

Assertiveness and Managing Conflict

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Everybody up!

The secrets of body language & **Power posing**:

Who wants to gain power through altering body Language?

By simply altering
your body language
can result in
physiological changes
in your body.

You can feel more
powerful, assertive,
and less stressed!

High Power Poses

Let's try adopting the following Power Poses for 2 minutes..



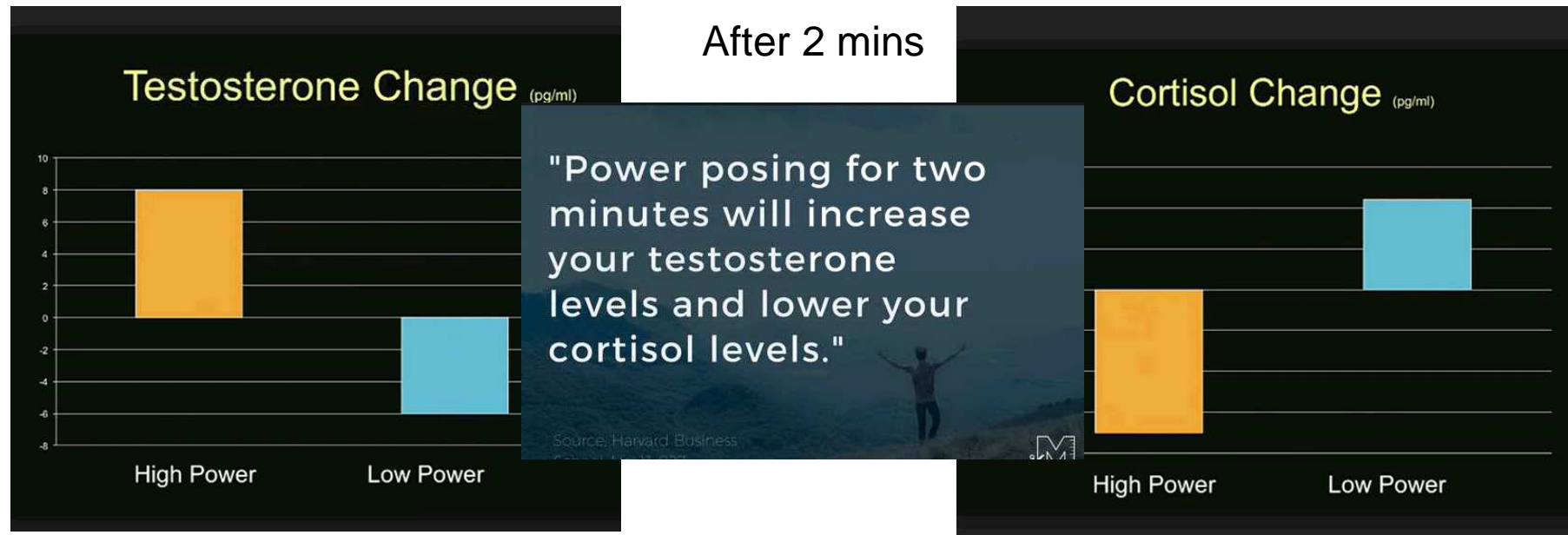
Non verbal expressions of power dominance, make yourself big, take up space/open up. humans and animals all do it, feeling powerful: pride

Low Power Poses



Our bodies do the opposite when we are powerless, to make ourselves smaller, retreat, and insignificant

Adopting high or low power poses to see whether it made people feel more powerful



Testosterone hormonal Change

High power people experience a 20% increase in testosterone.

low power people experience a 10% decrease.

(Testosterone configures brain to be either **Assertive, Confident**)

Cortisol change

High power people experience a 25% decrease in cortisol.

low power people experience a 15% increase.

(Cortisol is released in response to **stress**)

Putting together; high and low power!

