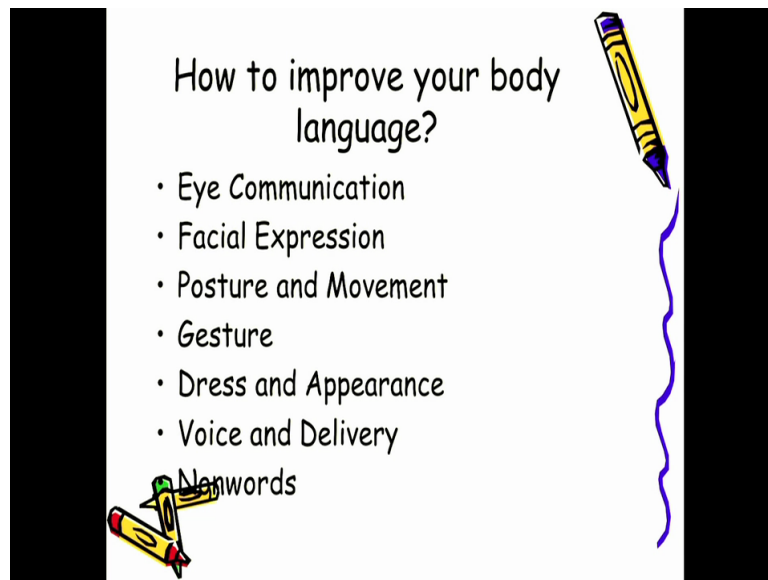


Speaking Effectively
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Lecture 7
How to Improve Body Language I

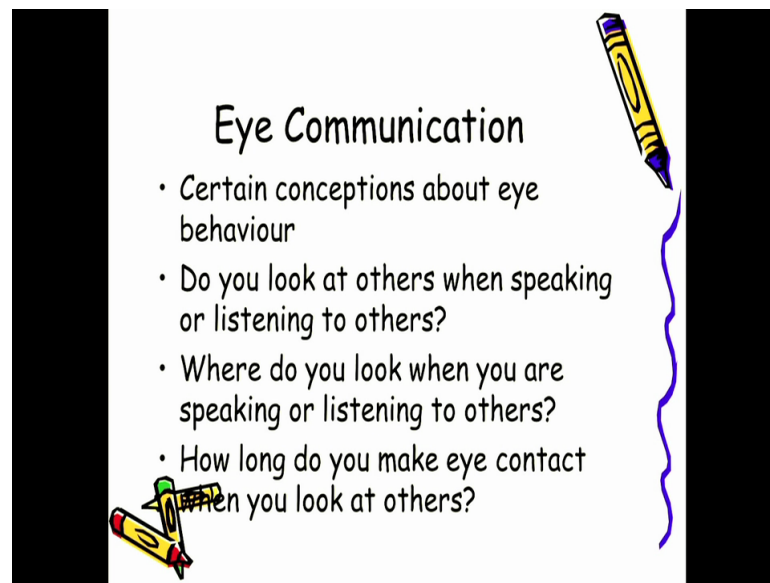
Welcome, in the last unit of module two, we looked at different kinds of non-verbal communication, the importance and function of non-verbal communication. In this unit I am going to share some tips with you as to how to improve your body language. So I will not go into, all forms of non-verbal communication that we discussed in the last unit but I would focus largely on nine interpersonal skills, focusing on body language and show you how you can improve your body language.

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We will look at eye communication, facial expression, posture and movement, gesture, dress and appearance, voice and delivery, non-words and paralanguage.

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Eye Communication

- Certain conceptions about eye behaviour
- Do you look at others when speaking or listening to others?
- Where do you look when you are speaking or listening to others?
- How long do you make eye contact when you look at others?

