

Review of Body Language Posture, and an Exercise Called “Power Posing Challenge” to Improve One’s Confidence

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ABSTRACT

Body language posture with confidence is an important skill that cannot be ignored by people who wants to have high achievements in life. A much better first impression can be created in people’s minds if someone can display a good and confident body language. Such important skills can be applied professionally, socially and romantically as well. The negative impact of social media will be presented and discussed as it does decreases face-to-face interactions. The importance of people skills will be put in evidence, as it will be related to personal experience with an exercise called the “Power posing challenge” in conjunction with some literature review in this area. While doing and promoting this simple exercise among Chinese students, it became evident that this simple exercise can provide the person doing it more confidence and fun experience. The recommendation is to give more importance and consideration to the social sciences as this is necessary to learn and practiced more to improve the outcomes of our personal lives and communities.

Keywords: *people skills, social media, power posing, Internet addiction, confidence, body language, social behavior*

1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has led to so much improvement in the present that it is very easy to maintain contact with almost anybody in the world at a relatively low cost. Our smartphones and the many apps that we use can store an almost infinite number of contacts, which allows us to text, write, and send pictures: record videos, voice clips, and songs; and even to make an audio or video call. That put so much in our hands making it possible to reach out to other people as never before, but if we don’t use this technology wisely, we will do just the opposite, even leading ourselves to loneliness as described by Gregory [1], as one of many symptoms of Internet Addiction Disorder that can happen on the PC or Smartphone. Gregory also points out that just because you do use the Internet a lot – watch a lot of YouTube videos, shop online frequently, or like to check social media. That does not mean you suffer from Internet Addiction Disorder. The trouble comes when these activities start to interfere with your daily life.

“Selfie” is an American romantic comedy series starring Karen Gillan and John Cho. The series follows the life of Eliza Dooley, a woman obsessed with the idea of achieving fame through the use of social media platforms, including Instagram, where she regularly posts selfies. She begins to worry that “friending” people online is not a

substitute for real friendship, and she seeks help from Henry Higgs [2]. This preoccupation is not unique of hers, and I may ask you: What do you think? Does an online relationship substitute real relationships or relationships that you can have with the real person in front of you?

2. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

O’Keeffe, G. S; Clarke-Pearson, K [3] from the American Academy of Pediatrics describe how Social media sites allow teens to accomplish online many of the tasks that are important to them offline: staying connected with friends and family, making new friends, sharing pictures, and exchanging ideas. Social media participation also can offer adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community, and the world. Together with the Positive side, there is also a negative side, among many other bad things, let’s just point out a few: researchers have proposed a new phenomenon called “Facebook depression”, defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression. Acceptance by and contact with peers is an important element of adolescent life. The intensity of the online world is thought to be a factor that may trigger depression in some adolescents. As with offline depression, preadolescents and adolescents who suffer from Facebook depression are at risk for social isolation and sometimes turn to risky Internet sites and blogs for “help” that may promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, or aggressive or self-destructive behaviors.

Even when it does not trigger depression, to substitute real contact with peers to almost 100% online relationship as a new way to keep in touch with them is not healthy even for adults. From Zagorski, Nick [4] research has suggested a link between spending extended time on social media and experiencing negative mental health outcomes.

I can relate the way I use social media as a foreign teacher here in China: meeting a student in person first, before asking his Wechat contact (Chinese social media) prone the interaction or relationship to be much better than the other way around when I get a request for adding me without meeting face-to-face before.

3. THE PROBLEM

Of course, you can use people skills online, but I believe they are much more effective when you are having contact face-to-face to another human being, for example, you cannot handshake the other person if you are talking online. It is not hard for me to imagine that increased social media usage may impact how we socialize face-to-face, leading to social isolation when faced with self-doubt or a lack of confidence. I notice that since I came to China in 2018 as a university teacher and started eating at the University canteen with students. I did this to make new friends, and most of the time the students I seat with are roommates at least classmates. It is very rare to see them reaching out to make new friends, and when I asked them “why?” The most common answer is they don't feel comfortable talking to strangers, or they are shy. Every one of them is glued to their smartphone, and sometimes it is hard to breach the connection between a person and its smartphone, in such a situation it is easy to understand how come a person can be around many people and still feel isolated.

