

Eye Contact, Body Language, And Martial Arts

By [Forrest Caudill](#)

I was browsing the bookstore before sitting down to write today's post and I came across a book entitled *The Power Of Eye Contact: Your Secret For Success In Business, Love, and Life* by Michael Ellsberg. I couldn't put it down. How we communicate through our eyes and our body language has interested me for as long as I can remember, probably partly due to how useful of a tool it has been in reading my sparring partners in a match.

The overall message of this book was that the eyes REALLY ARE the windows to the soul. When we look into a person's eyes we get a very real sense of who they are and what they're feeling in that moment. And they get a sense of the same in us. This is why making eye contact with someone can feel so awkward. It's a very vulnerable moment. By holding eye contact with another person you are allowing them to see how you are really feeling. There's no hiding. If you are shy, nervous, upset, bored, lying--all these will show up if the other person is paying attention.

As I read I thought about my own experience with eye contact and body language through training in martial arts. I remember how hard it was when I first started martial arts to look my sparring partners in the eyes, especially if they were better than me. My posture was also usually one of submissiveness.

Eventually I became more aware of the role eye contact and body language made in my martial arts success and I started trying to appear tough and confident in front of my training and sparring partners. I felt like I had to put up a facade of security and inner strength.

Over time and with great training and sparring partners I have been able to develop a much more open REALness to my eye contact and body language. I developed a TRUE sense of inner strength that has allowed me to be in the moment with my training partners, totally free of insecurity and more able to see what was going on for them so that I could strategize accordingly.

If you would like to have this kind of PRESENCE in the world I hope that you would consider martial arts training. There's no better place for developing this kind of openness and vulnerability, or the deep inner strength to maintain it, than on the martial arts mat where you will come face to face with all of your fears and you'll practice moving through them time and time again.

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