

Body Language Archetypes of Communication

Leveller:

Symmetrical physiology, hands start centrally palms down about waist height moving in an outward direction. As if you are smoothing something (like plaster or concrete). This is a very powerful message use this sparingly in order to make a really important point.

Subliminal message to your audience: "This is the way it is", "This is true", "Pay attention", "This is important"

Placater:

Symmetrical open physiology with palms turned up or open, moving in an upward or outward direction, like someone pleading.

Subliminal message to your audience: "Help me", "I'm open", "I want to please you" or "I'm honest you can trust me".

Blamer:

Pointing finger, jabbing finger, leaning forward. Warning: this body language can be perceived as very aggressive so use it sparingly (can be used for motivational purposes).

Subliminal message to your audience: "It's your fault" or "It's down to you".

Computer / Thinker:

Hand on chin with other arm folded across chest hand holding elbow, "thinker" pose, university lecturer stance.

Subliminal message to your audience: "I'm the authority", "I'm reasonable, logical and sensible" or "Here are the facts" or "I have the answers"

Distracter:

Asymmetrical physiology, incongruent and off balance (like Billy Connolly or Lee Evans). Lean on chair, goofy gestures, weight on one foot, lean against wall, flippant etc.

Subliminal message to your audience: "I don't know", "It's not my fault" or "Who cares anyway" "lets have some fun"

Sequencer:

The Sequencer uses measured sequential movements in line with the middle of their body. Often their hands will be positioned vertically and move in steps horizontally from the sides to the centre of their body. They will use similar language to the Computer person, and appear unemotional and thoughtful, yet logical. Although this is not one of Satir's original categories, it is a useful additional tool, particularly for teachers, trainers and leaders to emphasize points in a specific order and sequence.

Based on the work of Virginia Satir