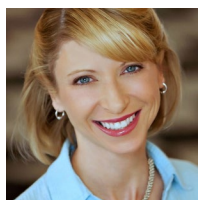


TED Connection: The Power of Body Language

Overview

Mensa for Kids' TED Connections are short, easy to use guides that help teachers, parents and youth use TED talks in a classroom or home setting. Rather than a lesson plan format, they have a list of discussion questions, all at higher levels of thinking.



Social Psychologist **Amy Cuddy** explains the power behind nonverbal communication. She shares how, in a very short time, you can become more powerful. Dr. Cuddy explains the difference between “fake it ‘til you make it” and “fake it ‘til you become it,” and invites us all to put the ideas to the test, sharing the information to empower others.

WATCH THE TED TALK AT:

ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are

Think about it

1. Dr. Cuddy says her free, no-tech life hack only requires you to change your posture for two minutes. Name three other things you could do for two minutes that would have a profound, positive impact on your life.

2. Watch the clip of the president and prime minister carefully. Why do you think the policeman and prime minister didn't shake hands? Who do you think was the person responsible for the awkward exchange – the police officer or the prime minister?

3. Dr. Nalini Ambady's research at Tufts on what she called "thin slicing" (the ability to make valid judgments very quickly) showed that students analyzing teachers did just as well with very short, even silent, exposure to the teacher as students who'd sat in the professors' classes all semester. Can you tell quickly if you will like a teacher or not? What are some of the behaviors or mannerisms that influence that?

4. Dr. Cuddy is interested in power dynamics, what she describes as the "nonverbal expressions of power and dominance." If you were to study nonverbals, what would you be most interested in?

5. In the animal kingdom, she says, power is associated with expansiveness, with making ourselves bigger. Even people who have never seen it demonstrate the behavior. Can you think of something that gets more powerful the smaller it gets?

© This TED Connection is the property of the Mensa Education & Research Foundation, www.mensafoundation.org. It is provided as a complimentary service to the public. Reproduction and distribution without modification is allowed. Images, links and linked content referenced herein are the property of the originating entities.

6. We tend to do the opposite nonverbal of a person we are with, according to Dr. Cuddy. Why do you think that is? What do you think happens when two people both demonstrate high power? Does someone shift into a weaker position? Who decides and how?

7. When students walk into class, their nonverbal tend to match their behavior, Dr. Cuddy explains, and she says that it's connected to gender. Can you think of domains where women would feel and display more power than men do?

8. Even a forced smile makes you feel happy. So which comes first: the action or the feeling? Can they both come first? If so, which do you think is most effective? What other emotion(s) do you think you could create in yourself through body language?

9. We often associate power with stress, yet Dr. Cuddy describes how powerful people have higher levels of testosterone and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. What does that tell us about the difference between "Type A" people and real power?

10. Drs. Cutter and Carney had people maintain high- and-low power poses, and they found that people who did the high-power pose took more risks and felt less stress, as measured by their behavior and the chemicals in their saliva. "Our bodies change our minds," Dr. Cutter says. How do you think this relates to the role of physical exercise? Do you think people who exercise or certain kinds of exercise may make people feel more powerful?

11. She mentions that it could make a difference to teenagers in the lunchroom. What kinds of power dynamics do you see in a school cafeteria?

12. The job interview experiment showed that practicing power posture helped you even when you got no feedback. Think of three occupations for which this could be particularly beneficial.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

13. Dr. Cuddy's own experience with impostor syndrome is one experienced by gifted individuals in a wide variety of domains, even without the experience of her traumatic accident. Have there been times when you have felt that someone was going to find out you didn't actually belong or that you felt out of your league when you really weren't?

14. “And so what I want to say to you: Don’t fake it till you make it. Fake it till you become it. Do it enough until you actually become it and internalize.” This is Dr. Cuddy’s advice and plea. It worked for her. It worked for her student, and she’s sure it can work for you, too. She says that little tweaks make big changes. Think about an area of your life this would be helpful to you – some domain in which you feel less yourself than in others. What little tweak could you make that would make a big difference there?

15. She asks two things: try it and share it. Who do you know who would benefit most from this knowledge?

Do it

- Observe the body language of people in a public space (like a restaurant). Can you tell the people who feel powerful? Do you see expansive behaviors? Do you see people making themselves smaller?
- Practice a power pose in private for two minutes before engaging in some activity. Do you notice a difference? Try it over time. Find the poses at <http://bit.ly/try-power-pose>.
- Tell someone about Amy Cuddy’s ideas and research. Show them how to do two of the power poses.
- Spend one entire day making yourself more expansive. Even at a desk, you can keep your elbows away from your body.

Read about it

- Read Dr. Cuddy's study, *Power Posing: Brief Nonverbal Displays Affect Neuroendocrine Levels and Risk Tolerance*, at bit.ly/cuddy-power
- Read an article about her work at bit.ly/cuddy-article
- Read Todorov's study about predictions of candidates faces at courses.washington.edu/pbafhall/514/514%20Readings/todorov%20science.pdf or an article about it at bit.ly/todorov-article
- *What Every BODY is Saying: An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Speed-Reading People* by Joe Navarro and Marvin Karlins
- *Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges* by Amy Cuddy

Watch it

- Watch this interview with Dr. Cuddy at bit.ly/cuddy-time. It's just under 6 minutes. Compare it to her TED talk. What key stories or ideas are not in this short version that are in the longer version?
- Watch Stanford graduate business students share how to make your body language your superpower at bit.ly/body-language-superpower
- Watch a TEDx talk about how body language and micro expressions predict success at bit.ly/tedx-bodylanguage

Surf it

- Follow Dr. Cuddy on Twitter at twitter.com/amyjccuddy
- Visit the Harvard University Business School at hbs.edu