

The Definitive Book of Body Language

Allan & Barbara Pease

Published by Orion

Extract

All text is copyright of the author

[Click here to buy this book and read more](#)

This opening extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements xvii

Introduction I

All Things Are Not What They Seem
How Well Do You Know the Back of Your Hand?
How Well Can You Spot Body Language Contradictions?
How We Wrote This Book
Your Body Language Dictionary

1. Understanding the Basics 7

In the Beginning...
Why It's Not What You Say
How Body Language Reveals Emotions and Thoughts
Why Women are More Perceptive
What Brain Scans Show
How Fortune-Tellers Know So Much
Inborn, Genetic or Learned Culturally?
Some Basic Origins
Universal Gestures
Three Rules for Accurate Reading
Why It Can be Easy to Misread
Why Kids are Easier to Read
Can You Fake It?
True-Life Story: The Lying Job Applicant
How to Become a Great Reader

2. The Power Is in Your Hands 31

How to Detect Openness
Intentional Use of the Palms to Deceive
The Law of Cause and Effect
Palm Power

Our Audience Experiment
An Analysis of Handshake Styles
Who Should Reach First?
How Dominance and Control Are Communicated
The Submissive Handshake
How to Create Equality
How to Create Rapport
How to Disarm a Power Player
The Cold, Clammy Handshake
Gaining the Left Side Advantage
When Men and Women Shake Hands
The Double-Hander
The Blair–Bush Power Game
The Solution
The World's Eight Worst Handshakes
The Arafat–Rabin Handshake
Summary

3. The Magic of Smiles and Laughter 66

Smiling Is a Submission Signal
Why Smiling Is Contagious
How a Smile Tricks the Brain
Practising the Fake Smile
Smugglers Smile Less
Five Common Types of Smiles
Why Laughter Is the Best Medicine
Why You Should Take Laughter Seriously
Why We Laugh and Talk, But Chimps Don't
How Humour Heals
Laughing Till You Cry
How Jokes Work
The Laughter Room
Smiles and Laughter Are a Way of Bonding
Humour Sells
The Permanent Down-Mouth
Smiling Advice For Women
Laughter In Love
Summary

4. Arm Signals 90

Arm Barrier Signals
 Why Crossed Arms Can be Detrimental
 Yes...But I'm Just 'Comfortable'
 Gender Differences
 Crossed-Arms-on-Chest
 Solution
 Reinforced Arm-Crossing
 Arm-Gripping
 The Boss vs The Staff
 Getting the Thumbs-Up
 Hugging Yourself
 How the Rich and Famous Reveal Their Insecurity
 The Coffee Cup Barrier
 The Power of Touch
 Touch Their Hand Too
 Summary

5. Cultural Differences 107

We Were Having Pizza at the Time
 Take the Cultural Test
 Why We're All Becoming American
 Cultural Basics are the Same Almost Everywhere
 Greeting Differences
 When One Culture Encounters Another
 The English Stiff-Upper-Lip
 The Japanese
 'You Dirty, Disgusting Pig!' – Nose Blowing
 The Three Most Common Cross-Cultural Gestures
 To Touch or Not to Touch?
 How to Offend Other Cultures
 Summary

6. Hand and Thumb Gestures 125

How the Hands Talk
 On the One Hand...
 On the Other Hand, Gestures Improve Recall
 Rubbing the Palms Together

Thumb and Finger Rub
Hands Clenched Together
The Steeple
Summary
The Face Platter
Holding Hands Behind the Back
Thumb Displays
Thumbs-Protruding-from-Coat-Pocket
Summary

7. Evaluation and Deceit Signals 142

Lying Research
The Three Wise Monkeys
How the Face Reveals the Truth
Women Lie the Best and That's the Truth
Why It's Hard to Lie
Eight of the Most Common Lying Gestures
Evaluation and Procrastination Gestures
The Lying Interviewee
Chin Stroking
Stalling Clusters
Head Rubbing and Slapping Gestures
Why Bob Always Lost at Chess
The Double Meaning

8. Eye Signals 165

The Dilating Pupils
Take the Pupil Test
Women Are Better at It, as Usual
Giving Them the Eye
The Eyebrow Flash
Eye Widening
The 'Looking Up' Cluster
How Men's Fires Get Lit
Gaze Behaviour – Where Do You Look?
How to Keep Eye Contact in a Nudist Colony
How to Grab a Man's Attention
Most Liars Look You in the Eye

How to Avoid being Attacked or Abused
 The Sideways Glance
 Extended Blinking
 Darting Eyes
 The Geography of the Face
 The Politician's Story
 Look Deep Into My Eyes, Baby
 The First 20 Seconds of an Interview
 What Channel Are You Tuned To?
 How to Hold Eye Contact with an Audience
 How to Present Visual Information
 The Power Lift
 Summary