So let us begin with eye communication, first of all we need to check certain conceptions about eye behavior. Do you first of all I need to ask you, do you look at others when you are talking to them or listening to them? In where do you, do you look at all at people when you are speaking or listening to them? Now I must narrate a very amusing incident here again that in traditional Indian society, you are not supposed to look at your elders, or you are not supposed, and is not supposed to look at a woman when they are talking to a woman or a woman is not supposed to look at a man when she is talking to a man or you are not supposed to look at an elder in the eye.

So you do not normally look at people when you are speaking to someone of the opposite sex or you are talking to someone who is elder then you because it is considered inappropriate to look at them in look at them when if they are elder then you and people say, look this person is so disrespectful, he or she was looking at me in the eye, he has no respect for elders. So what I am saying is that as with every other form of communication, every aspect of your body language also is culturally coded.

What may be appropriate, may be appropriate in another culture. What may be appropriate in Western cultures might be actually inappropriate in traditional Indian cultures as I just explain to you but again as I said, in the work place, we follow the norms which are laid down by the Western world and we follow those rules. And according to in the Western world, when you talk to people or you listen to people, you are supposed to look at them and a person who does not look at you is considered either a very nervous person or considered a very unreliable or shifty person.

So according to the rules made by the Western world, when you speak to someone, when you listen to someone, you must look at that person. If you do not look, you are seen as someone who is not trustworthy. Where do you look when you are speaking? The next thing is, where do you look when you are speaking listening to others? We will come to this but again I will recount an anecdote which I came across in a textbook from Emory about differences in culture as far as eye communication is concerned.

And we Indians are not the only ones who regard looking at elders in the eye as disrespectful but there are other cultures across the world as in this example that I am going to illustrate you. There was apparently a theft in a departmental store or a supermarket or a mart in the US and when the police tried to enquire into that theft, they suspected a young Latino girl who was 16 years old.

Now the reason why they suspected this girl was, one can think of any number of reasons but one of the reasons that the police officers cited for suspecting this girl of having stolen was that she did not look at him in the eye when she was speaking to him and that made him suspect that she was the culprit.

Now fortunately for the young woman, the manager of that store, also happened to be from the same culture that is, he was a Hispanic and he was the one who took the trouble to explain to the police officer that just not looking at somebody in the eye was not an evidence of her off her complicity in the crime because as well brought up Latino girl or a Hispanic girl, she was not expected to look at elders in the eyes. So fortunately for the young girl having a manager from her own culture rescued her from a very serious charge.

But this can happen to anyone and this shows that rules related to eye communication very and the Western world, if you do not meet someone look at someone, you are considered unreliable or untrustworthy. Now the next thing is where do you look when you are looking, speaking or listening to others, where do you look? When I ask people, where do you look, those who say they look at people when they are speaking or listening to them, when I ask them where do you look, they are not very sure about where they look.

Usually people say, I look at people in the eye but you observe yourself, try doing this exercise and talk to someone and tell me try to recall when you are talking to someone on listening to someone, we do you look at them? Which part? And do you always look at them in the eye, I do not think so. We do not look at people in the eye when all the time when we

are talking or listening to them. We do look at them occasionally in the eye but not all the time. So we do you look?

Now again like the zones related to space which business zones, social zone and intimate zones, with respect to eye communication also, we have some rules that when you look at a person, when you are speaking or listening to them, it is okay for you to look at them anywhere between, anywhere on the face. So each of us had their own spot, some of us look at the lips maybe because we are reading maybe we are reading the lip language, we are lip reading.

Some of us look at maybe, a particular part of the cheek, somebody looks at the forehead, somebody looks at the eyebrow, so you must need you need to find out your spot. You need to find out which spot it is where you look and anywhere on the face is okay, anywhere from the forehead to the chin is okay but when you look at somebody who is when you look at someone below the chin, I mean normally, in the business zone when you are your relationship with somebody is very formal, you are expected to look at them only between the head and the nose not go below the nose.

So that is the business gaze, when you are looking at you can look at someone anywhere between the head up to the nose. So suppose you are in an interaction at your workplace, it is you are expected to observe the business gaze and look at people anywhere from the head to the nose.

