The Social Times

BODY LANGUAGE: A MUST READ!

I Second That Emotion: Feeling Whacky

Ask Roger Gets-it: A Question About Friendship

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READING BODY LANGUAGE

Have you ever been talking about something you really love to talk about, thinking that everyone else is interested when all of a sudden you notice that some of your friends are starting to walk away? Now, ***that*** is frustrating!

Chances are those friends "told" you that they were bored way before they actually walked away. **They told you with their bodies.** No kidding, people talk with their bodies all the time. Simple examples are shaking your head when you mean "no," and nodding when you mean "yes." Some people are really good at "reading" or understanding body language, and some people are not.

A scientist did a study about this. He found that when people talk to each other, they are actually saying most of what they want to say with their *bodies*. Only about 8% of what they want to say is communicated in the actual words that come out of their mouths. All the rest of the "message" is in their body language (how their face looks, how their body looks, what their voice sounds like, etc.). For example, you might say to your friend, "I love your hair" but whether or not you *really* love her hair depends on what your voice sounds like when you say it.

For some people, reading body language is like trying to read a book written in a foreign language. That's why they need to study about body language. Other people just seem to learn about it without even being

TRY IT!

Watch other people talking from a distance, so you cannot hear what they are saying. Can you tell how they are feeling? Can you tell if they are friendly or not friendly? What clues help you to "read" their bodies?

taught – or with very little practice.

Learning how to read body language can be hard, but it is worth it! If you cannot "read" bodies, you cannot tell if other people are bored. You will probably just keep on talking about what you are interested in.

Some people may actually decide that they don't want to hang out with you because of this. They might think that you don't care about their feelings because they think that they have been ***telling*** you with your body language and that you have been ignoring them on purpose.

Before we go any further, it is important to remember that body language is what could be called an "inexact" science. That means that sometimes a gesture means one thing, and at other times the same gesture means something else. For example, wide open eyes and raised eyebrows often mean that the person is surprised, but people who are frightened also might have wide open eyes and raised

YIKES! It is confusing, but don't get too frustrated. Start with the basics. Eventually it will get easier.

Elephants can communicate using sounds that are below the human hearing range: between 14 and 35 hertz.

The Body-to-Word Dictionary

Sometimes it helps to review some of the basics of body language. Here are two examples that work like a foreign-language-to-English dictionary, but they are actually examples of a **body-to-word dictionary**.

The friendly wave
This is almost always a friendly greeting.

The irritating lean
This is too close. This one can cause others to lean away because it usually feels uncomfortable when somebody is that close.

Now you try! Can you think of another thing your body can say?

USING THE 5-POINT SCALE:

Sometimes teachers or parents, or even friends, use words to tell you something, share something or explain something. When it comes to emotions and social information, their words might not be so easy to understand. Sometimes, the words feel very personal and judging.

Putting the word (or idea) on a scale can help make things clearer. For example, if your teacher tells you to be quiet, but you don't even know you are being loud, it might feel like she is picking on you or that she wants to be the boss of you, and that might actually make it harder for you to calmly make a good decision about what to do next.

If you and your teacher or parent agree up front that a #4 voice is too loud for the classroom, then when she holds up 4 fingers or a card with the number 4 on it, it could be a sign to tell you that even though you didn't mean to be loud on purpose, your voice is getting louder than you thought. You can then calmly bring your voice back down to a #3. Here is how your voice volume scale might look.