9. Space Invaders – Territories and Personal Space 192

Personal Space
 Zone Distances
 Practical Applications of Zone Distances
 Who Is Moving In On Whom?
 Why We Hate Riding in Lifts
 Why Mobs Become Angry
 Spacing Rituals
 Try the Luncheon Test
 Cultural Factors Affecting Zone Distances
 Why Japanese Always Lead When They Waltz
 Country vs. City Spatial Zones
 Territory and Ownership
 Car Territory
 Take the Test
 Summary

10. How the Legs Reveal What the Mind Wants to Do 209

Everybody's Talking About a New Way of Walking
 How Feet Tell the Truth
 The Purpose of the Legs
 The Four Main Standing Positions
 Defensive, Cold or 'Just Comfortable'?
 How We Move from Closed to Open

The European Leg Cross
The American Figure Four
When the Body Closes, so Does the Mind
Figure Four Leg Clamp
The Ankle Lock
The Short Skirt Syndrome
The Leg Twine
Parallel-Legs
Put Your Right Foot In, Put Your Right Foot Out
Summary

11. The 13 Most Common Gestures You'll See Daily 229

The Head Nod
Why You Should Learn to Nod
How to Encourage Agreement
The Head Shake
The Basic Head Positions
The Head Shrug
Picking Imaginary Lint
How We Show We're Ready for Action
The Cowboy Stance
Sizing Up the Competition
The Legs-Spread
Leg-Over-the-Arm-of-Chair
Straddling a Chair
The Catapult
Gestures That Show When a Person is Ready
The Starter's Position
Summary

12. Mirroring – How We Build Rapport 250

Creating the Right Vibes
Mirroring on a Cellular Level
Mirroring Differences Between Men and Women
What to Do About It if You're Female
When Men and Women Start to Look Alike
Do We Resemble Our Pets?
Monkey See, Monkey Do

Matching Voices
 Intentionally Creating Rapport
 Who Mirrors Whom?
 Summary

13. The Secret Signals of Cigarettes, Glasses and Make-up 265

The Two Types of Smokers
 Differences Between Men and Women
 Smoking as a Sexual Display
 How to Spot a Positive or Negative Decision
 Cigar Smokers
 How Smokers End a Session
 How to Read Glasses
 Stalling Tactics
 Peering-Over-the-Glasses
 Wearing Glasses on the Head
 The Power of Glasses and Make-up
 A Little Lippy, Lady?
 Briefcase Signals
 Summary

14. How the Body Points to Where the Mind Wants to Go 280

What Body Angles Say
 How We Exclude Others
 Seated Body Pointing
 Foot Pointing
 Summary

15. Courtship Displays and Attraction Gestures 288

The Emergence of the Colourful Male
 Graham's Story
 Why Women Always Call the Shots
 Differences Between Men and Women
 The Attraction Process
 The 13 Most Common Female Courtship Gestures and Signals

What Men Look At in Women's Bodies
How Beautiful People Miss Out
Is He a Bum, Boobs or Leg Man?
Male Courtship Signals and Gestures
Men's Bodies – What Turns Women On the Most
Is She a Chest, Legs or Bum Gal?
Summary

16. Ownership, Territory and Height Signals 319

Body Lowering and Status
He's a Big Man Around Town
Why Some People Seem Taller on TV
Try the Floor Test
The Downsides of Height
How Body Lowering Can Sometimes Raise Status
How TV Politicians Can Win Votes
How to Placate Angry People
What's Love Got To Do With It?
Some Strategies For Gaining Perceived Height
Summary

17. Seating Arrangements – Where to Sit and Why 332

Take the Table Test
It's Not What You Say, It's Where You Sit
King Arthur's Concept
Keeping Two People Involved
Rectangular Board Tables
Why Teacher's Pet Sits On the Left
Power Plays at Home
How to Make an Audience Cry
The Attention Zone
An Experiment in Learning
Getting a Decision Over Dinner
Summary

18. Interviews, Power Plays and Office Politics 349

Why James Bond Looked Cool, Calm and Collected
The Nine Golden Keys to Making Great First Impressions

When Someone Keeps You Waiting
Fake It Till You Make It?
Seven Simple Strategies for Giving You the Extra Edge
Summary
Office Power Politics
How to Switch Table Territories
Seated Body Pointing
How to Re-arrange an Office
Summary

19. Putting It All Together 367

How Well Can You Read Between the Lines?
How Did You Rate?
Summary
The Six Secrets of Attractive Body Language

References 383

INTRODUCTION

By a man's fingernails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boots, by his trouser-knees, by the calluses of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt-cuffs, by his movements – by each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the competent enquirer in any case is almost inconceivable.

