



Module Three

Project Self-Confidence With Your Physiology

Powerful body language shifting
to instantly boost self-confidence



Introduction

If first impressions are everything, let's hope that when you walk into a room, you immediately exude a confident, trustworthy air that positively draws people in. So how exactly can you appear this way? Initially, a lot of it comes down to your appearance—from the way you dress to how you wear your hair—but more than anything else, body language is how you communicate with someone you just met. And if you're not careful, your body language may be projecting a very different image than what you intend.

"You are in control of **THE MESSAGE** you are sending out"; if you project a confident, credible, composed image, people will respond to you as if you are all those things.

The most successful people are the ones who understand exactly how to appear more confident by making minor adjustments that wield more influence and help them win people over.

This module will help you alter your body language and give off a more confident vibe. There are mainly 5 parts in this module; we will focus on your physical appearance, upper body, lower body and how to avoid all the confidence killers.

3.1 Five physical appearances that are the golden key to your life success.

3.1.1 Dress to impress yourself first

Fit matters

No matter your size, the fit of your clothes make a difference in the way you look and feel while wearing them. Tops, bottoms and dresses that don't fit well will likely feel uncomfortable and may look unflattering. Clothes that fit correctly, on the other hand, help you look put together - and they're often much more comfortable.

Be comfortable

Comfort matters just as much as fit when it comes to how clothes make you feel. While taking fashion risks can help you step outside your comfort zone and feel great, if you wear something so outrageously different from your personal style, it may have the opposite effect altogether. Wear clothes you feel comfortable in, and that will likely shine through in the way you carry yourself.

Find styles that work

There's nothing wrong with buying one skirt in three different colours if you absolutely love the way it makes you look and feel. In fact, you should actively look for styles that work well on your body type and incorporate them into your wardrobe as much as possible. If you wear something you love every single day, imagine how much more confident you'll feel.

If you don't love it, don't buy it

Have you ever looked into your closet and thought to yourself, "I have nothing to wear?" Avoid that feeling by only purchasing clothes you absolutely love. You'll be able to invest in higher quality items that can be worn over and over again, and best of all, you'll always feel good about the way you look.

Dress for the occasion

There's nothing more uncomfortable than being considerably over- or underdressed - and in those situations your confidence can take a serious hit. No matter where you're going, try to put some thought into what clothes will be appropriate. If you want, divide your closet into categories (i.e., work clothes, weekend clothes, evening wear, etc.) so that you'll always have plenty of options to choose from.

3.1.2 Hair Styles

Your hair is fundamental to the way you look, and therefore an important element in the way you feel about your appearance. Many people undervalue their hair, ignoring the impact it can have on their confidence in daily life. Choosing to change your hair for a style that you prefer can be both terrifying and liberating. You have to be brave, trusting that the new style you've chosen will work with your appearance, but will also get to enjoy the confidence boost you get from the whole thing. We all want to live empowered lives and building confidence is one way to live that reality. Of all the ways to empower yourself, start by taking pride in your appearance and pampering yourself with a new hairstyle.

3.1.3 Teeth

It's hard to feel confident when you don't like your teeth. Underbites and overbites, chipped or broken teeth and a huge range of other dental issues can leave people feeling unhappy with this part of their body. Thankfully, there are loads of ways to solve problems like this, and it can often be as simple as choosing the right product to help you. Veneers are often a good solution to dental issues, adding a layer to your teeth that will make them look good no matter their condition.

3.1.4 Nails

Having strong, healthy nails can be a great confidence boost. Healthy nails are smooth, free of ridges and discolorations, with cuticles intact.

Keep your nails clean and dry. When washing your hands, don't forget to gently scrub the surface and undersides of your nails with soap and water. It helps get rid of bacteria that might live there and cause an infection.

Be sure to dry your hands thoroughly after washing them because your nails can become brittle if they're constantly exposed to water. Wearing gloves when doing household activities like washing dishes can help.

Trim your nails regularly and carefully. Rock hard nails are not necessarily strong nails. Overly hard nails can be brittle and prone to breakage.

Don't overdo the manis and pedis. A manicure can help your nails look clean and fresh but getting them too often can weaken nails and increase your chances of infection.

