



Brighter & Brighter, PLLC.  
*A Positive Practical Path to a Better Brighter Life*

# INTERPRETING BODY LANGUAGE

Cynthia Kay, PhD., LPC-S, MAC,  
SAP

# GOALS

- Define Body Language
- Learn the difference between a signal and a gesture.
- Understand congruent and incongruent body language
- Learn how body language guides and governs conversation
- Learn about the four zones of personal space

# WHAT IS BODY LANGUAGE?

- Speaking without words
- Gestures, postures, facial expressions, eye contact
- Use our personal space
- Signals
- Can be different one culture to the next
- Gestures



# CONGRUENCE VS INCONGRUENCE

- Gestures and words don't match
- Actions and signals don't match
- Actions speak louder than words





**BODY LANGUAGE CAN  
DIFFER!**

- Cultural differences
- Developmental differences
- Psychological differences

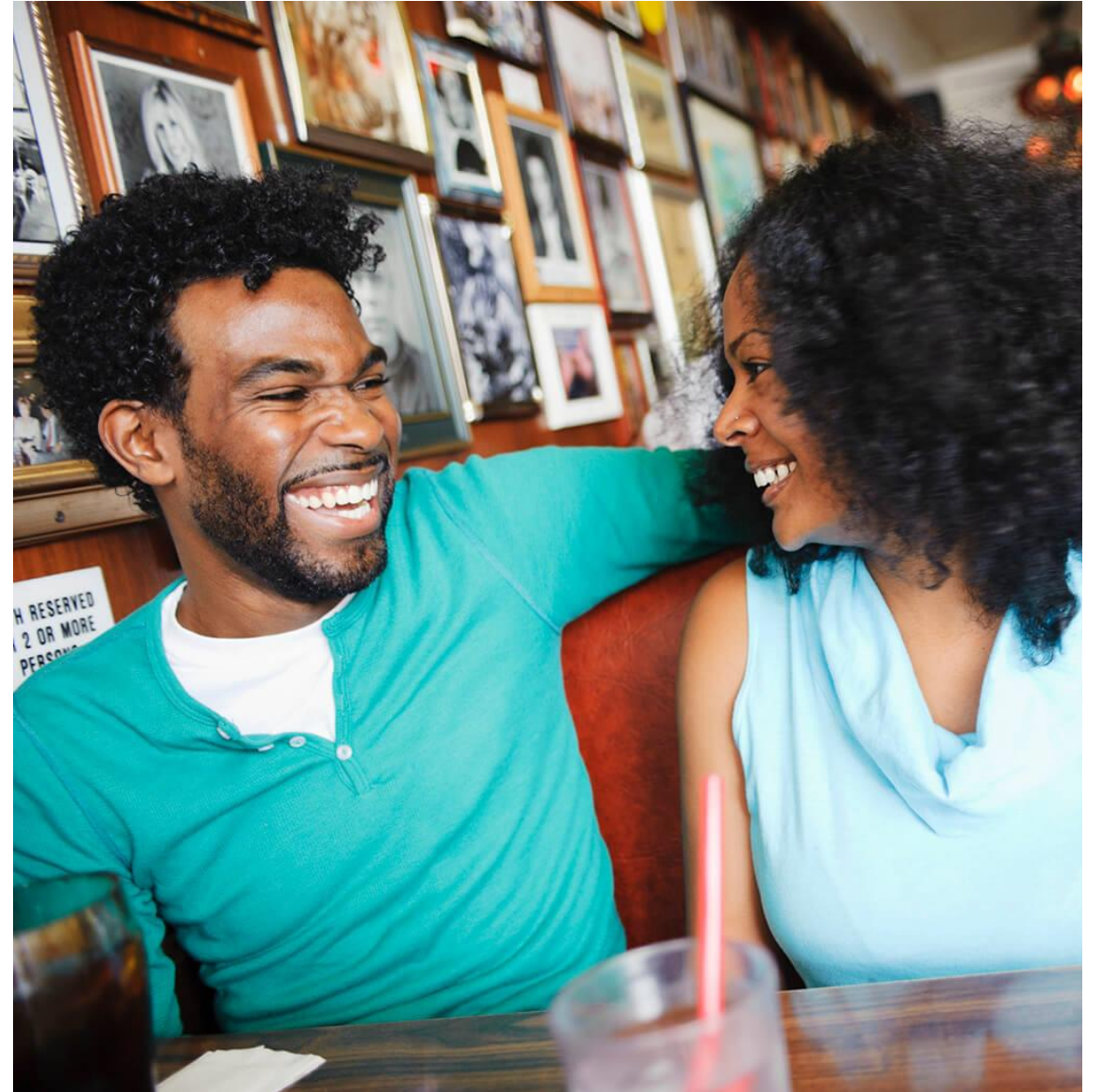
# OTHER NON-VERBAL BODY LANGUAGE

- Eye contact
  - Essential non-verbal cue
  - Helps guide conversation
  - Three seconds
- Avoids eye contact
  - Lack of interest
- Women make more eye contact



# THE EYES CAN SAY A LOT

- Eyes can convey a lot of information about someone's mood and level of interest
- Blinking
  - Under stress
  - Suggests dishonesty
  - Working through a difficult problem, feeling uncomfortable, afraid or worried
