


Fall 2016

# Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are TED Talk Annotated Resource List

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## Recommended Citation

Hurm, Elizabeth, "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are TED Talk Annotated Resource List" (2016). *Undergraduate Research Award*. Paper 31.

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**Elizabeth Hurm**

**September 9, 2016**

### **Annotated Resource List**

#### **TED Talk Information**

The TED Talk video that I chose to watch was *Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are* by Amy Cuddy. This talk was about how body language not only shapes how others see us, but also may affect how we see ourselves. The talk begins with the discussion of nonverbal expressions of power and dominance, using animals as an example. Amy Cuddy states that within the animal kingdom, nonverbal expressions of power and dominance are about “expanding; to make yourself big. You stretch out. You take up space. You basically open up.” Animals such as monkeys open themselves up when facing another animal, in an effort to make themselves appear bigger than the other. Humans do the same thing, whether we realize it or not. Do you remember the last time you came into contact with someone who tried to make you feel inferior? Upon approach, you probably straightened your posture, pulled your shoulders back, and opened your stance to make you seem “larger than life.” If this was not your reaction, then you probably did the exact opposite by shrinking your shoulders, folding your arms, and possibly crossing your legs to make yourself seem smaller. Animals and humans act as one when it comes to expressions of power and dominance.

When someone enters a classroom and immediately draws attention to himself or herself, it is pretty safe to assume that this type of individual is someone who exudes confidence, power, and authority. When someone else slips into the classroom and automatically retreats to the back to hide behind a textbook, you can tell that this person does not want to draw attention to his or her actions and would rather be a fly on the wall. Within the TED Talk, Amy Cuddy points out that these behaviors are strongly related to gender. Men tend to walk into a classroom and their persona demands attention, while women enter a room and try to go unnoticed because “women chronically feel less powerful than men” according to Amy Cuddy’s study. We cannot prove that these certain types of body language really portray a person’s feeling, but it shows that an individual’s actions influence how people think and feel about them. A person’s body language can also affect what they believe about themselves. If a person continues to act confident and in control, whether they feel like they are or not, sooner or later, they will believe that they are a powerful individual. Likewise, if someone constantly shrinks into the background, they will believe that they are powerless and cannot do anything on their own. The overall message of this TED Talk is that how an individual portrays himself or herself to the world around him or her is how they will be perceived by not only society and other people, but also themselves. Be larger than life or a fly on the wall, the choice is up to you.

#### **Annotated Resource List**

#### **Scholarly Journal Article**

Bailey, April, and H. Kelly. "Picture Power: Gender Versus Body Language in Perceived Status." *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 39.4 (2015): 317-37. Print.

This journal article provides information about power hierarchies in interaction by discussing gender and body language, just like the TED Talk video. While the video discussed the importance of nonverbal expressions of power and dominance in the classroom setting, this article focuses on gender and body language effects on individuals regarded as high status within the workplace. This article helps people to understand how women are able to use dominant body language and nonverbal displays to alter how they are perceived within workplace power, while men are not able to change the stereotypical status pinpointed on them as easily.

### **Book Source**

Goman, Carol Kinsey. *The Silent Language of Leaders: How Body Language Can Help-or Hurt-how You Lead*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

This book provides information on how someone's ability to communicate can be hindered by a minute nonverbal expression or gesture. This book would be useful to someone who wishes to learn more about how simple body language, such as the way a person sits in a business meeting or makes eye contact with those they are addressing during a speech while at a podium can affect how others view this person from a business standpoint. After reading this book, someone would be able to look back on important leaders of a business/corporation and infer what type of leader they are, simply based on their body language.

### **Reference Sources**

Doyle Charles. "Body Language." *A Dictionary of Marketing* (2011): A Dictionary of Marketing. Web.

This reference helps to give people an understanding of how gestures and movements communicate nonverbally between people. Body language consist of two variables known as involuntary and voluntary. The reference describes involuntary body language as movements done without thought and often take place as facial expressions. Voluntary body language can be seen as gestures, such as offering to shake hands with someone, and poses (whether an individual chooses to cross his or her legs after sitting down).

Chandler, Daniel, and Rod Munday. "Body Language." *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (2011): A Dictionary of Media and Communication. Web.

This reference source is extremely similar to the reference source I chose from *A Dictionary of Marketing*, listed above. The main difference with this resource is that it mentions the two types of body language, or nonverbal communication, as conscious and unconscious communication, as opposed to involuntary and voluntary. This reference describes nonverbal communication as facial expressions, an individual's posture, and several gestures, such as waving hello or hugging someone.

### Internet Source

"Using Body Language." *Using Body Language*. Changing Minds, 2002-2016. Web. [http://changingminds.org/techniques/body/body\\_language.htm](http://changingminds.org/techniques/body/body_language.htm)

This website would be extremely useful for anyone looking to research or learn more about body language and its specific types. This website includes core patterns such as touching, expanding, and moving away from another individual; and parts-of-the-body language that send signals to a specific part of the body, instructing it do respond to something via nonverbal communication. Just a few examples of the several different unique types of body language listed on this website are closed body language, evaluating body language, and submissive body language.

Segal, Jeanne, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, M.A., Greg Boose, and Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D. "Nonverbal Communication.": *Improving Your Nonverbal Skills and Reading Body Language*. Last modified April 2016. Web. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/nonverbal-communication.htm>

This site begins with the very basics of nonverbal communication and body language. For someone who has never heard about body language or would like to acquire more knowledge about it, they would use this site to learn why nonverbal communication matters, how nonverbal communication can go wrong, tips for reading body language and nonverbal communication, and types of nonverbal communication and body language. This site would help to build a strong defense against researchers who claim that body language is not a real form of communication.