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The Art of Communication: How to Use Words to Win Friends and Influence People

Topics Covered:

The Power of the Spoken Word

Building Solid Relationships Using the Power of Words

How to Keep Your Audience's Attention

4 Amazing Tips To Successfully Persuade Anyone

Necessary Qualities of a Good Persuader

Miscommunication: Root Cause of Problems?

Getting to Know the Art of Non-Verbal Communication

Kick the Habit of Criticizing

How To Criticize And Still Be Nice

Why Argue? You Can't Win Anyway

Keeping Your Friends

What's in a Handshake?

Interpret the Posture of Confidence

The Art of Communication: How to Use Words to Win Friends and Influence People

The Power of the Spoken Word

The pen is mightier than the sword, says an adage. But most people do not know that when written words become spoken words, they explode like firecrackers! If books speak volumes, speeches fire up entire lives.

There are three kinds of words: the written, the meditated, and the spoken.

Written words inform and give full spectrum of probabilities about a topic or event. Meditated words have the potential to bring out explosive ideas. But when both the written and meditated words are verbalized, the result is tremendous, to say the least. Spoken words are fired from the barrel of a gun (the mouth), through a triggering mechanism (our tongue). When used effectively, words are like bullets that hit targets accurately and leave an indelible mark.

Speaking is a very unique technique of conveying messages. It involves body and soul. It can create a visual drama with live emotions and gestures that put life into the message like no written or meditated messages can achieve. In speaking, you really become the message rather than the words you speak. Thus, entire multitudes can go berserk in public with a moving speech.

It pays to learn how to speak with fire or have a flowery tongue. The power of the spoken word is insurmountable. Entire nations have been either united or divided by one dominant leader who spoke winningly of a cause. Abe Lincoln spoke and persuaded divided Americans to unite, and this was before modern sound systems and media were used.

Vladimir Lenin, on the other hand, spoke with fire to sway Russian peasants and workers to bolt away from Czar Rule, and even called on the Proletariat or working class of other nations to a similar action.

You can also wield this powerful tool of speaking very credibly to an individual or crowd by just learning and practicing the chief points of public speaking. You may be amazed that steps to potent public speaking skills are very simple and easy, yet practicing them is crucial. Delivering the spoken word with power is a science and an art that requires diligence.

Power is gained through mastery. Powerful leaders since ancient civilizations have mastered the ways of the spoken word handed down to them by their forerunners. And if you desire to attain the power of the spoken word, you have to persistently practice your skills in public speaking.

Building Solid Relationships Using the Power of Words

We may not be aware of it; but the words we utter daily may have different interpretations, even if you think that they mean the same thing.

Here's an example.

Would you rather have someone tell you that you are "slim," or would you like to hear that you are "thin?" Being slim has a slightly positive effect because it is attributed to health and fitness.

Rather than saying you have failed, just mention that you have not yet achieved success. Get the picture? Always try to speak words in the most positive manner you can think of.

Here's another important advice.

Never compare the negative qualities of one person with another.

A former boss of mine has this to say to me when I made an error in my previous day job, "James (not real name) is doing a much better job than you are. He's not committing any mistake like you do."

That crushed my heart. My boss thought this would motivate me to do better. Nope, it just hurt my feelings and lowered my self-esteem. Of course, I would never make the same mistake again after her harsh scolding. I've learned my lesson well. But she could have said it nicely.

Experiences arising from discouragement and condemnation will have a negative effect on the recipient.

Some parents might believe that instilling fear on their children would improve their performance. They would say, "You're always failing. Why can't you be like your brother? You're such a disgrace to this family."

Now that's not the proper way to do it. They should inspire, encourage, and motivate their children; not belittle them even further.

They should tell their children that they have the capacity to achieve great things, if they would only put a little more effort. Teach them values that would make them feel important and loved.

You may even go as far as giving them qualities that they do not yet possess. By giving them confidence and by making them believe that they have such characteristics, they will eventually acquire such traits. Tell them how bright you think they are, and you will soon be surprised at the results. They will significantly improve if you firmly made them believe that they have the capacity to do so.

So if you ever wanted to persuade or encourage someone to do better, make sure that he or she is motivated out of inspiration, and not out of fear. Give advice that cares, and not offensive words borne out of hatred or anger.

