**International Body Language: A Language with No Words**

By Anne Merritt

**A. Gestures**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gestures** | **Meaning** | **Place** |
| **1. Thumbs up****2. Tapping finger to temple****3. Nodding head up and down****4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_"Yes""No""Yes""No"Rude behavior in a professional setting | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AmericaRussiaIn America\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Bulgaria, AlbaniaTurkey\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**B. Silence**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Place |  **Silence is seen as …** |
| 1. Western cultures (North America + UK)2. China3. Japan | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(for women) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

To people from cultures in which silence is not viewed negatively, someone who fills the silence and dominates a conversation is seen as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**C. Touch**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contact level | Meaning/Description | Places |
| **1. Low-contact cultures****2. High-contact cultures** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Rules for contact

1. Men hold hands, kiss in greeting other men, not with women in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. South Korea b. Laos or Thailand c. Arab countries

2. You shouldn't touch someone's head in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. South Korea b. Laos or Thailand c. Arab countries

3. Elders can touch a younger person forcefully when trying to get through a crowd in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. South Korea b. Laos or Thailand c. Arab countries

Misunderstandings:

4. When interacting, someone from a high-contact culture might see someone from a low-contact culture as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. pushy and inappropriate

 b. cold and distant

5. Reversely, someone from a low-contact culture might be surprised by the hug or kiss of someone from a high-contact culture and view them as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. unfriendly and closed

 b. too friendly and violating personal space

**D.** **Eye-contact**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level | **A sign of …** | Place |
| **1. Unbroken, frequent eye contact****2. Lack of eye contact** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Respect for bosses and elders | Western / Middle Eastern countriesAsian, African, Latin American countriesWestern / Middle Eastern countries\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**ANSWER KEY**

**A - Gestures**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gesture** | **Meaning** | **Place** |
| 1. Thumbs up2. Tapping finger to temple3. Nodding head up and down4. Shaking head (left-right)5. Nodding head up and back6. Using a lot of hand gestures | Middle finger = badShows memoryinsanity"Yes""No""Yes""No"Rude behavior in a professional setting | Greece and Sardinia AmericaRussiaIn AmericaBulgaria, AlbaniaBulgaria, AlbaniaTurkeyEast Asia |

**B - Silence**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Place | **Silence** is seen as … |
| 1. Western cultures (North America + UK)2. China3. Japan | problematic/uncomfortable/sign up disinterest positive/shows agreement/receptiveness(for women) feminine |

People from cultures in which silence is not viewed negatively, someone who fills the silence is seen as \_\_\_\_pushy or arrogant\_\_\_\_ .

**C - Touch**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contact level | Meaning/Description | Places |
| 1. Low-contact cultures2. High-contact cultures | very little physical touch in daily interactions touch is big part of socializing | Britain, Northern Europe, Far East Middle East, Latin America, Southern Europe |

**Rules for contact**

1. Men hold hands, kiss in greeting other men, not with women in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

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2. You shouldn't touch someone's head in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

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**Misunderstandings:**

4. When interacting, someone from a high-contact culture might see someone from a low-contact culture as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. pushy and inappropriate

 b. cold and distant

5. Reversely, someone from a low-contact culture might be surprised by the hug or kiss of someone from a high-contact culture and view them as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

 a. unfriendly and closed

 b. too friendly and violating personal space

**D - Eye-contact**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level | A sign of … | Place |
| 1. Unbroken, frequent eye contact2. Lack of eye contact | confidence, attentivenessaggressiveness and confrontation boredom or dishonesty Respect for bosses and elders | Western / Middle Eastern countriesAsian, African, Latin American countriesWestern / Middle Eastern countriesAsian, African, Latin American countries |