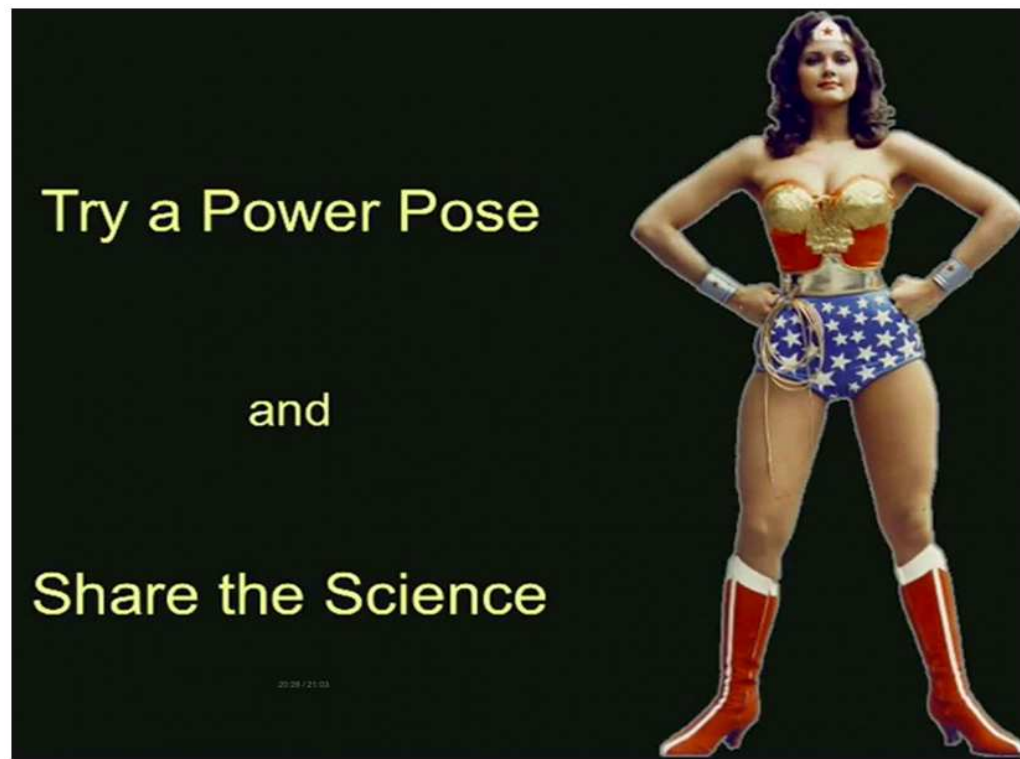
We compliment
others body language
and don't mirror
them!

Try adopting the pose before
having an important meeting,
interview, challenging
conversation, to increase your
assertiveness and feel more
powerful!

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Our bodies change our minds...which change our behaviour....which changes our outcomes.



Marginal gains can lead to BIG CHANGES



*Why be
assertive?*

Passive – Assertive – **Aggressive**

- It's important to get the right balance - a skill we can all develop!
- Assertive behaviour allows us to;
 - Refuse requests. (say no to the request, not the person!)
 - Ask for favours and make requests.
 - Express our feelings.
 - Maintain our personal rights **& stand up for ourselves**