Now like in the spatial distance, if you meet the same person in a social gathering, suppose even if it is someone senior to you, you meet them in a social gathering, in a social gathering or the party, there you are able to cross that zone and you may look at them anywhere between the nose and the chin, so that is the social zone. However, if you look at a person below the chin that is considered people start looking very uncomfortable.

If someone stays at you below the chin, someone keeps staring at you when you are talking to them or listening to them below the chin, they feel offended, they feel very uncomfortable because you are intruding into their intimate or personal zone. Next come to looking in the eyes, it is not that we do not look at people in the eyes when we are talking to them or listening to them. We do look at them in the eyes but how long do we look is very important.

When you look at people in the eyes, you look at them and then you look away. You look at them in the eyes and you look away, you look at some other part, you do not look at them continuously in the eye.

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Eye Communication

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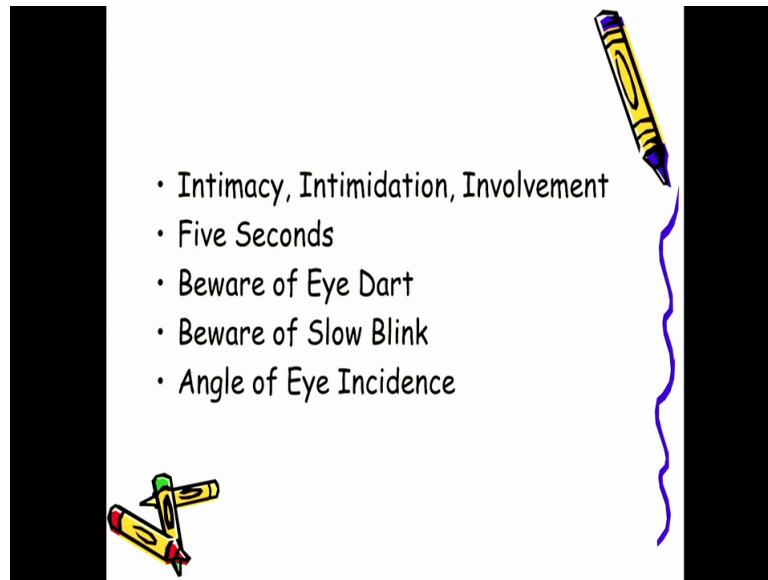
So this looking at people in the eye is called eye contact. Now how long do you make eye contact when you look at others? That is very important. Some of us do not make eye contact at all. As I said, in certain cultures, we are not trained to make eye contact, it is considered rude or inappropriate to make eye contact, particularly with elders are members of the opposite sex, so people do not make eye contact at all. But in other places where people do make eye contact or individuals who do make eye contact, then the problem lies in the length of the eye contact.

Some of us make eye contact, I myself doing it particularly when I am looking at the camera because I have a problem with the glare, I find that my eyes are inadvertently closing. So when I am looking at the camera, I find that I am myself violating the rules related to eye contact because any eye contact less than five seconds gives you the look of a scared rabbit. It looks like you have you are you have an eye dart, your eyes darting from one point to the other.

In my case, my eyes are darting not because I do not know the rules but because the glare is hurting my eyes and I cannot help it because it is a problem with the eyes, I cannot do anything. But other people do it because they are not of not careful to make eye contact for long enough. You must make eye contact for at least five seconds otherwise you will be guilty

of eye dart, you would look like a scared rabbit look here look here, you do not make contact all.

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The others the eyes slow blink, if you exceed five seconds, 5 to 45 seconds is the ideal limit of eye contact. If you look if you make eye contact with somebody for more than 45 minutes, the other person again starts feeling uncomfortable. When is the situation, think of the situations where you made eye contact with the person for less then, more than 45 minutes, think of the situations. One situation could be, somebody has done something wrong, you do not use words but you just stare at them in the air for more than 45 minutes and 45 seconds sorry and that person gets that message that you are very angry with them.

