

Speak with Confidence: **Assertive Nonverbal Communication Tips**

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We all want to be able to communicate clearly and effectively. After all, communication is essential to connecting with other human beings and getting our needs met. Effective communication depends on an assertive approach. Assertiveness requires you to be mindful that your nonverbal communication is as crucial as your verbal communication. Your nonverbal cues can often make or break your message. To be taken seriously, ensure that your body language aligns with your words.

Assertive nonverbal communication can take many forms. Voice tone and volume should be appropriate for the situation without appearing aggressive. You should maintain firm eye contact without staring down the other person. When you want to add authority or strength to the message, use body gestures that denote strength, such as standing up straight and holding your head high. Your speech pattern should be fluent, with no stammering or hesitations.

Examples of assertive nonverbal communication can take many forms including the following:

- Appropriate volume and tone of voice,
- Firm but not dominating eye contact,
- Firm handshake,
- Direct, but non-staring eye contact,
- Good posture,
- Strong voice, appropriate tone and volume,
- Movement with control, intention, and purpose
- Respectful use of personal space

While assertive non-verbals can add emphasis and robustness to the message, passive nonverbal communication can undermine your message. Your nonverbal cues can make you sound insecure or uncertain.

Examples of passive non-verbal communication could include:

- Evasive eye contact.
- The inappropriately quiet, soft, or whiny tone of voice.
- Flat or monotonous tone of voice.
- Nervous gestures.
- A stiff body posture.
- A hunched body posture
- Looking down
- Crossed arms, tightly clasped hands
- Restricted hand movements

Passive nonverbal communication is one of many ways you can sabotage your communication efforts. Passive nonverbal communication, on the other hand, can come across as a weakness or uncertainty. Finally, avoid aggressive nonverbal communication, damaging your message and relationship with the other person.

Aggressive nonverbal communication can get in the way just as quickly and can be particularly damaging, as it can make the other person feel dominated or demeaned. If you're trying to be assertive, you want to avoid appearing aggressive. When trying to be assertive, bold gestures and body language will likely create a defensive stance that keeps the other person from adequately hearing and understanding what you are trying to say.

Examples of aggressive non-verbal communication could include the following:

- Intense and prolonged eye contact,
- A loud, strident voice that does not match the situation,
- Sarcastic or condescending tones,

- Angry parental gestures like finger-pointing,
- Clenching of the jaw,
- Invading personal space,
- Quick, abrupt or powerful movements
- Disrespecting the other person's space
- Leaning forward, towering, or tilting head forward
- Rigid posture
- Angry facial expressions

Self-awareness of non-verbal communication and body language is crucial. People are often unaware of the messages their nonverbal cues communicate, leading to confusion when their intended message is not received. But by being aware of different types of nonverbal communication, you can become a more effective communicator and achieve better outcomes in your personal and professional life. Nonverbal cues can effectively back up your verbal messages.



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