meet someone for the first time. Unit 2 is based on verbal language and the use of voice. It includes material on assertiveness, active listening, polite language and public speaking. After this, Unit 3 is about forms of expression of emotions and includes gestures, observance of personal space, and different elements of body language. The final part, Unit 4, is about the management of emotions and the body. It includes stress and anger management, ways of reducing potential conflict, and suggestions for keeping your body healthy.

All of the four units contain a balance of advice, examples, practice and tasks. The units also contain discussion board activities so that you can learn with, and from, your peers.

Although the module is based mainly on work situations, you are likely to find that some of the techniques can be used amongst your friends and family as well.

We sincerely hope you will enjoy this module and will benefit from it.

JEAN MEAKIN &
The UK EMLT Team

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INTRODUCTION AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

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WRITER



JEAN MEAKIN



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INTRODUCTION

This Module covers Body Language and Diction. Here are some definitions so you know exactly what is meant.

Body Language is the movement of our bodies to communicate our attitudes and feelings. The movement may be made consciously or unconsciously. It may include, for example, facial expressions and eye movements.

Non-Verbal Communication (NVC) means the exchange of information without using words. In this Module, it is taken to include body language, body movements, gestures, posture, use of space and the way you dress.

Diction is the choice of words of words you use and the way you say them, and includes voice pitch, tone, volume, speed and intonation.

Verbal language is important for successful communication. However, as we will see, there is far more to communication than just words. For example, there is the language we express with our bodies, our voices and even our clothes. All of these things can be vitally important in the world of work and they can mean the difference between success and failure. Most of us can learn a lot to improve our non-verbal communication. It represents an aspect of our human communication that is fun to study and can be of great professional benefit to us.

You will learn a lot about ways of being polite in this Module. This is important whatever one's culture or background. Here is a definition of politeness.

Politeness is behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people. The rules of politeness depend to some extent of the cultures of the people involved in the social interaction.

This unit covers the first impression you make at work. It covers your clothes and general appearance, the greetings you make, your facial expressions and some points about cultural sensitivity.

CLOTHES AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Before you say a single word in a new job, your appearance will be noticed, and in particular, your clothes will be noticed. It is worth taking some time to get your outfit right.

Before you start, find out about the place where you are going to work. Look at the sort of clothes the employees wear, and imitate them, at least at the beginning of your employment. You can find out by looking at their website, by asking people who work there, or by other ways. For an interview, it is wise to wear something similar, but perhaps just a little smarter than the people wear there. If you look too smart, you will stand out too much. If you look less smart than the other employees, you could put yourself at a disadvantage. As a general rule, look clean, smart and tidy.

Avoid wearing very bright colours and do not wear too many lines or patterns. Remember that you are wearing the clothes to make yourself look good. It is not the other way round! Make sure YOU are noticed, and not just your clothes. Unless you have a job in a highly creative career, aim to dress conservatively.

Wear jewellery if you like, but do not let it be obtrusive. For example, large dangling earrings may not be appropriate.

As a general rule, it is good for men to wear suits or a pair of tailored trousers and a jacket. Whether men wear a tie depends on the formality of the organisation, but it is good to take one, just in case. If you have the sort of job where you are occasionally required dress more formally, having a spare tie can be useful. It can always be removed if it seems too formal.

There tends to be more flexibility in the dress code for women. Trouser suits or skirt suits, or dresses with jackets can be excellent. Some Muslim women may prefer to wear long dresses or long skirts with jackets or blouses, together with a matching scarf.

Generally, if you wear just one colour, this can look very formal; two colours are smart, and three colours can be rather informal. However, if your colours include neutral colours such as black, white, grey, navy blue or brown, you may be able to wear more colours without seeming too informal.

Wear smart shoes and if appropriate, polish them regularly. Make sure the shoes are comfortable and you can walk easily in them. You might need to walk long distances around the organisation, so be sure to wear practical shoes. Women should normally avoid very high heels, although a slight heel can look and feel good. Open toed sandals are best avoided unless the weather is very hot, and men should never wear these. Generally, men can make a businesslike impression by wearing dark well-polished leather shoes in black or brown.

Try not to wear new clothes for the first time at work. Practise wearing them once or twice beforehand. It would be a pity if you left the price tag on the clothes because you had not yet seen it! You can learn to wear your new clothes better after a little practice.

Avoid wearing sports clothes at work. These are not appropriate, unless you are working in the field of sports. Make sure your clothes are warm, comfortable and practical as well as smart. Wear clothes that are suitable for doing your work, and never dress as if you are going for an evening out. In some organ-

isations, it may be best for women to avoid low cut necklines, sleeveless blouses and dresses, flimsy clothes and very short skirts at work if they want to be taken seriously.

Be aware of the effect of colours. These may affect people's impressions of you more than you think. Generally, men can safely wear dark suits, in navy blue, charcoal or black. Women in some professions, notably law, may choose black. However, black does not suit everybody. Strong colours, rather than pastel colours may look more professional. If you think you will be nervous and your face may go red, avoid wearing red clothes. Green may be a good colour to wear to counteract the red appearance of your face.

Remember also that your brief case or handbag says something about you. Whatever you do, don't turn up on your first day at work carrying an old rucksack. All the accessories you take, including jewellery, bags, belts, scarves, ties, watches, umbrellas and even phones, tablets and notebooks will be noticed by your employers and also your colleagues. They should all look professional and fit the image you wish to portray.

Make sure your hair is looking neat and tidy. Keep it off your face because people will want to read your facial expressions. If your hair is in front of your face, it may look as if you are hiding something or are very shy. Men should have neat facial hair or be clean shaven.

Make sure your hands are clean. If you wear nail varnish, keep it looking fresh and new.

Legally, in the UK, an employer can ask employees to dress in a certain way. This could be for Health and Safety reasons, or because employees are representing the company.

If you want to know more about dress codes and the law, and indeed about many aspects of working practice, you may find the following link to ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) helpful.
<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1342>



Informal Clothes



Professional Clothes

COLOURS

Read the following article, adapted from Business Insider Australia. It gives advice about which colours are good to wear at work.

Make colours work for you!

The best and worst colours to wear at work

by Vanessa Van Edwards

Having trouble picking out what to wear to work? Focusing on colours might not only help you narrow down your choices, but may also benefit your career. **Research has shown that colours can greatly affect our moods and the way other people respond to us.** Amazingly, colours can even change our heart rate, blood pressure and respiration, as researchers Keith Jacobs and Frank Hustmyer discovered in 1974.

With that in mind, here's the ultimate colour guide for what hues you should (and shouldn't) wear to work.

Best colours to wear to the office

1. **Black.** This power colour can convey feelings of mystery and seriousness. It is also considered elegant and has a thinning effect. If you want to be treated seriously, the typical black suit with a splash of green or blue works wonders.
2. **Blue.** This is the colour of truth and wisdom. It also has a calming effect and is linked to intellect. It's also the most stable colour. So if you have a volatile or drama-filled workplace, blue is a great colour to wear to counteract the tension.
3. **Brown.** The colour of stability, brown is also seen as masculine. If you're a woman in a predominantly male workplace, wearing a chocolate brown suit can give you credibility.
4. **Green.** This colour denotes freshness, safety and harmony. It's also associated with money and the "go" signal for a traffic light - both great characteristics in the workplace. The colour green is restful on the eyes and produces the least amount of eyestrain, making this a good choice for people who sit in front of a screen for many hours.

Worst colours to wear to the office

1. **Yellow.** This is the happiest of all the colours and usually stimulates joy. However, yellow is considered an unstable colour, so it can be over-energizing for the office and make the wearer look weak.
2. **Grey.** Grey implies that people are passive, uninvolved and have a lack of energy. If you like wearing grey, pairing it with a brighter colour such as blue can help offset the negative effect.
3. **Red.** This is the colour of aggression and passion-great for a first date, not so great for the office. It also increases metabolism and raises blood pressure, which is why it's used for stop signs and fire engines. Red can be seen as a bit hostile in the work environment, so think twice before wearing it often.

Colours to wear in moderation or as accents

1. **Orange.** This is a colour of stimulation and enthusiasm. It's not as aggressive as red, but can catch attention, so it's good to wear in moderation.
2. **Purple.** Purple reminds people of royalty and luxury. It's also the colour of magic. However, since purple rarely occurs in nature, it's also seen to be artificial. A purple scarf, tie or purse can be a nice, subtle addition to any outfit.
3. **White.** This colour is associated with cleanliness and perfection. It is always a safe choice for a shirt or scarf, but too much white denotes timidity and sterility-not good for workplace relations.

Colours affect our moods and how others perceive us. But, of course, colours aren't the only thing that affects how people see us - you can still be liked at work even if you're wearing a yellow suit. Still, when given the choice, pick a colour that will work for you and not against you.

Adapted from: <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/the-best-and-worst-colors-to-wear-to-work-2012-11>



EXERCISE #1

Imagine you are going to work as a junior business analyst in a large city-based company. Read the wardrobe suggestions below and tick ✓ the ones you think are appropriate, and put a cross ✗ by the ones you think are inappropriate.

- For men*
Navy blue track suit and trainers

- For men*
A plain, dark grey suit, a plain white shirt, a striped navy blue and white tie and black leather shoes

- For men*
A brown striped suit, a checked red and brown shirt and a striped brown and red tie and brown leather shoes.

- For women*
An orange sleeveless dress and high heeled black shoes. No jacket.

- For women*
A plain black skirt suit, a green blouse with small white spots, and black shoes with a low heel.

✓ CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

GREETINGS

In most cultures, people pay great attention to greetings. They tend to be the first thing we learn when we are learning a foreign language, and this may reflect their importance. Greetings are used when we meet someone for the first time, and also on an ongoing basis, for example when we meet people again after some time has elapsed.

If we greet people in the right way, we can normally build a positive relationship. On the other hand, if we do not greet people appropriately, they may quickly feel offended, and the relationship can get off to a poor start.

Here are some expressions we can use when we meet people. It is good to know a variety of expressions. Although there are also a lot of informal and slang expressions, these are not included in this unit.

Meeting someone for the first time

Ways of starting the greeting



YOU

Hello

YOU

Hi

Suitable response



Hello, pleased to meet you.



Hi, it's good to meet you.

or

It's nice to meet you.



Greeting someone you already know

Ways of starting the greeting



YOU

Good morning.

or

Morning

Suitable response



Good morning, how are you?



YOU

Good afternoon.

Hi, how's it going?



YOU

Good evening.

Hi, how are things?



YOU

Hi, long time no see.

Hi, yes, long time no see.
How are you?
or
Yes, it's been a while.
Hi, how are things?



YOU

Hi, it's good to see you.

Yeah, nice to see you. *



*Notice how the person replying tends to choose a different adjective in response. If the first person uses the word good, the other person will often choose to use a different word, for example, **nice** or **great**.

YOU

What's new?

Not a lot, how about you?
or
Quite a lot, how about you?



YOU

Hi, how are you doing?

Fine, thanks. How about you?



YOU

How's life?

Good, thanks. And you?



YOU

How've you been?

All good, thanks.



YOU

How's everything?

Everything's fine, thanks.
or
Pretty good, thanks.
or
Quite good, thanks.



The following responses may be useful if things have not been going so well in your life.

YOU

Not so bad, thanks.
or
Thanks, not that great, actually.

Making your exit

Ways of starting the greeting



YOU

Good night.

Night, see you tomorrow.



YOU

Goodbye.

Bye, see you.



Suitable response



IMPORTANCE OF SAYING PLEASE AND THANK YOU

Read the article below, which has been slightly adapted for this module. It is called **More than words: saying 'thank you' does make a difference**, by Lisa A Williams. After you have read it, do the exercise which follows.

Most of us were taught that saying "thank you" is simply the polite thing to do. But recent research in social psychology suggests that saying "thank you" goes beyond good manners – it also serves to build and maintain social relationships.

This premise has its base in the *find-remind-and-bind* theory of gratitude, proposed by US psychologist Sara Algoe, from the University of North Carolina. According to this theory, gratitude prompts:

- » the initiation of new social relationships (a *find* function)
- » orients people to existing social relationships (a *remind* function)
- » promotes maintenance of and investment in these relationships (a *bind* function)

As with all emotions, gratitude can be both felt and expressed. The evidence on how feeling gratitude functions to *find*, *remind*, and *bind* in social relationships is robust. From promoting helping and trust to lowering aggression, feeling grateful gives rise to a wide range of outcomes that benefit both parties in a social relationship.

When we say 'thank you'

When a stranger holds a door, when a barista hands over the morning espresso or when we step off the bus, we typically (or should!) say "thank you". The question becomes: how do these expressions of gratitude among strangers shape social relations? Might hearing "thank you" help us "find" or start new social relationships?

So my colleague Monica Y Bartlett, from Gonzaga University in Washington, US, and I carried out the first empirical test of the "find" function of expressing gratitude among strangers, with the results published this month in the journal *Emotion*.

In the study, we sought to create a situation in the lab where we could manipulate the expression of gratitude in a realistic way. So we asked our 70 undergraduate participants to help pilot a new mentoring program supposedly run by the university. As part of the pilot, all of our participants were to act as mentors by giving advice on a writing sample from a high-school student mentee. The writing sample was one that the mentee planned to use in their university admissions

package. This setup ensured that we satisfied one of the core starting points of gratitude – the granting of help, resources or a favour.

