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Golden Nuggets of Networking Wisdom

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**This month's Golden Nugget comes from Tim Davis –
Executive Training Using Behavioral Communications**

Body Language Cheat Sheet: How To Interpret Physical Communication and Body Language

A good tip for a successful manager is to study the possible interpretations of body language. It is widely accepted that at least 50 percent or more of what is communicated by individuals is performed in a nonverbal way, that is, using signs and signals related to body language.

Some researchers claim that the percentage could even be as high as 80 percent for some people and that facial expressions and voice tone are used four to five times more often than words themselves to express an attitude.

Whatever the actual percentage, it is a fact that body language is an indispensable component in human communication, and being able to interpret what it means has considerable advantages in developing management and leadership skills in any area where human resource issues prevail.

Researching the internet, including Wikipedia, quickly demonstrates that body language is not only a widely accepted form of conveying meaning but that the interpretation of its different facets can vary widely as to their assumed or believed meaning, as demonstrated by the numerous examples below.



NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION (NVC) INTERPRETATION

FACE

- Hand to cheek: Thinking carefully, evaluating
- Touching nose; rubbing slightly: Rejection, doubt, lying
- Pinching bridge of nose; eyes closed: Negative evaluation
- Pursing lips and touching side of nose: Evaluating
- Stroking the chin or side of face: Evaluation, assessment, deciding
- Retracted lower lip: Holding back, waiting for affirmation, angry
- Retracted upper lip: Mixed reactions to what is being said
- Resting the cheek on hand: Thinking and evaluating
- Rubbing the bridge of the nose: Uncertain, rejection
- Pursing one's lips: Thinking
- Smiling: Acceptance, appreciation, pity, superiority
- Smirk: Rejection, opposition, disagreement
- Disapproving frown: Opposing opinion, strong disagreement
- Staring/glaring eye: Disagreement, opposition, guilt
- Sneering: Anger, opposition, aggression
- Pale face: Embarrassment, untruthfulness, guilt
- Trembling lips: Anger, opposition, fear, aggression
- Forced smiles: Disbelief, lie
- Flushed face: Embarrassment, untruthfulness, guilt
- Baring of teeth: Anger
- Grinding jaw: Temper, hotheaded
- Grimacing: False, anger opposition, rejection
- Redder face: Untruthful, embarrassed



EYES

- Rubbing an eye: Doubt, disbelief
- Looking over the top of spectacles: Summing up a situation and evaluating
- Looking down, faced turned away: Disbelief
- Frowning, eyebrows raised: Apprehensive, questioning your motive
- Eyes downcast: Guilty, bored
- Rubbing the eyes: Disbelief, doubt
- Good eye contact: Respect and interest
- Looking away: Disinterest, disbelief, boredom
- Staring around room: Lack of interest
- Looking at watch: Desire to finish, had enough
- Vacant facial look: Lack of knowledge, disinterested
- Raised eyebrows: Surprise, disbelief
- Damp eyes: Sorrow, guilt
- Widely opened eyes: Honesty
- No eye-to-eye contact: Dishonesty, guilt, cover-up
- Excessive blinking: Untruthful

HEAD

- Head resting in hands; eyes downcast: Boredom, despair
- Fondling or patting hair: Insecurity, lack of confidence
- Quickly tilting head: Interested
- Prolonged tilted head: Boredom
- Head tilted to one side: Interested, listening, friendly, receptive
- Slightly turned ear: Attentiveness, interest
- Straight, level head position: Feeling confident, authoritative
- Pulling or tugging ear: Indecision
- Head moving backward: Opposition, disagreement



HANDS

- Placing the hands on the knees: Readiness
- Putting the hands on the hips: Impatience, aggression, authoritative
- Locked hands behind the back: Anger, frustration, apprehension
- Locking the hands behind the head: Superiority, uninterested
- Seated with hands clasped behind: Confident, superiority
- Open palms: Sincere, openness, innocence
- Tapping or drumming fingers: Impatience
- Holding both hands: Anticipation, impatience
- Clasped hands pressed together with linked fingers: Evaluating the situation
- Fingers or finger touching the lips; pointing upwards: Assessing and evaluating
- Biting fingernails: Insecurity, nervousness
- Hands on lap: In control
- Seated with hands behind the head; legs stretched out: Relaxed, confident, thinking
- Palms open and up: Friendliness and openness
- Palms down: Dominant, possible aggression
- Upright hand when handshaking: Conveys equality
- Clenched fists: Aggression
- Playing with ring: Heard before, bored, finished
- Fidgeting: Bored, impatience
- Hands in pockets: Limited interest