



Physical meetings with colleagues and clients may be a distant memory as professionals around the world adjust to the “new normal” of video conferencing and remote meetings.

And whilst restrictions in the UK are slowly lifting, it could be a long time before we start meeting others again face to face.

For many, this is disconcerting not just because conducting digital meetings brings its own set of learning curves and challenges, but also because physical meetings have been happening for decades and the vast majority of successful professionals have perfected the personal one to one meeting.

Having to build relationships with a client digitally simply isn't the same skillset, leaving some floundering outside of their comfort zone. In fact, a study by Academia.edu found that 55% of communication comes from body language, 38% is in the tone of voice, and seven per cent is in the actual words that are spoken.

However, there are many techniques to help improve your physical intelligence, take control of your body language and help you feel more confident and connected, generating positive feelings in others.

1. Control Your Posture and Breathing

Good posture matters. Those taking the lead in critical situations tends to use open, expansive body posture. It enables us to feel stronger, more alert, and at ease. Start by placing your feet flat on the floor and focus on being rooted in that spot. This creates a feeling of emotional and mental balance by lowering the stress chemical cortisol and boosting the balance chemical acetylcholine. This elevates testosterone and serotonin, which helps us feel more confident. We can then communicate that confidence to others and help them feel more confident too. (Peyton, 2020).

2. The Power of Eye Contact

Connecting visually is one of the most significant aspects of body language, whether meeting in person or virtually. Eye contact boosts oxytocin, which is the social-bonding-and-trust chemical that forges closer connections and elevates serotonin. Poor eye contact conveys a lack of confidence and leads people to question if they can trust us. (Peyton, 2020)

For example, to maintain eye contact in videoconferences, smile into the camera and make sure that your smile reaches your eyes. Smiling at yourself boosts serotonin, while smiling at others boosts oxytocin, building chemically fuelled rapport with them.

3. Stay mindful of expressions

If stress is high, our facial expressions and gestures can become rigid, making it difficult to connect and collaborate, and can erode confidence. To combat this, be cognisant of your reactions from the top down. Even friendly or neutral gestures should be limited and purposeful, (Peyton, 2020)