Think first before you speak. Many relationships have been ruined by the wrong choice of words. Some people voice out anything that comes to their mind, without first filtering the good words from the bad ones. This might result in misunderstandings and arguments, which could have easily been prevented if we speak out in a way that is neutral and non-offensive.

Words are very powerful indeed. Use them responsibly for the benefit of all.

How to Keep Your Audience's Attention

In almost all gatherings (conventions, alumni homecomings, commencement exercises, fund raising or awarding ceremonies), guest speakers are usually invited to highlight the occasion.

To make the gathering memorable, guest speakers are selected for a certain reason, some according to their popularity and accomplishments. As much as possible, the speaker's profession or line of achievement must be in some way related to the occasion.

Let's say the occasion is a convention of home developers. The likely guest speaker to grace it could be a famous housing czar well known and respected by the city and state.

To impart a lasting impression to the audience, a speaker must find ways to keep the attention glued to his speech.

If it so happens that you are the invited guest speaker of a gathering, the suggestions below may help to keep your audience listening instead of daydreaming, walking around or fidgeting in their seats.

1. Speak in a clear, crisp, comprehensible voice with an enthusiastic tone. Avoid mumbling. Try not to eat the words as if there's a gum in your mouth.
2. Your speech should be in consonance with the aim of the gathering, touching on issues relevant to its objective and applicable to current needs for the benefit of the majority.
3. More speakers prepare a list of the issues they want to touch on instead of a speech prepared and read (or memorized) word for word. A spontaneous speech aligned on the ideas prepared or written on the list is projected more naturally.

4. Inject humor into your speech to keep the audience attentive and waiting for more. Studies reveal that, when humor is involved, audiences find the speaker interesting to listen to. But be aware not to go beyond the line of humor because this may unintentionally embarrass others or be misunderstood by them. This might raise comments that criticize your speech. Try your best to avoid criticism.
5. When you raise an issue, one of the best ways to project it is by citing instances or examples. Correlate the example and the issue clearly.
6. Suppose the gathering was organized to save an industry or boost the morale of those that will be directly and indirectly affected by it. Try your best to deliver an inspiring speech. A speech filled with positive thoughts, like projecting a bright tomorrow, can turn a depressive mood into an enthusiastic one. If you are well versed on the industry with a solution to offer to suppress its downtrend, then say it.
7. Audience participation may seem to turn your speech into a discussion, but it is one way to confirm effectiveness of what you are saying or offering.
8. Image how the industry will look like 5 or 10 years from now on a positive flight. Be specific and realistic in your projection. If hard work is called for, say so.
9. Leave a lasting, meaningful message as you wrap up your speech.

A speech that leaves the audience thinking long after the speech has been made will also leave the audience remembering the speaker for a long time.

4 Amazing Tips To Successfully Persuade Anyone

Having excellent persuasion skills is one of the most important abilities to possess in today's fast-paced world. We need the support and cooperation of other people to help us in reaching our goals. The saying "No man is an island" is an undeniable truth.

Here are some hot tips to effectively influence and persuade anyone you desire.

1) Enter their world.

You must understand the situation according to their point of view. Set aside your personal interests and concentrate on them.

Just pretend that if you are them, what would you do? What would be your opinion? Then take the appropriate action that would be beneficial to them.

Copy them. Observe how they act, how they speak, and how they think. If they rub their forehead while they think, act like them. If they speak at a clear and slow pace, try to do the same thing. This is called mirroring.

In due time, the people you're mirroring will subconsciously feel more comfortable with you. It's as if they see themselves in you.

However, you must proceed with caution. Do not let them be aware that you are copying them. They might interpret it as mockery and you'll just get into trouble.

2) Be Friendly and Nice.

Smile to brighten up the day. Make a sincere compliment to raise their spirits. Little things like these count a lot.

Make them feel that whenever they need help or just someone to look up to, you'll always be there to lend a hand. They would tend to be more receptive to people that they trust.

If you want to ask your boss a favor, do everything you can to please him. Overdeliver and exceed his expectations. Soon, he will notice your efforts and will be more than glad to grant your request.

3) Provide them with compelling evidence.

