

## ***Communication Skills: Lecture No. 23***

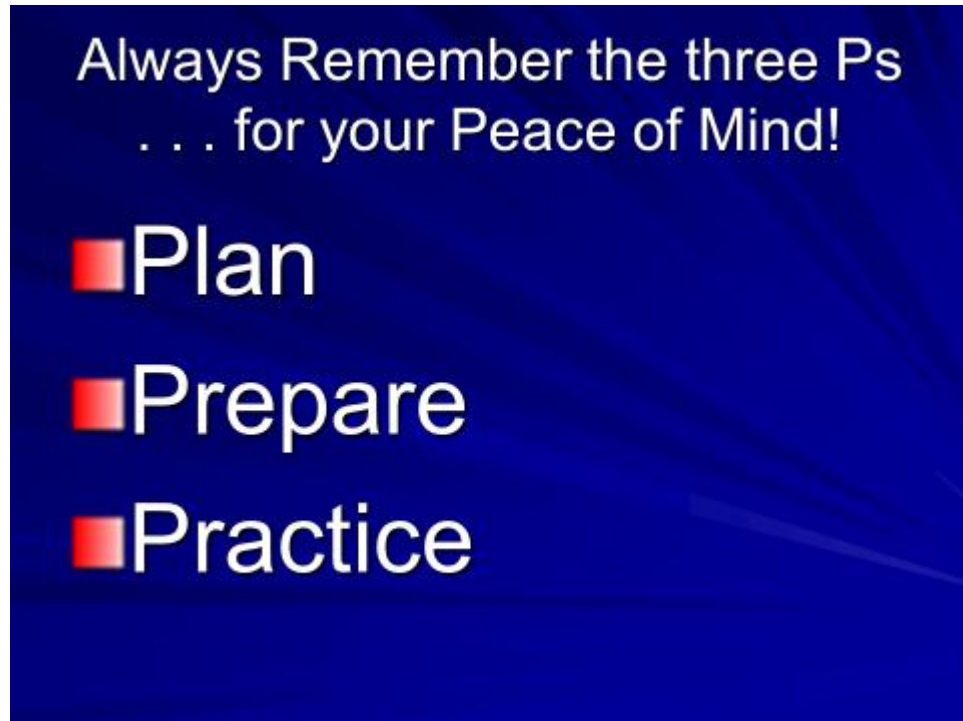
### **Module 8**

#### **Lecture 2**

## **INTERVIEW SKILLS**



In the previous lecture, I cleared some misconceptions about an interview and in the context of preparing for an interview, I introduced to you the three Ps: Plan, Prepare and Practice. In this lecture, we shall see them in detail.



## PLAN

You should have a thorough plan of your interview. The planning includes a meticulous time-schedule. You should have a time-table in which you plan the books and other materials you should read and revise. Keep some extra time to meet and talk to some important people from whom you may get information about the organization that you intend to join. Your work schedule should also include a healthy regime that has a walking, jogging, swimming, cycling or any such activity that keeps you fit. Follow a healthy diet, especially, avoid eating junk food—this can protect you from any last minute health hazards that can damage the prospects of your impressive performance in an interview.

## PREPARATION

After planning, you should start preparing for the interview. Many people do not prepare for the interview thinking that an interview needs no preparation. They just take the entire interview process for granted and get caught unawares, thereby, lose a golden chance to prove themselves. An eminent novelist Mark Twain says that *“It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.”* If it can take three weeks for an impromptu speech, that is, an informal speech that demands no preparation, then you can imagine how much time you should devote for a formal interview! *Sometimes, it takes a life to give a good interview performance!* The time and quality preparation by you, and the amount of effort you wish to put is directly proportional to your success in the interview. And success is a never ending process!


Developing the right attitude is the basic step in preparing for an interview. As Norman Vincent Peale puts it, “Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure.” Successful interviewing begins with preparation. This involves four significant components: 1. Knowing the company, 2. Knowing yourself, 3. Knowing the questions, and 4. Preparing questions of your own.

**Prepare for the Interview . . .**

**“Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure.”**  
- Norman Vincent Peale -

**Successful interviewing begins with preparation:**

1. Know the company
2. Know yourself
3. Know the questions
4. Prepare questions of your own

A cartoon illustration of a person with grey hair, wearing a green shirt and purple pants, sitting in a purple office chair at a wooden desk. They are looking at a computer monitor that displays a red rose. On the desk, there is also a small blue cup and a lit candle. The background is a solid blue color.

