

Persuade! — How to Use Body Language in a Persuasive Speech

Match the titles to each bullet point:

Ground Yourself.	Use Facial Expressions.	Gesture.
Use Headphones.	Sit Up and Lean Forward.	
Make Strong Limited Gestures.	Build in Interaction.	
Move Purposefully.	Stand and Move.	Ask Questions.
Change Your Pace and Approach when Necessary.		
Move Off the Back of the Chair.	Use Plenty of Vocal Energy.	
Open Yourself Up.	Direct Your Energy Outward not Inward.	
Watch How Listeners Respond.		

For Speaking when You're Standing

- **1.** Stand with your feet apart at armpit-width to create a stable and steadfast presence. In performance, you get part of your energy from the earth. Don't deprive yourself of that power.
- **2.** Too many speakers wander, pace, or move without purpose. Choose parts of the stage for each main point you discuss, and use visual aids and even the audience to give physical expression to your message.
- **3.** The singular gesture that amplifies an important point is the one that adds to meaning. Make it clean and limited. Too frequent or weak gestures give no physical expression, per above.
- **4.** Listeners decide in part whether to trust someone from facial expressions and the look in the speaker's eyes. An expressionless speaker is giving an audience too little to go on.

For Speaking when You're Sitting

- **5.** Getting too comfortable in a chair is a trap when you're speaking. When you need to display engagement and passion, you have to heave yourself forward, which is awkward.
- **6.** Good posture while seated shows professionalism, and adds to authority. Leaning forward is an important clue to your listeners that you're engaged and interested.
- **7.** A common mistake among speakers sitting at a board table is to clasp the hands together or gather the arms in a "locked" position. That creates a physical barrier between you and your audience.
- **8.** Just because you're sitting down doesn't mean you can't gesture. Too many speakers become talking heads and include no amplifying or supporting gestures. Use your arms and hands!

When You're Speaking Virtually

- **9.** Audiences that you speak to virtually or on the phone will hear the physical expressiveness you use when you speak. If it's necessary for you to fully involve yourself when you speak in person, why eliminate movement when you're speaking on the phone or in a webinar?
- **10.** Not only will headphones free you to move and gesture, but they make your voice seem warmer and nearer. Once you get in the habit, you won't want to be without them.
- **11.** Since listeners can't react to the visual clues you're giving them (such as when they should respond), you need to give these clues vocally. Both you and your audience will feel like you really are connected. And you'll keep listeners from multitasking!

- **12.** In the absence of vital visual clues, your vocal energy must take up the slack. With no gestures for listeners to see, they need your voice to do the pointing up and emphasizing.

Observe Your Audience's Body Language

- **13.** Body language coming from your audience is as vital as the nonverbal communication you're sending their way. Don't worry about how you're doing - watch to see how your listeners are responding.
- **14.** Once you notice those movements, gestures, eye contact, and jiggling feet, pay attention if the patterns change. That's often a sign that you're losing listeners' engagement.
- **15.** If that happens, change what you're doing. Tell a story if you've been speaking in generalities; give an example; or switch out of the technology you're using or start using one if you've been talking for too long.
- **16.** Above all, keep your audience active. That may mean literally using body language, to get them on their feet or involved with an activity. Audiences are always more persuaded, motivated, and inspired when they're *doing*, not just listening.