

# **THE HELPING INTERVIEW**

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## **Syllabus**

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# LESSON ONE

## Setting the Atmosphere for the Interview

### Introduction

Many elements help to shape the helping interview.

- 1) A convenient starting point is the optimal conditions we should like to create for the interview.
- 2) Conditions that will facilitate rather than hinder the interview process.

### External Factors and Atmosphere

- 1) The room.
  - a) How you arrange and decorate your room is a matter of taste and necessity.
  - b) It should not be overwhelming, noisy, or distracting.
  - c) Under ordinary circumstances nothing that is part of the interviewer's professional equipment need be hidden away.
  - d) Some things we do not wish the interviewee to see.
    - i) Files of other clients, papers of other students, electrocardiograms of other patients.
    - ii) The remains of our late lunch.
  - e) Our goal is to provide the atmosphere that will prove most conducive to communication.
  - f) Clothes should be appropriate (can't meet the expectations of all interviewees; just as well fall back on own personality and minimal professional standards).
  - g) Arranging chairs.
    - i) Interviewer usually decides where each will sit.
    - ii) Some interviewers like to sit behind a desk facing the interviewee and think that this arrangement is desirable for both parties.
    - iii) Others feel best when facing the interviewee without a desk between the.
    - iv) Still others prefer two equally comfortable chairs placed close to each other at a ninety-degree angle with a small table nearby.
- 2) Interruptions.
  - a) Interruptions and interferences are external conditions which should be avoided.
  - b) Total concentration is required to establish rapport and building trust.
  - c) Phone calls, knocks on the door, people who want just a word with you, secretaries who must have you sign this document at once, may well destroy what you and the interviewee have accomplished in terms of a relationship.
  - d) The interview is personal and deserves and needs the respect we wish to show the interviewee himself.
  - e) Many interviewers put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on door; however, we need

communication more than signs.

## **Internal Factors and Atmosphere**

- 1) Bringing ourselves; desiring to help.
  - a) What do we bring with us, inside of us, about us, that may help or hinder or not affect the interviewee one way or another?
  - b) Two internal conditions:
    - i) Bringing to the interview just as much of our own selves as we possibly can, stopping, of course, at the point at which this may hamper the interviewee or deny him the help he needs.
    - ii) Feeling within ourselves that we wish to help him as much as possible and that there is nothing at the moment more important to us.
  - c) Can take away from the interview the feeling that we may be trusted as a person and the conviction that we respect him as a person.
    - i) Without these, little can be accomplished.
    - ii) If mutual trust and respect are clearly present in the interview, felt by both parties, they will not require expression in words.
  - d) This intangible atmosphere is probably determined most by the interest we take in what the interviewee is saying and by the understanding we show of him, his feelings, and his attitudes.
  - e) Our bodily gestures contribute to the picture.
  - f) The tone of our voice is heard by the interviewee and he decides whether it matches our words or whether they are a mask that the tone of our voice is heard.
- 2) Knowing ourselves; trusting our ideas.
  - a) The more we know about ourselves, the better we can understand, evaluate, and control our behavior and the better we can understand and appreciate the behavior of others.
  - b) As we become more familiar with ourselves, we may feel less threatened by what we find.
  - c) As we continue to examine, discover, and explore, it is possible for us to grow and change.
  - d) Such an attitude will help the interviewee to trust us.
  - e) Having accepted what we are, shall feel no need to hide behind a mask.
  - f) Will sense that we are not hiding; as a consequence will hide less.
  - g) He will feel liked and may reciprocate our feeling.
  - h) We need not be preoccupied with ourselves but can concentrate wholeheartedly on the interviewee.
    - i) Can be free to listen.
    - ii) Be genuinely interested because nothing in us gets in the way of what comes from him.
  - i) Trusting our own ideas and feelings constitutes another important internal condition.
    - i) Relatively comfortable with ourselves and concentrating on the interviewee, we shall find that ideas and feelings will well up in us.
    - ii) We ought to listen carefully to these ideas and feelings of ours as well as to those

- coming from the interviewee.
- j) Voicing our feelings and ideas as ours will help rather than hinder.
- 3) Being honest; listening and absorbing.
- a) If we did not hear or understand something by being absorbed in ourselves, we could not listen to him.
  - b) We become aware we were not completely with him; far better to say so than to act as if we had been there.
  - c) Most interviewees feel best with interviewers whom they perceive as human beings with failings. Makes it easier to reveal their own fallibility.
  - d) Reciprocal honesty of this kind may at times involve telling the interviewee that we do not have the solution to his difficulty.
    - i) May need to decide at what point honesty borders on imprudence.
    - ii) May genuinely feel that the interviewee is arrogant or dependent, but it may not be appropriate or helpful to him to state it in that way or even to state it at all.
  - e) Beginning interviewers are often so concerned with what they will say next that they find it difficult to listen to and absorb what is going on.
  - f) Life space.
    - i) Best that we do not impose our life space on that of the interviewee.
    - ii) Don't confuse ours with his.
    - iii) We behave in a manner which will enable him to explore his own life space because of our presence and not in spite of it.

# LESSON TWO

## Stages of the Interview

### Introduction

- 1) The helping interview is more an art and a skill than a science, and every artist must discover his own style and the tools with which he works best.
- 2) Style matures with experience, stimulation, and reflection.