Lastly, look out for the signs of a nail infection. Discoloration, pain, redness, swelling, or pus around your cuticles and nearby skin can be signs of a nail infection. If you notice these or any other abnormalities around your nails, it might be time to consult a doctor if symptoms persist. Fungal nail infections, or onychomycosis, happen to about 10 percent of people and are more common in older people.

3.1.5 Make up

A recent study has shown that women who put on makeup before taking a test achieved higher marks than those who did not wear any - between 10 - 20% higher.

This research aside, it's clear that women have been wearing makeup to increase self-esteem by boosting their attractiveness to meet the cultural expectations of the society they live in. As we have all experienced, looking good can help us feel better during stress.

In a business context, wearing makeup can also help us be taken seriously. However it would appear that wearing too much makeup in this context can have the opposite effect as research carried out by Abertay University in Dundee identified. They asked participants to view a series of images of the same woman fresh faced, or made up as if for a social night out. Computer software was used to manipulate the amount of makeup worn. They found that people judged heavily made up women as having poorer leadership skills than those who had not used cosmetics.

3.2 Five physical appearances that are the golden key to your life success.

3.2.1 Eyes are the windows of your soul

Looking someone in the eye comes naturally when you're feeling comfortable and confident, but if you're nervous you might find yourself surveying the room in the middle of a sentence. If you want to project confidence, you have to break this bad habit. Whenever you're speaking or he/she's speaking, look at their face! Remember to look away during pauses in conversation to avoid seeming like a stalker.

When you're able to maintain eye contact, you're communicating to others that you're honest, approachable and confident. Those who aren't able to maintain eye contact or are the first to break eye contact signal that they're hiding something, feeling uncomfortable, or projecting a lower-status than or submissiveness to the person they're speaking with.

However, you just make sure that your eye contact is appropriate and doesn't become too aggressive, making others uncomfortable.