A week later, we brought the participants back to the lab. All participants received a note purportedly written by the high school mentee. For half of the participants – those in the control condition - this note simply acknowledged the advice, with the following message. *'I received your feedback through the editing program. I hope to use the paper for my college applications.'*

Here comes the manipulation of gratitude expression. Critically, for the other half of the participants, the note also included an expression of gratitude. Their message added the following words. *'Thank you SO much for all the time and effort you put into doing that for me!'* This design meant that all participants received a note – just the content of the note differed across conditions.

Participants next completed a series of questionnaires assessing their impressions of the mentee, and then were informed that the study was complete.

Except, that wasn't quite true. The researcher casually mentioned that the pilot program organisers had left a set of notecards for mentors to complete if they chose to. The program organisers would ensure that the mentee received the note if the mentee were accepted to the university. The researcher made it clear that leaving a note was completely optional and then left the room. Participants were thus left alone to decide whether to write a note, and, if so, what to say.

This note-writing opportunity served as our dependent measure of actual social affiliation. Would participants take the opportunity to establish a social relationship with their mentee? Would this depend on whether the mentee had expressed gratitude?

How far does gratitude go?

Perhaps not surprisingly, all but three participants wrote a welcome note. Promisingly for the "find" hypothesis, all three participants who didn't leave a note were in the control condition.

To test the "find" hypothesis more directly, we coded what participants wrote in those notes and a pattern quickly became clear.

Of the participants who had received a note expressing gratitude from their mentee, 68% left their contact details in their note. Only 42% of those who had received the control note left any contact details. The difference was statistically significant.

Next we tested what might explain this difference. For this, we looked to how participants rated

their mentees. Specifically, we considered two dimensions – interpersonal warmth (kindness and friendliness) and competence (skill and intelligence).

Sure enough, mentees were perceived as more interpersonally warm when they had expressed gratitude. Further, this increase in perceived interpersonal warmth explained the increase in likelihood of leaving contact information for the gratitude-expressing mentees.

The takeaway message

Saying “thank you” goes beyond good manners. Initiating a social bond can be risky. We need to be selective and choose to invest in those bonds with the highest likelihood of being a good investment. In this context, an expression of gratitude serves as a signal that the expresser is a good candidate for a future social relationship.



EXERCISE #2

After reading the exercise, look at the summary of the research in the boxes below. Match the sentence halves on the left with the sentence halves on the right. Answer according to the information in the text. Use each sentence once only. Write your answers below the boxes.

1. Only one group of participants received a message from the mentees which
2. After receiving a note from the mentees, all the participants had a chance to
3. 68% of the participants who had been thanked
4. However, 58% of the participants who had not been thanked
5. The experiment suggests that gratitude can

- A. write to the mentees voluntarily.
- B. thanked them.
- C. did not give the mentees their contact details.
- D. left their contact details in their notes to the mentees.
- E. prompt the beginning of new social relationships.

 **CHECK YOUR ANSWERS**

EXPRESSIONS MEANING PLEASE AND THANK YOU

You will see there are many different ways of saying *please* and *thank you*. Generally speaking, phrases in the following green speech bubbles are more formal than the ones in the light green bubbles. However, all the expressions could be fine at work, in an appropriate context. Generally, you will use the green bubbles for conversations at work. The words in the light green bubbles should only be used with friends, and they not be used with people in authority over you.

Thank you

Thanks

Thank you very
much indeed

Thanks so
much

Cheers

Ta

Thanks a million

Thanks a lot

WHEN TO SAY PLEASE, THANK YOU OR EXCUSE ME



EXERCISE #3

Now, let us consider **when** it is appropriate to say *please*, *thank you* and *excuse me*. Write in the spaces whether you think you should say **Please**, **Thank you**, **Excuse me** or **nothing** in the following circumstances.

Note that the usage of some of these expressions may vary slightly in the USA.

1. You ask your colleague if you can borrow her phone to make a call. _____
2. You yawn. _____
3. The cleaner is just leaving, having cleaned your office. _____
4. In the staff canteen, the server gives you a plate of food. _____
5. You sneeze. _____
6. Your colleague returns the book he has been borrowing from you. _____
7. You have said *Excuse me* to someone so that they will move and you can get past. They move. _____
8. The lecturer gives you and each of the other students a handout. _____
9. You ask someone the time. You say, *Could you tell me the time ___?* _____
10. The clerk brings your mail to your table. _____

✓ CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

In addition to the familiar six expressions, which are *happy*, *sad*, *fearful*, *surprised*, *angry* and *disgusted*, scientists have identified as many as 21 different facial expressions. These include combinations of the six expressions and examples are, *angrily disgusted*, *happily surprised* and others. Follow the link to see the wide range of facial expressions that humans can show. You will be able to click and see pictures of 21 different expressions. The section is called: **In pictures: Scientists map 21 facial expressions and emotions**. Notice how each part of the face can move and contribute to the overall expression.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/howaboutthat/10736128/In-pictures-Scientists-map-21-facial-expressions-and-emotions.html?frame=2868612>

Here are the six main expressions which humans make, in addition to a neutral facial expression.



Photograph from <https://www.omron.com/ecb/products/mobile/okao07.html>

As humans, we experience a wide range of emotions. We can show these, either voluntarily or involuntarily, through our facial expressions. Look at the seven pictures above and consider which part of the face is contributing to the overall expression. Then read the paragraphs below, which are intended as a brief introduction to the basics of understanding and using facial expressions.

Eyes

Perhaps the most communicative part of our faces is our eyes. In the Western world, making eye contact creates a connection with the other person. It may indicate either a friendly relationship or a hostile relationship, but it certainly indicates involvement. In the West, making eye contact may indicate self-confidence, and if we avoid it, this could suggest that we are shy or even being dishonest. In some cultures, it is considered respectful not to make eye contact. In some Muslim cultures, men and women may avoid making eye contact, depending on the nature of their relationship. Whatever we do, we should not look into the other person's eyes for too long, unless we want to indicate, for example, hostility or that we feel attracted to them. The frequency of our blinking may suggest that we are ill at ease, or even lying. (If you wear contact lenses, think about how often you may be blinking!) All of us may involuntarily dilate our pupils, and this can indicate excitement, attraction, and even readiness to fight. We can make deliberate gestures with our eyes, and these may be interpreted differently according to different cultures. For example, in some cultures, rolling the eyes may mean that we think someone is stupid or a bit crazy, but in other cultures, it could simply mean 'no'.

In addition, our eyes may water when we are sad and tearful, and also when we are shocked, or simply feeling cold.

Notice the all-important eye contact in the pictures below.



Eyebrows

We move our eyebrows possibly more than we realise. Raised eyebrows may indicate surprise, whilst a frown can indicate disapproval or deep concentration.



Mouths and Lips

Smiling is the most widely recognised expression we make with our mouths, and it normally conveys happiness or humour. Be aware, however, that in some cultures, smiling can be a sign of sadness or embarrassment. If our mouths are wide open, this can show great surprise. When our lips are tightly closed, this may show that we do not want to talk about something. A hand placed in front of one's mouth will convey this meaning even more strongly. Often, we place our hands in front of our mouths when we are concentrating. When we bite our lips, this suggests anxiety.

Noses

Although the tops of our noses don't move so much, our nostrils can flare, especially if we are angry. If we hold our noses upwards, this can suggest rejection, scorn or arrogance.

Hair

When we are terrified, sometimes we can feel our hair standing up. This is an involuntary movement. Apart from this, hair can indicate a lack of confidence when it is shielding the face. On the other hand, a dramatic hairstyle can capture people's attention and exude self-confidence.

Cheeks

When we do not fight with someone, we can 'turn the other cheek'. This means we turn our faces away from them, in a gesture of submission. If our tongue is visible sticking out of our cheeks, this may mean we are joking and not being serious. Pink or red cheeks are often considered to be a sign of health or of passion.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS REFLECTED IN ENGLISH IDIOMS

There are many words and idioms in English which refer to facial expressions and are used to indicate emotions, attitudes or other things. Try the exercise below and work out what the idioms mean.



EXERCISE #4

Read the descriptions on the left, below. They all contain a reference to the face. Choose a corresponding item from the box and write it next to the appropriate description. Each item in the box may be used once, more than once, or not at all.

Attraction	Fear	No emotion shown	Agreement
Good health	Attention	Hypocrisy	Surprise or shock
Clarity	Rejection		

1. The designer watch cost an eye-watering £45,000. _____
2. His hair stood up on end. _____
3. We normally see eye to eye with each other. _____
4. Throughout the trial, he had a poker face. _____
5. She has rosy cheeks. _____
6. The final cost of the project raised a few eyebrows. _____
7. Her eyes were like saucers. _____
8. He turned up his nose at our offer. _____
9. Her eyes were glued to the photograph. _____
10. Throughout the meeting, he was making at eyes at her. _____

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



DISCUSSION

1. Which facial expressions do you tend to make the most?
2. Have you ever looked at someone's facial expression and misread it? Write your experiences on the discussion board.
3. Then, Then, if you would like to, post a picture of yourself, either alone or with friends.
4. Which types of pictures and expressions are you generally happy to post on social media, and why?

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

People from different cultures have different ideas regarding body language. If we do not know the appropriate body language to use, we could easily cause offence. To see the wide range of gestures used across the world, ask someone to count using their fingers, and watch the different ways in which people do this. When you move into a new culture, you will almost certainly see some differences in body language and behaviour. One example of different behaviour regards blowing one's nose in public. Whereas some people may do this without a second thought, in other cultures this may be seen as rude. Similarly, spitting, pointing and speaking loudly may also be disapproved of. It is good to find out about the habits in different cultures, especially if one travels to a foreign country. Read what you can before you go, watch other people's body language and above all, ask a trusted friend to advise you frankly about anything you may be doing inappropriately.

REVIEW

In this unit, you have considered what to wear at work and how to make the very best of your personal appearance. You have read about the importance of making requests and showing gratitude politely. You have also considered facial expressions and the emotions they indicate. We hope this unit has increased your awareness of all the elements that contribute to making an excellent first impression.

References

Williams, L. (2014). More than words: saying 'thank you' does make a difference. *The Conversation*.

<http://theconversation.com/more-than-words-saying-thank-you-does-make-a-difference-30920>

Accessed 20 April 2016

Further Reading

If you wish to read more about the research referred to by L. Williams and M Bartlett in this unit, it can be found by clicking on the following link.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lisa_Williams13/publication/264627488_Warm_Thanks_Gratitude_Expression_Facilitates_Social_Affiliation_in_New_Relationships_via_Perceived_Warmth/links/53fa80c00cf20a45497007f6.pdf

Information accessed 3 May 2016

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



ANSWERS #1

✔ *For men*

Navy blue track suit and trainers. **Sportswear is too informal for most jobs, except those directly linked to sports.**

✔ *For men*

A plain, dark grey suit, a plain white shirt, a striped navy blue and white tie and black leather shoes. **This a classic outfit and suitable for a wide range of jobs. All the colours are neutral colours and will go well together. Although there are four colours, all of them are neutral colours, so it will not seem to be too many. The black, grey and white are from the same 'range' of colours so they will blend in well together. There is only one pattern, and that is the tie, so there is not too much. There is just enough pattern to create interest. Black leather shoes are normally a safe option for men to wear.**

✘ *For men*

A brown striped suit, a checked red and brown shirt and a striped brown and red tie and brown leather shoes. **Even though there are not too many colours, this outfit has too many patterns and the wearer is unlikely to be taken seriously at work.**

✘ *For women*

An orange sleeveless dress and high heeled black shoes. No jacket. **This outfit is inappropriate because of the lack of sleeves and the high shoes. Although it could look great at an evening event, it will not create a professional appearance during the day.**

✔ *For women*

A plain black skirt suit, a green blouse with small white spots, and black shoes with a low heel. **This is a classic outfit for businesswomen and is likely to create an excellent impression. Although there are three colours (black, green and white), two of these (black and white) are neutrals and so it will not seem to be too many colours. Only the blouse has a pattern, so there is enough to be of interest, but there is not too much pattern.**

 [GO BACK](#)



ANSWERS #2

Please track colors to match items.

1. Only one group of participants received a message from the mentees which
2. After receiving a note from the mentees, all the participants had a chance to
3. 68% of the participants who had been thanked
4. However, 58% of the participants who had not been thanked
5. The experiment suggests that gratitude can

- A. write to the mentees voluntarily.
- B. thanked them.
- C. did not give the mentees their contact details.
- D. left their contact details in their notes to the mentees.
- E. prompt the beginning of new social relationships.

GO BACK



ANSWERS #3

1. You ask your colleague if you can borrow her phone to make a call.
2. You yawn.
3. The cleaner is just leaving, having cleaned your office.
4. In the staff canteen, the server gives you a plate of food.
5. You sneeze.
6. Your colleague returns the book he has been borrowing from you.
7. You have said *Excuse me* to someone so that they will move and you can get past. They move.
8. The lecturer gives you and each of the other students a handout.
9. You ask someone the time. You say, *Could you tell me the time ___?*
10. The clerk brings your mail to your table.

 Please
 Excuse me
 Thank you
 Thank you
 Excuse me
 Thank you
 Thank you
 Thank you
 Please
 Thank you

Remember that even if it is part of someone's job to help you, it is likely they will expect to be thanked. This applies particularly to the situations in questions 3, 4, 8 and 10.

GO BACK



ANSWERS #4

1. The designer watch cost an eye-watering £45,000.
2. His hair stood up on end.
3. We normally see eye to eye with each other.
4. Throughout the trial, he had a poker face.
During a game of poker, players must try not to show their opponent how they are feeling, or they could lose.
5. She has rosy cheeks.
6. The final cost of the project raised a few eyebrows.
7. Her eyes were like saucers.
8. He turned up his nose at our offer.
9. Her eyes were glued to the photograph.
10. Throughout the meeting, he was making at eyes at her.