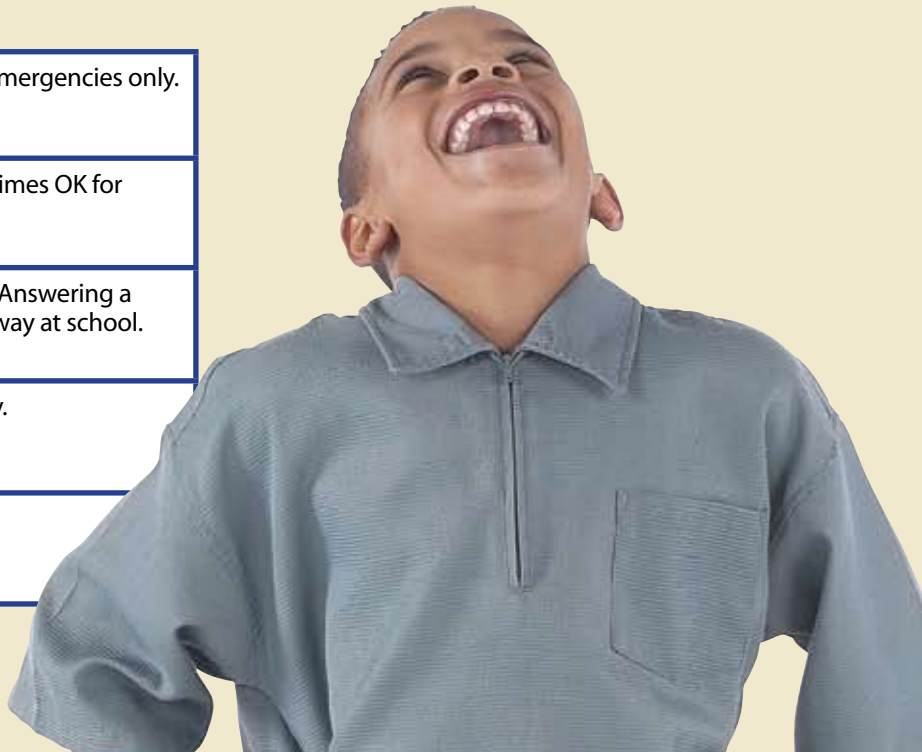
Voice Volume Scale – Example

5	**This is screaming.** Way too loud! Emergencies only.
4	**Too loud for inside.** Yelling. Sometimes OK for outside play.
3	**Talking to a friend on the phone.** Answering a question in class. Talking in the hallway at school.
2	**Whispering.** Soft talking in a library. Telling a secret.
1	**Not talking at all.** Silent. Listening carefully.

Here is another fun example of using a 5-Point Scale to explain the different degrees of a feeling.

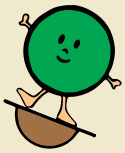
Feeling Whacky at School

5	**Way Whacked:** Uncontrolled laughter. Not thinking clearly. Not noticing other people's reactions. Risky behavior.
4	**Whacked:** Doing anything for a laugh. Looking for reactions from other students.
3	**Pretty Whacked:** Laughing out loud in class. Responding loudly to another person's joke. Not paying attention to the teacher. *****This is when the teacher starts to get nervous!*****
2	**Marginally Whacky:** Laughing out loud, maybe telling a joke at lunch.
1	**Nicely Whacky:** Giggling calmly. Thinking about funny things when you are with your friends. Best when at recess or lunch.

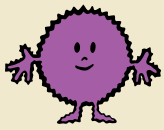


Coming to Our Senses

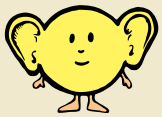
Getting nervous about certain things is common, such as taking tests, going to the dentist, etc., but getting TOO nervous can make it hard to think clearly, make good decisions, or even do something you'd really like to do. Too much nervousness is like having an explosion in your stomach.



Learning about relaxation can help you stay calm. But what helps one person to relax doesn't always help another person. Begin exploring what that might help you relax.



One idea is to gather some photos and put them into a small photo book. Choose photos of things that make you feel calm. This might be a picture of your parents or your pet, or your favorite vacation place. After you have put your photo book together, you can practice relaxation by looking at the pictures and taking really slow, deep breaths. Try this right before you do something that typically makes you feel nervous. If your body and mind are really calm, you have a better chance of fighting back against that train wreck in your gut!

