

# Body Language:

Research has shown that when we communicate with others, only 7% of our feelings are conveyed with words, 38% of what we communicate is through our tone of voice and an amazing 55% is by using body language.

Body language is what we “say” to one another without the use of words. This non-verbal communication can come in several forms: body position, eye contact, facial expressions, physical appearance, touch and space

**Body Position** - the location of the arms, legs and hands as well as the manner of sitting or standing can tell you a lot. For example, crossed arms often indicates defensiveness and the desire to be more removed; a sitting person leaning forward is a sign of friendliness and interest.

**Eye Contact** - eyes can reveal moods and feelings as well as intentions and interest. For example, if a person is having a one-on-one conversation, yet is looking around and not at the person to whom he or she is speaking, it might tell you that the sender is more interested in something else.

**Facial Expressions** - our expressions also send a message. For example, raised eyebrows could mean disbelief, questions, shock. A frown usually indicates displeasure, yet a smile usually expresses agreement and pleasure.

**Physical Appearance** - the manner in which one dresses tells a little about his or her personality and character. In addition, the items a person carries by choice can also aid in determining personality traits. someone who always carries a briefcase may be characterized as serious and work-oriented. Shorts and tank top expresses carefree and informality.

**Touch** - the manner in which one person touches another can reveal a great deal about his or her character. For example a light tap on the shoulder is apologetic, while a firm hand on the shoulder is demanding. A firm handshake often hints of a strong-willed and straight forward individual.

**Space** - the distance a person keeps while talking is a good indication of his or her openness and sociability. We all have a “comfort space” that we like to keep around us. For example, if someone stands too closely when speaking, invading that space, it is often interpreted as a hostile and forceful communication.

By keeping aware of the body language of those around you, your ability to assess their message will be greatly increased. The listener’s body language will help you monitor your delivery of an idea or message. One additional thing to remember. Your body language gives you an indication of your motives and meanings--be sure to monitor your own non-verbal cues.

# Interpreting Gestures

Most gestures using body language and paralanguage are quite important and can be used to send signals between the sender and receiver. They can be grouped into three categories that resemble a traffic signal.

## Gestures

arms folded on chest  
clutched jaw  
fists clenched  
running fingers through hair  
sharp signs  
tapping on table

hand over mouth  
frown  
raised eyebrow  
clearing throat  
picking fingernails  
pinching bridge of nose  
stroking chin

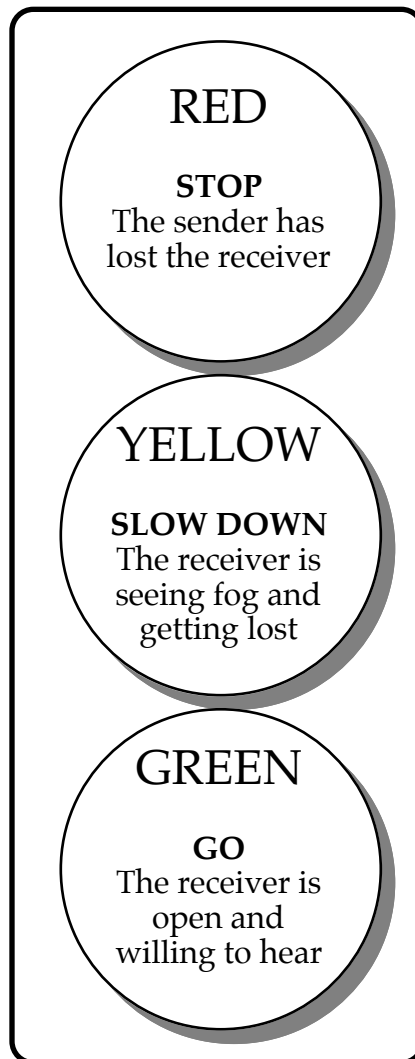
uncrossed legs  
open hands, palms up  
cock the head  
sitting on edge of chair  
eye contact  
mouth/chin relaxed  
nodding

## Possible Meanings

not going to listen  
antagonism  
defensiveness  
frustration  
furiousness or boredom  
impatience

doubtful  
displeasure  
disbelief  
nervousness  
seeking reassurance  
concern  
stalling for time

open to agreement  
sincere, open  
interested  
ready to accept  
weighing proposal  
considering ideas  
agreeing



## Paralanguage

Paralanguage is verbal language that can have meaning, but it is not words.  
Examples: sighing, clearing throat, yawning, clicking tongue, etc.