

Communication Skills: Lecture No. 28

Module 8

Lecture 7

INTERVIEW SKILLS



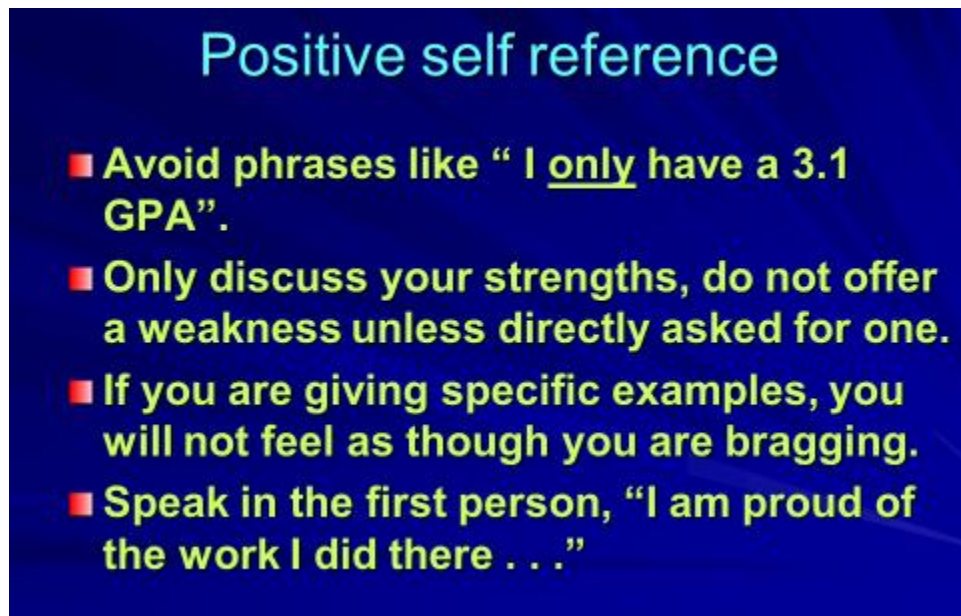
In this concluding lecture of this module, I will give more details about attending the interview and give suggestions for preparing yourself for the closing of an interview and post interview functions.

During the Interview

Throughout the interview process you should speak with *sangfroid*. Sangfroid implies coolness in trying circumstances, calmness in danger or difficulty where you have freedom from agitation or excitement of mind.

While answering, start from the general statement, then, move to a specific example that will describe the details of a specific skill or experience. This means that you should give a holistic picture first and then slowly get to the main points and assert them with key words. When you are elaborating, you can use stories and interesting anecdotes that describe you better than adjectives. People love to listen to stories, so have some good stories to exemplify your key strengths.

Although I mentioned in the previous lecture that you should answer the question only and do not add any unwanted information, there are occasions when you need to volunteer relevant information. If there are some very important details about your career or experience which have not been covered up by the questions asked, then you need to continue talking by filling the missing details. Always make a positive self-reference as suggested below.



Positive self reference

- **Avoid phrases like “ I only have a 3.1 GPA”.**
- **Only discuss your strengths, do not offer a weakness unless directly asked for one.**
- **If you are giving specific examples, you will not feel as though you are bragging.**
- **Speak in the first person, “I am proud of the work I did there . . .”**

Remember: In an interview you are selling yourself as the best available candidate. So do not shy away from bragging about your achievements. To make it effective, use *active verbs* when you explain an activity you coordinated. Say: *I initiated, I coordinated, I designed, I facilitated, I*

motivated, I generated, I developed rather than I helped with, I worked with, we did, we contributed, and so on.

Use transitional statements to move away from an area of weakness into an area of strength. In this regard, make use of connectives as: *but, on the other hand, nonetheless, nevertheless, although, however, to the contrary*, and *in contrast*. If asked about a skill or experience you do not have, respond truthfully but also add how you can overcome this lack of experience. Reveal your honest efforts taken in this direction.

End of the Interview

Towards the end of the interview, you should have some questions prepared about the position and the organization. They are not questions in a real sense, they are asked by way of seeking clarifications of the position (responsibilities, projects, travel), on the department (goals, career paths, training offered) and about the expansion plans and direction of the organization. While transacting with your panel members, keep the following *don'ts* in mind.

Successful Interview



Don'ts


- Don't expect easy presents
- Don't promise what you can't offer
- Don't accept what you don't need
- Don't ask what they can't give you

Interviewers Like and Dislikes

People generally look for moderate, balanced, knowledgeable and well-mannered candidates.

