

How Do Other People Perceive You?

By Amy Scholten, MPH

Other people form immediate impressions of us based on our clothing and body language such as facial expressions, the way we walk, sit, stand, and present ourselves. These impressions may or may not be accurate. The following assessment can help you learn how people may perceive you based on your body language. Please read each question and choose the answer that is most typical of you. When finished, you can decode your answers at the bottom of the page. Please keep in mind that this is a *general* assessment and not a diagnostic tool.

1. **Which best describes your eye contact when you have a conversation with someone?**
 - a) Very direct. You don't look away.
 - b) Direct but intermittent. You look away periodically.
 - c) You have difficulty maintaining eye contact.

2. **How do you usually walk?**
 - a) Fast, with large steps
 - b) Fast, with small steps
 - c) A fast to medium strut (you walk with confidence and importance)
 - d) Slower, with head up, looking around
 - e) Slower, with head down

3. **When you find something funny, you usually respond with:**
 - a) A loud, hearty laugh
 - b) An audible laugh, but not a loud one
 - c) A quiet chuckle
 - d) A sheepish grin

4. **Which best describes how you shake hands when you meet someone:**
 - a) A firm handshake, about 2-3 times
 - b) You turn your grip so your hand is on top
 - c) You offer just your fingertips
 - d) Very gentle, with barely a grip

5. **What hairstyle do you have? (Women/Men)**

Women:

 - a) Long and free flowing
 - b) A traditional bob cut
 - c) Ponytail

- d) Very short
- e) Bangs

Men:

- a) Carefully cut, blow-dried and styled
- b) Very short
- c) Balding, but you often wear a baseball cap, hat, or a ponytail
- d) Long hair

6. When you walk into a room where there's a social gathering...

- a) You make a grand entrance so everybody notices you
- b) You enter quietly and look for people to talk to
- c) You enter quietly and hope that nobody notices you

7. When relaxing, you tend to sit with...

- a) Your legs slightly open
- b) Your legs crossed
- c) Your arm draped over the back of the chair and your leg up on your opposite knee
- d) Your legs stretched out straight
- e) Your legs closed together

8. How do you tend to smile when you greet other people?

- a) A broad smile, where crinkly lines form around your eyes
- b) With just the lower half of your face
- c) A slight smile, with your teeth barely showing
- d) A closed mouth smile

9. When talking to people, you usually...

- a) Stand with hands on your hips
- b) Cross your arms
- c) Stand with one arm at your side and the other arm clutching at the elbow
- d) Hide your hands, such as putting them in your pockets
- e) Play with your hair, your ear, your clothing, or fidget with your hands

10. How do you feel when someone interrupts you when you're concentrating really hard?

- a) Very annoyed
- b) Somewhat annoyed
- c) Relieved to have a break

11. When you're at a social gathering, you are most apt to hold your drink (glass or bottle)...

- a) Firmly in front of your body, like a barrier, or you hold it protectively

- b) Firmly in your hand, and waving it around as you make gestures
- c) Push it out in front of you on a table as you tend to spread out all over the place
- d) You caress and play with it suggestively
- e) You hold it loosely at its shoulder and take short swigs

12. Which person would you most want to talk to at a social gathering?

- a) The person who has the most status and connections
- b) The self-confident, direct, no-nonsense person who runs his own business
- c) The gregarious, fun-loving extrovert who's always saying something funny or interesting
- d) The quiet, serious person who has a lot of great ideas
- e) The person who could most use your help and encouragement.

Question #	Answer You Chose	How People May Perceive You
1	a	Confident, challenging, aggressive
	b	Confident, interested, alert
	c	Insecure, lacking confidence, untrustworthy, short attention span
2	a	Very goal-oriented, enthusiastic, confident, maybe a bit impulsive
	b	Goal-oriented, enthusiastic, methodical
	c	Arrogant, self-important
	d	Focused, confident, an observer, detail-oriented
	e	Lost in thought, lack of enthusiasm, aimless, depressed
3	a	Extroverted, uninhibited, fun-loving
	b	Open
	c	Somewhat reserved or self-controlled
	d	Very reserved or self-controlled
4	a	Confident
	b	Domineering, aggressive, controlling
	c	See yourself as superior
	d	Weak, insecure
5	WOMEN	
	a	Sexy, feminine, sensual, playful
	b	Elegant, stylish, classic, assertive
	c	Creative, straightforward, no-nonsense, assertive
	d	Confident, self-assured, daring
	e	Youthful, cute, playful, strong personality
	MEN	
	a	Into power-image, want to impress
	b	Practical, conservative, sports lover
	c	Resistant to getting older
	d	Independent, you think for yourself, courageous, you may be a

		musician
6	a	Extroverted, fun-loving
	b	Concerned with being appropriate
	c	Introverted, cautious
7	a	Relaxed, comfortable, casual
	b	Modest, anxious
	c	Arrogant
	d	Independent-minded, comfort-seeking
	e	Conventional, reserved
8	a	Genuine, friendly
	b	Insincere
	c	A bit shy
	d	Reserved, not wanting to say much
9	a	Confident, natural leader, aggressive
	b	Guarded, unapproachable, defensive
	c	Insecure
	d	Prefer to listen rather than talk
	e	Nervous, impatient, or bored
10	a	Serious, very goal-oriented
	b	Goal-oriented but flexible
	c	Distractible, pleasure-seeking
11	a	Shy, submissive or defensive
	b	Know-it-all, gossipier
	c	Confident, territorial
	d	Seductive, flirtatious
	e	Fun loving
12	a	Social climber
	b	Strategic, seek direction, ideas and role models
	c	Pleasure seeking, you love (or need) excitement, novelty
	d	Thinker, planner
	e	Warm hearted, caring, nurturing

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Biography

Amy Scholten, MPH, has a Master of Public Health in health promotion and education from the University of South Carolina and a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition from Framingham State College. She is a freelance health writer and has taught stress management at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY, USA.