Surprise or Shock

Fear

Agreement

No emotion shown

Good health

Surprise or Shock

Surprise or Shock or Fear

Rejection

Attention

Attraction

 [GO BACK](#)

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

2

WRITER



JEAN MEAKIN



SECTIONS

Click the titles to navigate.

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04. Polite language at work
05. How to make language more polite
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INTRODUCTION

This unit will help you to find effective strategies for speaking and listening at work. Although we may never have formally learnt to do these things, they are skills which can be learnt, to our benefit. Many of the world's leaders have had coaching in these areas, and the effects are obvious. After training, they demonstrate a mastery and professionalism which most people can only dream of. As you work through this unit, consider which of the strategies you could practise and adopt to make you a better listener and speaker.

ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness is self-confidence without aggression. It is normally considered to be a positive characteristic. For example, someone may have the confidence to say what they believe is true, AND THEY ALSO have the skill to express this in a way that does not cause offence. Generally, as long as what they say is reasonably coherent, people who are assertive are highly respected in the work place.



QUIZ: HOW ASSERTIVE ARE YOU?

Try this quiz to see how assertive you are. Imagine you are at a job interview. Answer the questions accordingly. Choose one answer each time. Check your answers at the end.

1. You don't understand one of the interviewer's questions. What is your reaction?
 - A. Say something and hope it answers their question.
 - B. Ask them to rephrase the question.
 - C. Say the question was too complicated so you didn't understand it.
2. The chief interviewer introduces you to the three other members of the interview panel. They are sitting close to you. How do you react?
 - A. Shake each person's hand and say hello.
 - B. Just say hello once to the whole team.
 - C. Continue to look at the interviewer, smiling.
3. One interviewer says she likes your scarf or tie. What do you say?
 - A. Oh, my sister chose it for me for this interview because I'm not very good at choosing nice clothes.
 - B. Thank you. If you want to buy one, my sister sells them at her shop.
 - C. Thank you.

4. The chief interviewer gets your name wrong. How do you react?
 - A. Say nothing about it.
 - B. Correct the name.
 - C. Say they could have prepared better for the interview.

5. One of the interviewers says to you, 'I see this is the subject you have majored in. Wasn't that subject rather a waste of time?' What do you say?
 - A. I don't think that is a very nice question to ask me.
 - B. I agree, but I chose it because it was less work than the course I was really interested in.
 - C. Not at all, in fact I know it will be very useful for me in my career.

6. The window is open and you're feeling cold and starting to shiver. What is your reaction?
 - A. Ask if you can shut the window.
 - B. Say 'It's like the Arctic in here, isn't it?'
 - C. Say nothing and hope you don't catch a cold.

7. At the beginning of the interview, they asked to see your passport. They seem to have forgotten to return it to you. What do you do?
 - A. Say nothing and hope they will remember.
 - B. Try to steer the conversation to poor memories, hoping they will remember.
 - C. Wait till near the end of the interview and ask for it back.

8. After a couple of minutes, one of the interviewers asks you to speak more loudly. What do you say?
 - A. I thought you could hear me OK because this is a small room.
 - B. Certainly. Can you hear me all right now?
 - C. OK.

9. One of the interview team seems to be interesting and you would like to have their contact details so you can contact them again after the interview. What do you do?
 - A. Say nothing but look for their details online after the interview.
 - B. Say, 'It's been so interesting meeting you. Would you mind giving me your email address so I can be in touch?'
 - C. Say, 'It's a pity you don't all have name cards. I'd like to be in touch with you.'

10. One of the interviewers seems to spend rather a long time explaining something which

doesn't seem relevant. You are worried that they might be wasting your precious interview time. How do you react?

- A. Decide it is more polite if you say nothing.
- B. Say, 'That's very interesting. Perhaps we should discuss it further after this interview.'
- C. Say, 'I think we'd better stop talking about this now as this is my interview and the time is important.'

11. When you arrive in the interview room, you are led to your chair and a rather small table. There is a jug of water and a glass on the table. You are concerned that you might knock something off the table during the interview. What is your reaction?

- A. Tell the panel that the items are in an unsafe place.
- B. Sit further back from the table so you won't knock them off.
- C. Move the items to another place, explaining that you don't want to knock them over.

12. Unfortunately, the interview room door has been left open. The noise in the corridor is disturbing you, and you are worried that the interviewers may not be able to hear all you say. What is your reaction?

- A. Ask if they would mind if you shut the door, and then shut it.
- B. Ask an interviewer to shut the door.
- C. Speak louder.

ACTIVE LISTENING

A lot has been said and written about the importance of listening. Read the quotations in the box and think about what they might mean for you.

'An appreciative listener is always stimulating.'

Agatha Christie, Author

'Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening.'

Larry King, Chat Show Host

'When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.'

Ernest Hemingway, Author

'Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.'

Stephen R. Covey, Author

'Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking.'

Bernard M. Baruch, Economist

'We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we say.'

Zeno of Citium, Philosopher

'The word listen contains the same letters as the word silent.'

Alfred Brendel, Essayist

At work, you need to speak well and also to listen well. If you talk all the time and do not appear to be listening to your colleagues, this will create a poor impression. They will wonder whether you are paying any attention to them.

Although one may tend to talk too much when feeling nervous, aim to exercise self-control, and be sure to listen. You need to listen and be seen to be listening. Pay attention and respond to the other person appropriately. Aim not only to speak but also to understand.

Here are some ways to help you.

Using your body to show you are listening

Look at person speaking in the eyes. Do not make eye contact for too long, but keep looking at the speaker frequently.

Smile to show you are friendly, and smile when you are happy or something is funny. Do not smile too much, however, or it could look false and even slightly crazy. Try to match your colleague with regard to how much you smile.

Do not fidget, or tap your hands or feet.

When people are really listening to each other, their bodies, and even their feet will be turned towards each other.

Nod appropriately. Make facial gestures to mirror the feelings the speaker is causing. If his/her words are interesting, look interested, possibly by leaning forward a little, raising your eyebrows, and so on. If your colleague says something and thinks it is bad, reflect that emotion with a slight frown. Without exaggerating, make sure your body language mirrors the feelings of the other speaker.



VIDEO

Witness the above advice being put into practice. Follow the link below and watch the clip.

Body Language - Listening and Rapport presented by *Robyn Hatcher* 3:27 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sO84bGgra8>



EXERCISE #1

Now complete the sentences according to what you heard. Choose your answers from the words in the box. Not every word in the box will be needed.

eye	pace	nod	look	faster
leaning	listener	rapport	connectedness	smile

1. It's just as important to _____ like you're listening.
2. When you _____, a person will speak four times longer than he would otherwise.
3. _____ forward is another important way to show you are listening.
4. Subtle mirroring makes the person you are speaking with feel instant _____.
5. You can also mirror the speaker's vocal tone, vocal _____, and language choices.
6. Try not to speak _____ than the other person. It has a tendency to make them feel anxious.
7. A light touch on the elbow creates _____ positive feelings and a feeling of _____.

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

Using your words to show you are listening

1. Make short, encouraging responses. These include the following phrases, and some variations of these.
 - » How surprising / amazing / useful / wonderful / awful / brilliant!
 - » That's interesting / encouraging / helpful / good news / disappointing / unusual / incredible.
 - » Yes, that will be important / a good idea / challenging / productive.
 - » Yes, of course.
 - » I see what you mean.
 - » That's right.

In addition, you can use the expressions below. Although they are short and do not seem to carry a lot of weight on paper, they can convey a lot of meaning. Try saying them with different expressions in your voice. If you vary your intonation and volume, you can express agreement or disagreement, astonishment, joy, anger, disgust and other emotions, just depending on the way you say them.

- » Oh.
- » Yes.
- » Oh, really?
- » I see.

2. Provide verbal feedback. For example, you can repeat or paraphrase what your colleague has said. If you use your own words and try to repeat what they have just said, this will help you to understand, and it will be a good way to show them you have understood the message. You could begin by saying: 'So what you're saying is' or 'So what you mean is'
3. Ask questions for clarification, or to get further information. You can say, 'So do you mean' or 'And what about?'

Paying attention

Above all, try to give the other person your undivided attention while they are speaking. It is a compliment and shows respect if you can make the other person feel as if there is nothing more important to you at that moment, other than listening to their message. Do not be distracted, for example by your phone, another conversation, your finger nails or a fly buzzing in the room. Similarly, do not interrupt the other speaker, even if you think you know what they are going to say next, and do not hurry them.

If you can master the art of active listening, you will find massive benefits at interviews and at work, and also with your friends and family.

In a moment, you will watch a YouTube clip.

The clip shows a conversation which takes place at work. The woman tells the man (her boss) why she is unhappy. The man demonstrates the techniques of active listening and after a short time, an agreeable outcome is achieved and both sides are happy. You will notice how he addresses all the issues she raises, and he deals with each one in turn. When he is uncertain about what she means, he asks her to clarify her point. Notice the appropriate body language and listen to their words words. The clip is an example of how effective active listening can be for developing good relations and overcoming annoyances.

Watch the clip twice and do the following exercises.



VIDEO

Follow the link below and watch the clip.

The clip is called **Active Listening – Example**, produced by *Ohlmer Consulting* 2:52 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLvZkUP5_KU



EXERCISE #2

The first time you listen, look at the first table below. Tick ✓ the sentences which explain why the woman felt unhappy. Put a cross ✗ in the table next to the sentences which do NOT apply.

The woman is frustrated because:

- She finds the work too difficult.
- The man did not thank her for her work.
- She dislikes working for the company.
- She did not receive enough recognition for her work.
- She needs more feedback for her work.

Next, watch again and tick ✓ the sentences which apply to the man. Put a cross ✗ next to the sentences which do NOT apply.

- He says he is sorry about the situation.
- He checks the exact reason why she is frustrated.
- He says he understands her need for recognition.
- He agrees that what she says is right.
- He thanks her for her hard work.
- He offers her a small bonus.
- He explains the reason for the delay.
- He says he wants her to enjoy working for the company.
- He offers to go through the research with her.
- He offers her a promotion.

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

Now you have completed the exercise, you will have seen that the active listening techniques help the man to be a good businessman. He does enough to solve the problem, but he does not promise to do or give anything more than is needed. If he had not listened so carefully, he might have unnecessarily promised a great deal more. The woman's point of view has been listened to, and she feels valued and happier. The outcome is a positive one.



DISCUSSION

Give an example of when you needed to listen very carefully to someone. Which of the active listening techniques (if any) did you use then and what was the outcome? If you had a chance to turn back the clock and have the conversation again, how would you handle the conversation better this time, using more active listening skills?

POLITE LANGUAGE AT WORK

When we are with our family and friends, we can usually relax and use fairly direct language. However, when we are at work, we may have to tread more carefully. We need at all times to create a good impression, and politeness is a large part of this.



EXERCISE #3

To get an idea of the direct and indirect ways of speaking, match the direct phrases on the left with the corresponding indirect phrases on the right. Write your answers below the table. An example has been given to help you. Notice that none of the expressions are rude or offensive in themselves. However, in the wrong contexts, they could be considered impolite.

1. I think you're wrong, there.
2. Coffee?
3. Can you turn off that light, please?
4. Please get in touch soon.
5. I'm very busy right now.
6. I can't deliver the goods immediately.

- A. I wonder if you'd mind turning off that light, please.
- B. I'm just a little bit busy right at the moment.
- C. Are you absolutely sure that's right?
- D. I'm afraid the goods may not be able to be delivered just yet.
- E. Can I get you a coffee?
- F. I'd appreciate it if you would get in touch soon, please.



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

HOW TO MAKE LANGUAGE MORE POLITE

At first, some people might feel that the indirect language above seems a little disingenuous, and could be more honest. However, to people who are accustomed to this way of speaking, the messages are entirely clear. The point about using this sort of language is that it softens the impact on the listener, and it shows great respect for the listener.

Some of the indirect expressions are longer and more complex, but there are some simple tips which can help you. Read the 7 tips below. After that, practise using this type of language and enjoy watching the positive effect it can have!

Giving Unwelcome News

- » Prepare the listener first. Start by saying: *unfortunately / I'm afraid / regrettably*
- » Use little words to soften the impact, for example *a little / slightly / a bit / rather / somewhat / a few / quite*.
- » Apologise, if you think that will help. Say, *I'm sorry / I'm very sorry / I'm really sorry / I apologise / I do apologise*.
- » The modal verbs *might, may, can* and *could* are often used to soften messages. Also, the verbs *to seem* and *to appear* can have this effect.
- » As an example of the techniques above, consider the following two sentences. *Henry has rung. He's sorry, but unfortunately, it seems he might be a few minutes late.* In direct language, this would correspond to *Henry has rung and he will be late.*

Asking For Permission

- » Use *Can I* or the more polite form, *May I*, to ask for permission.
- » To sound even more polite, say *Would you mind if I (+ past tense of verb)*.
- » OR *Would it be all right if I (+ past tense of verb)*.

This can be even more persuasive if you add a valid reason to your request.