Explain to them how your ideas or suggestions could be the most effective techniques to implement. Show them undeniable proof that you have the best product by way of testimonials, before and after scenarios, and detailed comparisons against your competitors. Just make sure that all your claims are true and verifiable. Always maintain a good reputation.

4) Meet their existing needs and desires.

People are self-centered. They are initially concerned with their own well-being before others. If you can prove that your proposal will provide more advantageous benefits to them than to your own, then they will probably accept it.

If you could focus more on their interests, desires, needs, and expectations, then you would satisfy their cravings for attention. Moreover, it would show that you really care about them. Mutual trust and respect would be established.

This is the most important thing to remember when persuading anyone. No matter how close you are to becoming like them or how overwhelming your evidence is, if it does not satisfy the "What's In It For Me?" test, your persuasion efforts will not produce satisfactory results. Always bear in mind how they will benefit from your actions.

Necessary Qualities of a Good Persuader

Persuasion is asserting your will over others. In this definition, the concept of power comes in. Power is the ability of a person to put his will over others or over his followers. But in persuasion, no full power should be applied. The persuader should learn to be humble to accomplish his objective, so that the persuadee may give in.

Therefore, the qualities of a persuader must come from opposite ends. He must be positive-minded but open to negative results; he must be insistent but must also know how to compromise.

Let us look at the essential qualities a good persuader must have.

First, he must learn to balance both sides. In the middle of a discussion, he should not always place too much emphasis on the advantages he will get from the deal. He should place equal or more consideration in the benefits that the other party will get. The persuader should try to anticipate the expectations of the persuadee. Thereafter, the persuader's benefits can be considered.

Secondly, the persuader must have a positive mind. He must show enthusiasm not only in words but also in actions. Gestures and facial expressions should be part of the conversation to make the persuadee agree with the persuader. Let's say you're the persuader. Should the persuadee ask questions, endeavor to make your answers positive ones (of course, you cannot avoid saying negative ones if those are true).

Thirdly, the persuader should learn to compromise. Compromise here relates to a balanced negotiation. This does not mean giving up at all, but some things should be given up to make way for better ones. To do this, learn to balance the situation (first rule). No matter how enthusiastic the persuader is, the persuadee might have his own conditions or decision factors.

These strategies are best applicable for sales persons or marketers who are closing deals with clients.

One more thing not mentioned above but I think is a universal rule that everybody should know, is the notion of being honest. You cannot persuade people if most you are saying are lies. Honesty is still the best policy.

Miscommunication - Root Cause of Problems?

People of two opposing ideas can stir up arguments and fights. It's that situation when one thinks he has the right concept while the other one also believes he has the proper notion. Both of them would try to outsmart each other until one claims victory.

Here's an actual example.

My spouse would sometimes buy me signature clothing. When my Mom finds out how much it costs, she would advise us to budget our money and just buy the affordable brands.

A problem occurs when my spouse thinks that her effort to give me the best is unappreciated. Mom, on the other hand, thinks that my spouse is far too big a spender.

There's a conflict with their beliefs. No two people are exactly alike. We are all unique; not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

There will be many times when your opinion will not correspond with that of another. So how can people prevent this kind of conflict from occurring?

Communication is the key to overcome doubts and misunderstandings. You should let other people know what's in your mind. Don't keep them guessing.

There is a story about two couples who were filing a divorce. After the lawyer has spoken to them both, he found out that the root cause of all their problems was due to miscommunication.

Here's one of the couple's problems.

The man filing the divorce said that he just hated the breakfast meal that his wife often prepared for him. On the other hand, the wife said that she's only preparing the meal because she thought it was her husband's favorite. But she never liked cooking it because it's very difficult to prepare.

See? If only one of them took the initiative to speak out what's in his or her mind, then that particular dilemma would be solved.

Now why would people prefer to keep their complaints and criticisms to themselves? What's holding them back?

It's because they do not want to be rejected. Most, people, if not all, would like to be accepted and to be perceived as likeable in the eyes of others.

So can you get your message across without hurting feelings?

You can if you substitute negative statements with positive ones.

Instead of saying "You don't understand," say "Let me explain." Instead of remarking "You're wrong," say "Permit me to clarify." Instead of stating "You failed to say," just mention "Perhaps this was not stated."

There are certain words that affect a person more negatively in comparison with other words that have the same meaning.

