



Feature

## Is Your Body Language Sabotaging Your Job Interview?

By Judith Earley

**You seemed to be the perfect candidate for the position: an honors graduate with a solid work history and excellent references. But somehow you didn't advance past the first round of interviews. Could inappropriate body language have actually killed your chances?**



The answer is a resounding yes! A strong cover letter and resume may land you an interview for the job of your dreams, but you can easily destroy your chances with bad body language. If you got the interview, the prospective employer obviously thinks you are qualified for the job. But how you present yourself can either make

you or break you in a competitive situation.

Studies have shown that the first impression is based 7 percent on what you say, 38 percent on the tone of your voice, and 55 percent on your body language. When you walk into a job interview, a prospective employer develops an impression of you within 10 seconds, and a poor first impression is difficult to overcome.

And you thought you scratched your head just because it itched! Simple actions can betray our innermost feelings. But there's good news: You can do something about it. There are no cut-and-dried measures for reading body language; however, according to MSN.com, here is how some basic body language can be interpreted:

- Arms folded across your chest is frequently seen as a defensive posture or, at best, as reserved and uninterested in the conversation.
- Standing with your hands in your pockets suggests a lack of confidence or unease.
- Sitting with legs crossed while shaking one leg or wiggling a foot suggests nervousness or severe discomfort.
- Staring blankly at the floor suggests a profound lack of interest in the conversation.
- Rubbing or touching your nose during a response suggests that you're not being completely honest.
- Rubbing the back of your head or neck suggests you're bored by the conversation.
- Pointing your feet toward the door or leaning in that direction suggests that you want to end the conversation quickly.
- Slouching in the chair suggests that you're unprepared for the interview or that, deep in your heart, you know you're not up to the job.
- Tipping your chair back suggests that you're overconfident and perhaps disdainful of the interviewer.
- If the interviewer leans back in his chair, clasps his hands behind his head, and smiles, that's probably a look of condescension. If he's drumming his fingers on the desk, more than likely, he's bored.

Always remember these tips when you walk into an interview:

1. Grasp the interviewer's hand firmly and look her straight in the eye when introduced. Thank the interviewer for taking the time to talk. Don't sit down before the interviewer does, and don't throw yourself into the chair like a couch potato in front of the TV.
2. If there is not a desk or a table between you and the interviewer that will establish a safe amount personal space, don't get any closer than about 18 inches; two or three feet is even better and will be more comfortable for most people.
3. Speak directly to the person when responding to a question. If more than one person is interviewing you, glance briefly at each of them while you are speaking, but always return your gaze to the person who asked you the question.
4. Like your mother always told you, sit up straight to project an image of alertness and interest in the interview.
5. Use hand gestures for emphasis, but get don't carried away.
6. Emphasize your seriousness, interest, and confidence by making eye contact, tilting your head to catch questions, and smiling.
7. If the interview is interrupted by a phone call, don't stare at the interviewer while he or she is on the phone; instead, motion that you're willing to leave the room if the call is important. If the interviewer says no,



## Feature

busy yourself with personal papers to create a sense of privacy.

8. Pick up the discussion by saying something like "To get back to your question...." This will comfortably restart the conversation.

The bottom line is that you want to project an air of confidence, not arrogance. Arrogance is the opposite of confidence and demonstrates a profound lack of self-confidence.

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.