For example, *Would it be all right if I left 20 minutes earlier this afternoon, as I have to collect my car from the garage before it closes?*

Asking for action

- » It is good to avoid direct imperatives, such as *Please do this*.
- » The words *would* and *could* are useful here.
For example, you can say, *Please would you help me?*
OR *Please could you help me?*

- » You can use the phrase *Would you mind...* . (Remember that if the listener wants to be helpful, the response to this is *No*.
For example, *Would you mind correcting this work for me?* The helpful answer is *No, not at all*. This means the person WILL correct the work.)
- » The phrase *if + would* is widely used in asking for small favours. For those who love grammar, this is the beginning of what is known as a 'Second Conditional' sentence. The second half of the sentence is left unsaid, for us to imagine.
For example, you might hear, *If you would just sign here, please*. This is a polite way of asking someone to sign. (We can *imagine* the second half of the sentence to be, *I would be very grateful*.)

Disagreeing with or correcting the other person

- » When you want to correct someone else, do not cause them to lose face. Demonstrate the utmost tact and sensitivity. Try not to say, *No, you're wrong*, or *No, that's not right*, or *I disagree with that*.
- » Instead, begin by reassuring the person that you agree with at least some of what they have said. Then you can question the part you disagree with. Notice how effective the following negative question is.
For example, *I agree entirely with your point about the importance of the safety measures, but are you certain that we need to complete the changes so soon?*

Avoid accusing people

- » Do not use the word *You* if it might sound like an accusation.
- » Try not to say, *But you said your report would be ready by today*.
- » Instead, you could say, *But I thought the report would be ready today*.
- » You could say this even better, like this. *Forgive me if I am mistaken, but I was hoping that we might be able to receive the report by today*.
- » Using the passive form of a verb can help you to avoid accusing someone. If you want to report a broken window, but don't want to mention who did it, you can say, *Unfortunately, the window was broken*. This may have a better effect than saying, *Somebody broke the window*.

Use positive words

- » Wherever possible, use positive words.
- » Don't say, *His work was of a poor standard* unless you want to be very emphatic.
- » Say instead, *His work was of an insufficiently high standard*.
- » Similarly, if you don't feel well, you can of course say, *I feel awful today*.
- » However, the news might be better received if you say, *I'm afraid I really don't feel my best today*.

Imply that there is a compelling reason that someone has not succeeded

There are many reasons why things go wrong. We may have no idea what those reasons were. To show respect, it is sometimes good to acknowledge that failures may not be entirely a person's fault. Therefore, instead of saying, *Sue has not completed the work*, it may be better to say, *Unfortunately, Sue has been unable to complete all the work so far.*

This sentence suggests:

- » There could be a good reason for the problem
- » Sue has done some of the work
- » She may complete the work soon.



DISCUSSION

Give an example of a conversation you have had when you thought you did not sound polite enough. What went wrong? How exactly could you have improved the conversation, using the polite language referred to in this unit?

Write and share your answers on the discussion board.

SPEAK SO THAT PEOPLE WANT TO LISTEN TO YOU

When we speak, people may or may not want to listen to us. However, we can probably all think of people that *everyone* wants to listen to. We may wonder why this is. There could be a number of reasons but there are almost certainly some things you can do to make people want to listen to you more.



VIDEO

Follow the link and watch the TED talk given by Julian Treasure, a business sound expert. There will be three exercises to do as or after you watch.

How to speak so that people want to listen, produced by *Julian Treasure* 9:58 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elho2S0Zahl>



EXERCISE #4

Identify the things that people do not want to hear when you speak. Put a tick ✓ next to the seven 'deadly sins' that are mentioned in the talk.

- Gossiping about people
- Judging people
- Speaking too much
- Being negative
- Complaining
- Boasting and being too proud
- Making excuses, blaming people
- Lying
- Dogmatism
- Overconfidence

✓ CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



EXERCISE #5

Continue listening to the talk and complete the words in the matrix below. They are the four powerful things we can do with our voices to make change in the world.

H _ _ _ _ _	A _ _ _ _ _
I _ _ _ _ _	L _ _ _ _

Good foundations
for our speech:
'HAIL'

✓ CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



EXERCISE #6

Consider the items in your 'voice tool box'. Match the tools in the box with the relevant phrases or definitions on the left. Write the name of the tool next to the phrases.

Register	Volume	Timbre
Pitch	Prosody	Pace

1. The speed of your delivery, the use of silence. _____
2. The music of your voice, the tone. _____
3. Whether your voice is high or low. _____
4. The depth of your voice, which changes according to where in your body you produce your voice. _____
5. The loudness or quietness of your voice. _____
6. The way your voice feels e.g. rich, smooth, warm. _____

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



DISCUSSION

What did you learn from the TED talk that was particularly relevant to you? What will you do to make your voice more effective at work?

PUBLIC SPEAKING: GESTURES AND OTHER TECHNIQUES

When we make speeches and presentations, we need employ a range of techniques to reinforce our message. President Obama is a master of these techniques and we can learn something from these. Watch the clip describing the techniques that President Obama uses when he delivers his speeches. Click the following link. After listening, do the exercise.



VIDEO

Follow the link and watch the video.

Barack Obama's 3 Best Public Speaking Tips, 4:57 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKv9wYO5a9s>



EXERCISE #7

Fill in the gaps in the sentences based on the video clip with the words from the box. Not all the words in the box will be needed.

adjectives	pause	concrete	transcendence
vocal	impact	up	volume
gestures	repeatedly	words	matter

1. The first technique is what I call _____.
2. He can paint a picture in your mind's eye by using very _____ and vivid language.
3. Repetition is a way of structuring sentences to give them more _____.
4. Obama used repetition _____.
5. Use gestures and your _____ delivery to add impact.
6. He's constantly using his _____ to emphasize different sentences or different words.
7. Sometimes when he talks about being inclusive, he will spread his arms apart with his palms _____.
8. Nothing is as dramatic as a well-placed _____.
9. Listen to how his faster paced vocal delivery, as well as raising his _____, actually adds impact to the words.
10. Make people believe in you, using your _____, gestures and vocal delivery to drive your message home.

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

YOUR VOICE

Your voice is distinctive to you. It is unique. This is why people recognise that is you when you ring them up, and they cannot even see you.

We all know people who have voices that convey messages effectively are pleasant to listen to, but at the same time, we know that some other people's voices are less effective. Your voice is a vital communication tool. With some knowledge and some practice, you can improve your vocal communication.



Here is some advice about how to get the best from your voice.

1. Breathe properly. This means you should breathe from your diaphragm. This may feel as if you are breathing from your stomach. When you breathe, your shoulders should not go up and down. Breathe deeply, calmly and evenly. If you are very fit, you are likely to have strong lungs and this may be an advantage. If you are not so fit, it may be good for you to practise some deep breathing exercises to get your lungs working to a greater capacity. You don't ideally want to run out of breath mid-sentence. If you are breathing correctly, people should not be aware of your breathing movements.
2. Adopt a suitable posture. If you stand, you are giving yourself the best chance to breathe easily. If you are sitting, do not slouch or hunch your shoulders. Stand or sit with your shoulders well back. Keep your head up and do not talk down into your chest. Probably the most important thing is to pay great attention to the speed at which you speak. When we are feeling nervous, we tend to speak more quickly. This can show people we are feeling nervous, and it can distract them from hearing our message. Although you may find it difficult to slow down, do try to, if you think you may be speaking too fast. Ask a friend whether you speak too fast, and act on that information. If you have to make a speech or a presentation, you could perhaps write a reminder for yourself on your notes to slow down. Remember that sometimes LESS is MORE. If you say a little at a slow speed, your listeners may well remember more than if you say a lot at top speed.
3. Articulate as clearly as you can. If you mumble, people will not understand you easily, and you will not seem confident. If you find it hard to articulate clearly, you could practise saying some tongue twisters in advance, to get your speech muscles into training.
4. Vary the pitch of your voice. If your voice is always the same pitch, this could sound monotonous and even boring. Make your voice go up and down, especially to stress the important words in your sentence. When we feel tense, our vocal cords may tighten, making our voices go higher. This tells the listener we are not feeling confident and may send a negative message. Try to make your voice sound reasonably low, and notice how you sound more confident.
5. The volume you use will vary according to a number of factors. If you are making a speech, speak

loudly enough so that the people at the very back of the room, and even beyond, can hear you. People further away may not be able to watch your lips or facial expressions, and so they could be relying solely on your voice. As a general rule, if you are having to project your voice quite far, slow the speed down to make it easier for your audience to process what you are saying.

6. If you have a non-standard accent, this should not normally be a problem. Start off a little more slowly than usual, perhaps, to give your listeners a moment to adjust to your accent, and after that, just try to enunciate as clearly as you can.
7. Use pauses. These can be VERY effective. Do not feel that you have to speak all the time. Have the courage to slow down and even stop speaking. If you find this hard, try counting quietly to yourself during your pause. Stop speaking for two seconds from time to time. You may be surprised at the authority this gives you!
8. In order to make a positive and cheerful impression, make a point of smiling at appropriate moments. People can hear when someone is smiling, and generally respond well to this.
9. If you feel nervous about having a conversation with someone at work, or giving a presentation or a speech, the solution is likely to be good preparation. Think carefully about what you want to say. Then practise saying it, remembering all the techniques mentioned above.
10. Finally, it may be beneficial to record your voice and see how it sounds. If you have never done this before, your voice may surprise you. Try to be objective and if you think that your voice sounds too high, or you are mumbling, or speaking too slowly, make an effort to change. Then record yourself again in a few days, to see if your voice sounds better.



EXERCISE #8

As a review of the points on the use of voice and body language, watch a short clip of US President Obama attacking his political opponent, Donald Trump. Then, answer the questions below. Click the following link.

President Obama Destroys Donald Trump, Republicans 2:32 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3q8tkoqdAIU>

How many of the following can you notice in the clip? Put a tick next to each one.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> A range of facial expressions | <input type="radio"/> Slow speed of delivery |
| <input type="radio"/> Open palms | <input type="radio"/> Arm gestures |
| <input type="radio"/> Gestures with his hands to reinforce word meanings | <input type="radio"/> Variation in the pitch of his voice |
| <input type="radio"/> Pauses | <input type="radio"/> Good posture, with shoulders back |
| <input type="radio"/> Variation in the volume of his voice | <input type="radio"/> Looking relaxed |
| <input type="radio"/> Smiling whilst speaking | |

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



VIDEO

Now, watch a short clip of Michelle Obama in 2012, giving a speech in support of her husband. Observe her body language, her voice and her words.

Michelle Obama's speech moves many to tears in Charlotte

3:21 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tYto5PrSOI>



DISCUSSION

Which techniques does Michelle Obama use which are similar to those of her husband, and which are different? How effective are her techniques? Is there a difference in the techniques that a man or a woman might use when public speaking? Share your ideas on the discussion board.

REVIEW

In this unit, you have assessed your own assertiveness, and you have learnt strategies to help you to listen and to speak more effectively. You are probably already thinking of people you know who are very skilled in these areas. Try using the techniques you have met in this unit and see how you can improve your communication!

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



QUIZ ANSWERS

	Assertive, positive	Aggressive or impolite	Shy or passive
1.	B	C	A
2.	A	C	B
3.	C	B	A
4.	B	C	A
5.	C	A	B
6.	A	B	C
7.	C	B	A
8.	B	A	C
9.	B	C	A
10.	B	C	A
11.	C	A	B
12.	A	B	C

Comments

1. It is very important that you answer every question. In some interviews, you may be awarded points for each answer. Therefore, if you miss a question, you may lose points. Don't criticise the question or say there was anything wrong with it. Simply ask them to rephrase it.
2. It's good if you can develop a relationship with each member of the panel. If you are close enough, shake their hands, smile and say 'hello'. If they are less easy to reach, just smile broadly and say 'hello' to each one.
3. Don't downplay anything about yourself. If they like your scarf or tie, that means they have a good impression of it, and by extension, perhaps of you. Don't throw away the credit you have gained by saying someone else did the work for you, and don't reduce the value of something. If you suggest the interviewer might want to buy one, this could be seen as impolite.
4. If they get your name wrong, they might offer the job to the wrong person, so you must make sure they get the name correct. Be as polite as you can. They will probably feel quite bad about getting your name wrong, so don't make them feel any worse.
5. This type of negative question is often asked in order to test what sort of a person you are. It's just a technique that interviewers use. DO NOT take offence. You simply have to answer it in a positive way. If you become aggressive or are negative, you will lose points.

6. You need to feel comfortable and of course, so do the interviewers. If you feel so cold that you are shivering, they probably feel uncomfortable, too, and they might well be pleased to shut the window. It is their responsibility to make sure that you are warm enough and have the best possible chance of performing well. If you say nothing and are shivering, they will almost certainly notice this and think you are very nervous or even afraid, and this will create a negative impression.
7. Your passport is an important document. You don't want them to keep it by mistake, and neither do they. Give them enough time to remember. However, towards the end of the interview, if you think they are going to forget to hand it back, just ask them for it, very politely.
8. Do not imply that their hearing is defective or that the room is small. This will not endear you to them. If you want to show you care and are keen to act on their comments, you should choose answer b. If you just say OK, this may seem rather weak, although if you say it loudly and with a big smile, it may be fine.
9. It can be good to get in touch with interviewers, as long as you use their work email addresses. Don't imply criticism of the organisation by noting that they don't have name cards. In fact they may have name cards, but if you say c, they might not offer you one!
10. This is a tricky situation. Since most interviews are held to rather tight schedules, you cannot risk losing precious time in which you could demonstrate how good you are. If you can, observe the body language of the other interviewers (if there are any). Before you react, check whether they are looking impatient, or whether they seem to be thinking that what is being said is important. Also, look to see if they are likely to stop their colleague's explanation. It's much better if they stop it for you. Option b may be risky, but sometimes you may need to do this. Whatever you do, be as polite as possible.
11. Although water may be useful, you do not want to be thinking too much about it during the interview. You have enough other things to think about. However, do not sit further away, as you will be distancing yourself from the interviewers, which is never a good idea. Don't be afraid to move the articles. Just smile, thank them for the water and say that you hope that they won't mind, but you are going to move them to somewhere safer. Find another table, a window sill or even the floor to put them on.
12. The door could have been left open for a good reason, so you should not just ask an interviewer to shut it. Since you are more likely to be sitting near the door than the interviewers are, it may be good to offer to shut the door. It is best to ask permission. Do not just speak louder as this could be uncomfortable for them, and it could distract and tire you.