Or it can be more happy situation, think of you are gazing lovingly into somebody's eyes for more than 45 seconds. What is the affect you produce if you look at somebody for more than 45 seconds? In Hindi film language, aakhon he aakhon ishara hogaya, people gaze and they say a lot of things by gazing into each other's eyes. It is a completely coded language in the tasawwuf the Arab discourse where the direction of the gaze, the length of the gaze are used to communicate meaning between lovers.

However in the workplace, we do not want that effect. We do not want the effect of intimacy which might be the effect that lovers want in the Hindi film, nor do we want the effect of intimidation by staring at someone in the eye for more than 45 seconds but what we want is involvement and for involvement you need anything in between 5 to 45 seconds, just remember that.

Beware of eye dart, beware of slow blink, some of us when we are listening to other people, we close our eyes for a brief second, now that gives the impression that we are not interested in what that person is saying. So again we should watch out for slow blink.

Angle of eye incidents, this is very important, when we are looking at people say a group of people, now it is impossible for you to look at 10 people or even three people, so if you if there are three people and you focus on the person sitting in the centre, the people on the left and the right would also think that you are looking at them or you can rotate your eye contact from moving from one person to the other. Or when you are making a presentation, you move your eyes, make eye contact with one person in the group for a few seconds, then move onto another person and this we make eye contact with everyone in the room.

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Next we come to facial expression, that is another important element in body language. Now what is the impression you want to convey? The face is a very important means of communication nonverbally.

Professional actors if you watch them you will find that just by twirk of the eyebrow or just a curl of the lip, even in more serious situations, think of Mr Amitabh Bachchan in Kaun Banega Crorepati and how a turn of the gaze, of the eyes, the direction of the gaze, hint of a smile or a curl of the lip would give some kind of clue which was very carefully calibrated by Mr Bachchan to show how this little thing could convey a lot of meaning to the not only the viewers but also to the participant who would know what who would try to guess what he was trying to convey.

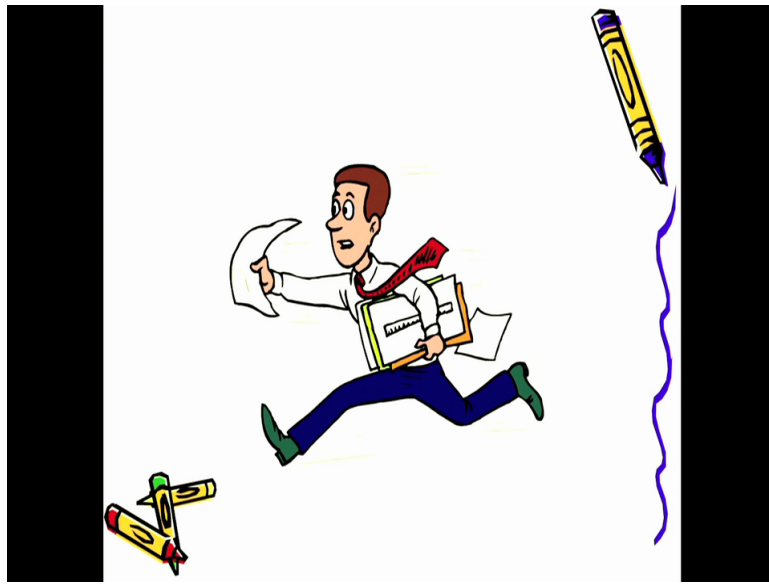
But what is in general your facial expression, what is the impression you want to convey? Do you smile, I mean do you want appear friendly or do you want to appear formidable, do you want to appear someone like who people are afraid to approach? So do you smile at others, I you, do you want to appear like a friendly person, do you smile at others or you do not smile at all? So people who are smiling, appear like friendly people. People who do not smile, do not appear like friendly people. Some people are always smiling, some people never smile and some people. So what is the problem?

