

Now you're  
talking!

## What's your Body Language Saying About You?

Hello ,

Recently I went to listen to a scientist speak about 'Black Holes in Space' something that has always fascinated me.

Every time he answered a question from the interviewer he raised his forearm - 26 times. (Yes, I counted them.) I don't remember anything he said about 'black holes in space' - all I remember is the distracting movement of his arm. The point of the story - actions speak louder than words! Those arms stole the show and he was oblivious.

Non-verbal communication or body language is our first language.

When your words and body language are not 'in sync' people believe the non-verbal message every time!

As soon as we see anyone even an animal - we are busy processing their non-verbal cues. Their body language. If a dog is wagging his tail we read it's safe to approach, if not, stay back! We decide in seconds if -

*Someone is confident because they look you in the eye.*  
*Someone is anxious because they wring their hands or do heel raises.*

Obviously there are cultural differences. Eye contact is a good example. If you have a Western cultural heritage, direct eye contact is interpreted as a sign of honesty. Whereas, if you have a Polynesian or Asian cultural heritage, not looking someone directly in the eye, particularly a person older than yourself, is a sign of respect.

Despite cultural variations and the dangers of snap judgements, (*are those folded arms telling me this person is closed to new ideas or are they just trying to keep warm?*), it's important to be conscious of the messages our body language is sending.

Learning how to keep your body language 'in sync' with your words will help not only your public speaking but your day-to-day communication too.

If possible, try and see yourself on video before you do a presentation to ensure your body language *underlines* - not undermines - your message.

If you are still unsure ask someone you trust a partner, colleague or speech coach to help.

Prepare well and enjoy your next presentation!

**Jane**

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So, Mr. Postman!

We meet again!