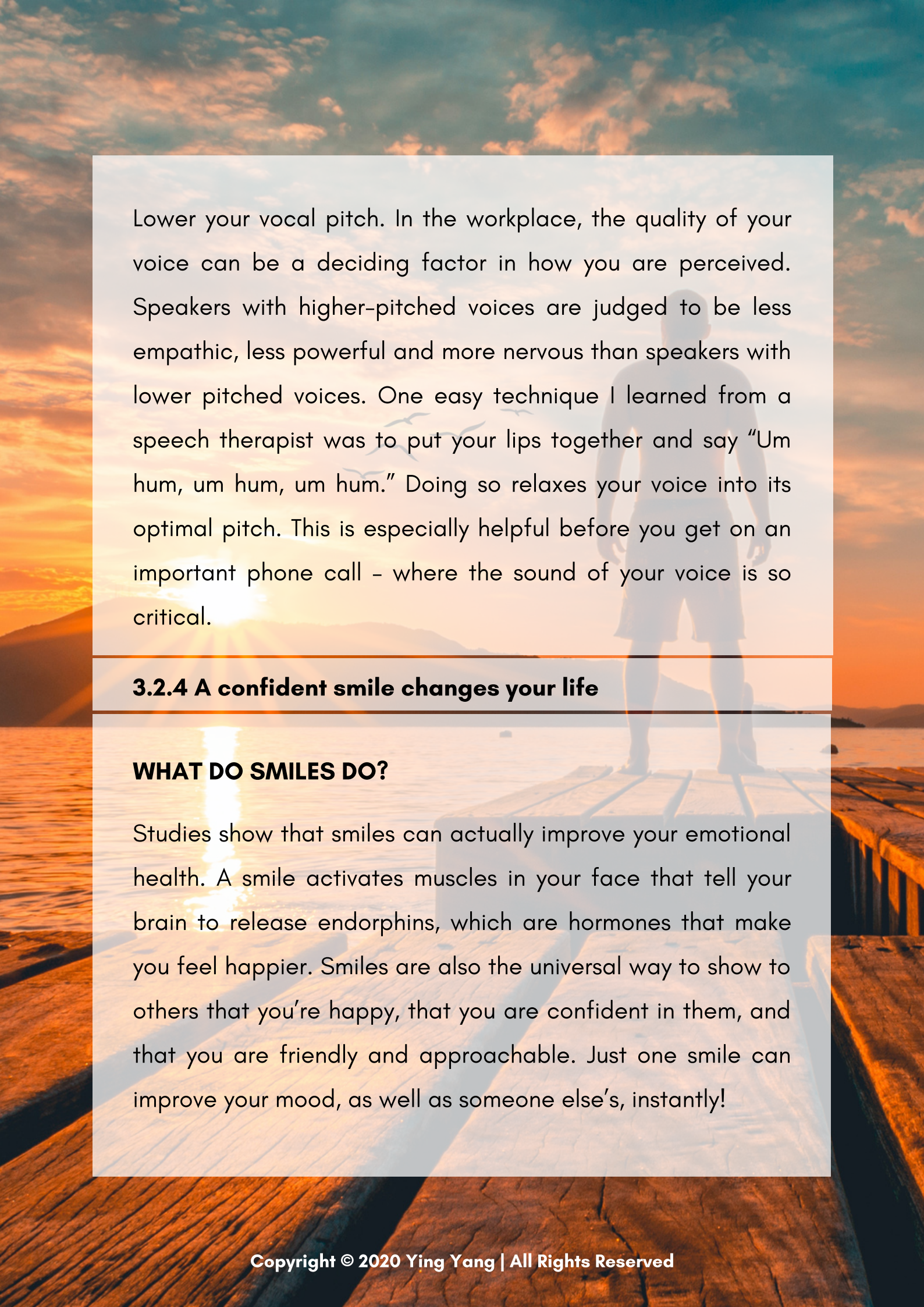
3.2.2 Smell

Nothing kills confidence faster than realizing you smell bad. You don't want to be stressed out about body-odour when you're talking to someone. If you want to project confidence, cleaning yourself up is a priority. Long before you hit town, try out different body washes, antiperspirants and body sprays until you find the right combination that works for you.

In fact, scientific research has backed up the notion that simply smelling great can make men "look" more attractive to women. Specifically, research done at the University of Liverpool found that men who used body spray felt more confident and were rated as more attractive by women who couldn't even smell them. That's right: The connection between projecting confidence and smelling great is a scientific fact.

3.2.3 Your voice

Our next tip to project confidence is about speaking clearly and confidently. This doesn't mean being a loudmouth; don't talk over people or interrupt them like a jackass, but whenever you're speaking, speak a little louder than you normally would. If people have to ask you to repeat yourself, then you're not projecting confidence. Also, try and reduce conversational clutter. Resist the urge to qualify every statement you make and cut back on irritating verbal tics, like saying "you know" after every sentence.

A person is standing on a wooden pier, looking out at the ocean during a sunset. The sky is filled with orange and blue clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow. The person is wearing shorts and a dark shirt. A white text box is overlaid on the image, containing text about vocal pitch. The text is in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

Lower your vocal pitch. In the workplace, the quality of your voice can be a deciding factor in how you are perceived. Speakers with higher-pitched voices are judged to be less empathic, less powerful and more nervous than speakers with lower pitched voices. One easy technique I learned from a speech therapist was to put your lips together and say “Um hum, um hum, um hum.” Doing so relaxes your voice into its optimal pitch. This is especially helpful before you get on an important phone call - where the sound of your voice is so critical.

3.2.4 A confident smile changes your life

WHAT DO SMILES DO?

Studies show that smiles can actually improve your emotional health. A smile activates muscles in your face that tell your brain to release endorphins, which are hormones that make you feel happier. Smiles are also the universal way to show to others that you're happy, that you are confident in them, and that you are friendly and approachable. Just one smile can improve your mood, as well as someone else's, instantly!

WHAT MAKES A SMILE BEAUTIFUL?

While smiling makes you more confident, having confidence in your smile makes you want to smile more! It's common to see straight, white smiles in magazine ads and in television and movies, and it's hard to feel excited to show off your smile if it doesn't look anything like those. Hiding your smile because you're not happy about the way your teeth look can have a lasting impact on your self-confidence. It can make it harder to express happiness to bring out the confidence in others.

3.2.5 Be more confident and calm through effective breathing

Shallow breathing manifests itself as tension in your face, throat, even shoulders. On the other hand, when you take deep, slow breaths, you look and feel more at ease in your body.