Some people who are always smiling, it is very difficult for them to get authority because if you are smiling all the time, you appear so friendly that you are unable to tick off a person or you are unable to discipline a person. So it is always smiling may be a very happy thing but it may not be an ideal thing because you it may not convey the right amount of seriousness on the part.

On the other hand you are (())(16:24) which is what businesspeople are trained to professionals are trained to do, that never smile at all, keep a glum face, keep a poker face so that people cannot guess what you are going, what is what are your real feelings, now that makes you appear very unfriendly. So what should you do? It is not a question of smiling or not smiling, you must use the right kind of when to smile and when not to smile. So when you are congratulating a young person, if you do not smile, they do not believe that you are congratulating them.

Or when you are commiserating or you are reassuring a person, if your facial expression does not show does not carry that reassurance, it does not help at all. Whereas if you are trying to discipline a person and you are smiling, that does not help. So you must know how to use your facial expression to convey the right impression about yourself.

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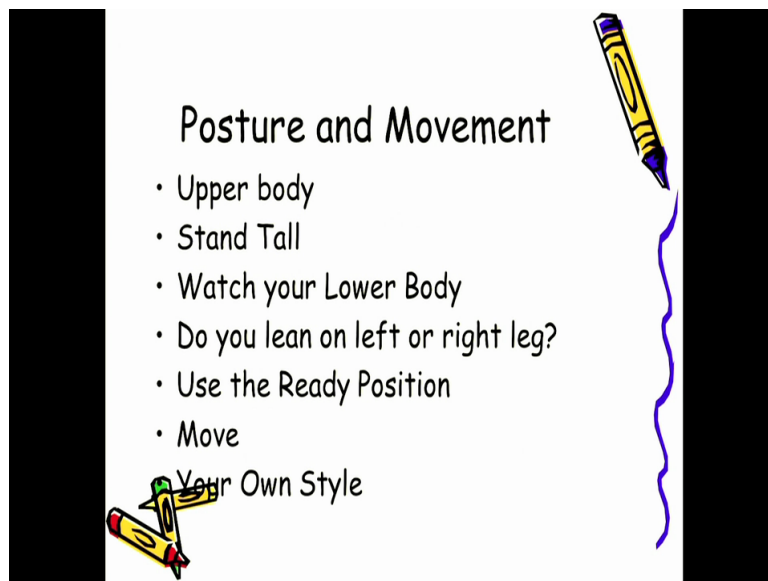


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So let us look at some of these languages here anger.

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Posture and movement, let us next come to posture and movement. Posture says it all, we think that posture has nothing to do with our communication but it says a lot about your personality. When we are looking at posture, you must look at your upper body as well as your lower body. Now with the upper body, what is the right posture? I will give you two examples to show how posture can be ingrained in a group of people or ingrained in certain kind of professional. So I am thinking of two postures, the posture of a soldier and the posture of a dancer, which appear very attractive.

So the posture of a soldier is that of a very confident person, of a very alert person. The posture of a dancer is of a very elegant, very graceful person. But what do they have in common? The soldier, if you look at the Army manuals, what is the soldier expected to do? The soldier must have his ears in line with the shoulder, straight-line, so that is the upright direct posture for a soldier, shoulders square, ears in straight-line with shoulders. That is the posture that a soldier is expected to maintain and this was the training given to the soldiers in the British Army in the Imperial Army or European.

In the Western world a (shou) soldier should keep his head upright, shoulders square and ears should be in line with the shoulders. So if you watch, today if you how do you guess a person is an army man and not a civilian, their posture says it all. You will find that they have an excellent posture. You do not have to wait for the crew cut to know that somebody is from the Indian Army or Indian Air Force. If you watch their posture, you know this person is Army person, this person is a soldier.

And the trace of these habits which were ingrained in warriors or soldiers particularly by the Europeans, they are so deeply ingrained that you will find that they carry over even after generations. So I am going to take the body of the soldier as it is mapped on the body of the male Sikh.