4. PEOPLE SKILLS

Van Edwards, V [5] describes people's skills as the social lubricant of life. When you understand the laws of human behavior, everything goes more smoothly: Professionally, you will know how to negotiate a raise, connect with colleagues, build rapport at networking events, and nail your elevator pitch. Socially, you will make unforgettable first impressions, reduce relationship drama, enjoy stronger and more supportive friendships, and get along with everyone you meet. Romantically, you will impress your dates, deepen your relationships, flirt authentically, and prevent partner miscommunications. Bottom line: There is a science to winning friends and influencing people, and learning it will completely change the way you interact.

I can benefit myself as anybody else to learn more about people skills, so I decided to give it a try, not only learning but also practicing what I have learned, and that turns out to be a very valuable skill for me here in China since I came alone without any friends or family members. I also

did incorporate some of this knowledge and concepts regarding people skills in my classes of professional and personal development that I was teaching at Hunan University of Science and Technology in Zhuzhou in the second semester of 2018.

5. POWER POSING

In one experiment carried from Dana Dana R. C et al [6] about how making Power Posing positions for a brief period can affect our confidence: results show that posing in high-power displays (as opposed to low-power displays) causes physiological, psychological, and behavioral changes consistent with the literature on the effects of power on power holders—elevation of the dominance hormone testosterone, reduction of the stress hormone cortisol, and increases in behaviorally demonstrated risk tolerance and feelings of power. These findings advance current understanding of embodied cognition, they suggest that the effects of embodiment extend beyond emotion and cognition, to physiology and subsequent behavioral choice.



6. THE CHALLENGE

Latter other works like Ranehill, E. [7] could not replicate the same results shaking the credibility of the Power posing effects, it still is undeniable that confidence and people skills could put you ahead in life as described earlier from Vanessa Van Edwards [5]. The reason I talk about the Power posing experiment is that it is this experiment I use to pose a challenge to my students. After explaining the experiment I ask them to take 3 pictures with strangers making the power pose position and put those pictures in the social media group of our class. Those

who take the challenge seriously end up reporting having fun and making some new friends in the process.

7. DISCUSSION

Different approaches can lead to more or less successful attempts to complete the challenge. If you can apply good people skills as in your body language, like being friendly, smiling, eye contact, you may get more "yes" than rejections to your requests to take a picture with a stranger making such a powerful position.

It is worth remembering that a quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson [8] is applicable here "That which we persist in doing becomes easier to do, not that the nature of the thing has changed but that our power to do have increased." Indeed when I start applying those people skills in my own life I felt a little shy in the beginning, as I get some rejection on my approach to talk to strangers in the attempt to make more friends, but now this become my second nature as this becomes so easy to do since I have been doing it for many years. Also, seeing the positive result in my own life, for example: in my professional life, I came to find my job in China as a teacher, from a friend I made when I started this process of improving my own people skills and increasing my networking.

Sometimes I get an objection from my students when I pose a challenge to them. They say it is easier for me to do that because I am a foreigner in China and hardly people would reject me when I approach them. That is nonsense and I did even record a video that I put in YOUKU of me getting some rejections.

https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDEzNjczMMDM4NA==.html?spm=a2h3j.8428770.3416059.1

Technology that we use online certainly makes our life easier, more productive and more connected; it should be used as a way to complement and expand our face-to-face interaction, not substitute them. According to Study International Staff [9] in recent years STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) sciences have received the majority of investment and support from the government, universities, etc., while these subjects are no doubt important, the importance of social sciences should not be ignored. In fact, in areas such as social and primary care, the justice system, and business, to name just a few, social science is extremely important and necessary. It is therefore very important that this educational imbalance is addressed and more support provided to the social sciences.

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