So How to Help Yourself Be more confident and calm through effective breathing

If you frequently speak in situations where you feel out of control, you need to know how to practice diaphragmatic breathing. There are myriad benefits to breathing this way, including vocal production, focus, and systemic good health (in terms of fully oxygenating your heart). But let's talk about the specific benefit of breathing diaphragmatically that will calm your nerves and increase your confidence.

It has to do with exhalation. The heart tends to speed up slightly upon inhalation, and slow down a bit with exhalation. The action is subtle enough that none of us know it's even happening. But there's a way to use exhalation to activate a powerful calming tool: the parasympathetic nervous system.

This mechanism is an easy and gentle way to get some relaxation going. I advocate doing it regularly, so that over time, you "default" to a calmer disposition. You'll make yourself a much more enjoyable speaker to watch and listen to, as your audiences will be able to relax along with you. And getting to that place should give you greater speaking confidence.

For more intensive breathing exercise, please check out our popular program **the healing power of colour breathing**.



3.3 Upper body language to boost your confidence

3.3.1 Your hands convey your message

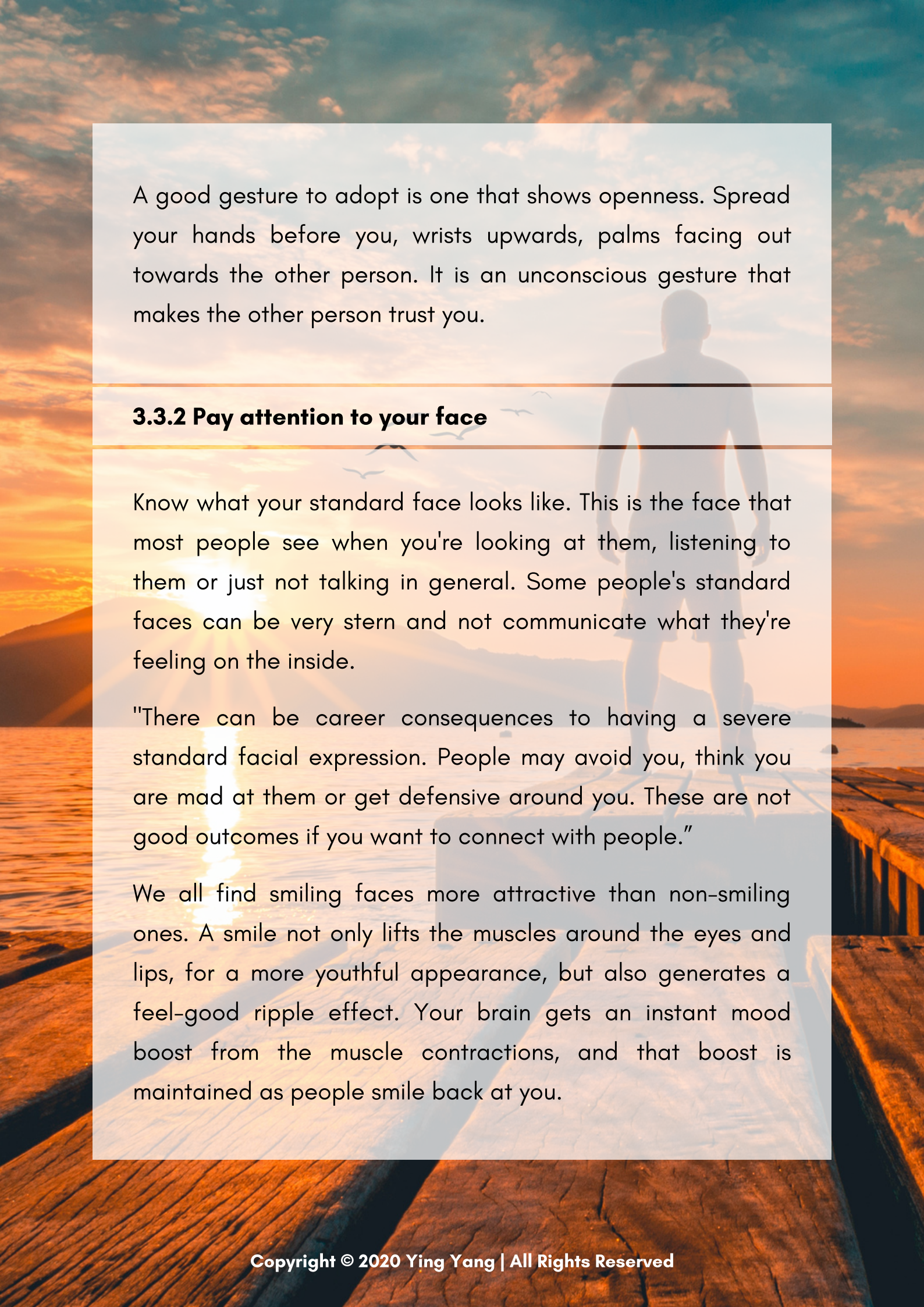
"An important part of mastering body language is knowing what your hands are saying,"