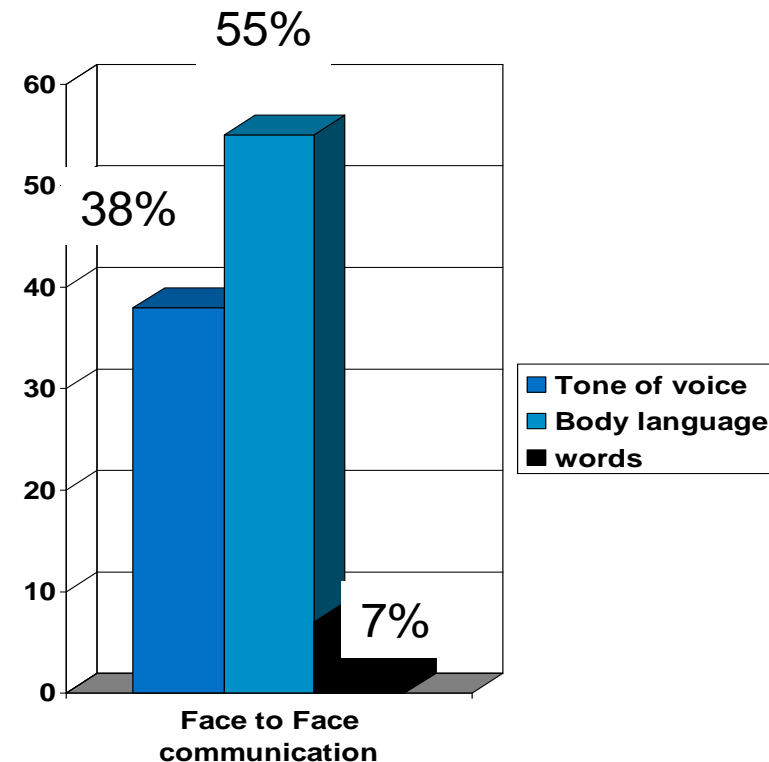
Your body language speaks volumes! It's not what you say but HOW you say it!

How much of the message is understood through words alone?

In a **face to face** situation
it takes **60** seconds to
make an initial impression

...

Appearance, How you make an
entrance, body language, attitude..



Mehrabian, A. (1981) Silent messages: Implicit communication of emotions and attitudes.

What signs can you pick up over the phone simply by tone of voice?

Interest?

Boredom?

Concentration?

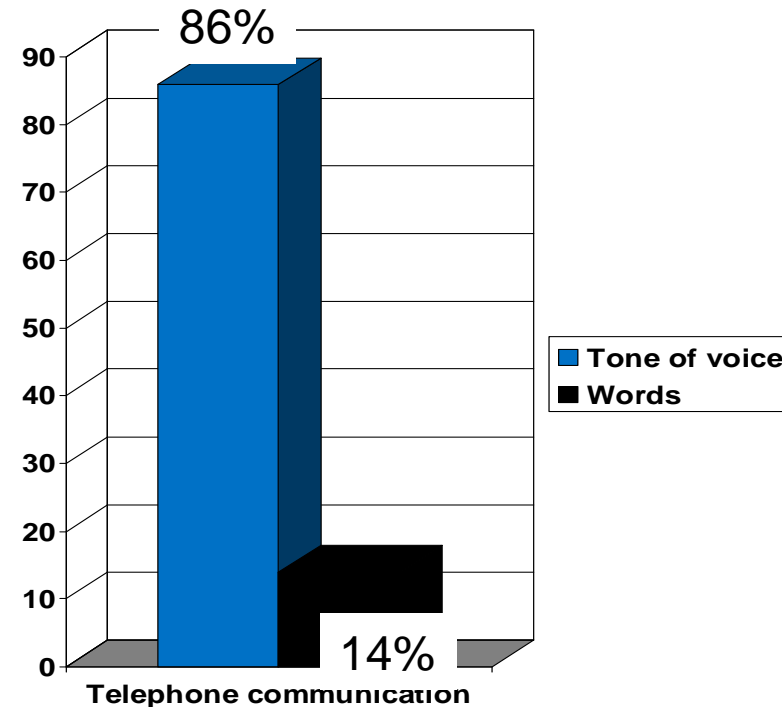
Distractions?

Mood / Anger?

