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Analyzing the face of a president

[Jason Hidalgo](#)

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Earlier this week, President Bush delivered his State of the Union Address before a joint session of Congress. And while most people paid attention to what he said, others paid attention to one more thing: the state of his body language.

Patti Wood, a body language expert and professional speaker based in Atlanta, said she especially noticed Bush's habit of giving many mouth cues.

“If the eyes are the window to the soul, I believe the mouth is the window to the truth,” Wood added.

Here are some of the cues Wood observed:

- o The downward smile: Bush did this a lot at the start of his speech. Smiling with a downward turn of the mouth masks unpleasant feelings, aggression, displeasure and tension, Wood said. That, in addition to other cues, led Wood to believe that Bush was tense.
- o Tight lips: On several occasions, Bush held his lips tight, which shows a lack of comfort or aggression. He also brings his chin and lower lip up in an “ape-like grimace,” Wood said, which shows displeasure. He presses his lips and moistens them, which can indicate nervousness or deception. When viewed in slow motion, Bush sticks his tongue out more than 50 times. This is typically a sign of aggression, Wood said, and is done when someone feels great stress, particularly when the person feels under attack. It also could be just a comforting habit.
- o Smiles: Bush seldom smiled, Wood said, making the few smiles he gave quite noticeable. He smiled when he got the longest and loudest applause, even making his eyes crinkle up, get moist and sparkle. Obviously, that means he's quite happy.
- o Positive cues: Bush was most confident in the final half of his speech when he spoke on AIDS assistance to Africa and aggression toward Hussein. Bush looked especially strong and confident when he said, “I will defend the security of America.”



Associated Press/Associated Press
President Bush's downward smile.

He wasn't confident, however, in his statements about the human cost, Wood said. Not only did he protrude his tongue, he brought it out to touch his upper lip. He also ended his speech saying, "God Bless America," with his tongue coming out, a highly unusual way to follow that statement, Wood said.

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