

► 4 – Body Language

Executive Summary:

Adding body language clarifies the speech message.

Objectives:

- *To learn the value of gestures and body movements.*
- *To comprehend the value of body language.*
- *To develop a sense of timing and natural body movements.*
- *TIME: 5 to 7 minutes - or - 6 to 8 minutes.*

Show What You Mean

The audience is more likely to believe what you say when your facial expressions match your words. Body language is an important aspect of a speech.

Why Body Language?

Using body language adds another dimension to your speeches. It can help the audience comprehend what you are saying.

This speech that focuses on body language is an introduction to using your arms, hands, facial expressions, and other body movements. This can illustrate and emphasize some parts of your speech.

In addition, using this body language, can help you understand the principles of timing, accuracy, and proper magnitude in your body gestures. These skills will be useful to help clarify in this speech, and in future speeches.

Using body language is relatively easy, when you truly believe what you are saying. Appropriate arms, hands, facial expressions can help convince the audience that you are sincere and speaking with confidence.

This increases the odds that the audience understands the importance the message. There is no doubt you believe in the message!

Use of Gestures

A very effective way to communicate your sincerity is to put your whole body into the speech. An audience will, quite likely, believe you when your body matches your words.

The body language could include facial expressions and body movements to show enthusiasm or boredom, pleasure or pain, sincerity or sarcasm.

It works well to use both facial expressions and body movements, especially arms and hands. Some basic gestures include:

- 1) Size, shape, direction, location.
 - These physical characteristics call for gestures such as using hands or pointing. "He went that way!"

- 2) Importance or urgency.
 - You could hit your fist into your open palm. This would punctuate your point.
- 3) Comparison and contrast.
 - Moving both hands in unison to show similarities or differences.
- 4) Disbelief.
 - Your face expresses concern or puzzlement.
- 5) Joy.
 - Your face expresses happiness and pleasure.

All of these will keep the audience's attention.

It is good to control the gestures and make them smooth, natural, and meaningful. This speech will give you the opportunity to try using different body language and discover what movements work best for you.

It is important that the body language is large so it can be seen by the audience. Gestures are good if they help the audience understand the message. Avoid gestures that distract the audience from the message.

Building the Speech

The primary purpose of this speech is to implement body language. It will help if the topic chosen by you facilitates the opportunity to use body language.

It can help to describe an object that can be shown to the audience, such as food, lantern, toy, hat, or even a rock. It could include a chalkboard or large size document with diagrams to clarify the message.

Showing these items to the audience, while describing them, will help the audience comprehend the message. You make the decision as to what you believe will strengthen the speech.

Strive to use items that are visible to the audience. If there words on a chart, use a large font and very few words.

The way you stand, the way you use hands and arms, your eye contact, and your body movement, can be very important. Body language does not diminish the importance of the words chosen. Body language is just one more factor in delivering an important message.

Some Examples

You like to fish. Hand and arm gestures can help describe baiting the hook, casting the fishing rod, catching a fish, using a fishing net, and removing the hook from the fish.

You planted some trees. Body language can help describe digging the holes, size of the holes, level of the tree roots, type of dirt and fertilizer, and watering.

You have horses. Describe catching the horse, food used to attract them, halter or bridle, how to saddle, and training a horse to direct them using the bridle.

These are merely examples. Everyone has had different experiences. Choose one that you feel is important.

Rehearsal

You, quite likely, have used body language throughout your life. It might be helpful to rehearse your speech before an audience, such as relatives or friends. Or video record to provide you with another perspective.

It is good to use movements that are deliberate and precise, but look natural and spontaneous. Achieving the right balance can be aided with rehearsal.

Presenting the Speech

Start by addressing the Toastmaster for the Day and the audience (Madam or Mr. Toastmaster, Ladies and Gentlemen). Then provide a statement that draws the audience into the speech. Starting with a question is always effective. Presenting an object in the opening will also be effective.

Trying to relax and feel at ease will help make the gestures look natural. Avoid shuffling papers, adjusting the lectern, or pacing back and forth during the speech.