On the **telephone it takes
just **10** seconds to make a
good or bad impression!**

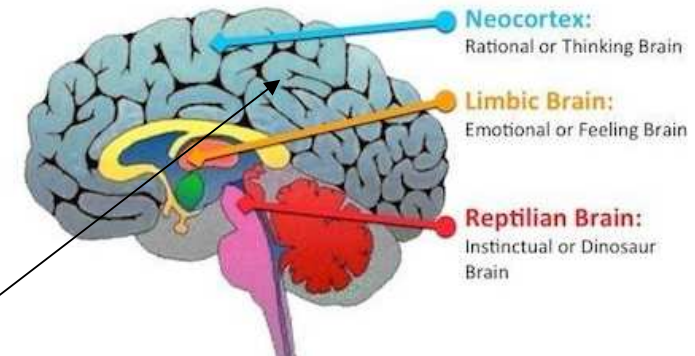
**Research shows that if you
answer the phone “smiling”
then it alters the shape of your
mouth which changes the
sound of your voice**

**– this can be detected by the
listener**



- **Our Initial response can be emotional or uncontrolled in the lower/basic region**

- Irrational, anger, fear, excitement,
- “fight or flight”
- basic instinct knee jerk responses etc ...

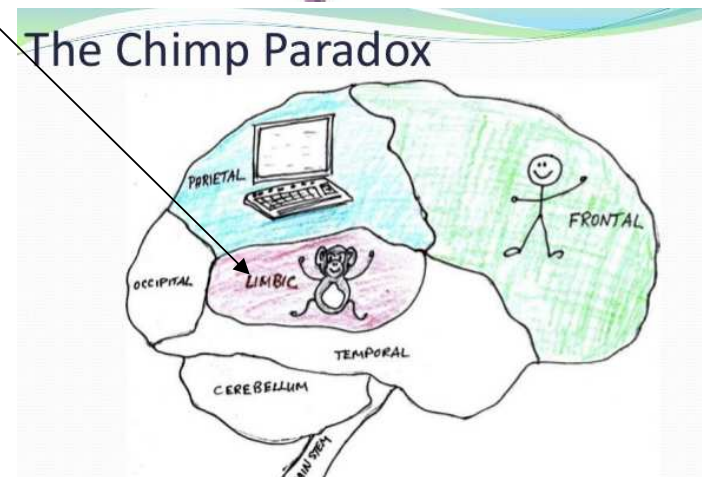


- **Rational responses are slower and controlled in the higher part of the brain**

- Calm, relaxed.
- Involves higher brain function
- Considered, logical responses

