



## Your Appearance and Demeanor are as Important as Words

The very moment the interviewer casts their eyes on you, they are forming an opinion. Your overall interview 'performance' is judged on a combination of three things:

1. Choice of words
2. Voice timber, tone and clarity
3. Body language---also referred to as non-verbal communication. Your appearance and body language may be more important than what you say.

One academic study indicated that up to 55% of the impact you make is based on your body language, demeanor and nonverbal communication. Another study suggested that up to 93% of our ability to communicate effectively is determined by nonverbal cues.

RRG offers you these tips and observations, all gained from our many years of experience, to improve your body language skills and help you avoid negative implications when preparing for your interview:

**Before the Interview:** It's important to practice your delivery, that is, how you will present your story. Since body language comprises at least fifty percent of the impression you make, it's important that you review our suggestions below so you can practice, practice, practice. *(Use a mirror or a videotape so you can observe yourself and make improvements.)*

Most of all: Think Positive! Having a positive attitude is half the battle. By reviewing the suggestions below and practicing, you are sure to make a successful impression.



**Waiting for First Contact:** While waiting for your interview be aware of your posture. Make sure you are not slouching, which usually indicates indifference. Sit “professionally” (erect and in-control) which helps make a positive impact. No chewing gum. Many times, interviewers will seat you in a location where your behavior can be pre-observed—even before the interview begins. So, be aware that the minute you walk into the building or office, you need to have your ‘game face’ on...because the ball is in play.

**First Contact:** When the interviewer approaches, it is important that you rise, smile, look them in the eye and shake their hand. Your handshake should be firm, but not hurtful.

Try to make sure your hands are warm, dry, and not rough. If prior to your interview, you use the rest room at the organization, use warm water to wash your hands and make an extra effort to dry them thoroughly. Make sure you address the interviewer by name.

**During the Interview:** Make sure your posture is erect and professional. A confident person will maintain eye contact, while listening and answering questions. Make sure you smile when appropriate. Also, keep your chin slightly up, and nod your head in a gesture of assurance when completing an answer. Don’t wrinkle your brow and appear worried. Never look down, or avert your eyes when the interviewer engages you. Looking at the ceiling, or around the room during an interview conveys disinterest or a lack of confidence. Appropriate hand gestures are acceptable. However, an unusual amount of hand gestures indicates an inability to communicate or frustration with the process. Never cover your mouth when you are speaking (unless to suppress a cough). Never play with your hair or be restless.

In conclusion, your body language is important. If you smile, show enthusiasm, and act professionally, you are sure to leave a positive impression that will make the interview a memorable experience for both of you!

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