



## BODY LANGUAGE

YOU ARE ALREADY AN EXPERT IN BODY LANGUAGE – EVEN BEFORE YOU COULD SPEAK WORDS YOU WERE INTERPRETING A COMPLEX SET OF CODES and signifiers whilst adjusting your own movement's syntax accordingly. The key to using body language to your advantage is simply being aware of it and not letting your subconscious be in control.

A lot of you reading this will have moved here to start university; some of you may have only picked up this magazine to avoid drawing attention to yourself in the canteen. While everyone else has seemed to fall into groups easily, you're sitting here pretending to be interested in my words hoping the others think that you're just the loner-intellectual type and not the lonely-psycho path type.

So this article isn't going to turn you into a modern day Cary Grant – but it may, with practice and a little bravery, give you just enough mind voodoo confidence to utter the magic words "Anyone else fancy a pint?" after that everything else is easy.

**1. Smile when you first see someone:** This needs to be a genuine smile not a fake. Studies show we are remarkably good at being able to tell a fake smile from the real thing – it seems the difference is the eyes. Make sure the smile reaches your eyes and really work those crow's feet. If you're still struggling, try thinking of something

funny, like a Ninja Turtle kicking your Nan down the stairs - works for me. *The other person thinks:* This person is happy to see me, I LIKE being liked

**2. Open body language:** Most body language guides tell you to have "open" body language. This basically boils down to "not closed". So uncross those arms, keep your hands away from your face and stand facing the people you are talking to.

*The other person thinks:* This guys not scared/on guard/ lying, so it's probably safe to relax.

**3. Mirroring:** This is the subtle copying of a person's own body language and mannerisms to force a bond quicker with that person. Next time you're in a pub have a look round at people and you will notice that good friends, or people who are really bonded, are sitting in nearly the same positions. We do this naturally when we are relaxed around someone we feel close to. There is a lot about this online if you Google it, but it boils down to this; if they sit with their legs crossed, so do you, if they speak quick with long pauses then you try to tweak your voice that way also. The key word here is 'subtle' if their conscious brain notices it will look like you're taking the piss.

*The other person thinks:* This person is like me. I like people like me.

**4. Ask a favour:** Here's a good one - when meeting someone you quickly

want to bond with ask them for a favour as big as you think you can get away with. This sounds wrong but the brain has a habit of backwards rationalizing everything and will presume you're a friend already.

*The other person thinks:* OK so tomorrow I'm helping him move house/buying him a beer/ bearing his child, and as this is something I would only really do for a friend - he MUST be my friend, right?

**5. The depressing 'Golden Rule':** People don't like you for who you are, people like you for how you make them feel about themselves. Making people laugh is all well and good, but laughing at their jokes is better. Telling really interesting stories about your gap year is fine, but nodding in an impressed way while they regale you of the time in Prague when they lost their wallet is far better.

*The other person thinks:* I feel good when I'm around this person; I want to be around this person more.

And remember if you do get brain meltingly hammered at every available opportunity the rules say if you are ever arrested, pass out, or drunkenly jump into a fountain with someone, that person is automatically your new best friend. Have fun!

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