

## Body Language 93

### Small Hand Gestures

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



In a prior [Body Language 14 Hand Gestures Article](#), I discussed large hand gestures, such as pointing or using the “Time Out” signal. In this article I will discuss some of the smaller gestures that we are all aware of and use regularly to communicate concepts.

Here are some of my favorite small hand gestures:

**Tiny amount** - We signal something small or a tiny amount by pinching our forefinger and thumb together and then opening a very small space between the fingers. We often hold our hand at eye level as we do this as if we are looking through the gap between the fingers.

**Call me** – For this gesture, we first make a fist with our left hand, then we extend our pinkie and thumb straight out. It is an invitation to have the other person call you soon.

**Text me** – in this case we would simulate holding a phone in one hand and pretend to be pecking letters into an app.

**You have the floor** – We signal for another person to speak by extending one hand outward with palm up. Extending both hands with palm up is generally a signal of openness.

**Good job** – For this gesture we usually use one thumb up. This can also mean agreement.

**We won** – The victory signal with the first two fingers held straight up is the way we convey this concept. You must be aware of the context, because the same gesture can indicate the number two. In general, we signal any number up to ten by holding up that number of fingers.

Another meaning with fingers held up is the number of minutes or the cost of an item. This gesture is also used to indicate “peace.”

**Anger** – we signal anger by holding up a clenched fist. You can see that gesture at most protests when groups of people want to signal their displeasure. This gesture is also a sign for black power.

**Easy** – We snap our fingers to show something was very easy for us to do.

**OKAY** – The OK sign with the forefinger and thumb touching forming a letter “O” is the typical meaning in western society, yet it is dangerous to use this sign in different culture groups. For example, in Japan the gesture means “nothing” and in some countries it is actually an obscene gesture indicating a homosexual act.

**Stop** – We usually just hold up our hand with the palm facing the person we are trying to stop.

**Go faster** – for this gesture, we rotate our hand in a tight circle from the wrist.

**Be quiet** – for this gesture, we hold our hand palm down sometimes patting as if to dampen the sound.

**Shoot** – to indicate hostility toward another person, we might use the simulated gun gesture with the index finger out straight and the thumb sticking up. The other three fingers are curled into a semi fist. Depending on the circumstances, this gesture can be dangerous. I suggest you don’t use it at all.

There are numerous other hand signals that make up the lexicon of body language. Of course, there is also an entire language that a hearing or non-hearing person can use to communicate with a deaf person. This language is called “signing,” or in the USA “ASL – American Sign Language.”

Keep your eyes open for the hand gestures we use to communicate every day. You will see these simple movements of our digits greatly enhance our ability to communicate.

*This is a part in a series of articles on “Body Language” by Bob Whipple “The Trust Ambassador.”*