

SPEAKING SUCCESSFULLY & PRESENTING PERSUASIVELY

with Alan Youngson



BODY LANGUAGE - DO's AND DON'T's

While you're talking, what is your body saying?

More than half of your impact as a speaker or communicator depends upon your body language. You probably have control over the words you speak, but are you sure that you have control over what you are saying with your body language?

The tricky thing about body language is that many of us are unaware of the messages we convey non-verbally. The most important visual aid is yourself. Add the fact that your voice is physical, and you realize just how much the way you look and sound matters - as this is how people perceive you.

Effective body language is 'IN-SYNC' with your tone of voice, emotions and spoken words. Listeners and audiences respond better to speakers and presenters whose bodies are more alive and energetic with gestures, movement, facial expressions including eye contact - when it is genuine, meaningful and supportive of the verbal message.

On the flip side, can you recall occasions when someone's body language feels "OUT-OF-SYNC and

has made you uncomfortable or distrustful? For example:

1. **Poor posture** - gives impression of insecurity, laziness. Aim for a neutral posture and positive stance - makes you appear relaxed and confident.
2. **Nodding too much** - can make you look like a bobble head doll. Nod once and then try to remain still.
3. **Failing to smile or breaking eye contact too soon** - can make people or audiences uncomfortable and wonder if you really want to be there. Give a genuine smile and hold eye contact slightly longer.
4. **Big hand gestures or fidgeting with your hands, phone or hair** - can indicate weakness and lack of confidence - become more self-aware.
5. **Eye rolling** can be a sign of contempt, frustration or lack of respect - minimise this completely conscious behaviour.

N.B. Body language should be interpreted in clusters - not judged in isolation.

NEXT MONTH: HUMOUR TIPS

*Alan Youngson, an award winning speaker, holds academic and professional qualifications: B.A.(Hons.) English & Drama; B.Ed. specialist Speech & Drama Teacher of 20 years; Certificate IV TAE (Workplace Trainer-Assessor-Educator); Certified Personal & Business Coach for Leaders, Managers, Speakers, Presenters and Performers. 25 years as a Theatre Manager & Director-Presenter of 97 shows; showcasing many Professional Speakers.



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