

It's the way you shake it

When you talk, do you use your hands?

What have we been told about using our hands when speaking?

*The old saying that words are not enough may have more than a **ring of truth** as scientists have discovered that the secret of communication is all in the hands.*

New research has shown that our hands - **whether** being shook or gesturing - **give away** more about us than we realise.

Once thought of as meaningless and even **distracting**, hand gestures have been shown to be far more important than the spoken word in **getting the message across**.

Professor Jana Iverson, of Missouri-Columbia University in the US, has completed two studies which may go some way to explain the mysterious importance Western society has always placed on people shaking hands.

Psychologists, businessmen and interviewees have long known that a good handshake is **crucial** in creating a good first **impression**.

A **firm** handshake means a person is open and confident with self-worth and **assurance**.

A **weak or limp** handshake **implies** a person's personality is much the same and is likely to leave a longer-lasting impression on the other person than anything said.

Body language has long been **recognised** as having importance. Politicians are carefully coached in what to do with their hands. US President Clinton's **double grasp handshake** - the free hand **clasping** the **recipient's sleeve** to stress his **sincerity** - is now famous.

Tony Blair's hands are fond of **stabbing** around in the air and his handshake is said to have **firmed up** since he came to power.

But the level of importance attached to handshakes in Iverson's latest research is **startling**. Her two studies have **pointed** to speech itself making up only 7 per cent of human communication while hand movements and body language make up well over 50 per cent.

'There is a common **misconception** that communicating is only speaking,' said Iverson.

Her research included **in-depth** studies of the blind. In the first study she looked at blind adults and how they met and communicated with both sighted and other blind people. Hands were just as important when one blind person communicated with another despite the fact that the talker knew the other could not see his gestures.

Iverson then went on to look at how communication skills develop in blind babies. She **found** that, despite never having seen their own hands, the children were learning to communicate with gestures well before they could talk.

She said: 'These studies **support** the theory that gestures not only help to communicate meaning to the listener but also help to co-ordinate and **facilitate** the thinking process of the speaker.'

No more should television presenters and politicians be **coached** to keep their hands **still**.

The most famous British hand waver was the late Magnus Pike whose **windmilling** arms helped to get complex scientific theories across to television audiences.

'If people are not allowed to gesture it can **interfere with** their communication and thought processes and certain ideas or expressions may be more difficult to **transmit**,' said Iverson.

'Gestures help us think about what we want to say and communicate effectively.' If there is anything we would like to keep secret from the rest of the world it is probably best to simply sit on our hands.

Find the words in the text that mean:

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|-----------------------|--|
| 1. trained | 8. not moving |
| 2. false belief | 9. in detail, thorough |
| 3. honesty | 10. vital, critical, essential, most important |
| 4. opposite of strong | 11. back up |
| 5. show | 12. send out |
| 6. known | 13. discovered |
| 7. to ease | 14. means |

True or False:

1. According to the text, words are more important in communication than gestures.
2. Crucial evidence which goes in favour of gestures is the research on blind babies and people.
3. Gestures make it difficult for us to communicate our ideas more effectively.
4. Gestures can show more about us than words.
5. Politicians are coached how to use their gestures in order to win more votes for themselves.
6. A person who gives you a weak handshake can be weak himself/herself.
7. Speech is the primary means of communication.
8. A strong handshake may suggest a long and lasting relationship.
9. Based on everything the text said about gestures, we can conclude that gestures are something we are taught to use during our lives.
10. Blind people use gestures only when communicating with seeing people.

Gestures and their meaning:

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. hands on hips (2 meanings) | a) lying or not telling the whole truth |
| 2. sitting with legs not crossed | b) ready to work |
| 3. touching your nose while talking | c) setting up a line between me and the rest of the world |
| 4. avoiding eye-contact | d) insecurity |
| 5. crossed arms | e) showing an open character, readiness to talk |

Fill in the blanks with: *facilitate, interfere with, startling, imply, impression, firm, misconception, still, support*

1. Do you have any evidence to _____ your accusations that John is responsible for this crime?
2. The high level of radiation in the rocks _____ that they are volcanic in origin.
3. Employers seem to share the general _____ that young people are more efficient than older workers.
4. Computers can be used to _____ language learning.
5. I'm sorry, but I was under the _____ that you needed help. I'll leave you alone now.
6. Children are full of energy and they often find it very difficult to sit _____.
7. It is _____ to read that his father never visited him in hospital.
8. Nervousness can _____ with children's progress at school.
9. Most doctors recommend sleeping on a _____ mattress.

Words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs

1. A **firm** shake suggests that you are an open person.
2. Sit **still** and don't move.
3. **Honesty** is the best policy.
4. She drives too **fast**.
5. **Truth** is better than **lying**.
6. Don't **accuse** me of stealing your money, because I didn't.

Proverbs:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A little learning | A) the more they stay the same. |
| 2. A picture paints | B) and carry a big stick. |
| 3. Better late | C) a gift horse in the mouth. |
| 4. Don't burn your | D) starts with a single step. |
| 5. Don't look | E) than never. |
| 6. History | F) crying over spilt milk. |
| 7. It's not worth | G) without breaking eggs. |
| 8. Necessity is | H) the mother of invention. |
| 9. Speak softly | I) do as the Romans do |
| 10. The more things change, | J) did anyone any good . |
| 11. You can't make an omelette | K) a thousand words. |
| 12. Worrying never | L) is a dangerous thing. |
| 13. The longest journey. | M) repeats itself. |
| 14. When in Rome. | N) bridges behind you. |