- Pupil dilation
  - Feel positively toward something or someone
  - Romantic attraction
  - Angry or afraid
  - Don't like something



# THE EYES CAN SAY A LOT

- **Gaze direction**
  - Follow what you're interested in
  - Working through a problem, recalling info or memories and thinking about something difficult
- **Eye blocking**
  - Covering your eyes with a hand, closing your eyes briefly
  - Rubbing eyes, squinting
  - Unconscious
  - Irritated, distressed, faced with something they don't want to do
  - Suggest disagreement or reluctance





# FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

- Smiling is one of the basics
- Tongue-showing
- Suggests deep concentration and desire not to be disturbed



# DECODING THE MOUTH

- If someone's smiling, that's a good sign, right?
- Smiles
  - Genuine
  - Insincere
  - Partial smile
  - Smile accompanied by lasting eye contact
- Lips
  - Compressed
  - Quivering
  - Pursed
  - Slightly parted lips



# POSTURE AND PERSONAL SPACE

- The position of the body
  - Relaxed posture suggests approachability
  - While a closed, defensive posture says: “Stay away”
  - Agree with someone: mirror posture
- Invisible bubble surrounding us
  - Proxemics
- Four zones of personal space
  - Public zone
  - Social zone
  - Personal zone
  - Intimate zone