What people Like

- Modesty, not shyness...
- Enthusiasm & Energy, not over-ambition...
- Self-confidence, not arrogance...
- Assertiveness not aggressiveness
- Short precise answer, not long, convoluted answers & meandering



What people don't like



- Wasting their time
- Repetition
- Over talking
- Unclear explanations
- Too many information
- Aggressive approach
- False interest

The Close

How should you conclude the interview? Understand that the close of an interview doesn't mean that interview is over. While the interviewer's first impression of you set the tone of the interview, their last impression can cement you in their mind. Hence, before you leave, make eye contact, smile (even if you think that the interview was bad for you), and thank them genuinely. Do not make an abrupt exit; leave gently. Say goodbye to other candidates as you leave.

Closing the Interview

While closing the interview, ensure that you achieve four objectives listed below.



Closing the Interview

You want to achieve four objectives at the close of the interview:

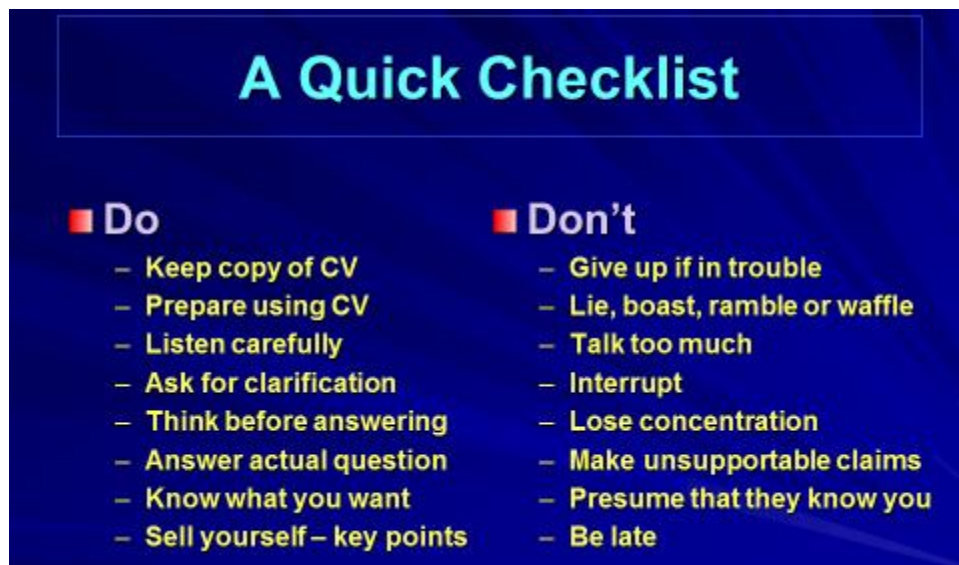
1. Make it clear that you want the job.
2. Set the stage for the next step.
3. Create a final good impression.
4. Get an actual offer.

Show your enthusiasm

A cartoon character of a person with a large head and a small body, wearing a blue shirt and purple pants, is shown in the bottom right corner.

A Quick Checklist

You can make use of the following quick checklist:



A Quick Checklist

■ Do	■ Don't
– Keep copy of CV	– Give up if in trouble
– Prepare using CV	– Lie, boast, ramble or waffle
– Listen carefully	– Talk too much
– Ask for clarification	– Interrupt
– Think before answering	– Lose concentration
– Answer actual question	– Make unsupportable claims
– Know what you want	– Presume that they know you
– Sell yourself – key points	– Be late

After the Interview

Now once you have done your best at the interview, let's have some after thoughts about what should you do after the interview. First, you should send a follow-up letter within 48 hours of the interview, especially, if the decorum of the organization demands it. You can thank the concerned for giving a chance for the interview. If you promised that you would send them some left out information, this is the time to send relevant copies and documents.

You should also do an assessment of your performance and work to strengthen any areas of weakness. Always remember that there is no interview where a candidate has answered all the questions to his/her satisfaction. There is always something that you feel you missed out, that you could have given a better answer, and overall, you could have exuded much confidence. Ironically, answers to questions that you failed to answer during the interview rush to your mind when you leave the interview venue.

Despite your best performance and a high possibility that you are the one who will be selected for the interview, you should use this time to apply for another job. When you keep applying for other jobs, you develop an optimistic attitude that minimizes any disappointment you might get from interview results.

Review own performance

Review your own performance by asking these questions honestly: *What went well? What went badly? What is it that you wished that you had said or had not said?* Use the answers as positive feedback for preparing for the next stage, especially in cases when you may receive invitation to the second/final round of interviews.

