

Communication Skills: Lecture No. 27

Module 8

Lecture 6

INTERVIEW SKILLS



In this lecture, you will learn more about the structure of an interview and how you should present yourself to create that winning image. So far, in the previous lectures, I have been preparing you to reach confidently up to the interview hall. The following structure of an interview tells you in phases about the process that happens inside the interview room.

Structure of an Interview

- Greeting, receiving, & introducing
- Casual, informal talk to develop rapport
- Formal presentation of CV by self or panel
- Clarifications on educational background, professional experience, etc
- Motive for applying for the present job
- Reasons for leaving the previous job
- Assessing suitability to the job
- Acceptability to company's norms/conditions
- Candidate's chance to ask questions
- Thanks, bye, and post-interview operations

Presenting Yourself

Successful interview depends on how best you present yourself. Take note of the following:

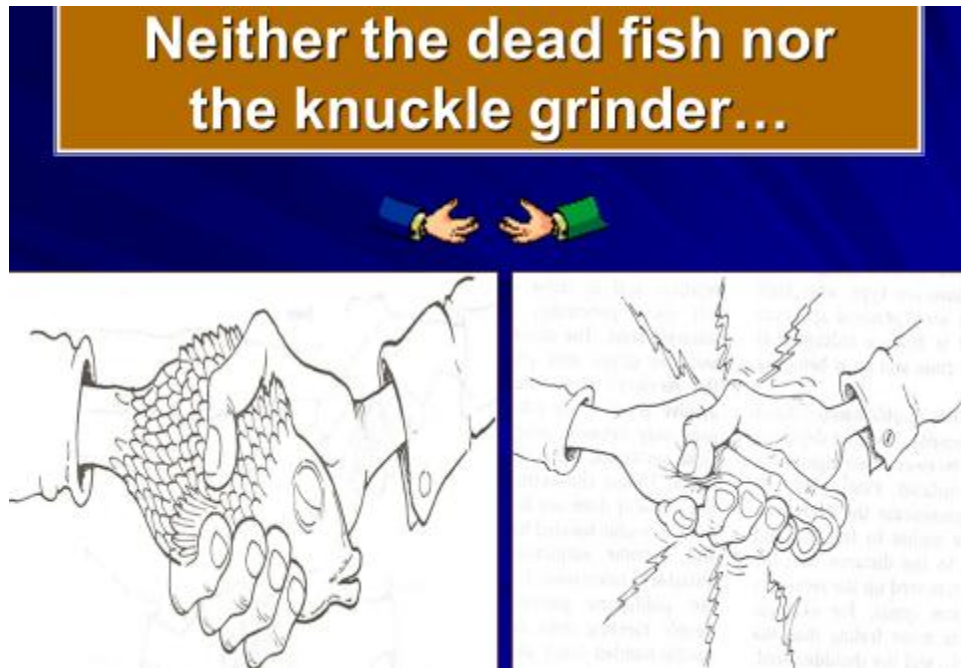
Presenting Yourself

- Establish a good personal contact
 - FRIENDLY
 - PROFESSIONAL
- Be aware of the body language
- Shake hands and don't be afraid of being "only" a student.
- Don't forget to ask permission to sit down.



Shaking Hands

In an Indian context, one can safely say *Namaste*. Nonetheless, if the members offer to shake hands with you, then you should give a firm handshake. I hope you remember from the previous lectures on nonverbal communication what firm handshake means. Make eye contact when you handshake.





Success in the first 30 seconds

In order to ensure success in the first thirty seconds, remember to perform the following:

Success in the first 30 seconds!

Tips for Improving Nonverbal Communication Skills

- Maintain eye contact
- Occasionally nod your head in agreement
- Smile and show animation
- Lean toward the speaker
- Speak at a moderate rate
- Use an assuring tone

A cartoon illustration of a man with dark hair, smiling broadly, wearing an orange suit jacket, a white shirt, and a green and blue striped tie. He is positioned on the right side of the slide.