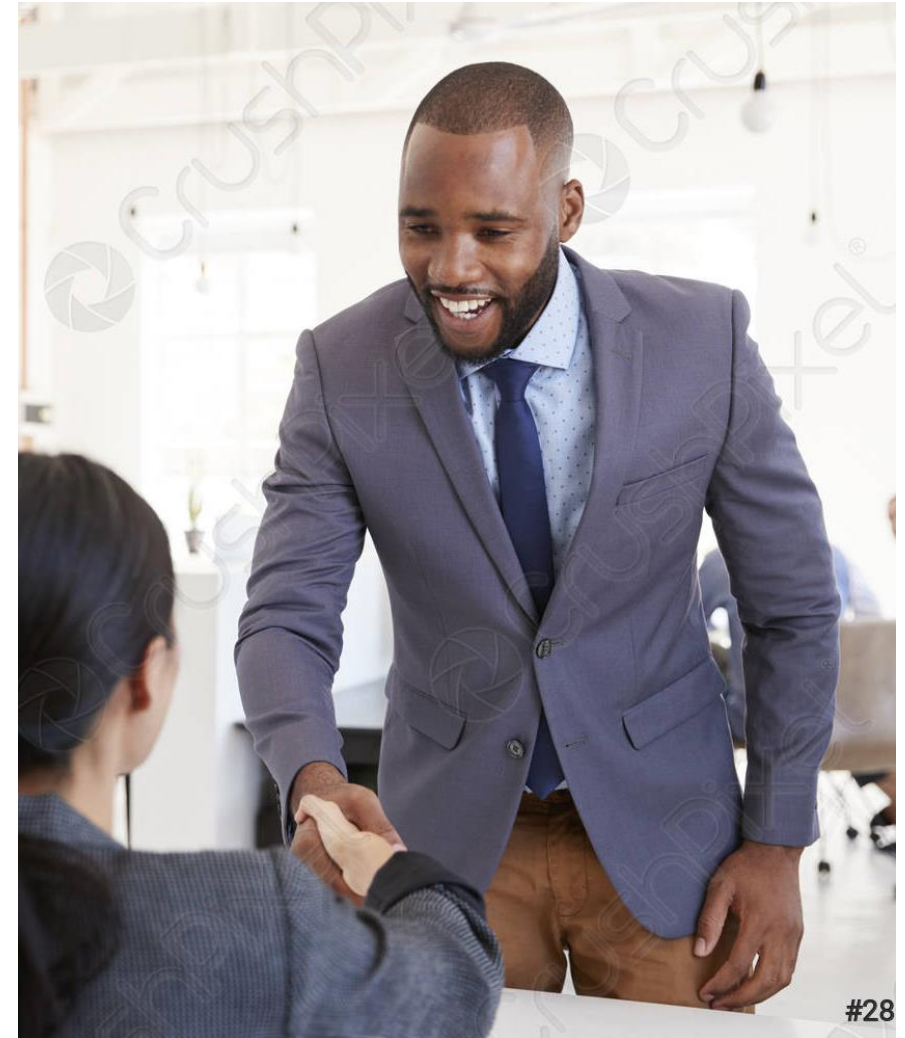
# CONSIDERING BODY POSTURE

- How someone stands or sits and where they do it can give you some clues about how they're feeling
- Leaning back on a wall
  - Suggest boredom or disinterest
- Leaning into a conversation
  - Suggests interest or excitement
- Standing up straight
  - Hands on hips
  - Suggest excitement, eagerness and confidence



# CONSIDERING BODY POSTURE

- Standing straight with hands at the sides
  - Suggests a willingness to engage and listen
- Resting the head in one hand
  - Show interest
  - Both hands support the head: suggest boredom or fatigue
- Tilting the head or body to one side suggests interest and concentration
  - Suggest attraction





## WHAT DOES DISTANCE MEAN?

- Give you clues about their mood or feelings for you
- Regularly stands or sits very close to you
  - Enjoys your company
- Stands apart and takes a step back
  - Wants to maintain some distance (physical and emotional) from you
- Sitting close enough to touch
  - Often suggests physical attraction
- Putting up a hand or arm when taking a step back
  - Suggests a desire for a physical barrier

# WATCHING THE ARMS, LEGS, FEET AND HANDS

- Arms

- Cross their arms when feeling vulnerable, anxious and uninterested in another perspective
- Can also suggest confidence
- Crosses their arms while smiling
- Give someone a sense of protection