Count how many questions you answered in an Assertive, Aggressive/Impolite or Shy/Passive way. If you chose mainly Assertive answers, you probably have the right degree of assertiveness for an interview. If you have mainly Aggressive or Passive, you probably need to rethink your stance.

 GO BACK



ANSWERS #1

1. It's just as important to look like you're listening.
2. When you nod, a person will speak four times longer than he would otherwise.
3. leaning forward is another important way to show you are listening.
4. Subtle mirroring makes the person you are speaking with feel instant rapport.
5. You can also mirror the speaker's vocal tone, vocal pace, and language choices.
6. Try not to speak faster than the other person. It has a tendency to make them feel anxious.
7. A light touch on the elbow creates ... positive feelings and a feeling of connectedness.

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ANSWERS #2

The Woman

- She finds the work too difficult.
- The man did not thank her for her work.
- She dislikes working for the company.
- She did not receive enough recognition for her work.
- She needs more feedback for her work.

The Man

- He says he is sorry about the situation.
- He checks the exact reason why she is frustrated.
- He says he understands her need for recognition.
- He agrees that what she says is right.
- He thanks her for her hard work.
- He offers her a small bonus.
- He explains the reason for the delay.
- He says he wants her to enjoy working for the company.
- He offers to go through the research with her.
- He offers her a promotion.

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ANSWERS #3

Please track colors to match items.

1. I think you're wrong, there.
2. Coffee?
3. Can you turn off that light, please?
4. Please get in touch soon.
5. I'm very busy right now.
6. I can't deliver the goods immediately.

- A. I wonder if you'd mind turning off that light, please.
- B. I'm just a little bit busy right at the moment.
- C. Are you absolutely sure that's right?
- D. I'm afraid the goods may not be able to be delivered just yet.
- E. Can I get you a coffee?
- F. I'd appreciate it if you would get in touch soon, please.

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ANSWERS #4

- Gossiping about people
- Judging people
- Speaking too much
- Being negative
- Complaining
- Boasting and being too proud
- Making excuses, blaming people
- Lying
- Dogmatism
- Overconfidence

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ANSWERS #5



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ANSWERS #6

1. The speed of your delivery, the use of silence.
2. The music of your voice, the tone.
3. Whether your voice is high or low.
4. The depth of your voice, which changes according to where in your body you produce your voice.
5. The loudness or quietness of your voice.
6. The way your voice feels e.g. rich, smooth, warm.

pace

prosody

pitch

register

volume

timbre

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ANSWERS #7

1. The first technique is what I call transcendence.
2. He can paint a picture in your mind's eye by using very concrete and vivid language.
3. Repetition is a way of structuring sentences to give them more impact.
4. Obama used repetition repeatedly.
5. Use gestures and your vocal delivery to add impact.
6. He's constantly using his gestures to emphasize different sentences or different words.
7. Sometimes when he talks about being inclusive, he will spread his arms apart with his palms up.
8. Nothing is as dramatic as a well-placed pause.
9. Listen to how his faster paced vocal delivery, as well as raising his volume, actually adds impact to the words.
10. Make people believe in you, using your words, gestures and vocal delivery to drive your message home.

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ANSWERS #8

All of the items in the table can be seen during the speech.

- » A range of facial expressions. The range of facial expressions includes smiles, frowns and raised eyebrows.
- » Open palms. The open palms suggest honesty, as if there is nothing to hide.
- » Gestures with his hands to reinforce word meanings. The hand gestures include moving his hands close together in support of the word 'together'.
- » Pauses. There are some long pauses and these allow the audience time to think about the message.
- » Variation in the volume of his voice. The volume varies. He speaks noticeably more loudly when talking about the greatness of America, as he tries to inspire his audience.
- » Smiling whilst speaking. He frequently smiles. This makes him seem friendly to the audience and it sometimes suggests that his opponent cannot be taken seriously.
- » Slow speed of delivery. The speed of delivery is slow. This gives everyone a chance to understand and to think about the meaning. It also makes him seem confident and sure of his message.
- » Arm gestures. He uses his arms a few times, sometimes as a dismissive gesture.
- » Variation in the pitch of his voice. He varies the pitch, for example using a rising pitch to show surprise or ask a question. This adds expression and interest to the speech.
- » Good posture, with shoulders back. At all times, his posture is excellent. He stands up straight and holds his shoulders back. This looks confident and gives him the opportunity to breathe deeply and unnoticeably.
- » Looking relaxed. Throughout the speech he looks relaxed. Sometimes he leans on the podium, as if he is talking to friends. He smiles, laughs and jokes throughout, in a seemingly relaxed and engaging way.

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FORMS OF EXPRESSIONS OF EMOTIONS

3

WRITER



JEAN MEAKIN



SECTIONS

Click the titles to navigate.

01. Introduction
02. Gestures
03. The importance of verbal and non-verbal messages
04. Personal space
05. The direction you face
06. Open and closed body language
07. Hands
08. Review

INTRODUCTION

This unit is concerned with forms of expression and of emotions. The focus is on how we use our bodies to express our meanings. Some of it you will already know, but there are sure to be some surprises. Go through the unit with an open mind and be ready to learn what you can from it, always with a view to improving your own communication style.

GESTURES

A gesture is a movement of the body to indicate a meaning or an idea. It is a form of body language and may involve, in particular, the movement of the fingers, hand, arm, shoulders or face.



Gestures are used widely by people of all cultures. Most of us are familiar with *waving*, *high fives*, or the *thumbs up* gesture, to indicate *success*.

Although some gestures are universal, others may be specific to certain cultures, and we have to be mindful of the appropriateness of our gestures.

Be particularly careful about pointing. It is often considered impolite to point directly at people, although it is normally fine to point at objects.



To see a wide range of gestures used in Poland and in Japan, for example, follow the link below. Scroll down to Body Language – Gestures and watch the short clip. You will see that one actress has a Polish flag painted on her face to indicate Polish gestures, and one has a Japanese flag on her face to indicate Japanese gestures.

<http://termcoord.eu/2014/08/polish-vs-japanese-gestures>



DISCUSSION

What gestures do you see people using at work? Do you notice any difference in the number or types of gestures made by men and women? Are there any gestures which you personally dislike? Share your ideas on the discussion board.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL MESSAGES

To understand the importance of body language, read the following passage summarising the findings of the famous psychologist, Albert Mehrabian. It has been slightly adapted for this unit.

From: Institute of Judicial Studies, Handout 1. Albert Mehrabian. Communication Studies

1. Albert Mehrabian is currently Professor Emeritus of Psychology, UCLA. He is best known for his publications on the relative importance of verbal and non-verbal messages. Mehrabian comes to two main conclusions in his studies: 1. There are basically three elements in any face-to-face communication: words, tone of voice, non-verbal behaviour 2. The non-verbal elements are particularly important for communicating feelings and attitude, especially when they are inconsistent i.e. if words disagree with the tone of voice and non-verbal behaviour, people tend to believe the tonality and non-verbal behaviour.
2. According to Mehrabian, the three elements in point 1 above account differently for our liking for the person who puts forward a message concerning their feelings: words account for 7%, tone of voice accounts for 38%, and body language accounts for 55% of the liking. They are often abbreviated as the "3 Vs" for Verbal, Vocal & Visual. For effective and meaningful communication about emotions, these three parts of the message need to support each other - they have to be "congruent".

For example, consider the following communication:

Verbal: "I do not have a problem with you!"

Non-verbal: person avoids eye-contact, looks anxious, has a closed body language, etc.

In this communication, it is more likely that the receiver will trust the predominant form of communication, which, according to Mehrabian's findings is non-verbal (38% + 55%) rather

than the literal meaning of the words (7%). This is known as “the 7%-38%-55% rule”.

3. So in summary Mehrabian found: 7% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in the words that are spoken. 38% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is the way the words are said. 55% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in facial expression.
4. Mehrabian did not intend the statistic to be used or applied freely to all communications and meaning as they frequently have been. They derived from experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes (i.e., like-dislike) so unless a communicator is talking about their feelings or attitudes, these equations are not applicable.

The article above was taken from

<http://www.iojt-dc2013.org/~media/Microsites/Files/IOJT/11042013-Albert-Mehrabian-Communication-Studies.ashx>

Accessed 20 April 2016



EXERCISE #1

After reading the text, match the percentages with the bubbles below, to show the relative importance of verbal and non-verbal messages. The percentages refer to the importance of the message (in relation to feelings and attitudes) which is received. Answer according to the information in the text above. For your answers, just write the letters a, b or c.

1. 7% relates to ____.
2. 38% refers to ____.
3. 55% refers to ____

- A. Body language / facial expression
- B. Words
- C. The place where the communication takes place
- D. Tone of voice

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



DISCUSSION

Consider the quotation in the box below. It is taken from the passage about Mehrabian's findings. Why do you think a person's tone and body language might not 'agree' with the words spoken? Think of a situation when this has happened and talk about it on the discussion board.

'If words disagree with the tone of voice and nonverbal behaviour, people tend to believe the tonality and non-verbal behaviour.'

Albert Mehrabian

PERSONAL SPACE

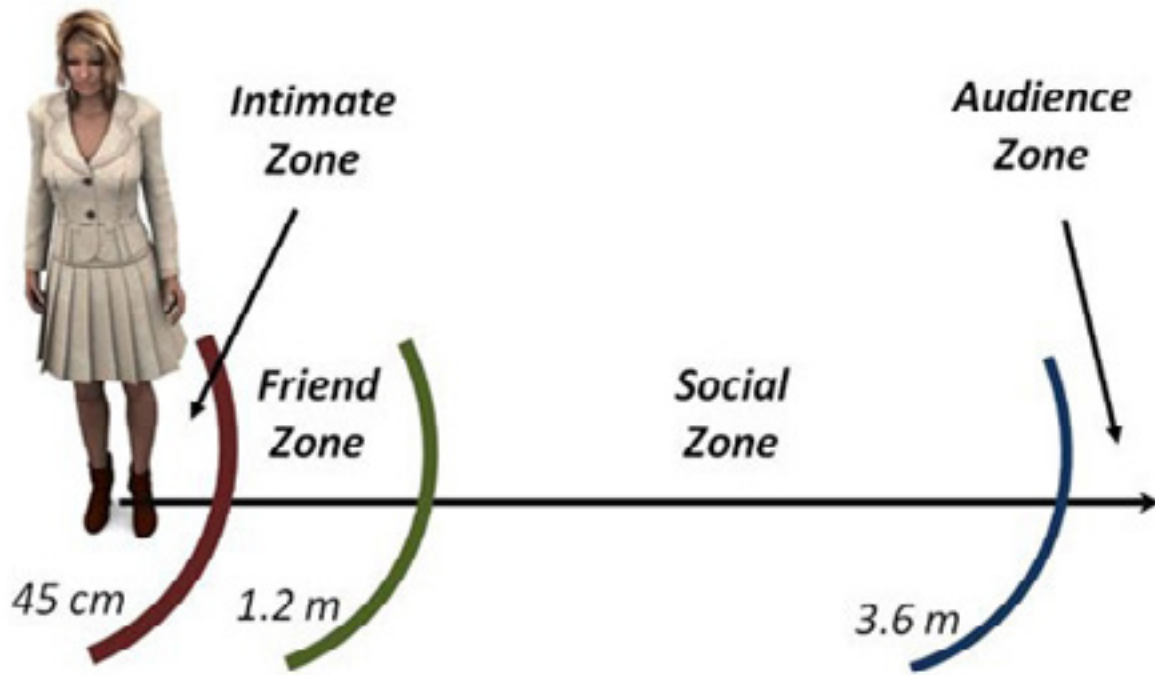


Read the following slightly adapted text. Then answer the questions at the end.

Body Language: Personal Space

We have all heard the term "Personal Space" used in one context or another, but what does this really mean? Animals for centuries have been known to have their personal space and territories. Snakes will attack you if you walk around their nest of eggs, and dogs will bite you if you come too close into the territory they're protecting. Lions will stay away from the other lion prides and their marked land (marked with urine and poo), and so on. In the 1960's Dr Edward Hall was one of the leading pioneers in the study of human personal space or what he called "proxemics". Humans also have marked territories: we have marked the borders of our countries, the borders of our states, the borders of our cities, the borders of the suburbs we live in - we have even fenced off our houses to establish the outline of our land, just like lions.

What is interesting however, is that apart from the obvious borders we have created, we also have invisible air borders around us, certain distances reserved for certain people.



Personal Space

Invisible Zoning

We all carry an invisible air bubble around us that we feel comfortable in, and as soon as someone comes too far inside our bubble, we will immediately feel discomfort and start becoming anxious. This bubble is created in our childhood and varies depending on the location we grew up in. For example, someone who grew up in the countryside or on a farm is used to having lots of space to themselves, therefore, their bubble would be significantly bigger than someone who grew up in New York or New Delhi where the population is denser and everywhere is more crowded. A few years ago in Spain, they decided to add extra seats in classrooms as the population was growing. This was instead of expanding the schools. The result was catastrophic as the students not only could retain less information, but also, they became significantly more violent as a result of the invasion of personal space, and started fighting each other.

