

## How to use your body language and micro expressions to show positivity

An excerpt from “[Language That Leads: Communication Strategies that Inspire and Engage](#)”

Positivity is about being able to see the world as a place of expansion. When we are afraid or [experiencing stress or anxiety](#), we see the world as contracting, closing in on us. When we are relaxed, positive, joyful, we can see the world around us as being more open and welcoming, full of possibilities.



You can see this on the body language level, as well. When animals are afraid or stressed, they close up to protect themselves. On the other hand, when they are relaxed or happy, they open up and get bigger, as they don't need to hide. Positivity is a mindset that affects your whole body and the way you look at and interact with the world. If you can practice positivity, you can be more open to what the world has to offer.

Being positive in business begins with focusing on a broader definition of success. Success comes about more naturally when you work to be intentionally positive, as those who do this seek achievement and feel they have a purpose. They believe in growth and prosperity.

Those who are positive intentionally [avoid negative thoughts and self-criticism](#). Instead, they talk more about the possibilities and what needs to get done in order to be successful with a project or job. They discuss the mission and the purpose of what they're doing in order to create a broader vision for those around them.

Creating a vision is more difficult for those who focus on the negative, as they tend to have tunnel vision, homing in on what they're feeling and the problem that has caused those feelings. When you are in that kind of mindset, it can be easy to feel that everything is going wrong. Spilling your coffee, getting stuck in traffic, or arriving late to work can all cause you to think more negative thoughts and interact with the world in a way that makes things even worse. The same things may happen to someone who is more positive, but they will see them as passing inconveniences or even possibilities. Getting stuck in traffic, for example, could offer time to listen to an interesting podcast. It's about approaching both good and bad experiences with a mindset that allows you to see the world in a way that is positive and productive. Different reactions will create different results.

Those who are able to remain more positive tend to talk more about joyful moments. They may be considered more successful, but this is usually due to the fact that they make the most of each experience and take more initiative when they see an opportunity. People who succumb to negativity often won't take initiative because they may not believe they'll be successful. They'll stay stuck where they are, which can cause others to get stuck as well. This kind of thinking can be contagious, which is why it's so important to look out for it at any company.

As a leader, you have the power to counter-balance negative energy with positivity by [focusing on the mission](#) and vision of your team. By describing goals and how to achieve them, you can show others a path they can follow, which will help them think more positively about what's at hand. One negative person can ruin a whole team, so a leader must represent a positive mindset that others can follow despite any difficulties they may be facing. The key is to focus on lessons that can be learned from mistakes or struggles, as well as solutions to problems that come up. Practicing positivity means focusing more on the possibilities and goals of the future and less on the mistakes of the past.

### **How to show positivity**

Body language and micro expressions that convey positivity are centered on openness and enthusiasm. Those who rate high on the positivity scale will demonstrate a higher level of energy, and their faces will be covered in micro expressions of positive emotions, such as happiness or excitement.

On the other hand, those with a low level of positivity will demonstrate body language and micro expressions centered on avoidance, resignation or resistance. This will cause them to close up, demonstrate superiority, or attempt to leave a situation that causes them discomfort.

Take a look below to learn more about specific gestures and micro expressions that demonstrate positivity and which demonstrate a lack of it:

#### *Body language and micro expressions that indicate positivity:*

- Eye contact
- Smiling with muscle around the eyes contracted
- Nodding
- Relaxed posture
- Hands on hips (preparedness)
- Hand gestures (enthusiasm)
- Facing the other speaker (engagement)
- Happiness micro expression with lip corner up
- Open hands showing inside palms

#### *Body language and micro expressions that suggest a lack of positivity:*

- Crossed hands or arms

- Pointing with finger
- Palms down or “pushing” away from body
- Touching nose/scratching
- One eyebrow up (disbelief)
- Weak handshake (resistance)
- Facing door or packing up documents (avoidance)
- Uneven smile with only one lip corner up (a micro expression of contempt)
- Disgust shown with wrinkled nose
- A neutral expression, that is a “poker face”

As a leader, you can focus on the outcome of a given project and the positive results you hope to see, as this will help your team members enter more positive thought patterns. If you notice that there is someone who is unwilling to move into a space of higher positivity, you will need to [confront them directly](#) or even part ways with them, as their energy can limit new ideas and impede the mission before you.

Positivity can be very rewarding for both you and everyone around you, which is why it’s so important to work on generating positive energy every chance you get. Bring that energy any time you have your team together and home in on the vision of the company. It’s crucial not only for the company’s external image but for the dedication and motivation of each employee.

*Taken from “[Language That Leads: Communication Strategies that Inspire and Engage](#)” (HarperCollins Leadership, 2023) by Kasia Wezowski. Used with permission.*

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## **Do Good:**

- Read “[Language That Leads: Communication Strategies that Inspire and Engage](#)” (HarperCollins Leadership, 2023) by Kasia Wezowski.
- [Get on the list for Good Words from the Good Word](#) and get a boost of inspiration in 1 minute a day with a daily affirmation from Scripture list this sent straight to your inbox. It’s an email to help you start your day with *goodness*.
- You’ve probably seen the red kettles and thrift stores, and while we’re rightfully well known for both...The Salvation Army is *so much more* than red kettles and thrift stores. So who are we? What do we do? Where? [Right this way](#) for Salvation Army 101.