### Opening the First Interview

#### Interviewee initiated.

- 1) Let him state what lead him to come.
  - a) If someone has asked to see us and has come, it is better to let him state in his own words just what brought him, what in particular is on his mind.
  - b) Help him get started and listen just as hard as possible to what he has to say.
- 2) In beginning, interviewee may not know what help you can give him.
  - a) May know but not able immediately to verbalize it.
  - b) May know but hesitate to state it bluntly so soon.
  - c) May not know whether he likes he idea of having to come for help (what connotation the word "help" has for him).
  - d) Probably best to help as much as possible without using the word.
- 3) Trouble with word "problem."
  - a) May not have a problem.
  - b) May not have thought of it as such till we put the word into his mouth.
  - c) The word "problem" is heavy; something to shy away from rather than to confront.
- 4) At onset, small talk may be helpful to interviewee to get started. Should be attempt only when feel it will be helpful.
- 5) Interviewee may not be sure who is to take the lead.
- 6) Only the interviewee knows for what purpose he has come and what he wishes to discuss.

#### Interviewer-initiated.

- 1) Both a rule and a danger.
  - a) Rule: State at the outset exactly what led you to ask the interviewee to come see you.
  - b) Danger: Can turn into monologues or lectures or a combination of the two.
    - i) can avoid this danger if careful to stop after we have indicated the purpose of the interview.

- ii) the interviewee will usually have a great deal to say if he feels we are ready and willing to listen to him.
- iii) if we want good communication, should see that the interviewee has the opportunity to express himself fully. The only way to discover if and how he has understood us; what he thinks and how he feels.

### **Explaining Our Role**

- 1) Best not to involve the interviewee in the intricacies of our role, profession, or professional background.
- 2) If our role comes up for discussion, it will usually be in terms of what we can or cannot do. Should be explained when such a situation arises.

### **Making Use of Forms**

- 1) May be necessary, but information called for is too often reluctantly given and prejudgmentally received.
  - a) Forms may come between interviewer and interviewee.
  - b) Best to have necessary forms filled out during and as an integral part of the interviewing process.
- 2) If the form is lengthy, complicated, or both, the interviewer may want to arrange a special meeting with the interviewee to work on it together.
- 3) A good initial relationship can be built up if both partners in the interview accept the procedure in this manner.

### **The Time Factor**

- 1) Our culture measures much in terms of time and sets a great deal of value on time.
  - a) The more time a client waits, the more he wonders if we have forgotten him.
  - b) Appointments should be kept on time or a good and sufficient reason provided.
- 2) You usually tell people explicitly or implicitly how much of your time is theirs.
  - a) Provides important framework for the interview.
  - b) This is preferable to continuing without saying anything but feeling increasingly pressed.
- 3) When several interviews are involved, the time factor becomes part of the general atmosphere, part of the relationship.
  - a) Some go on not realizing they are repeating themselves.
  - b) Should not rush interviewee, but we should make clear to him the time available so that he can orient himself within it.
  - c) Both should feel comfortable within the time framework.

- d) If you interview several persons in one day, allow a few minutes between interviews to write or fill in your notes, think over what has gone on, or relax and get ready for the next person.

### **Three Main Stages**

#### **1) Initiation or statement of the matter.**

- a) In the initial stage, the matter of the meeting is stated.
- b) This phase generally ends when both understand what is to be discussed and agree that it should be.
- c) Other points may arise; may be replaced by another subject. When more at home, may allow himself to discuss what the real matter is.

#### **2) Development or Exploration.**

- a) Once matter stated and accepted, looked into and explored.
- b) The main body of the interview has now been reached and most of our time will be spent in mutual looking into the matter.
- c) Learning from past interviews.
- d) Questions:
  - i) Did you help the interviewee open up his perceptual field as much as possible?
  - ii) Did you help the interviewee move from an external to an internal frame of reference?
  - iii) Did you let the interviewee explore what he wanted to in his own way, or did you lead him in a direction you chose for him?
  - iv) Did you go along with the interviewee, or did you force him to go along with you?
- e) Silences.
  - i) Most beginning interviewers find silence hard to bear.
    - (1) seem to think it's their fault.
    - (2) think it must be remedied at once and at any cost.
  - ii) Many kinds of silences.
    - (1) to sort out his thoughts and feelings.
    - (2) what is revealed may be tragic, shocking, or frightening. Need to absorb it to the depths in mutual silence.
    - (3) confusion may lead to silence.
    - (4) silence of resistance.
    - (5) brief silences or short pauses during which the interviewee may simply be searching for more thoughts and feelings to express.
- f) Personal examples can hinder.
  - i) My personal experience or example holds meaning for me; maybe not for interviewee.
  - ii) In presenting my own experience, I may unintentionally be threatening the interviewee.
  - iii) A less confronting way is to draw upon the experiences of others by means of

generalization and depersonalization.

iv) Avoid:

(1) "Well, you know, everyone has to go through this sooner or later."

(2) "If I were you, I should..."

(3) "I know just how you feel."