Nothing could be more pleasing to the ear than hearing someone else say that you are right. In this case, be prepared to let other people know that you respect their opinions. You may add your comments at the end, but acknowledge them first.

Say:

You're right, although ...

Great suggestion, however ...

I agree with your opinion, however ...

I would feel the same way if I were you, although ...

I understand your situation, however ...

Reassure your counterparts that the decision made will benefit both parties. People need to feel that they have made the right choice.

Communication is a gift. Use it wisely for everyone's advantage.

Getting to Know the Art of Non-Verbal Communication

Basically, communication is conveyed in verbal form. The conveyor talks or writes while the recipient listens to or reads the message. However, there is another form of communication based on gestures or body movements. This art of non-verbal communication is better known as body language.

Although spoken communication is a direct way to convey a message, it can be masked. In body language, the message can be conveyed in a truer sense or form. However, this depends on the interpretation of the recipient of the message.

With this in mind, it is important to familiarize yourself with this art of non-verbal communication. How a message is interpreted, correctly or wrongly, may have drastic, dramatic implications.

Given the chance to come face to face to communicate with each other, you may be able to realize and verify the truthfulness of the message being conveyed.

Let's pick a simple scenario to illustrate non-verbal communication. Let us say a former officemate of yours called you to propose a business partnership. This officemate is just one of your casual acquaintances. He's not exactly a confidant whom you would treat as a close buddy. He asks that the two of you meet somewhere and you oblige. So you wind up meeting him in a coffee shop. After the usual handshake (this is one type of body language), both of you take a seat and order coffee.

After a few exchanges of pleasantries and recalling past incidences while you were still officemates, you touch on the subject of his business proposal. While in the process of presenting the proposed business, you occasionally interrupt him with questions that he readily answers. Subconsciously, while you continue to listen to his proposal, you keep

touching your nose with your index finger, rubbing it once in a while as if covering the nose with your hand.

After the proposal has been made, he asks for your comment, if his proposal merits your acceptance. He's not asking for an immediate decision if you're interested or not, giving you enough time to study it. However, your first impression of the proposal is to reject it. Your main reason is that you are not familiar with the line of business he's proposing and to go into an unfamiliar business at this juncture simply does not interest you.

But in spite of your negative perception of the proposal, you don't want to disappoint your former officemate, so you ask for some time to study the idea. While you are making this comment again, without realizing it, you are rubbing the side of your nose.

In fact during the entirety of your discussion, you frequently made this move. Are you aware that touching your nose is a gesture that means you're not saying what you really feel or mean? Studies suggest that saying something while touching the nose is not reflective of what's being said. In this case, rubbing the nose is tantamount to disapproval of the proposal presented to you.

You may see this same gesture from other people if you are in the shoes of the officemate. But keep in mind that there may be other reasons. An itchy nose, a sinus that keeps bothering the listener, mannerism, halitosis on either the part of the conversationalist or the listener or both - anyone of these could be the real reason. Just because your conversation partner is itching their nose does not necessarily mean that they are disagreeing or not believing with what you are telling them.

Lesson to be learned: Interpretation of body language has a high probability rate but it is not necessarily infallible.

Kick the Habit of Criticizing

Oftentimes, when we are confronted with an undesirable situation or event, we tend to criticize or find fault. "What's going on around here? What happened here? Who did this?" All these questions may not necessarily be suggestive of a criticism, but somehow, they are posed in a negative manner.

Criticizing is a reaction that is second nature to most of us. People find faults more often than they find solutions. This is because it's always easier to spot the problem and it is sometimes difficult to find the solution.

Clean your own backyard before you tell others to clean theirs. When you criticize, complain, or speak ill of other people, be sure that others have no reason to do the same to you. It would be better to avoid criticizing other people for good. What other people shortfall off, could be possibly corrected by your good deed or action to compensate for the shortfall.

To criticize, complain, or condemn others is futile. This only creates more problems than the original ones. This strays away from the real issue being criticized. The result is at times dangerous because criticizing hurts a person's pride and self-importance, and this leads to resentment. The usual reaction of a person being criticized is to defend himself.

Keep in mind that humans are the highest forms of creatures in the animal kingdom, which is why we are filled with mixed emotions, various thoughts and feelings no other creatures can match.