If you see a Sikh anywhere in the world, even if the Sikh has shown their hair, they have cut their hair and they are Mona Sikhs, you can guess this person is this young person is a Sikh or an old person is a Sikh because that habit as a warrior community, that habit of holding the (shou) shoulders in straight-line with the ears and the shoulders square, the body thrust out in a position of confidence, hands loosely hanging by the side, that impression of confidence.

So these young men I meet on the streets of Melbourne or Sydney or Toronto or Munich, I find from their postures I can guess which part of India they are from and they are not very confident because many of them are immigrants, many of them are looking for jobs but they are not exactly very confident people but from their posture they appear as if they have no care in the world and they can take on the world squarely. So this is the body of the soldier which is an example of a perfect posture, very stiff but very perfect.

The other posture is that of a dancer and this is what I remember the famous dance dancer Dr Padma Subramanyam telling us about what is the first step in teaching dance or Bharatnatyam. So she said, that the first step to learning how to dance in Bharatnatyam is to

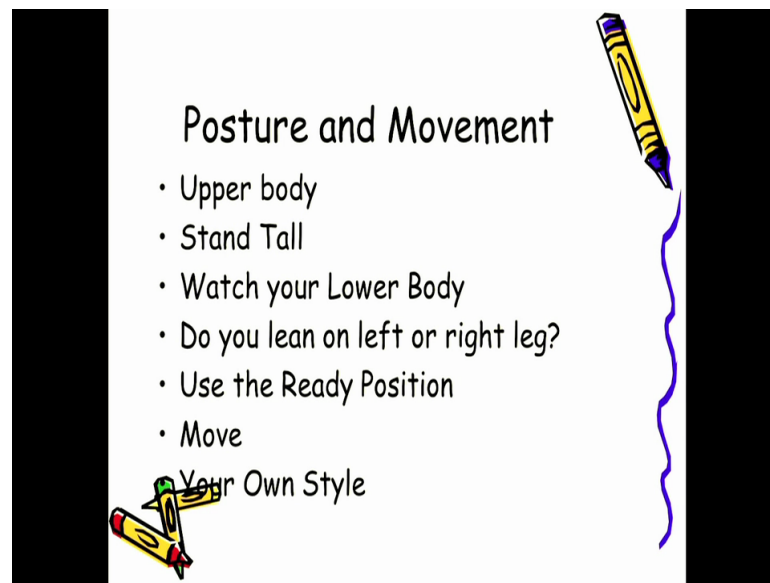
learn to stand. Of course all of our stand, so what is the problem? The problem is that our posture is not right. So the first thing Bharatnatyam dancer is told to do is put to correct the posture. And what is the correct posture again in Bharatnatyam, it is to the ears should be in straight-line with the shoulders.

So like the body of the posture of the soldier, the posture of the dancer also follows the same rule that the ears should be in straight-line with the shoulders. Now that creates the impression of confidence, of grace, elegance, you are standing tall, that is your upper body. Now what is the problem? The problem is that many of us, with our upper body tend to stoop, particularly those among us who are very tall.

And this a case of frozen posture, in a sense that if you were the tallest kid in your class, when you were in class V, you continue to stoop because you have a stoop because all other children in your class were much lower than you and you try to come down to their level by stooping, to make yourself accepted in the group. Now by the end of class X, everyone had shot up and maybe they were taller than you and yet you have your stoop because you think you are taller than them.

So a stoop makes you appear very nervous, it makes you appear less confident, it does not create the impression of you being a confident person. And you would notice if you look at people around you, who are not very conscious very confident about themselves or not confident about their body shape, you will find that their shoulders are slumped they stoop. We are talking about males and females and that creates the impression of not being confident.