The last thing you want to do is offend someone by jabbing a finger in his or her face. Pointing can seem aggressive, but many people do it without understanding how intimidating it may be to others. Instead, when you're explaining an idea, "point with an open palm, and keep your fingers together".

Watch your hands. Be careful about touching your face or your neck; both are indications that you feel anxious, nervous, or afraid. Confident people don't make these types of movements.

Give a firm handshake. A weak or limp handshake is an obvious sign of a lack of confidence, so work on making sure that you offer a firm hand when meeting others. After practice, it will come naturally.

The direction in which you move your hands sends subconscious signals to people. You may not even be aware when you are sending the wrong message to people you talk to.

A person is standing on a wooden pier, looking out at the ocean during a sunset. The sky is filled with soft, orange and blue clouds, and several birds are seen flying in the distance. The person's silhouette is visible against the bright light of the setting sun.

A good gesture to adopt is one that shows openness. Spread your hands before you, wrists upwards, palms facing out towards the other person. It is an unconscious gesture that makes the other person trust you.

3.3.2 Pay attention to your face

Know what your standard face looks like. This is the face that most people see when you're looking at them, listening to them or just not talking in general. Some people's standard faces can be very stern and not communicate what they're feeling on the inside.

"There can be career consequences to having a severe standard facial expression. People may avoid you, think you are mad at them or get defensive around you. These are not good outcomes if you want to connect with people."

We all find smiling faces more attractive than non-smiling ones. A smile not only lifts the muscles around the eyes and lips, for a more youthful appearance, but also generates a feel-good ripple effect. Your brain gets an instant mood boost from the muscle contractions, and that boost is maintained as people smile back at you.

3.3.3 Keep your chin up

Do you look at the ground when you are walking? Is your head always down? Instead, walk with your head up and your eyes looking forward. It might feel unnatural at first, but eventually, you will become used to this more confident pose.