Let us cite a simple illustration. Suppose a homeowner hires a housekeeper who is responsible for the upkeep of her property. Let us suppose that after a certain period, the homeowner finds the work performance of the housekeeper unsatisfactory. The homeowner can do either of the following:

- Tell the housekeeper straight forward that she is not satisfied with the housekeeper's performance and criticize her; or
- Ask the housekeeper to accompany her in visiting a friend. The homeowner's purpose is to show her housekeeper her friend's home that she finds satisfactorily maintained. During the visit, her friend's housekeeper can give tips to her housekeeper on proper work procedures.

If you're the homeowner and you choose the first approach (by criticizing), it is likely that your relationship with your housekeeper might get strained. The effect of criticizing has a lot to do with the attitude of the person being criticized. If she takes it lightheartedly, this may not lead to resentment. But if she takes it defiantly, the effects can at times be disastrous or disadvantageous. Criticism makes a person defensive. Your defensive housekeeper's reaction is to find justification for her actions.

On the other hand, an act of diplomacy, free of criticism, could be the right approach to better understanding and cooperation between two people. Going back to the case between the homeowner and housekeeper, the second approach shows the homeowner's subtle way of conveying her message to the housekeeper - how she wants the job done to her satisfaction, without resulting to strained relationships.

Oftentimes, when we ask a person to do a certain job that results in an outcome that falls short of our expectations, we don't give the person a second chance to prove his worth. Some factors may have to be taken into consideration depending on the situation at hand. At any rate, improvement free from criticism, with room for a second chance to prove one's worth, is a welcome change.

How To Criticize And Still Be Nice

Have you ever encountered an experience when someone told you how fat you've become? Maybe your boss has commented on how bad your work turned out to be. Maybe you've heard from other folks how people view you as cold and unapproachable.

Hurts, doesn't it?

Believe it or not, some people can be so tactless that they are not even aware when they've hurt anyone's feelings. The receiving parties, especially the sensitive ones, would be offended by their remarks. This would result in conflicts and arguments.

You know you're doing them a big favor by saving them from shame or disappointment, but would they realize your good intentions instead of feeling hurt by your brutally frank comments or advices?

They might probably think you're too rude or impolite. But what can you do if you really need to assert an honest criticism, but you're afraid of hurting others' feelings?

Want to know the secret?

All you have to do is sandwich your negative comment between two positive remarks.

For example, your best friend Paul is going on his very first date. He's all excited and raring to go. Now Paul doesn't have any fashion sense. He's wearing a bland shirt and old jeans. You know all along how he hates to admit that he's wrong. So what will you do to save Paul from an embarrassing first date?

Would you say to him that the outfit he's wearing is repulsive? That would hurt his ego.

Well, you can first point out the things that you like in his overall appearance. Comment on his well-groomed hair. Tell him he looks cool when wearing his sunglasses. Ask him where he bought his perfume because it can certainly attract women like bees to honey. Be sincere and honest.

Then, insert in a nice and suave manner your point of view and advice. You can tell him something like:

"Your shirt seems to be very comfortable to wear, Paul. Since this is your very first date, I think Sandra (his date) will be much more impressed if you would wear something like the outfit that you wore on my birthday. You look smashing when you put on clothes like that."

Afterwards, make another positive statement. You could say something like:

"You would definitely make a big impact on Sandra. She would fall heads over heels over your gorgeous appearance and cheerful personality. Have a great time on your date, Paul."

Do you think Paul would be offended by such pleasant comments? Not a chance. You have wittingly inserted a slightly negative feedback into a plethora of acceptable and ego-boosting remarks.

People love compliments. They believe they got the qualities. They want other people to intensify the great abilities that they believe to possess. People wanted to hear their greatness purported from someone else's mouth, and they would be very glad if other individuals would know about it.

So if you want to criticize anybody, remember to praise him first. It will leave a positive impression that you're a nice guy. Then say what you have to say, but in a smooth and non-offensive manner. Finalize with another positive reinforcement to establish a foundation of goodwill.

Why Argue? You Can't Win Anyway

Ever noticed the outcome of an argument between two people or groups with contradicting views? Was there really a winner?

If you're on the winning side, you feel superior, and important. All these feelings suggest a positive outcome for you. It's as if you're working down on a guy while he looks up at you. He has this words to mumble "I'm going to get you next time; you wait and see."