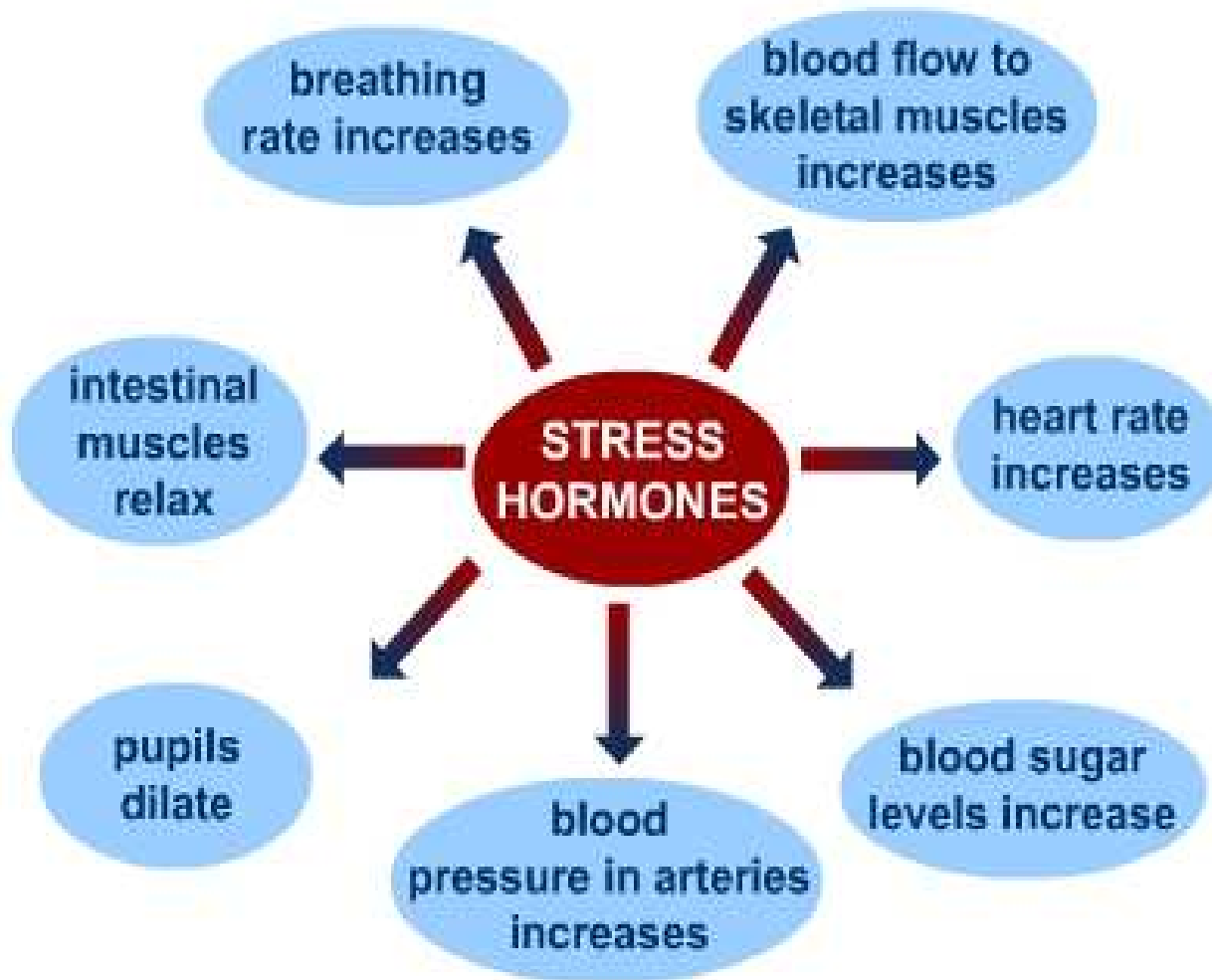
- **We need to be able to respond rationally, rather than succumbing to a “knee-jerk” response.**

- Take a mental breath
- Calm the situation down
- Take control, be assertive



It's not always easy ...

Release of stress hormones causes the following physiological effects..



Good communications skills will help ...

- **Phone manner**

- How you answer the phone **Very** important – sets the mood.

- **Inflection and tone of voice**

- Critical to get the best response & create good impression

- **Pacing**

- To help control the conversation, pause, breathing

- **Volume**

- Beware background noise that may make you or the caller have to raise their voice

The Dual Concern Model

Five approaches to handling conflict

Which approach is generally best ?

Assertive ▲

Self

**Not
Assertive**



COMPROMISE



Not Co-operate

Others

Co-operate ▼

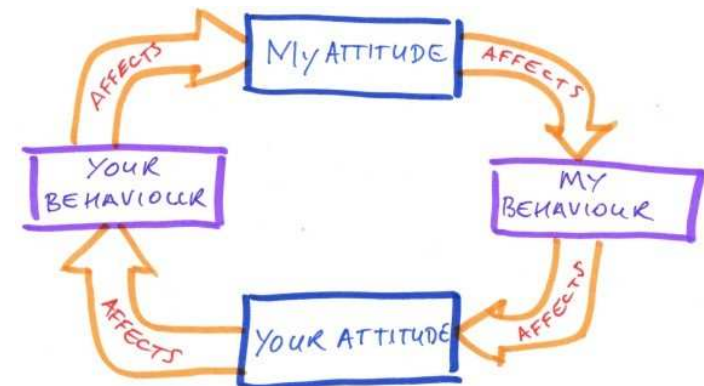
Defusing conflict – when dealing with conflict we need to:

DEFUSE not exacerbate!

- **D**etect early signs of escalation
- **E**mploy self control
- **F**ocus on a solution
- **U**se active listening
- **S**ignal non-aggression
- **E**mpathise

Consider..