There are general zoning distances you can keep in mind if you live in the city area of a Western country.

- » **Intimate Zone:** This is about 15 to 45 cm. The Intimate Zone is the most important zone of all as it is only reserved for a select few people, including parents, love partners, children, family and very close friends. The proximity chosen by people is also dependent on who the

other person is. Only love partners or our children for instance, would be allowed to enter into close physical proximity (15 cm or less). Anyone who is not meant to be in the Intimate Zone and enters it will cause physiological changes (such as increased heart rate) in our body as we will feel threatened.

- » **Friend Zone:** This is about 45 cm to 1.2 m. This is the distance that we reserve for social gatherings such as parties, friendly interactions, etc.
- » **Social Zone:** About 1.2 to 3.5 m. This zoning is reserved for strangers we have just met, acquaintances, and anyone we interact with that we haven't established a relationship with.
- » **Audience Zone:** This is anything over 3.5 m and is used to address an audience or large group of people.

Crowded Places

To put the zoning example to the test, go to any place and watch. In crowded public places, such as trains or elevators, when people do not know each other and are forced to be uncomfortably close together, you are likely to see people using the following rules of behavior.

- » Eye contact must be avoided at all costs.
- » Show no emotion and maintain an expressionless face.
- » If standing in a large compact crowd; remain rigidly stiff and avoid any physical movement.
- » Act busy, pretend to read a book or a newspaper, take out your phone and text or watch the floor numbers change in the elevator.

The information is taken from the website: <http://lonerwolf.com/body-language-personal-space>



EXERCISE #2

Mark each sentence **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Stated (NS)** according to the text.

1. Proxemics means the study of human personal space. _____
2. The idea of how close people should be is formed in our childhood. _____
3. A city dweller is likely to prefer more space around them than a country dweller. _____
4. In the Spanish school, students learnt more when there was less free space in the classroom. _____
5. In a Western country, the zone for friends is between 45 cm and 1.2 m. _____
6. In the Far East, people tend to stay closer together than they do in the West. _____
7. When people feel uncomfortably close, they tend to avoid eye contact. _____

 **CHECK YOUR ANSWERS**



DISCUSSION

Now that you have read the text, consider how this might apply to your situation at work. Answer these questions and share the information on the discussion board.

1. How aware are you of the issue of personal space at work and in your life? What has made you aware of it?
2. Explain how communication might be improved if people pay more attention to personal space.

THE DIRECTION YOU FACE

In addition to how close to someone you are, the direction that you are facing also gives an indication of how you are feeling. You may send subconscious signals through the positioning of your head, shoulders, and even your feet. When people are interested in each other, their bodies are likely to be facing each other and their feet may point towards each other. If they do not want to talk to each other, their bodies may subconsciously point away from each other. The more closely our body language mirrors the body language of the other person, the more likely it is that we are interested in them and want to be with them. If you are at a meeting and notice that someone chooses to sit near the door, and their feet

are pointing towards the door, you can be fairly sure that, subconsciously at least, they do not want to be at the meeting.

Therefore, if you want to make a positive impression, make sure that your body makes it look as if you want to be there.

Look at the pictures below and see how the body language is positive.



The male student leans forward, makes eye contact and smiles. All of these gestures show interest and engagement.

In this picture, you can see that the students' feet are pointing towards each other. This indicates that they are interested in each other and want to be there.



OPEN AND CLOSED BODY LANGUAGE

When we feel interested and receptive to another person, our body language will be open. We may show the palms of our hands and we may open our arms, moving them away from our bodies. On the other hand, if we do not like the other person or their message, we will tend to show closed body language. This might mean crossing our arms or our legs. These are strong and easily read signals and if we want to develop a good working relationship with people, we should try to avoid giving closed body signals.



Look at the picture of the graduates below and see the open body language.

In the next picture, notice how at least three of the students are showing open body language, whereas one is showing closed body language, despite her smile.



Notice the closed body language. The students seem to be bored and are showing this by holding their hands over their bodies, slouching and not sitting up straight, and making little eye contact. They may also be feeling uncomfortably close to each other. Even their clothes give the impression of a closed attitude, of distancing and covering up.

Compare the above picture with the next one, which shows students appearing interested. Here, their posture is upright, and they are looking up and they are smiling. They also seem more comfortable, with plenty of space around them.

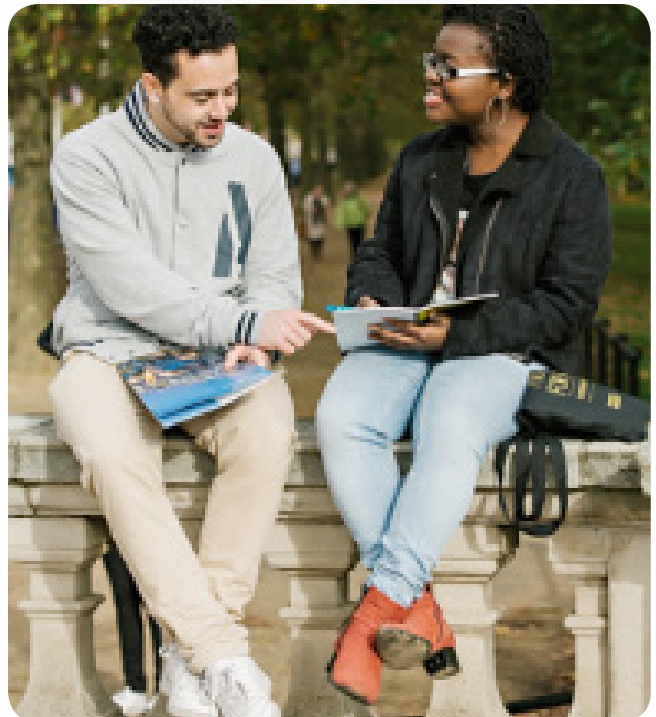




Be aware that closed body language can involve protecting your body, not only by crossing your arms and legs in front of your body. Sometimes, people subconsciously use a bag or a briefcase to shield themselves. The photo below may show this, with the bag in front of the student.

Sometimes, people may cross their legs in the direction of a person that they like. If we cross our legs AWAY from someone, this may send a powerful signal that we do not want to be with them.

Finally, be aware that closed body language does not always mean that the other person is unreceptive or unfriendly. In the first picture below, the crossed legs suggests that the two students are balancing and being careful not to fall off the wall! You will see that their faces appear genuinely friendly and they are smiling.



In this picture, the girl seems to be lost in thought. As the area is crowded, she may be avoiding eye contact. Her arm is across her body, but we should not necessarily read this as closed body language. More likely, her arm is helping her to support the weight of the placard. Notice how her casual T shirt and cap, worn backwards, may mirror the assumed appearance of new students and may help to create a rapport with them.

HANDS

A lot of meaning can be expressed through our hands. We all know that shaking hands is used as a sign of friendship. We also wave our hands to say hello or goodbye, and there is much more to what our hands can show.

Watch a small part of a TED talk given by the body language expert, Professor Allan Pease, in which he gives a practical demonstration of body language using his hands. He makes a request to the audience three times. He uses the same words each time for the request but with different hand signals. Then he analyses the audience's reaction.

Then, he describes an experiment in which a speaker had twenty minutes to present a proposal. The speaker made the proposal using the same words, but different body language with his hands. Follow the link below and fast forward it to watch from 6:09 minutes to 10:08 minutes. (Of course, you can watch all of it if you have time. It's an excellent talk.) After listening, do the exercise below, to check your understanding of his message.



VIDEO

Click the link below to access the talk.

Body language, the power is in the palm of your hands by Allan Pease 14:29 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZZ7k8cMA-4>



EXERCISE #3

After you have watched, complete the sentences according to the information given in the short section of the talk. Underline the correct answer in each sentence.

1. When the speaker gave the instructions with the palms of his hands in the upward position, the audience felt *positive* / *negative* about the instructions.
2. When the speaker gave the instructions with his palms facing downwards, the audience felt *positive* / *negative* about the instructions.
3. When the speaker gave the instructions using pointing gestures, the audience felt *positive* / *negative* about the instructions.
4. The audience retained 40% *more* / *less* of the information in the proposal when the speaker talked with his palms facing upwards.
5. When the speaker made the proposal with his palms down, he was seen as *friendly and engaging* / *pushy and authoritative*.
6. When the speaker made the proposal using pointing gestures, this was the *most* / *least* popular.



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

REVIEW

In this unit, you have considered non-verbal behaviour in terms of gestures, personal space, and open and closed body language, and seen how all of these can contribute to better communication. As you spend time with people, pay attention to these things. Practise some of the behaviours yourself and watch people's reactions. Persevere, and learn how you can make the techniques work for you.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



ANSWERS #1

- ①. 7% relates to ____.
- ②. 38% refers to ____.
- ③. 55% refers to ____

- A. Body language / facial expression
- B. Words
- C. The place where the communication takes place
- D. Tone of voice

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ANSWERS #2

True (T) / False (F) / Not Stated (NS)

- 1. Proxemics means the study of human personal space. T
- 2. The idea of how close people should be is formed in our childhood. T
- 3. A city dweller is likely to prefer more space around them than a country dweller. F
- 4. In the Spanish school, students learnt more when there was less free space in the classroom. F
- 5. In a Western country, the zone for friends is between 45 cm and 1.2 m. T
- 6. In the Far East, people tend to stay closer together than they do in the West. NS
- 7. When people feel uncomfortably close, they tend to avoid eye contact. T

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ANSWERS #3

1. When the speaker gave the instructions with the palms of his hands in the upward position, the audience felt positive / *negative* about the instructions.
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MANAGEMENT OF EMOTIONS AND THE BODY

4

WRITER



JEAN MEAKIN



SECTIONS

Click the titles to navigate.

01. Introduction
02. Stress and anger management and resolving conflicts
03. Spotting potential conflicts early
04. Using body language to reduce conflict and build better relationships
05. Mirroring body language
06. Sitting correctly at your computer
07. Using appropriate verbal language to reduce potential conflict
08. Managing stress, conflict and anger at work
09. Exercises to control stress
10. Review

INTRODUCTION

In this final unit, you will read about stress and anger management, and will find out how to spot potential areas of conflict and resolve them early. Appropriate body language and verbal language will be recommended for these situations. It is always important to take care of our bodies, and so there are some general exercises to try. In addition, as more and more people spend large parts of their day working in offices, there are some tips for sitting correctly at your computer.

STRESS AND ANGER MANAGEMENT

Everybody has experienced or will experience feelings of stress and anger at work. Sometimes we can see it coming and we can prepare for it, and sometimes it may take us by surprise. We have to deal with it as best we can. This section considers verbal language and body language in relation to stress, and some suitable responses are suggested.

PLEASE NOTE: The materials in this unit are presented in a general and lighthearted way. The materials do not represent professional advice. If you have any concerns whatsoever about these issues, you are recommended to seek help from a professional.

Read the following article called Effective Communication Skills: Resolving Conflicts, slightly adapted for this Module, from Utah State University Cooperative Extension.

After you have read the article, answer the questions in **Exercise 1**.

Before you read the article, you will need to know the meaning of 'I' statement. Read the definition in the box.

An **'I' statement** is a way of saying how the speaker feels about something. This is in contrast to a 'You' statement, which focuses on the addressee. 'I' statements can be more effective for resolving issues than 'You' statements.

Examples

'I' Statement: 'I feel afraid when you drive fast.'

'You' statement: 'You drive too fast.'

Effective Communication Skills: Resolving Conflicts

By Naomi Brower, MFHD, CFLE, Extension Assistant Professor

Jana Darrington, MS, Extension Assistant Professor

Even the happiest of relationships experience conflicts and problems (Markman, Stanley, Blumberg, Jenkins & Whiteley, 2004). If handled well, issues provide opportunities for personal and relationship growth. There are many skills that can help individuals seeking to resolve conflicts in a healthy way. One of the greatest skills that aids in conflict resolution is effective communication.

Common Conflicts

Issues, or conflicts, in relationships consist of any situation, event or experience that is of concern or importance to those involved. A variety of factors leads to conflict, some of which include topics such as money, children, in-laws, personal issues such as self-esteem, values, expectations, or goals, or relational issues such as the amount of together time versus alone time, support versus control, affection, and communication (Miller & Miller, 1997). While there are seemingly endless reasons for conflicts, they generally surround the underlying needs of all humans including physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual (Miller & Miller, 1997; Townsend, 2010). Most importantly, how we approach and communicate about these issues often determines the outcome.

Conflicts in Communication

Most people know that in order to resolve conflicts, we need to communicate about the issue; but negative patterns of communication can often lead to greater frustration and escalation of conflict. Consider the following communication challenges:

Body Language/Tone of Voice

Communication is more than the words we choose to use. In fact, our body language and tone of voice often speak louder than our words. For example, shouting "I'm not angry" is not a very convincing message! When we give an incongruent message where our tone of voice and body language do not match our message, confusion and frustration often follow (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001).

In order to overcome this communication challenge, we need to be aware of what messages our body language and tone of voice may be sending others. Speak calmly, give eye contact, smile when appropriate, and maintain an open and relaxed posture (Paterson, 2000).

