

Men's Health

The language of glasses

How people handle their specs will tell you more than they want you to know



When Vaibhavi decided to take Dhyanesh to her parents, the first thing she did was buy him a pair of rimless glasses. An IIM grad, Dhyanesh had everything a girl or her family would look for—a soft-spoken persona, a well-paid job, a flat and a car. But Vaibhavi was concerned about his appearance. Not that Dhyanesh was unattractive, he was just not the suave sort that her parents expected. The new glasses, which replaced his Gandhian round frames, transformed Dhyanesh, giving him an instant cool look. And the parents ended up giving their blessings.

Happily married now, Dhyanesh's personality-boosting glasses still aid him in his meetings with delegates or company directors. He has also learnt to handle the specs with style.

"How one carries his glasses sends a very powerful message that is understood on the very level from which it is relayed: the unconscious," says Dr Samir Parikh, psychiatrist, chief of the department of mental health and behavioural science at Max Healthcare in New Delhi.

Dr Parikh also says that people tend to do a lot of things with their glasses but if you ask them why they do so, they'll give all sorts of funny answers, because they don't have a clue.

Plus, glasses are in. These days, despite the wide availability of contact lenses, many people prefer to wear spectacles. In this light, how can it be possible that so few actually realise what their glasses unconsciously say about them?

"People have an image in their minds of what glasses represent and how they want

Many women love men who wear glasses because they think smart and serious is sexy



to look when they wear them, but they don't have the words to describe what they want," says Sudhansu Arora, marketing manager at Ray-Ban sunglasses.

But instinctively, many people know the right pair when they see it. When Vaibhavi made Dhyanesh wear that pair of glasses, she knew what she wanted to say. Many women, in fact, insist they love men who wear glasses, because smart and serious is sexy. (What they don't admit—and may not even consciously know—is that while they may love men with glasses on, they especially love them when those glasses are off).

"The brain is very sensitive to eye contact," says anthropologist David Givens, PhD. When gazing deep into your eyes, women, coworkers and potential employers aren't consider-

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ing the colour of your orbs as much as they're trying to gauge your honesty, integrity and sincerity. Glasses blur that. Behold, the language of glasses at work. Imagine what riches might come your way if you knew how to use those glasses for more than clear vision. So, gentlemen, take a cue with these pointers.

Earpiece in mouth Inserting the temple of glasses between lips or teeth

Boardroom: The corporate equivalent of sucking your thumb—without appearing weak. "It's a thoughtful gesture, and also one that's self-consoling," says Dr Parikh. If you don't immediately know an answer, teething the temple of your spectacles lends the appearance of productive introspection, and buys extra time to figure it out... or talk your way out.

Bar: A sexy, suggestive manoeuvre that draws attention not just to the eyes, but to

Despite the wide availability of contact lenses, many people opt for personality-enhancing spectacles

other lively areas as well. "The lips and tongue are very tactile, as are the fingertips," says Givens.

Suckling the ear of your glasses is a far more intimate distraction than, say, swigging a shot of Scotch, because your eyes remain fixed on the other person. When you suck your earpiece in front of a woman, you're saying, "Maybe I want you, maybe I don't." (And it's up to her to figure out which.)

Bridging the gap Sliding glasses down the nose

Boardroom: Pure intimidation. The glasses slide down the nose, the eyebrows arch, forcing the brow to wrinkle while the head tilts forward and slightly downward. It's an intense sequence of movements that projects unequivocal interest in the subject—and the person—at hand. Typically, around the world, when you raise the eyebrows, intensity is magnified. That's not an expression people are going to disagree with.



Bar: A gambit of earnest emotional, and perhaps carnal, interest. Raise your eyes and eyebrows and, thus, her hopes. If she mimics the gesture, even without glasses of her own, you may have just been given permission to take a closer look.

Crowning touch Glasses on the head

Boardroom: The classic pregnant pause. You're asked a question, and rather than blurt out an answer or stare into space, you pull off your glasses, consider them for a second or two, place them on the table or your head, and then, when you're ready to answer, put them back on your nose. "A blank pause puts pressure on a situation and also the individual," says Esha Patnaik, psychological consultant at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. "This one-two-three gesture takes pressure off. It buys you time and has some drama."

Bar: Placing glasses on your pate or in your pocket forecasts a change in mood or a sway from seriousness to simplicity, even whimsy. It's as popular at after-work happy hours as loosened neckties and cold beer. You're saying you've changed gears and you wish you could change your clothes. This may be the perfect time to make eye contact with someone willing to help you do that.

What's in a frame?

YOU'VE GOT A RACK FULL OF SHOES AND A WARDROBE FULL OF CLOTHES. WHY DO YOU HAVE JUST ONE PAIR OF GLASSES? "Glasses become more of a fashion piece with every single day," says Arora. "A person can easily change his look just by changing his frames." What kind of cool do you want to project?



SEXY

Choose curved lenses with a smoky black or grey tint. To be mysteriously sexy, pair them with a black plastic frame.



AGGRESSIVE

For shades, many like a classic aviator look with dark or mirrored lenses. If you want to show a nice postmillennial anger, take thick, black plastic frames.



GENTLE

Try a rimless style—any shape (as Dhyanes did). Because there's no actual frame, the look's not as brazen, and it will show off your eyes.



INTELLIGENT

Go for a vintage, rectangular look (metal or plastic frames). This style evokes seriousness—stay away from playful colours and shapes.



OUTGOING

Try an over-size, gold metal frame with mirror-tinted lenses, a good combination for prescription sunglasses.

The ripoff Removing glasses from face

In any given situation—be it the boardroom or the bar—suddenly and abruptly removing your glasses can prove as dramatic as bellowing, "What's the meaning of this?"

Our favourite spectacle-yanking moment: when southern superstar Rajnikanth rips off his sunglasses in all his movies to reveal... another pair of sunglasses! 