- **Why do you think the other person is behaving that way?**
 - Stress? Bad day, Pressure? Workload? Time? Personal issues
- **Can allowances be made?**
 - One-off incident, personality type, unaware of how they come across..
- **How can I help the situation?**
 - Empathy, understanding, offer suggestions/alternatives.
- **Does behaviour breed behaviour?**
 - Attitude - behaviour, break cycle of negativity



Employ self control

- Control your own fight / flight response
- Control your breathing (slow & deep)
- Do not get pulled into a conflict
- Be aware of your own attitude and the impact it has on others behaviours
- Consider the situation
from a different perspective
- Maintain
professionalism!

Anger is the **most
useless emotion;**
destructive to the
mind and hurtful of
the heart - Henchick, of the
Manni (The Dark Tower Series)

Assertiveness formula

State the problem/issue (Feedback what you want addressed or changed)

Listen (Active listening to the other person to understand their mindset)

Explore (Be open to and explore potential reasons/ideas/solutions)

Options (Discuss possible options? Suggest ideas to move forward)

Check understanding (clarify issue summarise what has been agreed inc expectations and responsibilities.

Action plan State wants/consequences & summarise what you want to happen & by when.

State and recap what you BOTH agreed.

Focus on a solution

- Move the debate on to the future and the solution, (rather than the past).
- Involve the other party in finding a solution
- Be prepared to compromise
- If possible, offer choices or options to the person
- If they have asked for something that you cannot provide, explain why & tell them what you can do instead

Use active listening

- **Focus your attention on them – active listening**
 - don't just spend the time composing your reply
- **Use verbal prompts such as “I see” and “I understand” rather than “OK”**
- **Allow them time**
- **Ask open questions (when, where, how etc) to enable you to fully understand the situation**
- **Summarise your understanding of the situation back to the individual when they have finished talking.**



The biggest
communication problem
is we do not listen to
understand.
We listen to reply.

- **Remember**, the caller, cannot see you,
 - so it's best to:
- **Talk clearly at a steady pace**
- **Keep your tone of voice calm and relaxed**
- **Avoid interrupting,**
 - Demonstrate that what they have to say is important to you
- **Don't be condescending or dismissive**
- **If you need to address their conduct – be ASSERTIVE**

- It is about being able to see and understand another's viewpoint, putting yourself in their shoes
- It is not to be confused with sympathy
- It is not about feeling sorry for someone or pretending to feel sorry for them
- It is a good way of building rapport
 - 'I am sorry that you are disappointed/ unhappy with...'
 - 'I can hear that this has upset you'
 - 'I understand how you must feel about this'
- "I can see that this is important to you and I really want to help, but your shouting is making it difficult for me to do that. If you can stay calm, I will do my best to help" (assertive)

Use the correct language

- **Try not to be negative**

- Try not to say “Unfortunately ...” or “I’m afraid ...”
- Submissive “I’m sorry but it’s not my fault, it’s hospital policy...”

- **Don’t apologise**

- or say “can’t”, explain the facts and give information, “I’m unable to because ...”, Offer a solution

- **If you don’t think you can help**

- Suggest someone who can, if you can, put them in touch rather than giving them the run-around

- **Empathy**

- ‘I understand your position, however...’

Remember...

- **DON'T SAY 'SORRY' FOR ENFORCING POLICIES / PROCEDURES**
 - but you can say sorry about how you've made them feel.
- **NEVER apologise for doing your job!**
- **Reflect on what you have said and whether there could have been better ways to say it e.g.**
- **DON'T SAY 'CALM DOWN' – try instead 'I can hear that you are upset. Let's stay calm.'**
- **BE POSITIVE and proactive during the conversation – look for a solution together**
- **KNOW your expectations and your customers expectations and check that you both understand what they are.**

Remember that you should not have to tolerate rude or aggressive behaviour

Don't forget to thank them ...

- **Thank you for bringing this to my attention'**
- **'Thank you for giving me the chance to put things right'**
- **'Thank you for being so patient'**
- **A Thank-you goes a long way!**