Differences in Style

Each of us has a unique way of communicating, often based on our family experiences, culture, gender and many other factors (Markman et al., 2004; Miller & Miller, 1997). For example, we may tend to be more loud, outgoing, or emotional when compared to our partner. While there is no right or wrong style, our past experiences often lead to expectations that are not usually verbally communicated with others, which can cause tension and misunderstandings in relationships. For example, if we came from

a large family that tended to shout in order to be heard, we may think that speaking loudly is normal. But if our partner came from a calmer family environment, he/she may be uncomfortable or even frightened by a raised voice (Markman et al., 2004).

Discussing our backgrounds and perceptions can help to clarify expectations to ourselves and others and can also help our partner to understand our point of view. Knowing this information can often help in the problem solving process.

Communication Roadblocks

Communication roadblocks occur when two people talk in such a way that neither one feels understood. Research has found four particularly negative styles of communication, often referred to as the "four horsemen of the apocalypse," (Gottman, 1999, p.27) because if left unchecked, these styles of interaction can eventually become lethal to relationships. These styles are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (Gottman, 1999).

- » **Criticism** attacks the character or personality of another. While it is normal to have complaints about another's specific actions, it is very different to put them down as a person because of those actions. For example, a complaint might be, "I felt worried when you did not call to tell me that you were going to be home late." A criticism in the same situation would be expressed as "You are so inconsiderate, you never call me when you are going to be late." Critiques focus on certain behaviours; criticism negatively focuses on the person's intentions and character.
- » **Contempt** portrays disgust and a lack of respect for the other person through body language, such as eye rolling or sneering, or by name calling, sarcasm and cutting remarks.
- » **Defensiveness** is a seemingly understandable reaction that individuals take to criticism and contempt; however, it often escalates the conflict. When we are defensive, we tend to stop listening to the other's viewpoint and communication is shut down.
- » **Stonewalling** is withdrawing from communication and refusing to engage in discussion. In other words, it is the adult version of the "silent treatment" that young children utilize when they are upset. Conflict resolution is impossible without communication!

Some additional examples of communication roadblocks include (Miller & Miller, 1997):

- » *Ordering ("Stop complaining!")*
- » *Warning ("If you do that, you'll be sorry.")*
- » *Preaching ("You shouldn't act like that.")*
- » *Advising ("Just wait a couple of years before deciding.")*
- » *Lecturing ("If you do this now, you won't grow up to be a responsible adult.")*
- » *Agreeing, just to keep the peace ("I think you're right.")*
- » *Ridiculing ("OK, little baby.")*
- » *Interpreting ("You don't really believe that.")*

- » Sympathizing (“Don’t worry, it’ll all work out.”)
- » Questioning (“Who put that idea into your head?”)
- » Diverting (“Let’s talk about something more pleasant.”)

Communication roadblocks are very common; however, they do not promote healthy conflict resolution and often lead to escalation of the conflict. Recognizing these roadblocks and making efforts to effectively communicate can help individuals overcome roadblocks.

Tips to Resolve Conflict

Soften the Start-up. One of the skills to overcome communication roadblocks includes a soft start-up to the conversation by starting with something positive, expressing appreciation, focusing on problems one at a time and taking responsibility for thoughts and feelings (Gottman, 1999; Gottman & DeClaire, 2001; Patterson, 2000). In addition, when expressing the problem, starting the message with “I” instead of “You” can decrease defensiveness and promote positive interactions with others (Darrington & Brower, 2012). For example, “I want to stay more involved in making decisions about money” rather than “You never include me in financial decisions.”

Make and Receive Repair Attempts. Another important skill in overcoming communication roadblocks is learning to make and receive repair attempts (Gottman, 1999). Repair attempts are efforts to keep an increasingly negative interaction from going any further by taking a break or making efforts to calm the situation. This is important because when conflicts arise, we often experience intense emotional and physical stress that can impact our ability to think and reason, which can lead to communication roadblocks (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001). Taking time away from the conflict (at least 20 minutes) to calm down can help us be more prepared to discuss the issue (Gottman, 1999; Gottman & DeClaire, 2001; Markman et al, 2004).

Effective Speaking and Listening Skills. Overcoming communication roadblocks requires effective speaking and listening skills. Markman, Stanley and Blumberg (2010) share what they call the “speaker-listener” technique to help individuals more effectively communicate. Each partner takes turns being the speaker and the listener.

The rules for the speaker include (Markman et al., 2004; Markman, Stanley & Blumberg, 2010):

1. The speaker should share his/her own thoughts, feelings and concerns—not what he/she thinks the listener’s concerns are.
2. Use “I” statements when speaking to accurately express thoughts and feelings.
3. Keep statements short, to ensure the listener does not get overwhelmed with information.
4. Stop after each short statement so that the listener can paraphrase, or repeat back in his/her own words, what was said to ensure he/she understands. If the paraphrase is not quite right, gently rephrase the statement again to help the listener understand.

The rules for the listener include:

1. Paraphrase what the speaker is saying. If unclear, ask for clarification. Continue until the speaker indicates the message was received correctly.
2. Don't argue or give an opinion about what the speaker says—wait to do this until you are the speaker, and then do so in a respectful manner.
3. While the speaker is talking, the listener should not talk or interrupt except to paraphrase after the speaker.

The speaker and listener should take turns in each role so that each has a chance to express his/her thoughts and feelings. Either can call for a time out at any time. The goal of this activity is not to solve a particular problem, but rather to have a safe and meaningful discussion and to understand each other's point of view. While we may not always agree with the other's point of view, understanding and validating other's thoughts and feelings can improve relationships and help us build on common ground, which may lead to more effective negotiation and problem resolution (Gottman, 1999).

Conclusion

Dealing with conflict can take varying amounts of mental, emotional, and physical energy (Miller & Miller, 1997). It can be work! However, learning and implementing a few simple communication skills can increase positive interactions with others. The opportunities for personal and relationship growth are well worth the effort.

http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FC_Relationships_2012-02pr.pdf



EXERCISE #1

Say whether the following are **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Stated (NS)** according to the text above.

1. Our body language often carries a stronger meaning than our verbal language. _____
2. Problems can arise when our body language fails to match our words. _____
3. Criticism, contempt and defensiveness can be poisonous to relationships. _____
4. Stonewalling means making strong objections to personal criticism. _____
5. Saying that things will work out is a helpful reaction to a potential conflict. _____
6. It is good to begin a difficult conversation by saying something positive. _____
7. It is good to take time away from a conflict in order to calm down. _____
8. In the 'speaker-listener' technique, the speaker should keep the statements short. _____
9. If there is a suitable opportunity, it is good to add some humour to a disagreement. _____
10. Dealing with conflicts can use mental, emotional and physical energy. _____

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



VIDEO

Click on the link below and watch a clip entitled **Conflict in the Workplace** (2:57 minutes).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpW5l9lfgbs>

You will see disagreements in two different work settings, together with a commentary. Notice the advice given about how to resolve the conflicts. Then, go to the discussion board for a related activity.



DISCUSSION

How could you respond to the following negative remarks at work, to avoid a conflict? Base your answers on what you have learnt from earlier readings in this Module, as well as on the advice given in the clip. Imagine the remarks are made to you in an office context. Write your responses on the discussion board.

1. Who's rearranged all these folders? That's my job. Was it you? Are you trying to do my job?
2. Why should I make the tea for everyone here? That's not part of my job description and yet you all seem to just expect it!
3. Have you heard? The boss wants me to work through my lunch break today! Not a chance!

SPOTTING POTENTIAL CONFLICTS EARLY

It is important to recognise the signs that a conflict may be brewing. The following extract, called '**Spotting Potential Conflicts Early**' is slightly adapted from the MindTools page on **Managing Conflict in Meetings**, and gives advice about how the signs of conflict can be perceived early.

After you have read the extract, do **Exercise 2**.

Spotting potential conflicts early

One key to spotting the first signs of conflict is watching "body language." If the conflict is mostly due to professional differences, rather than personality differences, the sooner you allow people to make their points, the better. Make sure that people have the opportunity to express disagreement as soon as possible, so that issues can be resolved and the discussion can proceed on a correct basis.

How do you know if someone is frustrated? Look for these signs:

- » Making facial expressions of amazement or disagreement, such as shaking the head or rolling the eyes. The person may also fidget, or move around in a restless or nervous manner.
- » Looking at other people to see if anyone else's body language or facial expressions reveal their disagreement with the speaker.
- » Whispering or writing notes to another person. This may indicate that the frustrated person is checking on his or her position or trying to gather support for a confrontation. This can apply to both types of conflict.
- » Staring, possibly in an intimidating way, at the speaker or potential target of confrontation.



ATTENTION

If you would like to read the rest of this article, follow the link below.

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_65.htm



EXERCISE #2

Fill in the gaps in the sentences. Answer according to the information in the text above. The first has been done for you as an example.

Example:

The sooner you allow people to make their p o i n t s, the better.

1. S _____ one's head may show frustration.
2. It may help to watch other p _____.
3. S _____ at the speaker may indicate a possible conflict.

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

USING BODY LANGUAGE TO REDUCE CONFLICT AND BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Here are some of the simple body language techniques you can use to reduce conflict at work and build better relationships.

Read the following article by Larry Barkan, which has been slightly adapted for this Module. It is about using body language to build rapport. After you have read it, do Exercise 3.

Conflict resolution training: use body language to build rapport with difficult people

Conflict resolution is easy: find out what people need and if you can and/or are willing to, give them what they need. How do you find out what people need? You listen, paraphrase and ask the question, "Why is that important to you?"

As you're listening, there are three non-verbal behaviors that will help you to build rapport and reduce the emotional intensity of any conflict:

1. Mirror the other person's body posture and position.

To build rapport with another person, it's important to let her (him) know that you understand her position from her perspective. You can do this by verbally paraphrasing what she is saying and non-verbally assuming her physical position.

For example, if the other person is standing, stand. If the other person is sitting, sit. If he (she) is resting his hands on top of the table, do so as well. If he is crossing his right leg over his left leg, cross yours in the same way. When he shifts to a different position, gradually shift to assume that same position.

The key is to move gradually and subtly. Don't shift to mirror another's body posture and position immediately after she (he) moves. Wait a few seconds and then gradually adjust your body posture and position to mirror hers.

Your intent is not to manipulate but to build rapport so that the conversation flows smoothly. Mirroring sends an unconscious message that you are not a threat to the other person.

If you doubt the validity of mirroring, watch a drama or comedy on television with the sound off. You will be able to tell when the characters are in rapport and when they are not, just by observing their body language. When they are in rapport, you will notice that their body postures and positions mirror one another.

2. Be physically close to the other person

Physical closeness encourages psychological closeness. If you want to non-verbally communicate, "I'm on your side," sit or stand beside that person. If you're in your office, come out from behind your desk and sit or stand near the other person. If you're in a restaurant, sit at right angles to the other person, not across the table.

The way to determine how close you should get to the other person is to notice what she (he) does when she shakes your hand. Some people extend their entire arm stiffly as though they want you to keep your distance. Others bend their elbow, as they shake as though to draw you closer. Never get closer than the length of a handshake.

3. If the disagreement gets heated, don't mirror, but align your body with the other person. Sit or stand facing in the same direction without making eye contact. During heated discussions, direct eye contact can be perceived as a threat (watch two dogs that are about to fight. They are glowering at each other.).

You'll be surprised to find the disagreement cooling down. This is because at a non-verbal level, you're indicating your desire to remain in contact even though the other person's verbal behavior suggests a desire to break away.

Alignment can be uncomfortable for you because, if the other person is angry, the tendency is to want to back away. But try alignment and watch the intensity of the confrontation diminish.

Be subtle as you use these techniques. If you are obvious, the other person is likely to feel manipulated. The intention of these three techniques is not to manipulate the other person but to create a relationship in which a win-win resolution to the conflict is possible.

The article above was slightly adapted and the original can be found by following the link below.
http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net/conflict_resolution_training/rapport.html

Reproduced by kind permission of the author, Larry Barkan:
<http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net>



EXERCISE #3

Match the body language listed in the left hand box with its likely interpretation, described in the right hand box. Write your answers below. Answer according to the information in the text above. Each interpretation might be used once, more than once or not at all.

Body Language	Likely Interpretation
1. You stand or sit close to someone.	a. You do not want to be close to the other person.
2. When shaking hands, you extend your arm stiffly.	b. You are on their side.
3. In a conflict, you make direct eye contact.	c. You threaten them.

✓ CHECK YOURSELF

MIRRORING BODY LANGUAGE

As we have read, mirroring another person's body language can help build a good relationship with them. Below, there are some pictures to show how mirroring can be done. It can be conscious or unconscious. The mirroring in all these pictures suggests harmony, closeness and interest.



All four people are clapping their hands as if in agreement with each other.



The man at the back is stooping forward, mirroring the body posture of the girl who is hitting the snooker ball.



The two girls are sharing the map and looking at it together.



All the six students are crowding together in similar poses as they try to be in the photo.



All three are lying on the grass, smiling and looking at the screen. Both males have their elbows on the ground, legs extended and feet crossed.



Both are standing close together, looking intently at the tablet.



ATTENTION

We have to be careful not to overdo the mirroring as we do not want it to feel artificial. However, it is well worth watching and mirroring people's body language when possible.

Look at the people around you during the day and see how much mirroring you can see. It's probably a lot more widespread than you imagine!

SITTING CORRECTLY AT YOUR COMPUTER

At work, sitting correctly at your computer could help you to work better, and will make you more comfortable. It could also help you to avoid back problems, which can be a major cause of absenteeism and stress.

How to sit correctly

If you work in an office and use a computer, you can help to avoid injury by sitting in the right position and arranging your desk correctly.