Yes, there's this shallow threat to win over you once he gets a rematch. Definitely, a rivalry and a disharmonious relationship will ensue. If the argument happens in front of other people, the repercussions are far worst than can be imagined. To most people, being contradicted and won over in front of other people is a big issue. For obvious reasons, no person in his right sense can tolerate being contradicted. It is an embarrassment.

A person forced to submit against his will stays firm in his belief. So what's the best advice to a situation that seems to lead to an impending argument?

Welcome an opinion even though it is the opposite of your own. When two people go into a partnership, let's say in business, it is normal that disagreements arise. Actually, it is healthy for business.

Disagreements don't mean that the partnership will go sour. It's the exchange of ideas that gives businesses more competitive edges and improvements. Use disagreements to your advantage. This is especially true to married couples. Husbands and wives may disagree but they ultimately find a common ground to make their relationship stronger. It's like exploring each other, getting to know your partner better.

If you are the temperamental type, learn to control it. Make every effort to gradually reduce the intensity until you see substantial improvement. Temper that is out of control is fueled by anger like a forest wildfire. This is entirely different from controlled temper that is like the fire in the fireplace giving warmth at wintertime.

One of the most important character traits you can develop to avoid arguments is to be a good listener. Give your ear a chance to listen first before you let words come out of your mouth. And when you do have a word or two to say, try your best to align them in a non-argumentative direction. Be tactful. Dwell on areas where you think you and the other party will agree.

Be sincere. If you commit a mistake, acknowledge and apologize accordingly. Apologizing for mistakes does not make you a lesser person in terms of importance. On the contrary, people feel humbled when apologized to. Apologies bring out the gentle person in you.

Give the other party the benefit of the doubt in his opinion especially when you doubt your own opinion as well. Tell the other party you will think over his ideas. This is better than being told later "I told you so but you wouldn't listen." This will also give you and him the chance to evaluate the problem or issue.

When someone takes the time and the effort to engage in a debate or argument with you, it only shows that he is also interested in the same things as you do. That alone is sufficient reason for you to thank him.

Arguments are raised not to be a source of losing one's face. Arguments are raised so that we may learn a lesson or two and get better in terms of acquiring added knowledge.

Keeping Your Friends

Ever encountered the phrase "friendship overload?" Some people may have this overload and we sometimes call them lucky for having many friends. But sometimes those friends only remain in the phonebook, memories, or photos. People who have "friendship overload" find it hard to keep those friends even if they want to. There are ways to keep the friendships alive, whether they are near or faraway.

Keep in touch with your friends often. For long-distance friendships, you could take advantage of email. If there is an event, like birthdays or Christmas, or even if you just want to say "hi," a card would be a nice idea. Online cards are always available on the net. For those friends who are just across your place or school, keep in touch with them by sending cards, letters, and notes. These are some of the best ways to communicate with them. Do not forget that handwritten work is more appreciated because personal touch is involved.

After getting in touch with them, some of them may respond and you might end up seeing them personally. Spend your time with your friends in a more meaningful and interesting way. This works best especially for those friends you haven't seen for a long time. Strolling at a park or watching a movie are some of the ways to have fun.

Sometimes spending time with your friends becomes boring when you end up talking about each other's problems in a day. On the other hand, listening to each other's problems is not bad. In fact this is a way to keep your friendships more meaningful, by reassuring each other in both good and bad times. Having a big problem is not the only time you should see your friends. In a way, spending good times or having fun with troubled friends might eventually help them to get through their problems.

Friendship also means responsibility. They are not friends just because you need them during difficult times, or just to have more gifts come Christmas time; but because you love and appreciate them. If you are a true friend, you will always make yourself available especially during the most depressing times.

Friends play an important role in a person's life. Some say they are the extension of your family; that is, you are not blood-related but you share a deep relationship with each other. Treat your friends well, for they are worth much more than any wealth or property in the world.

What's in a Handshake?

All over the globe, people greet each other in different ways. This is brought about by different cultures. Even the primitives of yesterdays down to the present tribal groups use greetings to show respect and acknowledgement of meeting one another.

