

Part 10 - Listening Skills

Active Listening

Listening isn't just something you do with your ears! It is something you have to do actively in an interview – you don't just have to listen; you have to be seen to be listening. This is active listening. Listening signals or behaviours include:

- Making eye contact
- Nodding
- Making 'listening noises' ('Mmm', 'Uh-huh', etc)
- Smiling
- Leaning forward
- Open body language
- Tilting the head to one side
- Reacting to what your interviewer is saying.

Concentration

The easiest way to listen properly is purely and simply to concentrate on what the person is saying! This tends to make most people exhibit at least some of the signs of active listening listed above.

Reflecting

Reflecting is repeating back what you just heard, in a way that isn't obvious. It checks your understanding is correct, and also shows them you understood. It also means that you are telling them what they just told you – remember that people like people who are like them – it will add to the matching effect you are trying to create. Here are some reflecting phrases:

- 'So what you're saying is ...?'
- 'So you think...?'
- 'Then would you agree that ...?'
- 'I agree, It is important that ...'.

Listening is an active, not passive process. It is a good opportunity to relax and make a good impression at the same time.

Mirroring - What is Mirroring?

Mirroring is when you imitate someone else's body language. It is like reflecting, except that reflecting is a means of establishing a rapport with someone verbally, whereas mirroring is its non- verbal equivalent. It is basically copying someone else's body language. Why Mirror:

- People like people like themselves
- It helps you establish a rapport with your interviewer
- It establishes a connection between you and your interviewer
- It strengthens any connection or rapport between you that may already exist.

You need to mirror very carefully and gently, so it isn't at all obvious, otherwise you will look very strange indeed!

Remember:

- Never mirror aggressive interviewers

- Don't mirror nervous people
- Don't mirror bad habits like scratching
- Only mirror people who themselves have good body language
- Don't over do it! – be very, very, subtle
- If you make it obvious that you are mirroring, you have failed.