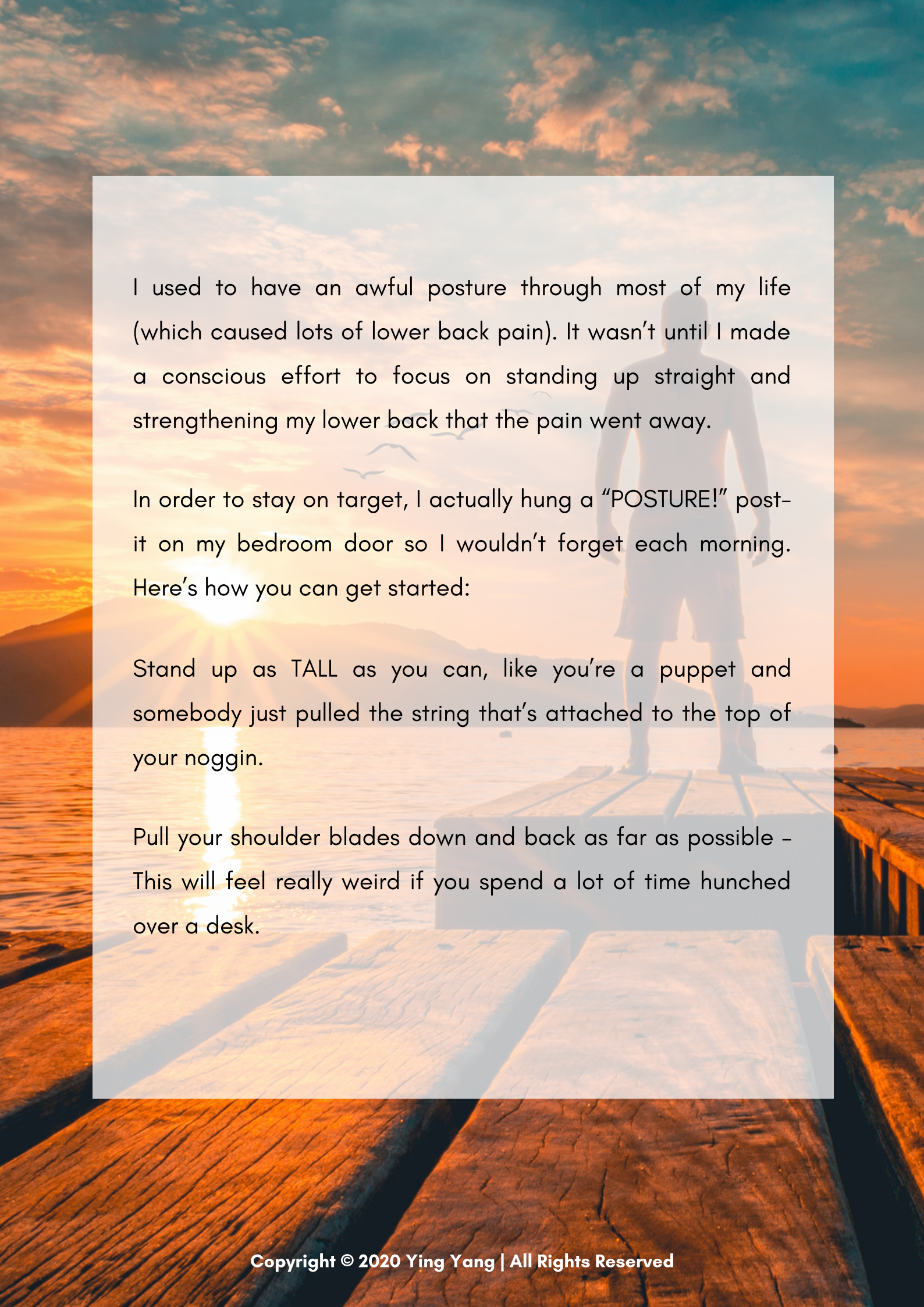
3.3.4 Chest

One of the best tips I have got from my speaking coach about my body language to build confidence is to imagine there is a fishing line hooked on the top of your chest to the ceiling.

That picture stuck with me for a very long time.

3.3.5 Shoulder

If you can develop a good posture, a trait that always seems to bypass nerds, you'll appear approximately 145% more confident within seconds (I definitely made up that stat, by the way).

A person is standing on a wooden pier extending into a body of water at sunset. The sky is filled with orange and blue clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The person is seen from behind, wearing shorts and a tank top. A semi-transparent white text box is overlaid on the image, containing the text.

I used to have an awful posture through most of my life (which caused lots of lower back pain). It wasn't until I made a conscious effort to focus on standing up straight and strengthening my lower back that the pain went away.

In order to stay on target, I actually hung a "POSTURE!" post-it on my bedroom door so I wouldn't forget each morning. Here's how you can get started:

Stand up as TALL as you can, like you're a puppet and somebody just pulled the string that's attached to the top of your noggin.

Pull your shoulder blades down and back as far as possible - This will feel really weird if you spend a lot of time hunched over a desk.

3.4 Lower body language to boost your confidence

3.4.1 Maintain an assertive posture

Want to know how to appear more confident? It's all in your posture "To stand confidently, keep your legs aligned with your shoulders and your feet approximately four to six inches apart. Distribute your weight equally on both legs, keep your shoulders back—but not way back—and turn your body towards others."

When standing, imagine a string pulling your head up towards the sky. Picture a straight line existing from your earlobes through your shoulders, hip and the middle of your ankles.

"It is the assertive posture that projects confidence, not insecurity. You are open to the person to whom you are talking. And you can stand tall, regardless of your height."

Avoid standing in a "submissive position" with your legs crossed, hands folded in front of you, or weight pressed down on one hip.

