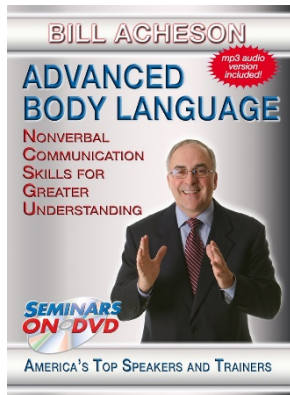


Body Language 97

Twelve Layers

by **Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



For the final few articles in this series on body language, I am highlighting some of the excellent content in a program entitled [“Advanced Body Language”](#) by Bill Acheson of the University of Pittsburgh.

In this article, I will summarize his Thinking on how we pick up twelve layers of information when we interface with another person. Most of the time the signals are processed by us unconsciously, but that does not mean they don't matter to us.

The body language is most important when we are meeting someone for the first time. According to Bill, what we can observe in the other person is ten times more important than what we say.

The 12 layers are the management of

1. Time
2. Space
3. Appearance
4. Posture
5. Gesture
6. Voice
7. Eye Contact
8. Facial Expression
9. Breathing
10. Touch
11. Smell
12. Congruence

Actually, in his recording he left off the 12th item, so I added the concept of congruence, because when one part of body language is out of step with the others, it sends a warning signal that something is wrong here, even if we cannot put our finger on it consciously.

When we see conflicting signals, the caution flag goes up in our mind, and we have a much more difficult time establishing a relationship of trust. That caution flag, even if it is subconscious means it will take substantially longer to trust the other person than if all signals were consistent.

According to Malcolm Gladwell in the book “Blink,” human beings have a remarkable ability to size each other up in a heartbeat. He estimates that we form a first impression of another person within the first three seconds. He calls the phenomenon “thin slices” after the analogy that if you slice something, like a cucumber, thin enough, you can actually see through it.

Near the start of his program, Bill shares some data he took when working with a group of 600 business woman. His question was, “In a business setting, how do you know when a man cheats on his wife?” The top 7 responses were all body language.

In the video Bill shares the top two responses. The first was if a man wears too much cologne or aftershave. The second giveaway, mentioned by 70% of the women, is if the man is wearing a pinky ring. What male would have guessed those two responses?

Another fascinating statistic has to do with trust. The research shows that 97% of the women he polled said they do not trust a man who wears more jewelry than they do. I suppose that one seems pretty obvious.

In his program, he makes several general observations comparing men and women. Bill is always careful to point out that these observations do not hold in every case, but there is enough of a trend to make them a valuable tool.

For example, he has measured that of out of all the emotions, there is only one emotion that men project with far greater accuracy than women. That emotion is guilt. He suggests that if women experience guilt, they usually do it to themselves.

I hope you have enjoyed these few articles summarizing the entertaining and sometimes startling research of Bill Acheson. I hope that you are interested enough to pick up a copy of his program. You will find it fun, entertaining, and insightful.

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