SHERLOCK HOLMES, 1887

As a young boy, I was always aware that what people said was not always what they meant or were feeling and that it was possible to get others to do what I wanted if I read their real feelings and responded appropriately to their needs. At the age of eleven, I began my sales career selling rubber sponges door-to-door after school to make pocket money and quickly worked out how to tell if someone was likely to buy from me or not. When I knocked on a door, if someone told me to go away but their hands were open and they showed their palms, I knew it was safe to persist with my presentation because, despite how dismissive they may have sounded, they weren't aggressive. If someone told me to go away in a soft voice but used a pointed finger or closed hand, I knew it was time to leave. I loved being a salesperson and was excellent at it. As a teenager, I became a pots and pans salesperson, selling at night, and my ability to read people earned me enough money to buy my first piece of property. Selling gave me the opportunity to meet people and study them at close range and to evaluate whether they would buy or not, simply by watching their body language. This skill also proved a bonanza for

meeting girls in discos. I could nearly always predict who would say 'yes' to a dance with me and who wouldn't.

I joined the life insurance business at the age of twenty, and went on to break several sales records for the firm I worked for, becoming the youngest person to sell over a million dollars' worth of business in my first year. This achievement qualified me for the prestigious Million Dollar Round Table in the USA. As a young man I was fortunate that the techniques I'd learned as a boy in reading body language while selling pots and pans could be transferred to this new area, and was directly related to the success I could have in any venture involving people.

All Things Are Not What They Seem

The ability to work out what is really happening with a person is simple - not easy, but simple. It's about matching what you see and hear in the environment in which it all happens and drawing probable conclusions. Most people, however, only see the things they think they are seeing.

Here's a story to demonstrate the point:

Two men were walking through the woods when they came across a big deep hole.

'Wow...that looks deep,' says one. 'Let's toss a few pebbles in and see how deep it is.'

They threw in a few pebbles and waited, but there was no sound.

'Gee - that is a *really* deep hole. Let's throw one of these big rocks in. That should make a noise.'

They picked up two football-sized rocks and tossed them into the hole and waited, but still they heard nothing.

'There's a railway sleeper over here in the weeds,' said one. 'If we toss that in, it's *definitely* going to make some noise.' They dragged the heavy sleeper over to the hole and heaved it in, but not a sound came from the hole.

Suddenly, out of the nearby woods, a goat appeared,

running like the wind. It rushed towards the two men and ran right between them, running as fast as its legs could go. Then it leaped into the air and disappeared into the hole. The two men stood there, astonished at what they'd just seen.

Out of the woods came a farmer who said, 'Hey! Did you guys see my goat?'

'You bet we did! It was the craziest thing we've ever seen! It came running like the wind out of the woods and jumped into that hole!'

'Nah,' says the farmer. 'That couldn't have been my goat. My goat was chained to a railway sleeper!'

How Well Do You Know the Back of Your Hand?

Sometimes we say we know something 'like the back of our hand' but experiments prove that less than 5% of people can identify the back of their hands from a photograph. The results of a simple experiment we conducted for a television programme showed that most people are generally not good at reading body language signals either. We set up a large mirror at the end of a long hotel lobby, giving the illusion that, as you entered the hotel, there was a long corridor going through the hotel and out the back of the lobby. We hung large plants from the ceiling to a distance of 5 feet above the floor so that, as each person entered the lobby, it looked as if another person was entering at the same time from the other end. The 'other person' was not readily recognisable because the plants covered their face, but you could clearly see their body and movement. Each guest observed the other 'guest' for five to six seconds before turning left to the reception desk. When asked if they had recognised the other 'guest', 85% of men answered 'no'. Most men had failed to recognise themselves in a mirror, one saying, 'You mean that fat, ugly guy?' Unsurprisingly, 58% of the women said it was a mirror and 30% said the other 'guest' looked 'familiar'.

.....
*Most men and nearly half of all women
don't know what they look like from the neck down.*
.....

How Well Can You Spot Body Language Contradictions?

People everywhere have developed a fascination with the body language of politicians because everyone knows that politicians sometimes pretend to believe in something that they don't believe in, or infer that they are someone other than who they really are. Politicians spend much of their time ducking, dodging, avoiding, pretending, lying, hiding their emotions and feelings, using smokescreens or mirrors and waving to imaginary friends in the crowd. But we instinctively know that they will eventually be tripped up by contradictory body language signals, so we love to watch them closely, in anticipation of catching them out.

.....
*What signal alerts you that a politician is lying?
His lips are moving.*
.....