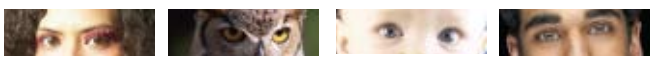


A chimpanzee can learn to recognize itself in a mirror, but monkeys can't.

The Eyes Have It

Look at the following complete faces very carefully. Then match the pairs of eyes below to correct face using the letters.

A B C D



_____ _____ _____ _____

TRY IT!

Looking in a full-length mirror, practice making your body and face look interested. Then try looking bored.

Gets-It Knows!

Dear Roger,

I have a friend who goes to my school. Actually, I would say that he is probably my best friend since we have known each other since kindergarten. Lately, he has been teasing me in a really mean way. He knows that my dog died last summer and he knows that I was really sad about it. But he has been saying cruel things about my dog – how he got run over by a car and how the authorities will never let me have another dog because I am an irresponsible dog owner.

What should I do? I am afraid of doing the wrong thing since he is my friend, but I can't stand it any more.

– Confused in Nashville

Dear Confused,

Got it!

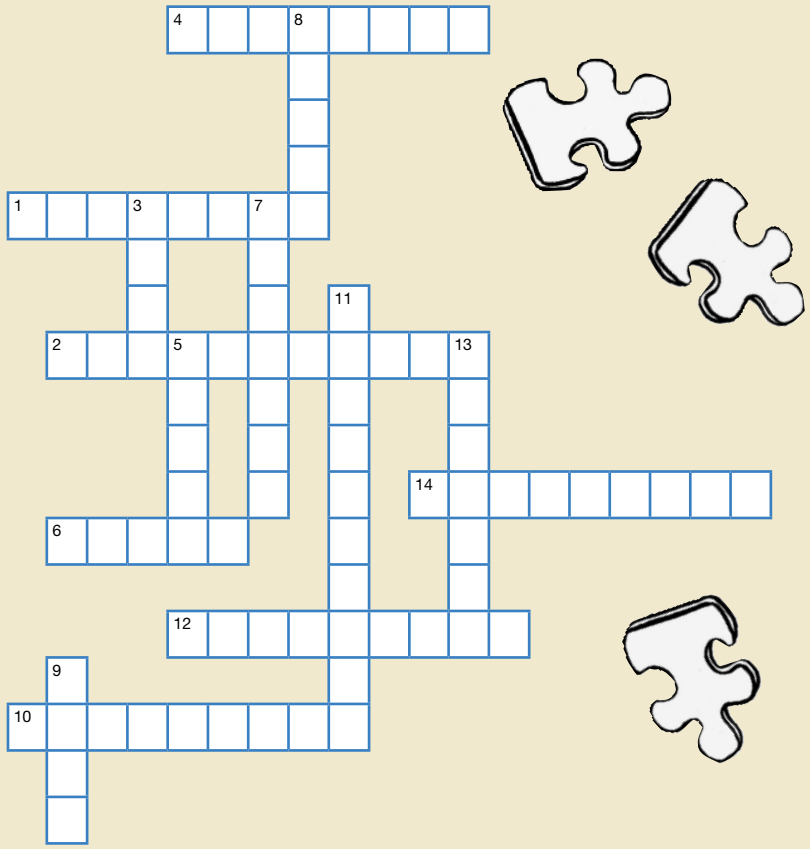
Oh man, your dog died? I'm sorry to hear that. That is really hard, and friends should feel bad for each other. No way was it your fault that your dog got run over; not even close!

I'm not sure this guy is really your friend. Friends just don't do that stuff. I know that friends are hard to come by, so rather than just write him off, try doing this. Tell him that what he is saying hurts you and that you want him to stop. If he keeps saying those things, then he is not your friend. Try to ignore him when he says those things, but tell an adult that this is happening and how it is making you feel.

Teasing like this is not OK, so don't feel bad about telling someone.