3.4.2 Consider using power poses

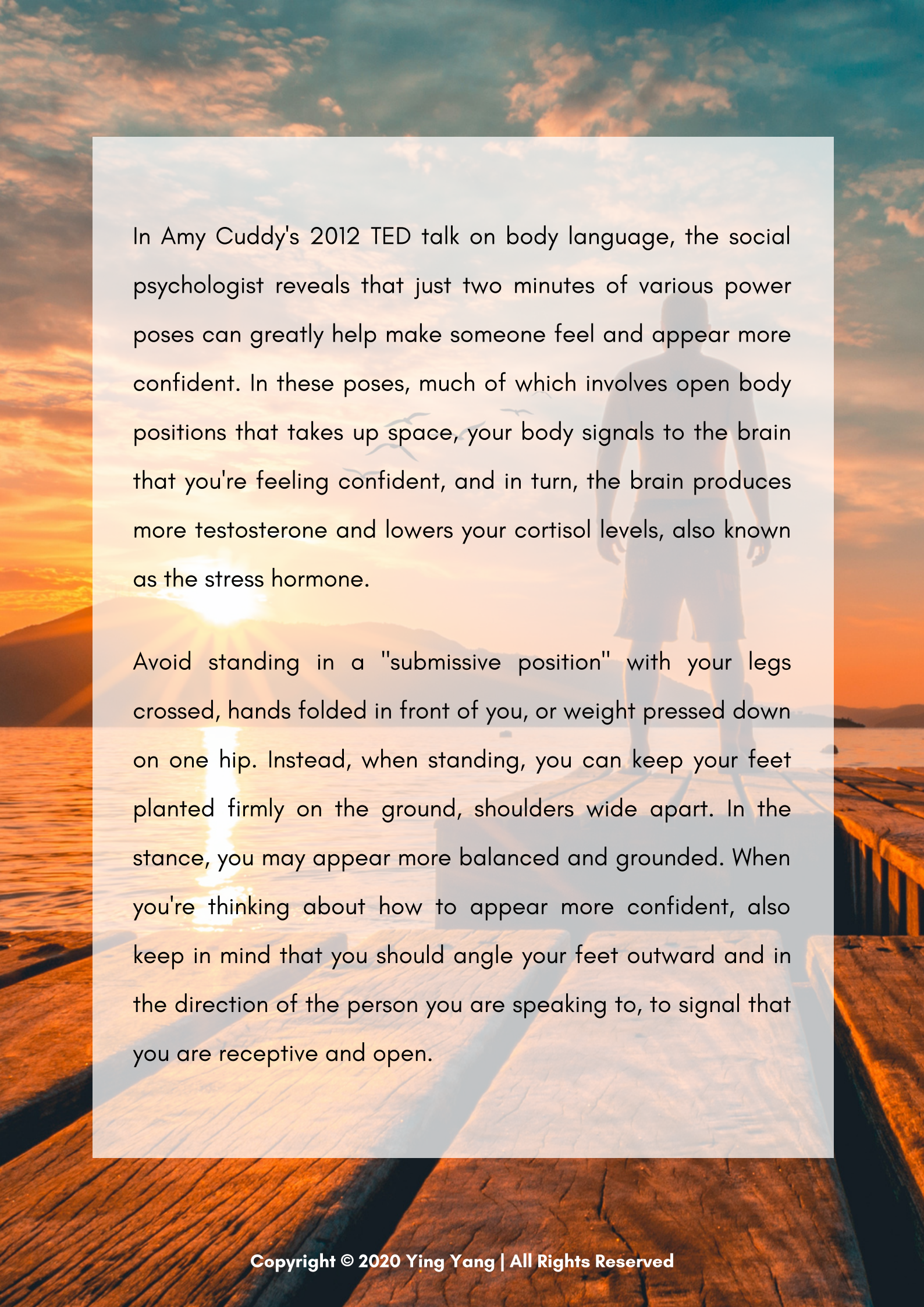
In Amy Cuddy's 2012 TED talk on body language, the social psychologist reveals that just two minutes of various power poses can greatly help make someone feel and appear more confident. In these poses, much of which involves open body positions that takes up space, your body signals to the brain that you're feeling confident, and in turn, the brain produces more testosterone and lowers your cortisol levels, also known as the stress hormone.