## KNOW YOUR COMPANY

### 1. Know the Company

**Make sure you research the company you are interviewing with so that you can ask and answer questions intelligently.**

**Knowledge is power.**

**There are a variety of ways to research:**


- ✓ Library (books, periodicals, magazines, etc.)
- ✓ Literature from company's public relations department
- ✓ Annual reports
- ✓ Electronic sources of information
- ✓ Interview someone who is already on the inside

Knowledge is power: knowing the company will give you a cutting edge in the interview. There are variety of ways to research on the company such as using a library, collecting company's literature and annual reports, using electronic sources of information (internet), interviewing an employee of the company. Remember that I already discussed this point in detail, along with knowing yourself, in the lecture on preparing your Bio-data/CV. I suggest you to go back to the lesson and quickly revise those points before reading further. Nonetheless, for a quick reference, I reproduce some of the significant points below.




- You should become familiar with the organization's products, structure, services, financial status, competitors, reputation and any recent major changes.
- Try to discover information about the person who you will meet: background, style, and education.

## KNOW YOURSELF



### 2. Know Yourself

- Knowing thyself
  - Know your gifts and talents
  - What can you give to the world.
  - Make sure whether you want “just a job”, or the right job that builds up your “career”.



The greatest philosopher Socrates summed up his entire wisdom in just two words: *know thyself*. If you know yourself, you can easily know others, and conquer the world. Knowing yourself implies an objective estimate of assets and limitations; your gifts and talents. Ask these questions: What particular strengths make you different? What makes you unique? What can you give to the world? What you can give to the world? Elicit honest answers, do not deceive yourself. Having assessed your capabilities, have strong belief in them.

***“To be a great champion,  
you must believe that you are the best.  
If you’re not, pretend you are”***

***~ Muhammad Ali***

Make sure whether you want ‘just a job’, or the *right* job that builds up your ‘career’. When you look for your career, you look for the right job to position yourself. You desire to get into an organization that promotes your individual growth and creativity. Often it’s the environment that determines our thinking, so choosing the right environment will accelerate your growth as you will be positively motivated by the stimulating ambience. You should also know what particular strengths make you different, and what makes you unique. Be ready to differentiate yourself. Remember that your competitors are sitting there in the classrooms with you. You need to know and understand your greatest strengths in relation to them.

## PRACTICE

The night before in the interview, spend some time with your well-wishers. The well-wishers may be your mother, sister, aunty, uncle, friend, or teacher. Tell your well-wisher why you think you would be the best person for the position. Before you can possibly convince the interviewers that you’re right for the job, you have to convince your well-wisher, and have to believe it yourself. Finally, go with that killer instinct! This means you should not accept defeat even before giving a strong try. And till the end, you should positively compete with other candidates without losing your enthusiasm.





**Don't expect the interviewer to tell  
you why you are right for the job.**

**That is your job**



**Successful Interview  
is a conversation  
between EQUALS!**

**You are offering a fruitful  
partnership to the  
company, not begging for  
some money !**

**You are willing to give your  
time and expertise for the  
money and status the  
company gives you !**


**KEEP IT IN MIND,  
DON'T BE SHY**

## PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

I conclude this lecture with a quick preview on the purpose of the interview and on the qualities and skills that employers are looking for.

**Employers are assessing:**

- Your personality
- Communication skills
- Your appearance
- If you will fit into the organization
- Your strengths and weaknesses
- Your Attitude
- Verifying your résumé

A circular illustration showing a woman in a pink blazer sitting at a desk, talking to a man in a green shirt who is sitting in a chair. There is a telephone and some papers on the desk. The background is a simple office setting.

## An Interview is:

*“a formal consultation usually done to evaluate an individual’s qualifications”*

The basic qualifications that an employer is looking for are:

1. Knowledge & Proficiency in the field of study
2. Work Ethic (positive attitude toward work)
3. Compatibility



## What are Employers Looking for?

- Strong work ethic  
(professionalism, commitment, keenness, sincerity, integrity)
- Self-confidence
- Strong communication skills
- Motivation/Initiative
- Evidence of leadership skills
- Organizational skills
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Ability to work in teams
- Interpersonal (relates well to others)
- Quantitative/Analytical skills
- Meticulousness to details
- Friendliness and accessibility
- Tact and diplomacy

## Qualifications

**Do you have the required skills, knowledge, or background to do the job?**

- **Questions you might be asked:**
  - Why do you feel you would be good at this job?
  - What are your strengths? weaknesses?
  - How has your work experience (or education) prepared you for this position?

## FURTHER REFERENCES

### Further References

- Dana Morgan, *10 Minute Guide to Job Interviews*. New York: Macmillan, 1998.
- Edgar Thorpe & Showick Thorpe. *Winning at Interviews*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2006.
- Julie-Ann Amos, *Handling Tough Job Interviews*. Mumbai: Jaico Publishing, 2004.
- Michele Brown & Gyles Brandreth, *How to Interview and be Interviewed*. London: Sheldon Press, 1994.