Especially, while you are seated, if you lean back completely, it will show that you are withdrawn and indifferent. You are supposed to slightly lean forward indicating interest, involvement, and enthusiasm. Similarly, speak at a moderate rate— neither too fast nor too slow—so that everybody can follow you. Focusing on these aspects of nonverbal communication is important from the beginning itself because people form their opinion and gather insights over such a short period of time and later draw their conclusions based on them. People invariably form their first impression based on *clothing, cleanliness and grooming, hair style and colour, body weight, height, and race*. Although you cannot do much about your physical attributes such as your skin colour, height and facial features, you can improve a lot on the other aspects as clothing, cleanliness and grooming. You should have researched on the company's values to reflect them in your clothing and accessories.

Clothing often speaks louder than skills. If you do not dress up for the interview, you send a message that you are not interested in the job. Whereas, once you dress up suitably for the interview by finding out the preferred dress code, you inform the panelists that you are ready for the job. Companies report that they base 90% of their decision on whether an interviewee is right for the job based on appearance alone. Many employers decide within the first thirty seconds if an applicant will fit into their company based on looks.

However, you can work to change people's views on appearances that we cannot change. You can prove that irrespective of one's race, height and colour, there are many who have conquered the world by their sheer hard work and determination. Accept who you are and be proud, this nonverbal communication is also powerful. Nonetheless, you should perfect the appearance features that you can change because developing a positive appearance is always found to be beneficial in professional situations.

How a Positive Appearance can be beneficial

- Researchers have found that the better your appearance, the more money you make.
- People who value their appearance are often promoted faster and higher.
- People with a pleasing appearance seem more credible, influential and are more persuasive.

Basic Interview Questions

RULES

1. LISTEN TO THE QUESTION!!!!
2. THINK BEFORE YOU ANSWER.
3. ANSWER THE QUESTION ONLY!!!!

When I say basic interview questions, I mean the most fundamental questions that the panel member will be asking you about your subject knowledge and the ones related to verifying your CV. Before answering the questions, listen to them seriously. Don't rush to give the answer; as the popular saying goes, *fools rush in where angels fear to tread*. Be natural, don't try to act smart. You can reflect over the questions and give a well-thought out answer. Answer the question only—do not add information that is not solicited. You should never *interrupt* what is being told to you. Particularly, never interrupt or finish a sentence for an interviewer. Even if the interviewers talk extraordinarily slow, be patient. Remember, they are the ones who hold the ticket for admission.

Trust in your own abilities and go ahead with that conviction while responding to questions. Be confident to give examples from your own life and experience. Dare to refer to a personal anecdote. Tell a story; keep your audience spellbound. Occasionally, use a little humour or wit, it will reveal the lighter side of your personality. And if they have a belly laugh at your witty anecdote, you can be certain that you are selected! For questions which you are not able to get immediate answers, request them to allow you to take notes. Before the interview reaches the concluding stage, remember to get back to the notes and address the initially unanswered questions. If till the end you are not able to recollect an apt answer, you can ask whether you can make a guess. Often, there are decent chances that your guess answers might be the right ones. The point is, before leaving the interview hall you should not have left anything incomplete. You should leave with a completely satisfactory feeling of having done your very best. If you give your best, you will have nothing to regret later!


I conclude this lecture by briefly summing up the important points you should remember while responding to the questions.

In the next concluding lecture of this module, I will give more details about attending the interview and give suggestions for preparing yourself for the closing of an interview and post interview functions.

During the Interview

Responding to Questions

- Listen to the entire question
- Be aware of your body language
- Take your time/Gather your thoughts
- Be Positive in your responses
- Speak clearly
- Tell a story/Use examples
- Use a little humour or wit
- Take Notes

A black silhouette of a person sitting on a stack of four books. The person is in a thinking pose, with their hand resting on their chin. The books are stacked vertically, and the person is sitting on the top one.

Further References

Further References

- Dana Morgan, *10 Minute Guide to Job Interviews*. New York: Macmillan, 1998.
- Edgar Thorpe & Showick Thorpe. *Winning at Interviews*. 2nd 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.