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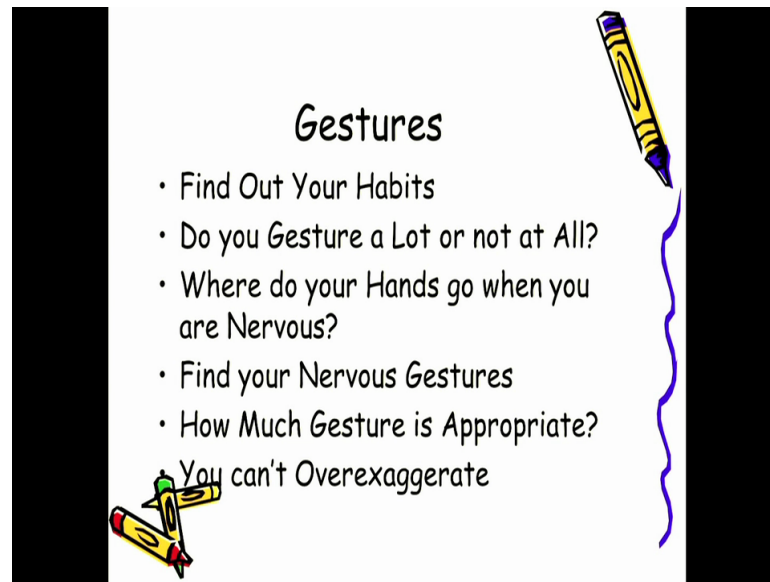
Now come to your lower body, when we are not confident, we tend to lean either on the left leg or on the right leg. So this is called left lean or right lean. But what I you expected to do? You are expected to put equal weight on both your feet. What happens is that sometimes we watch film actors, models who are very who deliberately lean on one side to strike a pose and we also find ourselves doing it. We are in a group of people and we think it is very stylish to put one's weight on one side of the body.

But what happens is that when you are nervous, when you are not confident, you are under stress, you tend to shift your weight from one side to the other and it is very distracting, particularly when you are making a presentation, you are shifting your weight from one side to the other, which is very distracting. So watch yourself when you are standing in a group, just watch, do you lean on left or right leg, just find out, which is your lean which lean do you have. Do you find yourself leaning on your left side or you find yourself leaning on the right side.

Ask your friends to observe because you may not notice it. What you need to do is, use the ready position. What is that? Your weight is equally distributed on both feet and you are inclining you are slightly inclining forwards. Your weight is not on your heels but on the front part of your feet, on the toes. So that is the ready position. And the same rule goes about movement, that the movement says a lot about you. The way you carry yourself, apart from the posture, the way you walk.

One is not expecting you to be a ramp walker and walk like a model but how you walk conveys a lot about your personality. So you have to find your own style. Now we come to gestures.

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Again like with smiling and facial expression, which gestures also, the problem is find out your habits. Some of us gesture a lot and some of us do not gesture at all. My feeling is that this is also culturally conditioned because in some cultures people tend to gesture more than in another culture.

I find that maybe Westerners tend to gesture more than Indians and I came to this conclusion by watching say news channels or talk shows on English-language television English language channels and those in Indian languages and I found that people in the Indian language channels tend to gesture much less than those on English-language channels because they tend to follow the body language of Westerners when they speak. When you speak English, you tend to follow you tend to imitate the body language of Westerners and you tend to gesture more than when you are speaking Indian languages.

In Indian languages when are speaking Indian languages, we do not use our hands gestures as much as we do when we are speaking English. We tend to use more of our voice and modulation rather than gesture to emphasize meaning. So on one hand you have people who do not gesture at all and they come across as very wooden, very stilted. On the other hand, you have people who gesture all the time, now that also is very irritating, it is very distracting.

If you have watched any entertainment channel, say music television, you will find these young VJs as they are called, you will find that they gesture a lot and women tend to gesture much more than men. Now why is it that they gesture a lot? In their case, they are being deliberately trained to gesture, to use gesture because what is the idea? They have to create the effect of intimacy, as if they are your friendly neighborhood young man.