In the talk, Cuddy says, "our research has broad implications for people who suffer from feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem due to their hierarchical rank or lack of resources."

If you're wondering how to look confident, consider practicing some of the poses Cuddy suggests before a big meeting or every day until they feel natural.

3.4.3 Standing and feet

Maintain an assertive posture with confidence, "To stand confidently, keep your legs aligned with your shoulders and your feet approximately four to six inches apart. Distribute your weight equally on both legs, keep your shoulders back—but not way back—and turn your body towards others."

A person is standing on a wooden pier extending into a body of water. The scene is captured at sunset, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The person is seen from behind, standing with their feet apart and arms at their sides. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing text. The text discusses Amy Cuddy's 2012 TED talk on body language, explaining how open body positions can increase confidence and testosterone while lowering cortisol levels. It also provides advice on avoiding "submissive positions" like crossed legs or hands folded, and suggests standing with feet firmly planted, shoulders wide, and feet angled outward to appear more confident and receptive.

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Avoid standing in a "submissive position" with your legs crossed, hands folded in front of you, or weight pressed down on one hip. Instead, when standing, you can keep your feet planted firmly on the ground, shoulders wide apart. In the stance, you may appear more balanced and grounded. When you're thinking about how to appear more confident, also keep in mind that you should angle your feet outward and in the direction of the person you are speaking to, to signal that you are receptive and open.

3.4.4 Sitting

If your work requires you to sit in a chair, majority of the day, consider practicing good posture while sitting. When you sit, do so with your back straight with your rear toward the back of the chair, and your feet planted firmly on the floor. In this position, you should be able to stand straight up without having to lean forward first. This kind of sitting position puts the least amount of strain on supporting muscles, keeps you from back and neck pains and helps you develop a strong core—all essential for good standing posture.

Additionally, good posture opens your airways, which ensures proper breathing.

3.4.5 Walking

Always show you walk with direction and purpose. This will give the impression that you are confident and clear with the direction of your life and it shows strong leadership and confidence. On the other hand, walking without direction and purpose shows that it's the walk of a low-status man with no confidence, nothing special to do, and nowhere special to be.

3.5 Avoid Confidence killer

3.5.1 Stop fidgeting

Whatever it is that you do—jingle coins in your pocket, tap your foot repeatedly on the ground or twirl your hair—stop fidgeting as it betrays a lack of confidence. Sometimes, these acts come off as signs of nervousness, which is the last thing you want to project if your aim is to come off as confident. These movements can also take away from the message you're trying to communicate and may distract people from getting to know you. Pay attention to what triggers your fidgeting habits, and attempt to replace those habits when you experience those triggers.

Now that you're aware of the previous tips, the question of how to look confident should be easier to answer. The key is to not let your body language undermine what it is you want to do as a leader. Since a large part of communication comes from body language, which includes posture and facial expressions, take great care in the messages you put out there.

3.5.2 Avoid putting your hands in your pockets

I still remember the first speaking training class, my tutor taught us that never put hands in your pocket, as the audience wants to feel that the time and effort is worth listening to the speaker; however, if the speaker puts his hands in the pocket, the audience automatically perceives that something is hidden or an unknown object may be hidden in the pocket. And so, the listener will find it very hard to trust the speaker.

Don't put your hands in your pockets. Again, it's going to hunch the shoulders and make you look more submissive.

3.5.3 Poor posture or body stiffness

Open and relaxed posture will gain people's trust as your listener will feel more relaxed and trust you; instead, a stiff and rigid posture will make people feel restricted in feelings and emotions.

3.5.4 Mismatch in multiple scenarios

It's perfectly ok to wear a bikini on the beach, wear PJ at home and wear a suit at office, but if you mismatch your outfit with the scenarios, then it seems inappropriate with less emotional intelligence.

3.5.5 Keep apologising

Why do you have to apologise for something to your listener that you didn't even do wrong in the first place? If you keep apologising, it will only give people the impression of over pleasing and minimize your value. And it also shows less confidence!

Example: I'm really sorry that I'm running late.

Instead: Thank you for being so patient and waiting for me.