

[body language]

smile power

Managers are constantly told that body language is a vital tool in winning people over. Internationally renowned body language experts and authors, Barbara and Allan Pease explain how body language impacts on workplace and business relationships. Lauren Thomsen-Moore reports.

Up to 90 per cent of a person's impression of you is formed in under four minutes, leaving you with no time to "stuff up", according to human relations, communication and body language experts, Allan and Barbara Pease.

"In the last 30 years, we've surveyed more than 100,000 people through our television and classroom experiments and found that it's in the first four minutes of meeting someone that you decide whether you like them, whether they're attractive, whether they like you, and whether you're going to say 'yes' or 'no' to what they propose.

"It's how you look, appear, behave and dress. We call that the 'love at first sight of business'."

"If you don't get the first four minutes right in your business or work environment where you're trying to persuade or negotiate, then you're stuffed.

"That's why job interviews are potentially a waste of >>

How's this for body language? Internationally renowned body language experts and authors, Barbara and Allan Pease.

» time, as the interviewer decides in the first four minutes whether they're going to give you the job or not.

"If they like you, then there's a good chance you'll get the job. If they don't, then they're going to look for reasons not to hire you. Which is pretty important information to know for a candidate looking to apply for a job," Allan says.

In the business world, body language displays – positive and negative – come alive during boardroom meetings.

According to the Peases, 60 to 80 per cent of the impact of all messages between people (face-to-face) is non-verbal; it's the way you look, appear, behave and dress that registers.

The Peases say they have numerous case studies of managers who have had trouble with relating to staff. Allan says a typical off-putting situation in many manager's office is that the manager has

a "power chair". It is larger, has a higher back, has arms, wheels, a gas lift to help it go up and down, and it spins around. While the visitor's chair is usually very plain, lower and with no wheels or arms.

"The key is, when a manager has a visitor to their office, the manager should not sit behind the desk.

"Managers should come out from behind the desk, sit next to the person and mirror, that is copy, the way they are sitting to create a rapport," Allan says.

"People give their business to people they like. If they like you, they feel relaxed with you and want to say yes. But if they don't like you because you're aggressive, arrogant or smug, no matter how good the deal is, they'll look for ways to say 'no'," Barbara says.

The Peases believe another good indicator when assessing body language, is the way a person sits.

Most managers – males in particular, as women are twice as likely not to sit behind their desk – will sit behind their desk with their hands behind their head and lean back; a position the Peases call "the catapult" because it resembles a child's slingshot.

Most men also sit with their legs wide apart, or put their leg over the arm of the chair – called a "crotch display", Allan says.

"We say to a manager: Just don't do that at all, unless your objective is to show that you're smart, superior and arrogant.

"The same rule applies to men in business as it does to women: keep your knees together.

"The minute a guy spreads his legs, there's a 'crotch display' – a display of masculinity – and most women get turned off. It's also hard to continue with an intelligent conversation if this is going on," Allan says.

According to the Peases, it's a turn-off to women because they can't copy it.

"Another man can copy it and it's equal – a draw if you like. For example, a group of males can sit around and do it with each other, because they're males. But when a woman gets in there, she gets really aggravated and thinks: 'These guys are just sexist, or macho'. You don't know why you're saying it, but you know that's just how it feels," Allan says.

The Peases say that when confronted with this type of situation, women do one of two things: "They either get angry or aggressive and think 'This guy is driving me crazy' or, 'He bugs me', 'His attitude sucks'. Or they become defensive: cross their arms, legs, adjust self, and show a 'no entry sign'. The minute you close yourself up, you're in a pretty weak position for negotiating or putting your ideas across," Barbara says.

The Peases offer strategies to deal with this: "Stand up, walk over and look out the window as you're talking. If you can't see the 'catapult', it can't intimidate you.

"Stand beside him and look down at him. Most men can't bear that, it makes them change position, and then you can sit down again.

"Or, if you've got a good sense of humour, you talk to his crotch. If he's going to put it on display, you have a conversation with it: 'Sounds like you've got a good point there Bob'. Though you'd have to know them pretty well to be able to do that," Allan says.

With more than 18 million total book

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Body language can create either a positive or negative response. Here, a male displays "the catapult" position – showing a colleague who's the boss . . .

sales worldwide to their credit, the Pease's latest book, the 400-page *The Definitive Book of Body Language*, was scheduled for release in August as a follow up to their 1976 best selling *Body Language*.

Allan says the latest book offers a serious but "entertaining and humorous" view of how body language works in generic situations, business and work environments, and your personal life.