### 3) **Closing**

a) Two factors are basic:

i) Both partners should be aware of the fact that closing is taking place and accept this fact.

ii) During closing phase, no new material should be introduced.

b) Help him by indicating that closing is imminent.

c) There are reasons for avoiding the introduction or discussion of new material at the closing stage.

i) To close in spite of the presentation of new material at the end of the interview is easier when both sides know that another meeting is scheduled.

ii) Interview most helpful when limited in time and when both partners accept and work within this time structure.

d) Styles of closing.

i) Ordinary courtesies will suffice to bring interview to an end.

ii) May wish to refer back to the matter discussed in the interview with a concluding statement.

iii) Occasionally, a more explicit summation is required to check whether you and the interviewee have understood each other.

iv) Ask the interviewee to state how he has understood what has been going on in the interview.

v) May want to point up matters that were mentioned but not discussed because of lack of time.

vi) When definite plans have been made during the interview, may be well to recap them briefly during closing.

# LESSONS THREE AND FOUR

## Attitudes and Behaviors

### Introduction

- 1) Everyone brings along with him attitudes in terms of which he functions.
- 2) These attitudes influence what he does or leaves undone and in what manner he accomplishes his task.
- 3) In terms of his attitudes he determines his own behavior as well as that of the interviewee.
- 4) Attitudes represent our philosophy regarding both help and interviewing.
- 5) At best, the helping interview will provide the interviewee a meaningful experience leading to change.
  - a) The experience is the relationship with you.
  - b) Change is what hopefully results from this relationship.
    - i) Change in his ideas.
    - ii) Change in his feelings about himself and others.
    - iii) Change in the information he possesses about a topic important to him.
    - iv) Change in himself as a person.
  - c) Two basic questions:
    - i) What sort of change do we wish to help bring about?
    - ii) How can this best be accomplished?

### Type of Change Desired

- 1) One upon which interviewee can build.
- 2) The change in which we are interested involves learning.
  - a) Useful information--cognitive or emotional.
  - b) New facts and ideas or more realistic feelings and attitudes.
- 3) Helping can take place in three main areas:
  - a) Information and resources.
  - b) Self-awareness and awareness of others.
  - c) Personal growth.

### How to Help Effect Change

- 1) Help through behavior which creates an atmosphere of trust; feeling respected.
- 2) Help through behavior which demonstrates that we consider him responsible for himself, his actions, thoughts, and feelings.

- 3) We act in a way that will help him become more aware of himself, his life space, his own frame of reference.
- 4) Want to help him learn that change is possible but that it is up to him to decide if and when and how to change.
- 5) We behave in a way that will prove least threatening for him.

## **The Interviewer**

- 1) Plays a vital, active role.
- 2) Is and acts as a genuine person.
- 3) Wants the interviewee not to become dependent on him, but to rely more and more on himself.
- 4) Shows respect for the interviewee.
- 5) Accepts the interviewee.
- 6) Genuine likes the interviewee.
- 7) Understands the interviewee.
  - a) Three ways of understanding.
    - i) Understand about him.
    - ii) Understand him, not through the eyes of others, but through our own.
    - iii) Understanding with another person.
      - (1) understand how the other person feels, thinks, and sees the world about him.
      - (2) means ridding ourselves of our internal frame of reference and adopting his.
  - b) Listening.
    - i) Requires that we not be preoccupied.
    - ii) Involves hearing the way things are being said, the tone used, the expressions and gestures employed.
    - iii) Effort to hear what is being hinted at; what lies beneath or beyond the surface.
    - iv) Listen with our ears, eyes, mind, and heart.
    - v) Listening with understanding must be learned and practiced.
    - vi) Goals of listening:
      - (1) How interviewee perceives himself.
      - (2) What he thinks and feels about people in general.
      - (3) How he perceives others relating to him.
      - (4) How he perceives the material to be discussed.
      - (5) What his goals are.
      - (6) What defense mechanisms he employs.
      - (7) What coping mechanisms he uses.
      - (8) What values he holds.
- 8) Empathy.
  - a) Means feeling yourself into, or participating in, the inner world of another while remaining yourself.
  - b) Willing to temporarily abandon own life pace and try to think and act and feel as if the

- life space of the other were his very own.
- c) Not same as sympathy.
    - i) Sympathy involves sharing common feelings, interests, loyalties.
    - ii) Can run the gamut from pity and charity to sincere compassion for another.
  - d) Not to be confused with identification.
    - i) When identify with another, wish to be like him.
    - ii) Wish to erase myself and to substitute the self of the other.

## **The Interviewer's Behavior**

- 1) Humanness.
  - a) Ought to behave as a human being.
  - b) Should be neither puppet nor technician.
  - c) Cast aside any masks or facade.
  - d) Should bring self into interview in open manner.
  - e) Should not be afraid of revealing himself.
  - f) Must be sincere, genuine, congruent.
  - g) Must learn to become more sensitive to what takes place in the interview.
- 2) Professional and Personal Ethics.
  - a) Unless confronted by values different from our own, unless called upon to defend and justify ours, we tend to take them for granted and their propriety as obvious.
  - b) Ultimately the client will have to choose in which direction to go, what values to adopt, and what values to discard.
  - c) Should not hide our values. Should state these simply and frankly as being ours, here and now.
  - d) Two crucial limitations.
    - i) Cannot morally encourage disclosure about values, attitudes, and behavior unless we are certain that we can guarantee confidentiality.
    - ii) May find it impossible not only to share the client's values but even to grasp them. Life-style may clash deeply with the values I hold.

