

PReP 12 - The Interview Process

Lesson 4 - During and After the Interview

Joan:

Nice to meet you. I'm Joan Selkirk, the Nurse Manager.

Amisi:

It's a pleasure to meet you, Joan. I am Amisi Santos.

Joan:

Great. Why don't you follow me.

Amisi, you can just sit here.

Narrator:

In her book about intercultural communication, called "Dance of Opinions", Sherwood Fleming says that without exception, all English-speaking cultures use two different forms of speaking in order to express their thoughts and opinions: collaborative expressions and authoritative expressions. In our course on teamwork, we'll focus on how to use the collaborative form of expression. But for now, let's look the authoritative approach. A job interview typically calls for this form of expression, because it is used to establish authority and professional expertise.

Fleming uses a technique she calls the CLEAR method to explain the authoritative approach.

This five-step process involves first conveying your opinion concisely. When preparing for an interview question, write down all of your opinions about a particular question. Then select the three opinions you feel most strongly about. Write each one in a sentence, editing until each sentence is as concise as possible. Be sure to use language you feel comfortable with, and aim for short, simple sentences. Arrange your opinions in order of importance and choose the first one.

The second step of Fleming's CLEAR method is to link to your listener's concerns. Ask yourself what the main priorities of your listener are as far as the particular interview question goes. Go through the same process as in step one, until you have three clear sentences which you feel strongly describe your listener's concerns. Choose the best option.

In the third step, Fleming suggests bringing your experiences to life by telling the listener a story that demonstrates steps one and two. Pick a story from your work history that you feel would be appropriate and write down the parts that illustrate steps one and two in point form.

Step four involves asserting your authority. Ask yourself what opinion you would like your listener to form about you based on the story you shared. Write down the top three options, but choose only the best one. This will be the sentence you use to conclude your story.

Finally, in step five, conclude your answer by repeating the opinion you initially expressed.

Techniques similar to Fleming's 5-step CLEAR method are used by marketers and politicians alike because they allow you to express yourself clearly, identify the needs and interests of your listeners, and carefully guide the conclusions that they reach about you. Beyond interviews, you can also use this process when making presentations, or writing reports and emails.

Joan:

Amisi, I'm impressed. You clearly have the education and the training we're looking for. Now let's talk about your work experience.

Amisi:

I would be happy to.

Joan:

Can you tell me—what is your greatest strength?

Amisi:

Ah...would you mind being a bit more specific please?

Joan:

Sure. Can you tell me your best quality as a nurse, and maybe include an example of using that quality?

Amisi:

Yes. I believe my best quality is my ability to use resources efficiently, and to handle a heavy caseload.

Back home, I worked for five years in a healthcare facility similar to this one. We were always understaffed. Our health centre was located in a region where there were lots of people, so we always had many people to treat every day, with few resources. I learned very quickly how to be creative with what we had. I understand your staff are using the Open Access scheduling system? And this is very similar to the system we used - fitting in as much as possible into one appointment to cut back on future visits. This worked very well for us. So I would say my ability to handle a heavy caseload and to use resources efficiently would be of use to you.

Joan:

I would agree with you, Amisi.

Now let me ask you another question. Can you tell me when you used effective communication at work, and what was it that made that communication effective?

Amisi:

In my experience, effective communication is about much more than the spoken word.

Our clinic was located in a region where there were many islands, and people spoke many different dialects, so we had to be able to communicate with them in other ways. One day an elderly woman came in with a deep laceration in her arm, so distressed that she would not let the doctor touch her. Simply by speaking calmly to her, and stroking her hand, I was able to calm her down enough for the doctor to treat her wound.

I know that you have many newcomers at your clinic, and I feel I could communicate very well with them.

Joan:

That's a wonderful story, Amisi. Thank you. Now can you tell me about a situation where you felt you hadn't communicated very well, and how you corrected that.

Amisi:

Well, when I first arrived in Canada, I was surprised that many people didn't understand my English. At my first job, many people - especially the elderly - had trouble understanding me. I took a bridging program, which helped, and I continue to work hard. In fact, I belong to a conversational group that meets once a week, and I find that helps me. Also, my volunteer work at the hospital encourages me to always be improving. I know you have many

elderly patients here, but I now feel comfortable speaking with them and I find they understand me most of the time.

Joan:

Well Amisi, I've asked all my questions, and thank you for answering them. Just so you know, you are the last candidate that I'm interviewing for this position, so I should be making a decision shortly. In fact, my goal is to get back to everyone later this afternoon.

Amisi:

Oh, that soon? Wonderful!

Joan:

So the next step in the process will be for the selected candidate to come back; meet the doctors here, and the rest of the team; and after that, if we're all in agreement, we would offer the candidate a position here.

And Amisi let me just say how much I enjoyed meeting you this morning. You were very well prepared, and did an excellent job in answering my questions

Amisi:

Thank you so much, Joan. It was a pleasure to meet you. That's so encouraging. I would love to be working here, and you have my phone number? So I look forward to speaking to you soon.

Joan:

That sounds great.

Narrator:

At the end of the interview, think about your overall performance—what you did well, and what you might do differently next time. And be sure to write a follow-up thank you email to the interviewer. If you don't get the job, you may also contact the interviewer and ask for some constructive feedback. Remember—each interview is a chance to practice and perfect your communication skills and interviewing techniques, until you find the job that's right for you.

Amisi:

Hello?

Joan:

Hi Amisi. It's Joan Selkirk from Grace Community Health Centre. Is this a good time to talk?

Amisi:

Oh, hi Joan. Yes, this is a good time.

Joan:

Great. I just wanted to let you know I was very impressed with your interview this morning. I liked what you had to say, and I really think your qualifications and experience would be a good fit for us. Would you be open to coming in and meeting the physicians and the rest of the team?

Amisi:

Oh that's wonderful! I would love to meet everyone!

Joan:

Great. Can we try and figure out a time...