- Legs and feet

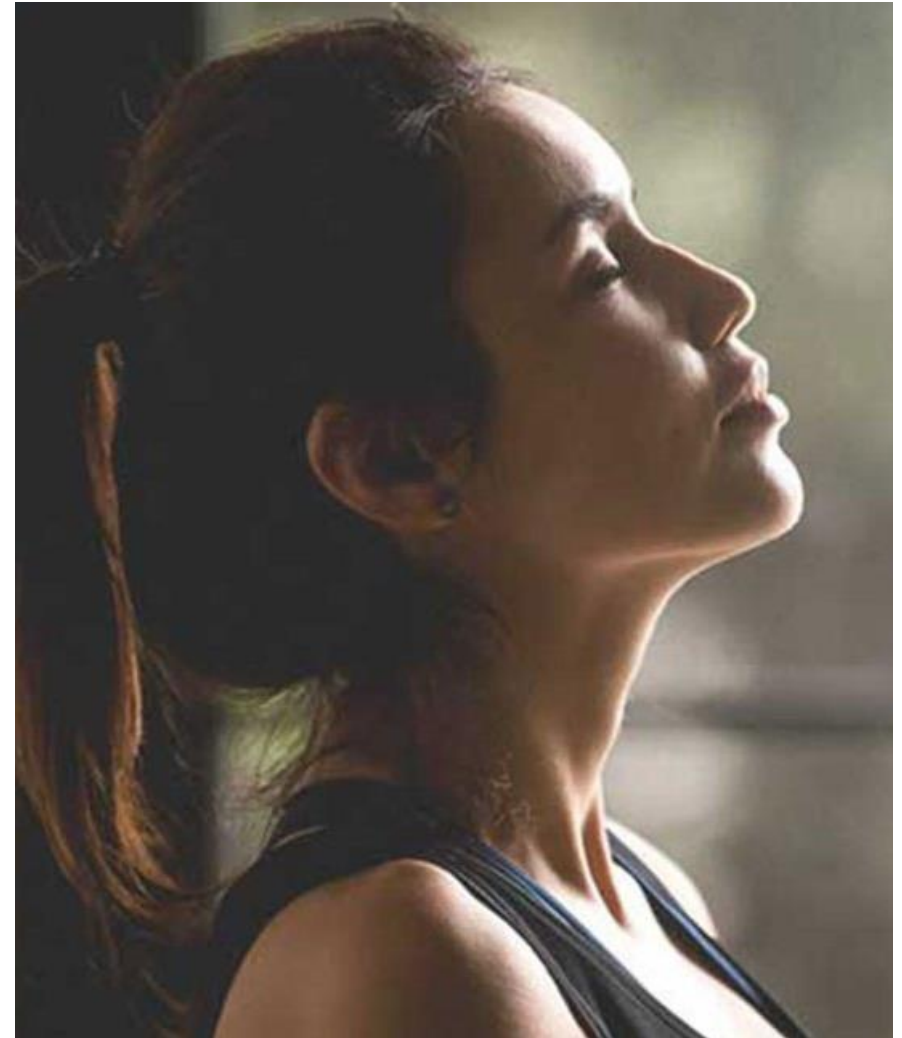
- Show nervousness and restlessness through tapping feet, leg jiggling, and shifting from foot to foot
- Crossed legs suggest an unwillingness to hear what someone has to say
- Feet point away like leaving the conversation than continuing it
- Feet point toward you likely enjoying the conversation

- Hands

- Outstretched hands, palms up, unconscious reflection of openness
- Clenched fists suggest anger
- Touching the cheek: someone is considering something carefully

# BREATHING CUES

- Breathing quickly
  - Excited
  - Anxious
  - Nervous
  - Worried
- Slower breaths
  - Calm
  - Thoughtfulness





# BODY LANGUAGE TO AVOID!

1. Looking Around the Room
2. Lack of Eye Contact
3. Staring at Your Phone
4. Not Listening
5. Talking Too Fast
6. Invading Personal Space
7. Lack of Response



# BODY LANGUAGE TO AVOID!

8. Using the Word "But"
9. Closed-Off Body Language
10. Holding eye contact longer than 3 seconds
11. Furrowed Brows and A Scrunched-Up Face
12. Slumping
13. Not Smiling Enough
14. Too Weak Or Too Strong A Handshake



## SUMMARY, PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Talk to them
- Consider their previous body language
- Aim for some level of eye contact
- Remember to listen



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN  
COMMUNICATION IS TO HEAR  
WHAT ISN'T BEING SAID.

~PETER DRUCKER



# RESOURCES

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