

Translating Body Language

In any negotiation, the more knowledge you have about your opposition, the more likely you are to reach a favorable outcome. However, much of this vital information is not directly communicated; you have to know how to read it. Negotiation expert Keld Jensen knows how to see these hidden signals, and he understands the importance of what messages we send with our own body language.

Negotiating effectively is no easy task, but it can become nearly impossible when your opponent is lying. A study carried out recently by the University of Virginia in the United States shows that lies are part of one in every five ten-minute conversations. Luckily, Keld has the tips to see through these lies.

- **Touching of the face, nose** - It is an expression of “assuring oneself”. We most often do it when we are lying or when we are very insecure. One of the best known and “famous” cases of this is Nixon when he said in a TV speech “I know nothing about the tapping of Watergate”. He touched his nose and covered his mouth.
- **Rubbing of eyes** – It buys us time and at the same time it no doubt also says that we are not particularly happy about what we are about to say.
- **Ears, neck, hair** – Touching of the ear in the way of rubbing may indicate stress in relation to the statement. Touching of neck most often also signals nerves, just as frequent contact with your hair also expresses anxiety, confusion, or stress.
- **Biting of nails** – This as well as contact with watches, jewelry, buttons, or nervous use of items such as coins or keys in your pocket are also indicators. Folding of arms over chest can express a need for self-affirmation. The use of a pen as a pointing instrument indicates irritation or anxiety.
- **No eye contact** – Eye contact is often lacking with the untrained or spontaneous liar. When lying or being insecure you look away. Other signals are frequent blinking which is a sign of nervousness, widening of your eyes, or a profound stare, which is a conscious attempt to accommodate to the first point. By lifting your eyebrows you try to act surprised over the fact that you do not trust the person. The eye can in some cases be directed at the liar’s top right corner as a sign of a constructed thought creation, i.e. not actual events but created scenarios

Of course, none of these signs alone is enough to be certain that someone is lying, but seeing enough of them should definitely raise your suspicion level.

Upon meeting somewhat new, we automatically make judgments about them within 7 seconds. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to interviewing for a job. According to a study published by the Carnegie Institute of Technology, “15% of your success is based on your technical/specialist knowledge and approx. 85% is based on knowledge of

human behavior.” In other words, regardless how qualified you are for the job, if you can relate well with the interviewer and build up a good rapport, you’ll have a good chance at getting the job.

If you are feeling stress about a job interview, negotiation, or any important interaction, it is important to control this and not exhibit its symptoms. Many of these same nervous twitches or touching that occurs while lying also manifests itself during stress. Keld has a few stalling techniques to get yourself under control and ready to make the right impression.

- **Cleaning your glasses with a silk cloth while you think.**
- **Removing your glasses.**
- **Searching for a piece of paper in your bag.**
- **Asking questions which are irrelevant to you but which require the opponent’s concentration and answer but not yours.**

Body language is subconsciously controlled for the most part, so that would imply that we have no control over it. However, if you are conscious of what can occur subconsciously, you can be the master of your own actions and have a window into the minds of others.