So somebody is talking to you as if he or she is your friend and you know them very well and because of that, if you use gesture on television, then it creates this impression of friendliness or directness and immediacy and that is why you find on entertainment channels, young VJs tend to gesture a lot particularly young women. So it is also gendered, women tend to gesture more than men, men tend to gesture less and whenever you see a man gesturing more than what you would expect a man to gesture, you find it odd.

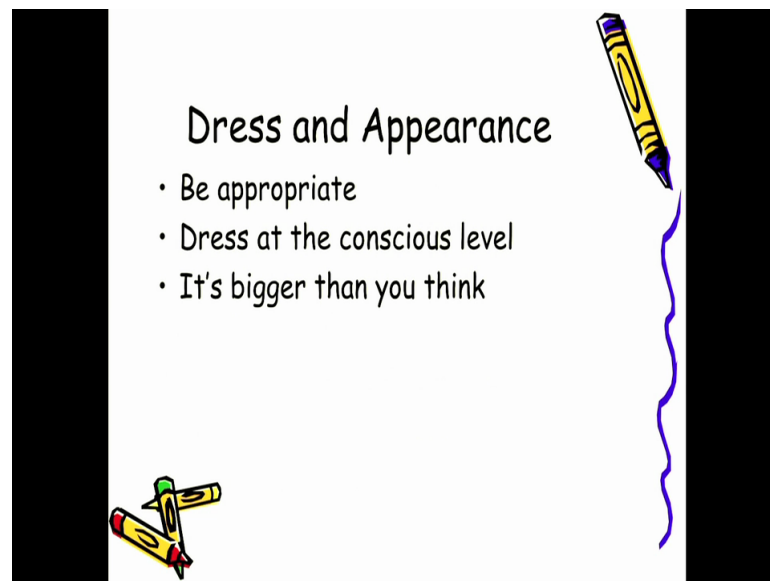
Whereas a woman does not gesture, you again think it is very cold. So there is this gendered aspect also. Where do you so you tell me, do you gesture a lot or you not at all, find out. Similarly, where do your hands go when you are nervous? When you are nervous, what happens to our hands? Either we put our hands in our pocket or we start playing with our hands, or be put our hands behind our back, so each of us need to find our nervous gestures. What do we do when we are nervous? What happens, our hands are the part of the body which show our nervousness more.

So how much gesture is appropriate? That is, you have to use your own judiciousness. Use gesture to complement, not to substitute. When you find that, gesture enhances what you are saying, so suppose you are showing a direction, over there, out down there, there may be a gesture is important. I do not know, you shrug your shoulders, maybe it has more impact than just saying I do not know. But let us do an exercise to show how gesture not only adds meaning but adds impact to your local delivery. Now let me talk to you.

My name is, Anjali Gera Roy, I teach in IIT Kharagpur. I have been teaching here for quite some time and I have been teaching this course on communication for quite some time and I hope that I will be able to share some tips on communication with you. Now, my name is Anjali Gera Roy, I have been teaching in IIT Kharagpur for more than a quarter of a century and I hope that my experience of teaching communication in IIT Kharagpur would help you improve your own communication skills. So you see how relaxed I was when I put my hands in front and used gesture as opposed to the first time.

Let us to another activity, shall we start the class? Yes or no? No, okay. So say no, I want to hear you say no. No, I am not going to stop the class. You have to say with more impact, no. Okay, I am going to stop the class. Did you see the difference in the first no and the second no? The second no was more impactful, so even my vocal message got enhanced because I used gesture. You cannot over exaggerate, so learn to use gesture judiciously.

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Now I stop with dress and appearance, what is again, in dress and appearance is the same rule. What is appropriate and what is not appropriate is more important than what is being attractive and not being attractive. There is no right or wrong way of dressing. I will go into the details of dress and appearance in the next unit because I have a number of things to discuss in both dress and appearance and voice and delivery.

So I will stop here I will continue in the next unit where we will share some tips with you on how to dress appropriately and then we will move onto voice and delivery.