



Toastmasters Tidbits

Body Language Sends Out Signals by Cleo Lamping

Glued to the TV during an ice skating competition, I enjoyed the 1st program of Elvis, the “King” very much, as did thousands of others. I particularly enjoyed his “body English” when the music changed partway through.

Whether the change of music was abrupt or jarred the senses I’m not sure, it was different anyway, and Elvis gave a noticeable shrug with a big smile at that point.

What Elvis meant by that shrug and smile is open to interpretation. To me, it was apologetic in a humorous way for the change of music perhaps suggesting “it jarred me too but I’m just the skater.”

Or it could have meant many other things to other people.

Despite the obvious concentration of holding a difficult program together, Elvis took the time to communicate with the audience by the oldest language known – body language – the “shrug” perhaps being the most widely used.

This very basic shrug, taken in context, made Elvis more than a skating machine. It changed him into a very personable, approachable human being.

All living creatures, with the exception perhaps of your pet rock, express their feelings by obvious and/or subtle body movements.

Just watch the cat. Looks very happy and contented doesn’t it, but that twitching tail tells another story.

Going up someone else’s driveway we meet man’s best friend, the dog, only the dog doesn’t know that and his stiff-legged, aggressive stance leaves no doubt as to who owns the driveway.

The horse flattens its ears tightly against the head, a very eloquent and dangerous signal of extreme displeasure.

We withdraw from physical signs of danger from animals and respond to signals of friendliness such as the cat rolling over to display its tummy, the dog wagging its tail, or the horse rubbing its head on your shoulder.

And so it is with humans. We withdraw from a speaker sending out cold, unfriendly body signals and respond with warmth to the caring speaker.

Our body language is unlimited and mostly involuntary so you can see how important it is to a speaker to leave all negative feelings baggage outside and instead walk confidently up to the lectern with love and respect in the heart for the audience one is about to address...have a

sincere “I care about your feelings,” otherwise the audience will sense that negativity no matter how kindly the words, and turn away from the speaker regardless of how beautifully the speech is scripted.

At Toastmasters we learn to “accentuate the positive” until the negative just dries up and blows away.

On Tuesday, February 7th in the Library at Bishop Smith High School, our theme is Body Language. Why not come out and find out a little more about what your body is saying to others and how to maybe change the picture from shy to confident. Please join us from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. There is no charge for this and you can attend up to 3 free meetings before making a decision to become a member.

For more information contact Al at 735-3272 or Fran at 649-2950. We look forward to seeing you.