1. Support your back

Avoid back pain by adjusting your chair so that your lower back is properly supported. A correctly adjusted chair will reduce the strain on your back. Get one that is easily adjustable, so that you can change the height, back position and tilt. Your knees should be slightly lower than your hips. Use a footrest, if necessary.

2. Adjust your chair

Adjust your chair height so that you can use the keyboard with your wrists and forearms straight and level with the floor. This can help to prevent repetitive strain injuries. Your elbows should be by the side of your body, so that the arm forms an L-shape at the elbow joint.

3. Rest your feet on the floor

Your feet should be flat on the floor. If they're not, ask if you can have a footrest, which lets you rest your feet at a level that's comfortable. Don't cross your legs, as this can cause posture-related problems.

4. Place your screen at eye level

Your screen should be directly in front of you. A good guide is to place the monitor about an arm's length away, with the top of the screen roughly at eye level. To achieve this, you may need to get a stand for your monitor. If the screen is too high or too low, you'll have to bend your neck, which can be uncomfortable.

5. Using the keyboard

Place your keyboard in front of you when typing. Leave a gap of about four to six inches (100mm-150mm) at the front of the desk, to rest your wrists between bouts of typing. Your wrists should be straight when using a keyboard. Keep your elbows vertical under your shoulder and right by

your side. Some people like to use a wrist rest to keep their wrists straight and at the same level as the keys.

6. Keep your mouse close

Position and use the mouse as close to you as possible. A mouse mat with a wrist pad may help to keep your wrist straight and avoid awkward bending. If you are not using your keyboard, push it to one side if using the mouse a lot.

7. Avoid screen reflection

Your screen should be as glare-free as possible. If there's glare on your screen, hold a mirror in front of the screen so you know what's causing it. Position the monitor to avoid reflection from overhead lighting and sunlight. If necessary, pull blinds across the windows and replace ceiling lighting with table lights. Adjusting the screen's brightness or contrast can make it much easier to use.

8. Working with spectacles

People with bifocal glasses may find them less than ideal for computer work. It's important to be able to see the screen easily without having to raise or lower your head. If you can't work comfortably with bifocals, you may need a different type of glasses. Consult your optician if in doubt.

9. Make objects accessible

Position frequently used objects, such as your telephone or stapler, within easy reach. Avoid repeatedly stretching or twisting to reach things.

10. Avoid phone strain

If you spend a lot of time on the phone, try exchanging your handset for a headset. Repeatedly cradling the phone between your ear and shoulder can strain the muscles in your neck.

NHS Choices Accessed 20 April 2016

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/workplacehealth/Pages/howtositcorrectly.aspx>



EXERCISE #4

Fill in the gaps in the following sentences. Use the words from the text above. The first has been given as an example.

1. Adjust your chair so your _____ back is supported.
2. Your _____ should be a little lower than your hips.
3. Your wrists and forearms should be _____.
4. If your feet are not flat on the floor, use a _____.
5. Adjusting the screen's _____ or contrast can make it easier to use.
6. Avoid repeatedly stretching or _____ to reach things.
7. If you use the phone a lot, it may be good to get a _____.

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



VIDEO

Now watch a video clip about how to sit correctly. It is called **Healthy back at work**. 3:37 minutes. An expert explains how bad posture contributes to health problems, including back pain. He describes how you may be able to avoid some of the common problems that office workers have. Watch the clip and do the exercise that follows.

Follow the link below and scroll to the bottom of the page to watch the clip.
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/workplacehealth/Pages/howtositcorrectly.aspx>



EXERCISE #5

Fill in the missing words. The first has been given as an example.

1. First of all, you need to make sure that your back is properly _____
2. The forearms should be _____.
3. Keep your wrists fairly _____.
4. The height of the screen should be roughly the same as your _____.
5. Take frequent breaks or do _____ exercises.

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

USING APPROPRIATE VERBAL LANGUAGE TO REDUCE POTENTIAL CONFLICT

The language we use can reduce or escalate conflict. The NHS website has some useful tips about language. These form the basis of the advice that follows. This information is adapted from the section called 'Let go of Angry Thoughts'.

Rule 1

Avoid the words '*always*' and '*never*'.

For example avoid saying, '*You always arrive late*'.

Don't say, '*You never contact me*'.

These are likely to be unhelpful generalisations. Words such as *all the time, everytime, everyone, everybody* and so on can be exaggerations of the truth. Words such as *again* or *yet again* can remind people of their faults and can cause a negative reaction. Deal with each incident as it happens. Don't allow a backlog to build up of all the things which have annoyed you.

Rule 2

Try not to use the words *should / shouldn't must / mustn't / ought to / ought not to*.

For example, don't say, '*You must keep me informed*'.

Similarly, don't say, '*You should not use this phone*'.

These sound aggressive and highly prescriptive, giving the other person no room to manoeuvre or negotiate.

Rule 3

Don't say, '*It's not fair*'.

This is not relevant and may not even be true. Saying it does not get you anywhere or achieve the results you want.

In general, if you choose your words so that they do not sound as if you are attacking the other person, they are more likely to react more favourably, so you will achieve what you want. Try to sound as if you want to work with them to solve the issue. Above all, make it clear that you are upset about the issue. Show that it is NOT that you do not like the other person. Try to show that you value and appreciate them.

In order to avoid the type of negative language above, it may be good to use 'I' statements. For example, instead of saying, '*You never contact me*', it will seem friendlier if you say, '*I prefer to be contacted*'.

For more information about controlling anger, visit the NHS website by clicking the following link.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/controlling-anger.aspx#let>



EXERCISE #6

Read the conversation below, between two colleagues, Pat and Chris. They are of equal standing in the workplace. For this exercise, highlight expressions which should be avoided in a conflict. The first has been given as an example. There are six, in addition to the example.

Pat: Morning, I'm sorry to see you're late again.

Chris: Hi, yes, my train was cancelled so I had to catch a bus. I'm sorry.

Pat: You should have rung me. Everyone has been asking me where you were.

Chris: Oh dear, yes, I tried to, but there was no reply from the office.

Pat: Well anyway, you should get up earlier in the morning and then you wouldn't be late all the time.

Chris: I understand your point, but I do get up early, and I thought it was enough to arrive 40 minutes early every day, which is what I do. Today was an exception, albeit a regrettable one. It's the first incident in the past six months.

Pat: I suppose so. But you must be on time. Making me cover for you is just not fair on me.

Chris: It was not at all my intention that you should have to work extra because I could not be here, and I'm sorry that that happened. It was an unfortunate sequence of events and I'm sorry about it. Shall we carry on with our work now?

 CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

Now read a different and improved version of the conversation and see how much better it can be. The statements which sounded aggressive and accusatory have been removed, and so have the obvious exaggerations. In their place, Pat makes some positive remarks about Chris's timekeeping, and uses some 'I' statements when making the negative points. Notice that as Pat's words are less aggressive, Chris's responses become less defensive and the conversation improves.

Pat: Morning, I'm sorry to see you're late.

Chris: Hi, yes, my train was cancelled so I had to catch a bus. I'm sorry.

Pat: Did you try to ring me earlier? Fred and Joanne have been asking me where you were.

Chris: Oh dear, yes, I tried to, but there was no reply from the office.

Pat: Well anyway, I know you normally get here very early, and it's quite unusual for you to arrive late.

Chris: Yes, I do get up early, and I thought it was enough to arrive 40 minutes early every day, which is what I do. Today was an exception, albeit a regrettable one. It's the first incident in the past six months. Anyway, I'm sorry I was late this morning.

Pat: Well, you're here now, which is good. I managed to cover for you this morning, somehow. But I hope you'll be on time next time.

Chris: I really hope so, too, and I'll do my best to make sure it doesn't happen again. It was not at all my intention that you should have to work extra because I could not be here, and I'm sorry that it happened. It was an unfortunate sequence of events and I'm sorry about it. Shall we carry on with our work now?

DISCUSSION

1. Reread the improved conversation above. List the improvements you notice.
2. How can you change some of your conversations at work to help you communicate better? Give some concrete examples and share these on the discussion board.

MANAGING STRESS, CONFLICT AND ANGER AT WORK

Here are ten suggestions for managing stress, conflict and anger at work.

1. Take exercise. Do something you enjoy, whether it be jogging, kite flying, dancing, swimming or whatever.
2. Get all the rest you need. Try to work out how much sleep is best for you and make sure you sleep enough.
3. Take the nutrition your body needs. Eat healthily, neither too much nor too little, and enjoy what you eat. Be aware that alcohol can be a false friend.
4. Allow yourself some 'me time' every day to do the things you like doing. This will give you something to look forward to and ensure a better work-life balance.
5. Pay attention to your feelings and notice when you are feeling stressed or angry. Deal with the feelings, and don't ignore them.
6. Try not to say things in anger. If you feel too angry or stressed to have a civilised conversation with someone, it may be better to wait until you feel calmer and more rational.
7. Try deep breathing for an instant release of tension.
8. If it's appropriate, talk to someone about how you are feeling. You might also find that keeping a journal or writing them a letter (which you do NOT send to them) can be an effective way to 'talk' to someone.
9. Use humour when you can. This has got to be better than anger!
10. Learn from things that don't go so well. Nobody gets it right every time. Be ready to forgive others, and also to forgive yourself, and to move on.

EXERCISES TO CONTROL STRESS

Sometimes, exercises and stretches can help people to relax and de-stress. Follow the links and watch the following clips. Try the exercises yourself if you think they might help you.



VIDEO

Exercises to help relieve stress and pain 3 - Perfect Posture Pt1 5:21 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQSyWslG4u4>

Tension Headache Relief with Simple Stretches - Ask Doctor Jo 4:40 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWNf6Khc9go>

How to Relieve Stress in 60 Seconds: Deep Breathing Exercises 2:25 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH7EmmgSZQE>



DISCUSSION

1. Now you are reaching the end of the Module, write down three of the most important things you have learnt.
 2. Describe three ways in which you will make changes to improve the way you communicate at work.
-

REVIEW

In this unit, you have thought about some of the negative situations that can arise at work, and how to avoid them. You have looked at the body and verbal language you can use to avoid or improve difficult situations. You have also learnt some ways to look after your body, through exercise, by reducing stress and by remembering some simple guidelines as you work at your computer.

Final words from the Body Language and Diction Module

You have arrived at the end of this Module and we hope you have a greatly increased awareness of body language and diction. Essentially, it's all about understanding people's emotions and trying to come alongside them, to achieve the best outcomes. It's not easy for anyone to communicate well every time, but we hope that what you have learnt in this Module will help you to improve your skills. These are fully transferable skills and whatever job you do, and wherever you are, you should find the benefits.

We wish you every success in the future and thank you for studying this Module.

***Wishing you every
success!***

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS



ANSWERS #1

1. Our body language often carries a stronger meaning than our verbal language. T
2. Problems can arise when our body language fails to match our words. T
3. Criticism, contempt and defensiveness can be poisonous to relationships. T
4. Stonewalling means making strong objections to personal criticism. F
5. Saying that things will work out is a helpful reaction to a potential conflict. F
6. It is good to begin a difficult conversation by saying something positive. T
7. It is good to take time away from a conflict in order to calm down. T
8. In the 'speaker-listener' technique, the speaker should keep the statements short. T
9. If there is a suitable opportunity, it is good to add some humour to a disagreement. NS
10. Dealing with conflicts can use mental, emotional and physical energy. T

GO BACK



ANSWERS #2

1. S h a k i n g one's head may show frustration.
2. It may help to watch other p e o p l e.
3. S t a r i n g at the speaker may indicate a possible conflict.

GO BACK



ANSWERS #3

Body Language	Likely Interpretation
1. You stand or sit close to someone.	a. You do not want to be close to the other person.
2. When shaking hands, you extend your arm stiffly.	b. You are on their side.
3. In a conflict, you make direct eye contact.	c. You threaten them.

GO BACK



ANSWERS #4

1. Adjust your chair so your l o w e r back is supported.
2. Your k n e e s should be a little lower than your hips.
3. Your wrists and forearms should be s t r a i g h t.
4. If your feet are not flat on the floor, use a f o o t r e s t.
5. Adjusting the screen's b r i g h t n e s s or contrast can make it easier to use.
6. Avoid repeatedly stretching or t w i s t i n g to reach things.
7. If you use the phone a lot, it may be good to get a h e a d s e t.

 GO BACK



ANSWERS #5

1. First of all, you need to make sure that your back is properly s u p p o r t e d.
2. The forearms should be h o r i z o n t a l.
3. Keep your wrists fairly s t r a i g h t.
4. The height of the screen should be roughly the same as your e y e s.
5. Take frequent breaks or do s t r e t c h i n g exercises.

 GO BACK



ANSWERS #6

Pat: Morning, I'm sorry to see you're late again.

Chris: Hi, yes, my train was cancelled so I had to catch a bus. I'm sorry.

Pat: You should have rung me. Everyone has been asking me where you were.

Chris: Oh dear, yes, I tried to, but there was no reply from the office.

Pat: Well anyway, you should get up earlier in the morning and then you wouldn't be late all the time.

Chris: I understand your point, but I do get up early, and I thought it was enough to arrive 40 minutes early every day, which is what I do. Today was an exception, albeit a regrettable one. It's the first incident in the past six months.

Pat: I suppose so. But you must be on time. Making me cover for you is just not fair on me.

Chris: It was not at all my intention that you should have to work extra because I could not be here, and I'm sorry that that happened. It was an unfortunate sequence of events and I'm sorry about it. Shall we carry on with our work now?

 [GO BACK](#)

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