## **Recording the Interview**

### **Note-taking**

- 1) Note-taking an integral part of the interviewing process.
  - a) Refresh our memory.
  - b) Remind us to carry out our part of an agreed plan of action.
  - c) To discuss the interview with professional colleagues.
- 2) Meaningful reason for keeping records may be to enable us to follow our own growth and development.

- a) To show us what we have done or left undone.
- b) How we have behaved in a given situation or with different interviewees under various circumstances.

## **Many Different Approaches**

### **Some “Don'ts”**

- 1) Don't turn note-taking into cross-examination.
- 2) Don't hide behind or escape into note-taking.
- 3) Don't be secretive about the taking of notes lest this arouse the anxiety or curiosity of the interviewee.
- 4) Don't write things you are not prepared to have him see.

## **The Ethics of Note-taking**

- 1) What do you do with notes?
  - a) Interview is assumed to be confidential.
  - b) This trust must be kept.
  - c) Remains of the interview, such as notes, are confidential as well.
  - d) May be shared only with professional persons whose task is to help us to be as effective as possible.
- 2) Honesty Essential
  - a) If notes to be used for research, we should state this at the outset.
  - b) Should not promise confidentiality unless can provide it.

## **Tape Recording**

- 1) Not just notes; a complete record of what has been said, as well as visual record of what has taken place.
- 2) Primary use for learning or research.
- 3) How will interviewee react?
  - a) After the first few minutes he will not react to it at all for he will no longer notice it.
  - b) Fact of taping should not be concealed.
  - c) If interviewee objects, should respect his feelings.
- d) Interviewee listening to tape can help him acquire a deeper appreciation of its seriousness, clarify for himself his purpose in it, and obtain much significant insight.
- e)

## LESSON FIVE

### Questioning

#### Questioning the Question

- 1) Some interviewers consider it their primary role to ask questions.
- 2) Perhaps we ask too many questions, often meaningless ones.
  - a) Ask questions that confuse the interviewee, that interrupt him.
  - b) Ask questions the interviewee cannot possibly answer.
  - c) Ask questions we don't want the answers to; do not hear the answers when forthcoming.
- 3) If begin the helping interview by asking questions and getting answers, asking more questions and getting more answers sets up a pattern from which neither we nor the interviewee will be able to extricate himself.
  - a) Teach him that in this situation it is up to us to ask the questions and up to him to answer them.
  - b) May readily adapt himself to this arrangement.
  - c) This tells the interviewee that we are the authority, the expert, and that only we know what is important and relevant for him.
    - i) Interviewee submits to this treatment only because he feels that you have the answers and this is the only way you have of helping him.
    - ii) Now you have the answers to your questions; now show your tricks.
    - iii) If you don't have the answers, what right did you have to ask questions?
  - d) The question-answer pattern does not create the atmosphere in which a warm, positive relationship can develop.
    - i) Where interviewee may discover more about himself, his strengths, and his weaknesses.
    - ii) Where he has opportunity to grow.
- 4) There are times we should pose questions.
  - a) We should be aware of the fact we are asking questions.
  - b) We should challenge the questions we are about to ask and weight carefully the desirability of asking them.
  - c) We should examine carefully the various sorts of questions available to us and the types of questions we personally tend to use.
  - d) We should consider alternatives to the asking of questions.
  - e) We should become sensitive to the questions the interviewee is asking, whether he is asking them outright or not.
  - f) Will the question I am about to ask further or inhibit the flow of the interview?

#### Open vs. Closed Questions

- 1) The open question is broad; the closed question is narrow.
- 2) The open question allows the interviewee full scope; the closed question limits him to a specific answer.
- 3) The open question invites him to widen his perceptual field; the closed question curtails it.
- 4) The open question solicits his views, opinions, thoughts, and feelings; the closed question usually demands cold facts only.
- 5) The open question may widen and deepen the contact; the closed question may circumscribe it.
- 6) The former may open wide the door to good rapport; the latter usually keeps it shut.

### **Direct vs. Indirect Questions**

- 1) Direct questions are straight queries; indirect questions inquire without seeming to do so.
- 2) The indirect question usually has no question mark at the end, and yet it is evident that a question is being posed and an answer sought.

### **Double Questions**

- 1) Never helpful in the interview.
  - a) At best, limits interviewee to one choice out of two.
  - b) At worst, confuses both him and the interviewer.
- 2) Interviewee does not know to which of the two questions to reply.
- 3) Examples:
  - a) "Do you want coffee or tea?"
  - b) "Do you wish to live with your mother or your father?"
  - c) "Do you prefer carpentry or housepainting?"

### **Bombarding**

- 1) Here the tool becomes a weapon wielded against the interviewee.
- 2) Interviewee feels caught in a hailstorm of questions.
- 3) Example:
  - a) "Well, why don't you answer? Do you need more time to think? Isn't there anything you can say? Didn't I make myself clear enough? Do you think that I don't know what has been going on or that I don't care? Would you rather I stop asking? Would you rather I leave you alone for awhile?"

### **On the Other Hand**

- 1) What if the interviewee addresses me? What if he probes or bombards me with questions?
- 2) Ought not reply to every question.

