Mastering Body Language for an Interview!

By
Dilip Saraf

“Why is it that one can look at a lion or a planet or an owl or at someone’s finger as long as one pleases, but looking into the eyes of another person is, if prolonged past a second, a perilous affair?” -Walker Percy, author (1916-1990)
Chemistry, Compatibility, and Competency

• Competency = Intellect (IQ)
• Compatibility and Chemistry = Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
  – your ability to understand the interviewer’s personality and what they are really looking for.
  – EQ is an earned skill
Body language plays a major part in chemistry/compatibility

• Be relaxed and breathe deeply before beginning an interview.
  – Some nervousness actually helps you be energized for a good interview.
  – Use this energy to your advantage.
  – Deep breathing also dispels any feeling of fear or apprehension you may have during this process
Body language plays a major part in chemistry/compatibility

• Shake hands firmly and make eye contact with the interviewer.
  – Smile and keep smiling as they start their conversation.
  – Do not look bewildered or puzzled as they talk to you.
  – A simple smile and a confident look dispel this energy.
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• Once you settle down, take another deep breath
  – Keep a faint smile on your face and continue that as long as you can.
  – When a question is asked, before responding, pause for a second or two and then formulate your answer in a thoughtful way.
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• When responding keep looking at the interviewer without staring at them.
• Use eye contact to connect with the interviewer without making them feel uncomfortable.
• You know they are uncomfortable by their looking away as you look at them.
**Body language plays a major part in chemistry/compatibility**

- Use both hands and respond without being voluble, or displaying exaggerated gestures.
  - This requires some practice, but is an easily learned skill.
  - Watch TV commercial spots and observe how the characters deliver the short message with the right body language.
Engage in a dialog, not an interrogation.

– If you start asking good questions right from the get-go you have a much better chance of engaging in a dialog than in an interrogation.

– Avoid going like a “machine gun” firing away answers to the questions asked.

– A “tennis racket” approach allows you to play tennis in a back-and-forth exchange.

– This also reduces your “air time” by half. A good thing!
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• Observe the body language of the interviewer
  – If you spot them shooting signals that do not synch up with their words, call on them with a question or clarification
  – Often, people are impressed by your ability to read their body language and by your calling them on it.
  – Be confident and smile when you do this.
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• Take charge of the interview by asking questions that are important to you
  – Often, candidates just surrender to the interview process and let the interviewer drive the process.
  – Remember, the interviewer is often as anxious and nervous as you are.
  – Use that to your advantage!
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- Before concluding the interview ask what the next steps are.
  - Repeat what you heard so that you can get clarity on the timeline and their take on what just happened in the interview.
  - If they are positive and enthusiastic then assertively drive to a close by saying, I really would like to be a part of your team and am interested in joining you as a …
  - I hope that you choose me to come on board. There is something compelling about asking them to hire you this way!
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• Send a great Thank-you note
  – Briefly explain any points that need further clarity
  – Ask to be hired the same way you expressed above
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