The primitives show their hands as a gesture that they come in peace. A roman salute during the time of Julius Caesar is done with the right hand clenched in a fist and sharply drawn to the chest. Grasping each other's forearm by the hand is also practiced then. In the western world, youngsters greet each other with a high five (at times with both hands). Soldiers greet their superiors with a snappy salute. The typical handshake among the general public is done with each other's palms interlocking.

If you are traveling to different places, it is still best to check first what the local custom is with regards to the proper greeting procedure. It is better to do it correctly than to be sorry after doing it. There's a saying: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Proper greeting or handshake best describes this expression.

To know the right greeting procedure, ask around the local circle. Your good intention might be interpreted as an insult and you know what follows thereafter, especially in places where you're a visitor. This becomes more important if you're a first timer to a particular country wherein you're not familiar with the cultures.

There are incidences wherein a handshake accompanied by another gesture is interpreted in more ways than one. Take for example, a typical handshake done by some politicians. A common handshake accompanied by a grasp by the left hand to the right hand or to the right shoulder of the other person may have different meanings to some people. Some interpret it as being overly comfortable with the other person when

in fact the politician hardly knows the person. Between close friends, this may be proper. But between two individuals who hardly know each other, this may mean otherwise.

The lesson here is to be reserved in your gesture. What is intended to be good might not be interpreted as such.

In the event that there is confusion on how the proper gesture in a locality is administered, it may be safer to throw a sincere smile instead of a handshake. Since a handshake is considered a type of body language, so is a smile. A smile almost always never fails in any culture around the world.

Local folks who extend their hands or greet first may also give you an idea of the way a greeting is administered in a certain place. Duplicating what they do or simply returning the favor can be safely assumed to be the proper way a greeting should be done in that place.

Some athletes who have strong hands are cautious in shaking hands because they fear hurting other people's hands. As for those whose livelihood is dependent on their hands, like surgeons, dentists, and musicians, they are likewise cautious in shaking other people's hands. This time it's their hands they want to protect.

So, what's in a handshake? It may be just a casual greeting but it may also mean a lot.

Interpret the Posture of Confidence

Words of confidence can be heard when spoken, likewise words of confidence can be read when written or documented. But can confidence be interpreted from the actions of a person?

Yes, it can. As a matter of fact, action has a higher degree of consistency compared to spoken or read materials regardless of the subject involved. Whenever there is a cloud of doubt on the truthfulness of an issue under discussion, the language not spoken or read serves as the confirmation of accuracy. This is the language of body movements or gestures. In this case, the issue is confidence.

Take these postures as indications of confidence:

A confident person is most likely to talk spontaneously, without second thoughts on his mind, as can be seen from his eyes. The eyes are the gates to a person's character. A confident person gives more frequent eye contact than a non-confident individual. He can look at you straight every now and then, at a longer time, and his eyes blink less (unless the person has a habit of frequent blinking which you will notice beforehand).

A confident person talks with hands away from his face. He doesn't cover his mouth (unless he has halitosis or unless the person he is talking to looks or reminds him of something funny) or nose (unless he smells something offensive). He doesn't scratch his head (unless it's itchy because of scalp disorders).

A person beaming with confidence of having achieved much stands erect and proud. He shows that he definitely knows where he is headed. A straight back with chin up shows confidence and even superiority.

One of the most reliable indications of a confident person can be seen by the gesture of his hands. When each finger of a hand (in spread position) meets each equivalent finger of the other hand at the tips, it is a very sure sign of confidence. This gesture resembles the structure of a church steeple. This is the reason why this gesture is called steeping or tapering.

Some people openly show off this hand gesture when they are seated. They proudly show their steeping hands, indicating authority and showing they are sure of what they are saying.

You may notice that when a boss and subordinate talks to each other, the boss is most likely the one doing the steeping. While seated in front of a desk, the boss usually places his elbows on top of the desk with the steeped hands almost on face level as if he is looking through a screen).

As for a woman, she usually rests her elbows on the armchair when seated with her steeped hands on her lap. If she is standing, the steeped hands are usually in the waist level.

In most of the gestures, especially when it comes to the steeped hands, it is important to know if the gesture you see from the other person is truly indicative of his true emotions or personality. Make sure you are not being misled or deceived. This is especially true in dealing with people you hardly know and when sincerity plays an important role in the deal. You can check this by looking for other clues that are congruent or related to the gesture he is exhibiting.

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