- a) May betray someone else's confidence to do so.
- b) Should treat every question with understanding and be as helpful as possible.
- c) Not every question demands an answer, but every one demands respect.
- 3) Interviewee may conceivably question us about areas of interest to him:
  - a) Others.
  - b) Ourselves.
  - c) Himself.
  - d) Seeking information.
    - i) Ought to supply information requested when it is feasible and appropriate to do so.
    - ii) Should also realize there is possibly something behind and beyond the question which is worth getting at.
- 4) Interviewee's questions about others.
  - a) When the other person has been known to both the interviewer and interviewee prior to their present contact.
  - b) When the person is known to the interviewee only.
  - c) When as a result of the helping relationship the interviewer meets the other person, known previously to the interviewee only.
- 5) Interviewee's questions about us. Answer directly when appropriate; do not take over the stage for long, and revert to him as soon as possible.
- 6) Interviewee's questions about himself.

## **“Why”**

- 1) So often been used that it has been distorted.
  - a) Once a word employed in search of information.
  - b) Signified the investigation of cause or reason.
  - c) Today, the word “why” connotes disapproval, displeasure.
    - i) Communicates that the interviewee has done “wrong” or has behaved “badly.”
    - ii) Interviewee will act predictably negatively; implies blame and condemnation.
    - iii) May feel need to defend himself, to withdraw and avoid the situation, or to attack.
- 2) For children:
  - a) “Why” unlocks the mysteries of the world; enables them to explore and discover.
  - b) Stop using the word for inquiry and begin to employ it against others the way it has been used against them.
  - c) Most of the time, the answer is “because.”
- 3) Regardless of the interviewer's intended meaning, “why” is too often perceived as “Don't do that” or “I consider this bad” or “You ought to be ashamed.”
  - a) Will withdraw into himself, attack, or rationalize.
  - b) Will not feel free to explore and examine but feel threatened.

## **Concluding Reflections**

## **How to Use Questions**

- 1) Unless seeking specific information such as filling out forms, questions should be as wide open as possible.
- 2) Should be single, not double questions.
- 3) Should be stated as succinctly as possible and still remain clear and understandable.
- 4) Better to be indirect than direct.
- 5) After we have asked the question, we ought to stop right there and wait for and listen to the answer.

## **When to Use Questions**

- 1) When we have been unable to hear, listen, or understand for one reason or another. Better to be honest and inquire than to substitute for missed words those we surmise were spoken.
- 2) When we have questions as to whether we have been understood by the interviewee
- 3) May want to phrase a question to assist the interviewee in clarifying or exploring further a thought or feeling he has been expressing.
- 4) May need further information to understand more fully.
- 5) May feel it necessary to ask something that may assist an interviewee who finds it hard to continue talking although he seems to have more to say.

# LESSON SIX

## Communication

**Without communication, there would be no interview.**

### Defenses and Values

- 1) The less defensive we become, the more we shall help our interviewees discard their defenses.
  - a) Authority as a defense.
    - i) Some convenient defenses:
      - (1) "Teachers are never wrong."
      - (2) "The doctor knows best."
      - (3) "Adults have more experience."
    - ii) Alternative is atmosphere where each human being fully respect the other.
  - b) Test results as a defense.
    - i) Hide behind diagnoses and test results; we lose sight of the person and in his stead see the category into which he has been place.
    - ii) Equally qualified experts may arrive at different diagnoses.
    - iii) Not all medical doctors are in agreement on diagnoses.
  - c) Judging as a defense.
    - i) Encourages us to rationalize our behavior rather than come to grips with it.
    - ii) Judge interviewee as "uncooperative," "a trouble-maker," "aggressive," etc.
    - iii) Could he be acting the way he is because of us?
- 2) The more obstacles to communication, the more arguing shows up. This arguing is getting us nowhere, so we might as well stop.

### Dealing with Obstacles

- 1) Amount You Talk
  - a) If you talk as much or even more than the interviewee, chances are that you are blocking communication from him to you.
    - i) Quite likely you are acting like the authority; as the superior.
    - ii) May be lecturing interviewee without considering his frame of reference.
  - b) If you talk too little (about 10%), you may want to look into this.
    - i) Are there many pauses, awkward silences?
    - ii) Do you say so little because you are reluctant to get in interviewee's way?
    - iii) Do the two of you feel comfortable that you are talking so little?
  - iv) If the little you say enables the interviewee to release feelings and express ideas, you

may have achieved good rapport.

- 2) Interruptions
  - a) Do you tend to let the interviewee finish what he has to say, or do you finish it for him?
  - b) Do you interrupt because you are quick to catch his intent?
  - c) Are you bored and simply cut him off?
  - d) After interruptions, what happens to the flow of the interview?
  - e) Should be aware of interruptions of interviewee; could indicate we have not understood him.
  - f) The helping interview is not an exercise in manners except insofar as we wish to use it to teach manners.
    - i) Sensitivity on our part may assist us to find the causes.
    - ii) If we really wish to hear the interviewee, the best thing is to stop and listen.
- 3) Responses
  - a) Am I responding to what the interviewee has expressed or what he should have expressed?
  - b) Do my responses enable him to express himself further?
  - c) Are my responses a help or a hindrance to the flow of his talk?
- 4) Forces and Facets
  - a) Any topic discussed usually has several facets.
    - i) Do I assist him to see, discuss, and cope with as many of these as possible?
    - ii) Am I helping the interviewee to explore all the aspects of his conflict, or does my behavior impede his doing so?
  - b) By posing questions may remove impediments to communication.