The Peases say they have been collecting material for this new book for 30 years, but the actual writing time was about a year and a half due to the amount of research required.

Technology progresses

"We used the skeleton of the original book as a basis from which to write. Since the first book was written in the '70s, technology has progressed. Back then, slow-motion video wasn't even invented. We did all of our slow motion analysis of politicians by 8mm film. We now have a greater understanding of how people behave.

"Back in the '70s, when I wrote the first book, minor techniques used by the Police and FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] had a 50 per cent success rate. Whereas now, the success rate is

Lying and smiling

The Peases say the new book features a chapter on lying as well as a chapter on smiling.

"Research shows that it's pretty-much hard-wired into the brain to understand smiling. For example, when I meet you, if you smile at me, my brain registers that you're not threatening. So therefore I'll return the smile to show that I'm not threatening either. So that right at the very opening, we've got a good relationship going because we're not threatening each other.

"That's why when you meet people – if you smile at them and they don't smile – you go into a form of panic, and the brain says 'you've just made yourself submissive to this person'," Allan says.

According to the Pease's research, women smile on average four times more than men smile – which Allan says can be disastrous for women in business.

"Just picture women sitting around the Boardroom table with a bunch of hard-faced guys and you want to try and loosen them up so you smile at them a lot. And they may start thinking 'oh gosh, she's a bit of a scatterbrain or a bit wimpy'.

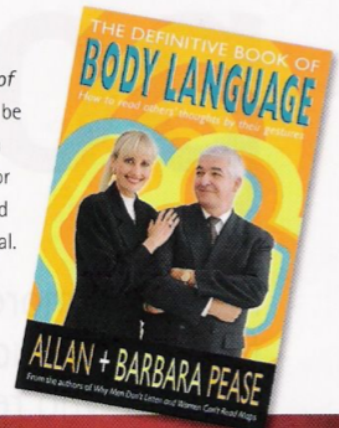
"So what we teach women to do – as

then you get up to leave, everyone – men and women – looks at your bum when you leave, particularly if you're a woman.

But with a guy, when he's leaving the room, you do look at the back of him, but you look at his shoes.

"Most guys don't clean the back of their shoes! But they've got to polish the back of their shoes, otherwise, it can leave women looking at the back of the shoes saying, 'has this guy got it together or not?'

"So, as a woman, when you get to the door, rather than walking straight out, you should turn slowly, smile, say goodbye, and take one step backwards. This is so that the last impression they get is your smiling face – not your bum. But if you're a guy, all you have to do is clean the back of your shoes," Allan jokes. MT



The Definitive Book of Body Language, will be available in Australia from August 2004 for \$29.95RRP. Published by Pease International. Distributed by HarperCollins Publishers.

top body language tips for managers

- >> To create rapport, mirror.
- >> When shaking hands, keep your palm straight, and match the pressure they give you.
- >> Men should clean the backs of their shoes.
- >> Avoid any arm or leg crossing when dealing with other people.
- >> Women should turn slowly while leaving the room, take one step backward, and smile.



about 99 per cent. Because of the new technology and new understanding, one can be far more accurate, more often with it," Allan says.

The new book is full of tips including how to do business from a cultural standpoint and how to behave when dealing with different cultures.

Allan says the new book has chapters on office politics, power play, seating arrangement, and territory and space.

For instance, Allan says he has recently worked with the Queensland Supply Association (purchasing and selling agents) discussing how to win people over: "They realise that if their suppliers love them, then they'll get the business".

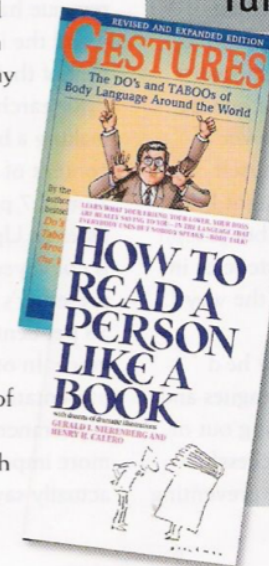
well as men – is to mirror the amount of smiling you're getting around the table. For example, if a man goes into a meeting with a stony face, which he'd do with other guys, the women would just think he's a cold fish and won't communicate," Allan says.

The exit

The new book also highlights some new tips on how to enter and leave an office, based on hidden cameras used as a form of measurement for research.

"When you're in an office with someone, talking to them, and

further reading



>> *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World*, Roger E. Axtell, \$35.95, John Wiley, 1998

>> *How To Read A Person Like A Book*, Gerald I. Nierenberg and Henry H. Calero, \$14.95, Simon & Schuster, 1971