– Roger Gets-It

Puzzle Time



DOWN

3) place to read the most emotion
5) look of disdain
7) big smile, looking at you, body moving
8) looking at watch
9) sticks out tongue
11) looking right at you, nodding head
13) look that indicates displeasure

ACROSS

1) knitted brows
2) hands on hips, head tilted
4) these are arched when someone is surprised
6) ends of mouth turn up
10) mouth wide open
12) agitated breathing, looking around
14) tapping toe

Puzzle Time

W U X Z T Z U D E X V O C L W O C S F N K G V M V S S A Q T
V B E M T V V W K X V G C S U R P R I S E D J M G J K L H E
V W Q L Y N Y K Y N C S Z B J K J Y O U T X S D L G U M P H
C M G Z G V U N R X O I D D I D I C V T N I U Q S A S U T Y
X R N H Q F E H M Q I H T O N W Z F O N H N S C I O P O X X
Z E T Y D L K J Q O T M R E E D N L N E K Y M W M U F P S Z
L N T A W Q S Q B J N D Q Y D B E D T X M Z I D N P Y K W U
X Q Q K P U V O J G E E S J X Q N T M G M Y L M M P Z P O J
X E K J V E V E A U I T K C V E N B A M S B E D E R O B R M
Q I K E J S Q C W E T S K Q X J M L Y T Y B G L I H K B B N
N B E N T T A A E M A E U S Z X P U U P I Q U M C E D K E R
G H P L L I O F M K P R M G P R W U U R T R W X O C U F Y I
F U F B M O V V W Q M E N R E D U R L A R X R I N F P A E Z
R X L C V N M Y G W I T N I O L M Z T K S Z D I F S U I L O
B F X H L I V Y X R Y N I M Q N U E K I Q Q C C U G B W B X
V V K Y Z N P J B P Y I B A L P O P Z N W Q M Y S C U Q Q U
H A W V G G M V O B S X E C N D D K N D J A Y Z E I Q M C T
K B X Q P E J T R E L K D E W Y I M D O A C T U D O J S A G
C I M W X C G H Q R P D V H B S K B B T D H A X I X B N N I
B F A I M C R V E B M K Q P A S D N E I R F G N I K A M S S

Word Bank: BORED, CONFUSED, EXCITED, EYEBROWS, FACE, GRIMACE, IMPATIENT, INTERESTED, IRRITATED, MAKINGFRIENDS, QUESTIONING, RUDE, SCOWL, SMILE, SQUINT, SURPRISED

All pet hamsters are descended from a single female wild golden hamster found with a litter of young in Syria in 1930.

TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Topic: Weather
Question: What was the highest wind speed ever recorded in the United States? In which state was it recorded?

Something to Talk About

by Claire

When I was in the third grade, I hadn't traveled much. But there was this girl in my class who had been to about 20 different states. Her name was Alexis. She bragged about her travels all the time. We were studying the United States, and every time the teacher mentioned a new state, she would ask Alexis to stand up and talk about her experience in that state.

Don't ask me why but one day, when my teacher asked the class if anyone else had traveled to other states, I raised my hand. This is what happened:

Teacher: "Where did you go?"

Me: "England"

Teacher: "Wow. You traveled to another country! How did you get there?"

Me: "We drove."

There was a roar of laughter. Even the teacher laughed. When the teacher started to explain that there was an **ocean** between the United States and England, I no longer heard her words. I was drowning in supreme embarrassment.

Lou Wisniewski

I thought my life had ended. All I wanted to do was go home and hide in bed for the next 5 years! Then, a few days later, a miracle happened. People seemed to forget that I had lied and made a fool of myself. My friend Wendy totally acted like it never even happened at all!

I learned two things that week. First, to **try really hard not to tell whopper lies even if I'm frustrated**. And second, **a good friend will like you even when you're not too sure if you like yourself.**

Created by Kari Dunn Buron. Her writings include *The Incredible 5-Point Scale, A "5" Could Make Me Lose Control!, A 5 Is Against the Law!, Adalyn's Clare* and *When My Worries Get Too Big*.