### **When Interviewee Won't Talk**

- 1) If the interviewer is interested in the interview, he will usually talk if we let him or encourage him a bit.
- 2) Not everyone wishes to be helped and not everyone can be helped in the helping interview.
- 3) If interviewee stops talking after relationship established:
  - a) Perhaps he has finished.
  - b) Maybe interviewer has thrown obstacles into his path.
  - c) Perhaps the interviewee has come up against obstacles in himself that hinder him from going further.

### **Preoccupation with Self**

- 1) A basic factor in communication relates more to the interviewer's behavior than to the interviewee's.
  - a) As interview proceeds, interviewer may be concerned about what he's going to say next.
  - b) May so absorb your attention that you will not genuinely listen to the interviewee.
- 2) What comes forth spontaneously as the result of truly listening may not be polished, but will

be perceived as genuine.

- 3) We may be concerned with how we appear instead of being satisfied with what we are.
  - a) More concerned with demonstrating our role rather than revealing oneself.
  - b) With being perceived as superior rather than behaving as an equal.

## LESSON SEVEN

### Responses and Leads - I

Basic difference in the way individual interviewers lead and respond, and this will become evident when one examines the particular style each interviewer develops and finds most congenial.

- 1) When I respond I speak in terms of what the interviewee has expressed.
  - a) React to ideas and feelings he has communicated to me with something of my own.
  - b) When responding, tend more to utilize the life space of the interviewee.
  - c) Interviewer keeps the interviewee at the center of things; leading keeps interviewer central.
- 2) When I lead, I take over.
  - a) I express ideas and feelings to which I expect the interviewee to react.
  - b) Leading may be response to what has already occurred in the interview or to the least statement made by the interviewee.
  - c) When leading, I make use of my own life space.
  - d) A very directive lead may be helpful in a situation in which neither recognition nor reflection of feeling is helpful.
- 3) Listening with understanding is not passive.

### Interviewee-centered Responses and Leads

- 1) **Silence.**
  - a) Can be nonverbal response, but can express a great deal.
  - b) A gesture on the interviewer's part may communicate:
    - i) "Yes, I'm with you, go on."
    - ii) "I'm waiting, sensing that you have not finished,"
    - iii) "You've said that before; I'm beginning to get bored."
  - c) Silence may be pointing up misunderstanding.
  - d) Unless the interviewer is very sure of his ground, he should avoid extensive silences; a minute of meaningful silence is quite lengthy.
- 2) **"Mm-hm"**
  - a) Though not a word, clearly an uttered sound.
  - b) Generally considered to indicate permissiveness on the part of the interviewer.
  - c) "Go on, I'm with you."
  - d) May also indicate approval of what he is doing and continue to encourage him to go on.
- e) The "mm-hm" seems noncommittal on the interviewer's part but does not necessarily imply that he refuses to commit himself. That may come later.

f) In meantime, way simply indicate that interviewer is prepared to listen further.

**3) Restatement**

a) Interviewer uses actual words, but they are those of the interviewee.

b) Restatement intended as an echo, to let the interviewee hear what he has said on the assumption that this may encourage him to go on speaking, examining, looking deeper.

c) Communicates: "I am listening to you very carefully, so carefully, in fact, that I can restate what you have said. I am doing so now because it may help you to hear yourself through me.

d) Restatement can be effected in four basic ways.

i) Restating exactly what has been said without even changing the pronoun the interviewee has used.

ii) Restating exactly, changing only the pronoun.

iii) Restating part of what has been said, the part the interviewer feels to be most significant and worth having the interviewee hear again.

iv) Restating in summary fashion what the interviewee has said (a selective process).

**4) Clarification**

a) Commonly understood to mean the interviewer's clarification for the interviewee of what the latter has said or tried to say.

i) The interviewer remains very close to what his partner has expressed but simplified it to make it clearer.

ii) The interviewer in his own words tries to clarify for the interviewee what the latter has had difficulty in expressing clearly.

b) Clarification also concerns the need of the interviewer to have things clarified for him.

**5) Reflection**

a) To reflect the feelings and attitudes of the interviewee demands deeply empathic listening and understanding.

b) Serves as a mirror in which the interviewee can see his feelings and attitudes reflected.

c) When restating, the interviewer tells the interviewee what he has said.

d) When reflecting, he verbalizes what the interviewee feels.

i) Should not be confused with interpretation.

ii) The interviewer perceives feelings and verbalizes them; functioning like a mirror or an echo. The interviewer adds nothing of himself.

iii) When reflecting, the interviewer neither guesses nor assumes.

e) Will usually be accepted by interviewee because it simply consists of putting into words the feeling tone of what he has just said.

f) Interviewer translates into words the feelings of the interviewee.

**6) Interpretation.**

a) The interviewer's frame of reference now comes into focus.

i) If he has spoken hitherto, has simply verbalized what the interviewee has said or felt.

ii) At this point, the emphasis shifts.

iii) Move slowly but surely from responses to leads.

iv) Bringing ourselves onstage.

b) Interpretation of two kinds.

i) The first is based on the internal frame of reference of the interviewee.

ii) The second is based on the internal frame of reference of the interviewer.

