

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Body Language Expert Sharon Sayler Says Sheryl Sandberg Falls Flat, Not Leans In

By: Sharon Sayler on June 11, 2013

Find more of the story at: <http://sharonsayler.com/sheryl-sandberg-falls-flat-not-leans-in/>

"Little Girl" Body Language Can Sabotage Women Executive's Success

PORTLAND, Ore., June 11, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Time Magazine recently featured Sheryl Sandberg, author of "Lean In," with the headline, "Don't Hate Her Because She's Successful."

"I am disappointed that she posed in a "Geez, I hope you like me" posture. The crossed ankles while standing says, 'little girl' and the fig-leaf pose of the hands screams, 'I'm just like you' or, 'I'm harmless.' The fig-leaf and crossed ankle position makes you look physically smaller. In body language for success, size matters," said Sharon Sayler, author of "What Your Body Says (and how to master the message): Inspire, Influence, Build Trust, and Create Lasting Business Relationships."

Sayler, a non-verbal communications expert, offers three tips for executive women to appear as confident leaders.

Pose #1: Crossing ankles while standing. "As a woman who loves high-heels, I know why we cross our legs at the ankles while standing: it relaxes the back, legs and feet for just a moment," said Sayler. One of her clients, a young woman in her mid-20's and second in command at a fast-growing entrepreneurial startup, wanted to become a more visible face of the company. "Our first engagement was for me to observe her on stage introducing the company CEO. Onto the stage she strides, she turns to face the audience and crosses her feet at the ankles. All that confident nonverbal pre-framing just flew off stage and out the door. She just said, 'I'm a little girl.' The audience did not take her as seriously as she had expected. If you want to send a message of success, stand with your feet under your hips, sit or get more comfortable shoes.

Pose #2: The fig leaf hand pose. This overly acquiescent pose known as the fig leaf (hands crossed over the groin) can say "Geez, I'm just like you" or "I'm harmless" or even "I'm afraid." To inspire and influence, simply have your arms down by your sides in their natural position or have your forearms parallel to the ground.

Pose #3: Head tilting or tipping. On the Time cover, Ms. Sandberg's head is chin up and tipped to the side, which is a dismissive move. More common is the submissive pose of head tipping alone saying, "I hope you like me" or "I'm confused" depending on context.

"One of my frequent missions is to shadow a client during work hours. I shadowed Sue, a vice president, at a Fortune 500 company. She wanted to be senior vice president, and had seen others less qualified or dedicated promoted above her. After observing two exchanges, one with her boss and one with her assistant, it became apparent that she was tipping her head to speak and to listen. To the boss, the consistent head tip said 'submissive and not management material.' To her assistant, it subconsciously said, 'push-over.' Sue and I debriefed the session. Her first response was 'You wouldn't believe how my assistant takes advantage of me.'". Yes, I would. Three months later she is a senior vice president with a new assistant who respects her."

"Today more than ever, we have to be strategic," said Sayler. "Remember, strategic communication is essential to our success, and a huge part of that communication is nonverbal."

To download a copy of Sayler's free e-book, click here "The Seven Things Nobody Is Telling You That Can Cost You Clients, Sales and Even Your Career,"

For information, go to www.SharonSayler.com

About Sharon Sayler, MBA, ACC, CEC

Sharon Sayler is an international communications trainer, speaker, best-selling author and CEO of the strategic communications firm Competitive Edge Communications, a company devoted to teaching professionals around the world how to be courageous leaders using critical behavioral relationship, leadership and communication skills.

http://online.wsj.com/article/PR-CO-20130611-905369.html?mod=googlenews_wsj