**Your actions speak louder than words.**

Communication process is not limited to what we say with words. There are 3 elements of communication: Words (7% of information is communicated though words), Body language (55%) and tone of voice (38%). Thus, 93% of communication is non-verbal.

The patterns of non-verbal communication that people use are defined by their culture, gender and social status.

There are several types of Non-verbal communication: Kinesics, Proxemics, Chronemics, Oculesics, Haptics.

Kinesics – movement of the body (head, arms, legs, etc.). For example, the gesture of slitting one’s throat in America means “I’ve had enough” or “I’m in trouble” in Swaziland means “I love you”.

Proxemics – the use of interpersonal space. For example Greeks and South Americans find it comfortable to stand, sit or talk to people at a distance which seems to North Americans and some Europeans intolerably close.

The closeness of Greeks and South Americans is unusual to Europeans and North Americans and it causes them to have the feelings of hostility, discomfort and intimidation.

However if Americans back away to their distance of comfort they’ll be perceived as cold, unfriendly and distrustful.

Chronemics – the timing of verbal exchanges during conversation. Americans expect their partner to respond to their statement immediately. But, for example in eastern cultures, in Japan or China, they leave silence between each statement.

For Americans this silence is unsettling and the person might seem shy, inattentive or nervous. In intercultural situation, it might be best for the visitor to tolerate the silence and wait for a response.

Oculesics – eye-to-eye contact or avoidance. Eye contact is very important in communication. People use their eyes to show interest. It is considered impolite to fix one’s eyes on smb., but some eye-contact is necessary to show that your interest and attention.

Haptics – is the tactile form of communication. Where, how and how often people can touch each other while having a conversation are culturally defined patterns.

Italians and people in Latin America touch each other more often than Americans and the English.

It also depends on the kind of communication situation one is in. For example, in Russia among close friends and the family touching is quite common, whereas at work it is not appropriate at all.

The ways of non-verbal communication differ from culture to culture. We should be aware of those differences in order not to be misunderstood and to properly understand other people.