You should also prepare yourself mentally, emotionally and psychologically to get the rejection letter/e-mail. If you can, ask politely for a feedback, which you can use it for improving your future performance. Ultimately, by analyzing the interview, we actually learn from our mistakes. There is nobody who has become perfect without trying to improve upon the mistakes one has been committing. That's why, if you don't get an offer from this particular company which you desired so much, be sure that you will succeed another time. But, do not allow rejection to destroy you because as Hemingway says: "Man can be defeated but not destroyed."

Be realistic: do not get depressed and stop preparing for the next interview. Interview is not an assessment of personal worth. It is trying to meet your qualifications with specific job demands. So in case there is rejection, it does not mean that they have rejected you as a person and you do


not have to take it too hard to meditate suicide or vow never to attend another interview. Don't let that negativity get into your mind.

Many good organizations have occasionally made the mistake of rejecting very good candidates. And then, there are other smart organizations which have actually taken these candidates who have been rejected by those organizations and built up their reputation and won over their competitors. Hence, if you don't get the job, it's not a major calamity. Think that the organization was also not lucky to have you! You know that you have the skills expertise combined with abiding loyalty for the organization that selects you. There are other potential employers around who will recognize you and happily recruit you.

Philosophically, you should nurture the attitude that *the best is yet to come!* Remember, as Dalai Lama wisely puts it, "Sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck!" You will realize the truth of this statement once you get a better job opportunity which was possible because you were not selected by the initial one that you thought was the best for you. Already you should be thinking about the next interview!

Afterthoughts

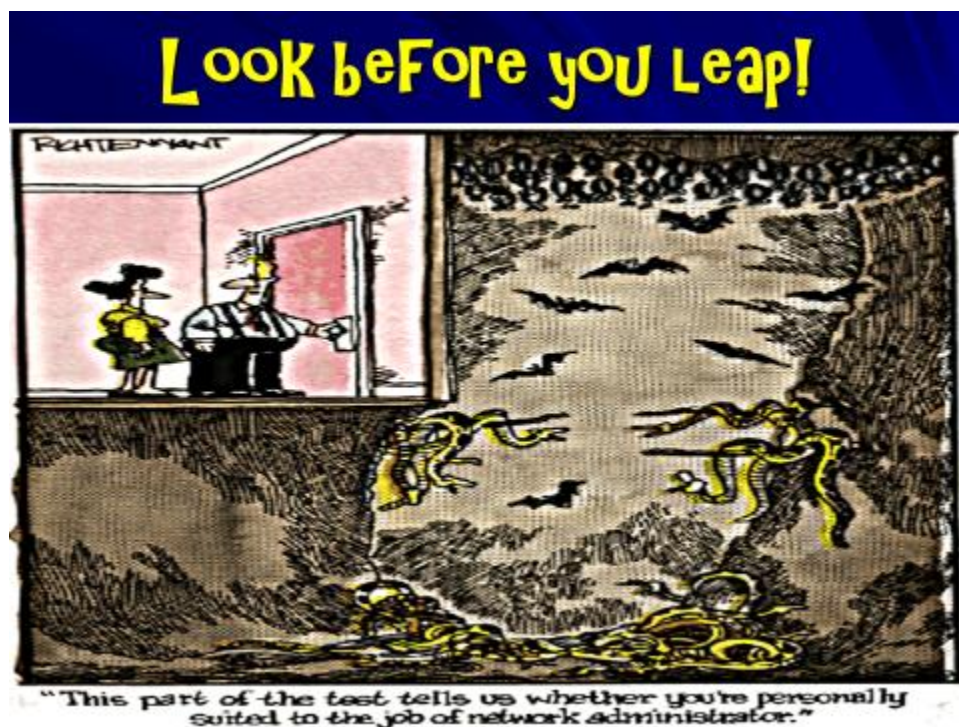
Don't become discouraged if you receive a rejection letter. Whenever you fail to get a job offer, you should assume that someone else had either better qualifications or had better interview skills. In an Indian context, somebody could have used influence to get that job. To be unsuccessful in a job competition is not a sign of inadequacy. There are many other imperceptible factors that go in the final selection. Remember, most successful people have gone through several interviews before they arrived at the final position in which they had established themselves. However, each interview moves you closer to your goal, a job offer. So take each one seriously and understand that there is something to be learnt from each interview.



Each Interview is
a Learning Experience



So if you really want to become what you want to be, you have to keep on revising what you are.
Finally, look before you leap! That is, do not jump at a lucrative offer that you regret forever.



Companies exploit you by tempting you with rosy offers initially, which sometime prove to be hell later. So, try to probe beyond the surface glitter and choose a job that promotes your career and

personal growth. Only such a job will give you utmost satisfaction and let you live a happy and healthy life.



Further References

Further References

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