For another television show, we conducted an experiment with the co-operation of a local tourist bureau. Tourists entered the bureau to ask for information about local sight-seeing and other tourist attractions. They were directed to a counter where they spoke with a tourism officer, a man with blond hair, a moustache, wearing a white shirt and tie. After a few minutes discussing possible itineraries, the man bent down out of sight below the counter to get some brochures. Then, another man with a clean-shaven face, dark hair and wearing a blue shirt appeared from beneath the counter holding the brochures. He continued the discussion from exactly where the first man had left off. Remarkably, around half the

tourists failed to notice the change and men were twice as likely as women to completely miss the change, not only in body language but in the appearance of a completely new person! Unless you have an innate ability or have learned to read body language, the chances are you're missing most of it too. This book will show you what you've been missing.

How We Wrote This Book

Barbara and I have written *The Definitive Book of Body Language* using my original book, *Body Language*, as our base. Not only have we considerably expanded on that one, we have also introduced research from new scientific disciplines, such as evolutionary biology and evolutionary psychology as well as technologies such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), which shows what happens in the brain. We have written it in a style that means it can be opened and read on almost any page at random. We've kept the content mainly to the movement of the body, expressions and gestures, because these are the things you need to learn to get the most out of every face-to-face encounter. *The Definitive Book of Body Language* will make you more aware of your own non-verbal cues and signals, and will show you how to use them to communicate effectively and how to get the reactions you want.

This book isolates and examines each component of body language and gesture in simple terms to make it accessible to you. Few gestures are made in isolation of others however, so we have also, at the same time, tried to avoid oversimplifying things.

There will always be those who throw up their hands in horror and claim that the study of body language is just another means by which scientific knowledge can be used to exploit or dominate others by reading their secrets or thoughts. We feel however, that this book seeks to give you

greater insight into communication with your fellow humans, so that you can have a deeper understanding of other people and, therefore, of yourself. Understanding how something works makes living with it easier, whereas ignorance and lack of understanding promote fear and superstition and make us more critical of others. A birdwatcher doesn't study birds so that he can shoot them down and keep them as trophies. In the same way, the knowledge and skills in body language serve to make every encounter with another person an exciting experience.

For the purpose of simplicity, and unless otherwise stated, the use of 'he' or 'him' will apply equally to both genders.

Your Body Language Dictionary

The original book was intended as a working manual for sales people, managers, negotiators and executives, but this one can be used for any aspect of your life, be it at home, on a date or at work. *The Definitive Book of Body Language* is the result of over 30 years of our cumulative knowledge and involvement in this field and we give you the basic 'vocabulary' you need to read attitudes and emotions. This book will give you answers to some of the most puzzling questions you've ever had about why people use some of the behaviours they do, and it will change forever your own behaviour. It will seem as if you've always been in a dark room and, while you could always feel the furnishings, the wall hangings and the door, you've never actually seen what they look like. This book will be like turning on the lights to see what was always there. But now, you'll know exactly what things are, where they are and what to do about them.

Allan Pease

Chapter I

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS



This is 'good' to Westerners, 'one' to Italians,
'five' to Japanese and 'up yours' to the Greeks

Everyone knows someone who can walk into a room full of people and, within minutes, give an accurate description about the relationships between those people and what they are feeling. The ability to read a person's attitudes and thoughts by their behaviour was the original communication system used by humans before spoken language evolved.

Before radio was invented, most communication was done in writing through books, letters and newspapers, which meant that ugly politicians and poor speakers, such as Abraham Lincoln, could be successful if they persisted long enough and wrote good print copy. The radio era gave openings to people who had a good command of the spoken word, like Winston Churchill, who spoke wonderfully but may have struggled to achieve as much in today's more visual era.

Today's politicians understand that politics is about image and appearance and most high-profile politicians now have personal body language consultants to help them come across as being sincere, caring and honest, especially when they're not.

It seems almost incredible that, over the thousands of years of our evolution, body language has been actively studied on any scale only since the 1960s and that most of the public has become aware of its existence only since our book *Body Language* was published in 1978. Yet most people believe that speech is still our main form of communication. Speech has been part of our communication repertoire only in recent times in evolutionary terms, and is mainly used to convey facts and data. Speech probably first developed between 2 million and 500,000 years ago, during which time our brain tripled its size. Before then, body language and sounds made in the throat were the main forms of conveying emotions and feelings, and that is still the case today. But because we focus on the words people speak, most of us are largely uninformed about body language, let alone its importance in our lives.

Our spoken language, however, recognises how important body language is to our communication. Here are just a few of the phrases we use –

*Get it off your chest. Keep a stiff upper lip.
 Stay at arm's length. Keep your chin up.
 Shoulder a burden. Face up to it.
 Put your best foot forward. Kiss my butt.*

Some of these phrases are hard to swallow, but you've got to give us a big hand because there are some real eye-openers here. As a rule of thumb, we can keep them coming hand over fist until you either buckle at the knees or turn your back on the whole idea. Hopefully, you'll be sufficiently touched by these phrases to lean towards the concept.