- 7) Explanation.
  - a) An explanation is a descriptive statement, though may include evaluative overtones.
  - b) Interviewer may utilize explanation as a lead or as a response to interviewee statements and questions.
  - c) Orientation to situation.
  - d) Explanation of behavior.
  - e) Explanation of causes.
  - f) Explanation of interviewer's position.

### **Interviewer-centered Leads and Responses**

- 1) Encouragement.
  - a) Our attitude, our approach, our responses are all meant to support and reinforce the interviewee and reinforce him in his efforts to change in a direction meaningful and worth while for him.
  - b) Wish to assist him in coming closer to reality and to his own self in order that he may explore his present situation and determine his future goals.
  - c) Encouragement a type of lead (at times it is a response) in which encouragement is verbally and openly expressed.
  - d) In leading, we must be conscious that we are doing so and know whom we are leading and to what end.
    - i) Must be prepared to retreat once we realize that we have not been helpful.
    - ii) Must lead in such a way that the interviewee can release himself from our grasp, if he so chooses, without feeling he has hurt or offended us.
- 2) Assurance-reassurance.
  - a) Used to tell the interviewee in words that we believe in his capability to act and overcome obstacles, to face up to his situation successfully.
  - b) Showing him that we can see further ahead than he, that he can safely place his trust in us, that it is up to him to act but that he requires a little pat on the back from us to help him on his way.
- 3) Suggestion.
  - a) A mild form of advice.
  - b) Its overtones tend to be tentative and vague.
  - c) Interviewer proffers a possible line of action.
  - d) Suggestion does not demand compliance nor threaten the interviewee with rejection should he not follow it through.
  - e) Suggestion provides the interviewee with the interviewer's considered opinions but leaves him leeway to accept, refuse, or propose ideas of his own.
  - f) Purpose may be to stimulate the interviewee to think and plan for himself.
  - g) When this is the interviewer's sincere intention, suggestion communicates: "I think my idea is a good one and may work. It's up to you, of course, to decide."
  - h) It is equal speaking to equal, one of whom may possess more information, knowledge, or

experience but is not determined to force it on the other.

- 4) Advice.
  - a) A matter of personal philosophy.
  - b) Essentially telling someone else how to behave, what to do or not do.
  - c) May be offered directly or indirectly; nonthreateningly or as an ultimatum.
  - d) Aim is to gather all possible thoughts and feelings from the interviewee concerning the subject on which he wants advice.
  - e) If I feel I have the right on moral, professional, or simply human grounds to give advice, I should say so openly and clearly.
    - i) it is essential as well that the interviewer ask himself whether he has a need to give advice, in specific instances or generally.
    - ii) Such a need may interfere with the interviewee's struggle to decide what is best for him.
  - f) Should decide to what extent the interviewee feels he cannot decide alone.
  - g) It is often easier to advise than to become more deeply involved in the struggles of another.
  - h) Interviewer should ask himself a few final questions:
    - i) "Do I know enough about what is involved to give advice?"
    - ii) "Do I possess enough factual information, as well as sufficient knowledge of the expressed thoughts and feelings of the interviewee, so that my advice will be sound and meaningful for him?"
    - iii) "How does the interviewee perceive, understand, and react to it?"
    - iv) "How do we feel when our advice is accepted and it doesn't work?"
      - (1) do we have to defend our own wisdom, or do we seek to understand what is happening to the interviewee?
      - (2) what if our advice works for the interviewee and he returns for more?
    - v) Those interviewers who insist on giving advice even when it is unsolicited tend to be the ones who resent it most when the advice is rejected or misunderstood.
    - vi) When advice has been given, it should be followed up.
- 5) Urging.
  - a) Closely related to persuasion and cajoling.
    - i) Is a lead or response for the purpose to prod the interviewee, to not let him escape what he should not evade.
  - b) Urging involves supporting in order to strengthen the interviewee's determination to carry out whatever it is that both partners have discussed.
  - c) Urging frequently takes place after advice has been accepted by the interviewee or at least has not been rejected outright.
  - d) Positive:
    - i) Our support and belief in the interviewee may strengthen him sufficiently to enable him to act.
    - ii) Should always check whether we are supporting and showing belief in the interviewee or in our own advice.
  - e) When you discover that you are urging, take note of the effect this produces on the interviewee.
- 6) Moralizing.

- a) Moralizing is a mixture of advice giving and urging.
  - i) When the interviewer simply advises and persuades, he relies on his own judgment.
  - ii) When he moralizes, he resorts to new weapons; he brings more powerful ammunition into action. Designed to make the interviewee “see the light.”
  - iii) Moralizing can be overwhelming.
    - (1) at best, it helps the interviewee see how society judges him, how others look upon his behavior.
    - (2) at worst, it blocks examination of self and self-motivated action and stifles further expression of feelings and attitudes. Can result in insightless submission or stubborn defiance.

# LESSON EIGHT

## Responses and Leads - II

### Authority Leads and Responses

We have witnessed a gradual change of attitude on the part of the interviewer we have moved along a continuum until we have arrived at the present point in our discussion.

