



What is Body Language?

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What is really known about body language?

You have probably read about common body language traits, or seen courtroom drama using body language as a sign that someone is guilty. But what is really known about body language?

A person’s physical reactions often can include:

- Pupil dilation
- Eye movements
- Sweating
- Blushing
- Involuntary mouth movements
- A crease in the forehead

Body language comes from very primitive parts of the brain’s Limbic System. The Limbic System tells us when we are comfortable or uncomfortable. It tells our bodies something is attractive and to pursue that thing. It also tells us to prepare to run or fight in a stressful situation. Body language was used long before spoke language. Scientists believe that pre-history hunters would use this while tracking food.

Body Language Was Used Long Before Spoke Language

Major scientific study of body language is less than 50 years old. However, Charles Darwin in 1872 published a book, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals. In his book, Darwin identified links between subtle lip movements and concentration or other subtle bodily movements and their meanings. 100 years later, this book would influence scientists to begin serious study on how body language is used and recognized.

When it comes to both the person observing and the person moving, people are rarely conscious of body language. People really cannot control most body language, we are just hard wired to do it. People do, however, almost feel the movements of the other person. For example, if someone’s eyes are darting around rather than focused on a conversation, they may seem nervous or disinterested. You may not say to yourself, “Wow, this person is really looking around a lot,” but you may get the feeling that what you are saying disinterests them.

Mothers are the most aware of body language, because this is the main way infants and toddlers can communicate. Also, people in artistic professions or nursing often are very aware of subtle body language changes.

It is possible to train yourself to look for certain body language cues. There has been enough study to identify that eye movements are linked to nervousness , boredom or lying, among other signals. Even though you are hardwired to give and interpret body language, it is good to be aware that people are hardwired to make and recognize these movements without even knowing it.

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