A good way to release tension is to make body movements that emphasize points in the speech. This helps the audience understand the message. Your nervous energy can result in animation to the body movements.

When exhibiting an object, center your audience's attention on it. Avoid looking at the object continuously. Strive to maintain eye contact with the audience. Eye contact is important body language.

When using a chart behind you or beside you, avoid talking to the chart. Face the audience when speaking.

Smiles help put the audience at ease. If you make a mistake, laugh with the audience. A relaxed presentation results in natural movements.

Close with a summary of the body contents. Using the speech title, as the last words uttered, ties the closing to the opening. Conclude by returning control to the Toastmaster for the Day (Mr. or Madam Toastmaster).

Your Evaluation

The primary focus of the speech evaluation is on the effectiveness of body language. In addition, this speech strives to implement the speaking skills from your previous speeches.

The challenge is to make it easy for the audience to understand the message.

Evaluation Guide for **Show What You Mean**

See last page for more evaluation guidelines.

--- Evaluate the Speech, not the Speaker!

Speech Title:

Speech Evaluator:

Date:

Note to the Speech Evaluator: This speech strives to incorporate body language to help the audience understand the speech message. This includes gestures, facial expression, and other body movements to emphasize points in the speech. It is important for the Speech Evaluator to provide **many positive comments, one item** that could **strengthen the speech**, and **end with more positive comments!** In addition to the oral evaluation, provide answers to the questions below.

The purpose of the evaluation is to Encourage, Encourage, and Encourage!
Strive to have the Speaker look forward to giving another speech.

- How effective was the speaker's use of body language? Give examples.
- Comment on the naturalness and smoothness of the speaker's gestures.
- Did any movements or expressions detract from what the speaker was saying? What were they?
- If a physical object was used, how well was it used?
- How well was the speech organized (opening, body, closing)?
- In what ways did body language add to the value of the speech?

Handy Dandy Speech Evaluation Guidelines

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- Strive to start with **four or more positive** comments, **one constructive** comment, end with **more positive** comments. A constructive comment example, *"The speech could be strengthened by"*
- Focus on the **Speech**. Avoid: *"you could improve"*- better: *"the speech could be strengthened by"*.
- Avoid commenting on the Speaker's point of view or facts. Focus on the **presentation**.
- Use specifics. Avoid: *"opening was weak"*- better: *"starting with a question would strengthen the speech"*.
- Use a lot of **"I"** phrases **instead of "you"** phrases. Avoid: *"you did this"*- better: *"it appeared to me"*.
- Avoid judging. Avoid: *"the speech was good"*- better: *"I liked the speech"*.
- If it is difficult to identify something that could be strengthened, ask yourself the question, **"Is this the best speech I've ever heard?"** If it is not, try to determine what could make it the best.

Evaluator:

Speech Title:

Date:

C Opening: Address Audience? Get Attention?

O Lead Into Body?

N Body: Organized?

T Help Remember? Persuasive?

E Interesting? Support Material?

N Relevant? Appropriate?

T Effective? Clear? Inspirational?

Closing: Climax? Produce Results?

Tie It Together? What to Do?

D Physical Appearance: Appropriate? Posture?

E Professional? Shirt (men) with collar?

L Zoom: Hands visible? Eyes include webcam?

I Body Language: Eye Contact? Hands? Face?

V Natural? Spontaneous?

E Overuse / Underuse? Detracting / Adding?

R Deliberate? Precise? Appropriate?

Y Vocal Variety: Volume? Pitch? Rate? Quality?

Manner: Enthusiastic? Direct? Assured?

Presentation: Visuals? Humor?

L Word Use: Clear? Accurate/Correct?

A Colorful? Vivid? Appropriate?

N Precise? Simple/Complex?

G Dull/Exciting? Jargon? Slang?

U Always/Never/Everyone Knows?

A Grammar: Proper?

G Pronunciation / Enunciation?

E Vowel Sounds?