- 1) Starts from a position in which the interviewee is central throughout the interviewing process and gradually shifts to the opposite position, in which the interviewer emerges as the central figure.
- 2) At one end of the continuum, the interviewer sees the interviewee as responsible for himself, as his own authority over himself.
  - a) Tend to consider interviewee as equally.
  - b) Listen to him, try to understand him empathically, and accepts him as he is.
  - c) Attempts to clarify, to describe rather than evaluate, the thoughts and feelings expressed by the interviewee.
  - d) Does his best to eliminate communication obstacles and is ready to assist the interviewee to move in the direction of meaningful change.
  - e) Does not impose own ideas and feelings on the interviewee but presents them as coming from an interested participant.
- 3) Finally, the interviewer occupies the center of the interviewing stage.
  - a) The interviewer sees himself as the authority.
  - b) He accepts the responsibility for what occurs in the interview and behaves and acts accordingly.
  - c) He defines his role as a helping one; to help means to guide, to instruct, and if necessary, to coerce.
  - d) His authority derives from his knowledge, his skills, and his position and must be openly employed for the benefit of the interviewee.
  - e) He is clear about values; knows right from wrong; good from bad; proper from improper; and says so in no uncertain terms.
  - f) Listens to interviewee and does his best to understand him; but he knows that, sooner or later, he will have to act and is prepared to do so.
  - g) Once he has decided on the course of action he does not hesitate to instruct the interviewee in which direction to move.
- 4) Different arrangements:
  - a) Agreement-disagreement.
    - i) Tells the interviewee whether in his opinion the latter is right or wrong.
    - ii) Relying heavily on his own experience and background, he states his position.

- b) Approval-disapproval.
  - i) Not question of right or wrong, but of good or bad.
  - ii) The interviewer expresses a value judgment when, from his frame of reference, this seems appropriate.
- c) Opposition and criticism.
  - i) When the interviewer opposes, he is saying no to a contemplated course of action.
  - ii) When he criticizes, he unambiguously expresses his displeasure with the interviewee's "bad" conduct or "mistaken" action.
- d) Disbelief.
  - i) Does not necessarily imply that the interviewer suspects the interviewee is lying.
  - ii) Does assume that the interviewee's perception of a given situation is incorrect or distorted and that the interviewer can detect this and present an undistorted, more objective view.
  - iii) The interviewer may intend to encourage the interviewee by showing him, even through sarcasm, that things cannot possibly be as bad as he describes them.
  - iv) Informs interviewee that he can evaluate the situation more soundly and authoritatively and that the interviewee would do well to be guided by him.
- e) Ridicule.
  - i) Related to disbelief, but the lead or response is sharper, more sarcastic.
  - ii) Interviewer condescendingly instructs the interviewee for the purpose of demonstrating how absurd he and his perceptions are.
  - iii) A form of teasing that aims at shaming the interviewee into behaving "sensibly" like "other people" such as the interviewer.
  - iv) "Yes, I am deliberately making fun of you so that you may be able to shake yourself free of your silly conceptions and act in a manner beneficial to yourself.
- 5) Contradiction.
  - a) "It isn't so. It is otherwise. This is how it is."
  - b) He is saying "no," "wrong," "bad," to what the interviewee has expressed.
  - c) He is certain of his ground and lets the interviewee know and feel this.
- 6) Denial and Rejection.
  - a) Denial and rejection are the most extreme.
  - b) Rebuffs the ideas, thoughts, and feelings of the interviewee, and in so doing, he may well be rebuffing the interviewee himself.
  - c) He is telling the interviewee that unless his thinking, his attitudes, his behavior, change, nothing can be achieved in the interview.

### **Open Use of Interviewer Authority**

- 1) Now reaching the phase in which the interviewer makes open use of his authority.
  - a) He assumes complete responsibility for what occurs in the interview and dominates the situation accordingly.
  - b) He acts out his authority position.
  - c) He is the determining figure in the interviewing process.
  - d) His attitudes are central.

- e) In addition to expressing these attitudes, he acts upon them openly and unambiguously, assuming that if the interviewee can be thus coerced, he may eventually be helped.
- 2) Scolding.
    - a) When scolding, the interviewer interprets and evaluates the ideas, feelings, and actions of the interviewee.
    - b) The interviewee needs correcting; and in the hope that a verbal thrashing will do the trick he administers it without delay.
  - 3) Threat.
    - a) The interviewer notifies the interviewee of the steps he will take should the interviewee continue along his present path.
    - b) He will mobilize the power at his command, which of course, is greater than any the interviewee can muster.
  - 4) Command.
    - a) Here the interviewer unequivocally orders the interviewee to follow his instructions.
    - b) He acts on the assumptions previously mentioned.
    - c) The interviewee needs to be marshaled by a firm hand, and the interviewer is best qualified to accomplish this task.
  - 5) Punishment.
    - a) The interviewer feels he must chastise the interviewee for some impropriety of deed or attitude, brandishes the power and influence implicit in his role.
    - b) May even claim to be helping the interviewee, although the latter may not appreciate this at the moment.
  - 6) Humor.
    - a) When appropriately used, humor can be as helpful as many other leads or responses, if not more so.
    - b) Do not mean sarcasm, ridicule, or cynicism.
    - c) Rather, thinking of light touch of humor which stems from empathic listening and which reflects a positive outlook on life.
    - d) Sometimes it results in our spontaneously laughing with the interviewee; at other times, in our provoking laughter in him.
    - e) Now and then it is an anecdote which fits the situation will produce no obstacle to communication but may serve to ease tension and lighten the atmosphere.
    - f) Referring to spontaneous, not artificial, humor--something very natural, not contrived.