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October 21, 2010

The Power of Persuasion

I recently had the pleasure of speaking to Chris St. Hilaire, the author of "27 Powers of Persuasion: Simple Strategies to Seduce Audiences & Win Allies," for a new article on Monster+HotJobs, "The Art of Persuasion in Your Job Search."

I'm enthusiastic about his approach to persuasion, which is very simple, and which is fundamentally about positivity: making other people feel good about themselves makes them feel good about you.

One of my favorite tips in the book embodies that notion well (and is a little "gem" of a job-interview tip, I think): You know how when you go to a job interview and the hiring manager asks you if you'd like something to drink? St. Hilaire says you should ask for a glass of water. He explains, "People want to do something nice for you, but not too much. This is a surefire way to make them feel good about themselves without inconveniencing them."

Other tips that didn't make it into the article (due to a shortage of space) include tips on actively liking people (when you like someone, it helps him or her like you): St. Hilaire says, "I really, really like the people that I interview with, and part of that comes from practice."

He says that in any meeting, you should find one thing to like about everyone in the room. In some situations, that will involve a mental adjustment: "Every trait can be viewed two ways ... when you flip negative to positive, stubborn becomes resolute, skeptical becomes careful," and so on.

He also advises job seekers to turn their own negatives into positives, and to address them forthrightly. In the book, he likens this to something we often see in politics: a politician turning the weakness of "inexperience" into the strength of "being outside a corrupt political system," for instance.

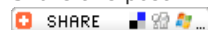
You can do this with your own "weaknesses"--for instance, a long gap between jobs. Before going into an interview, prepare a succinct story about how you've been spending your time between jobs (or addressing whatever your "weakness" is). He says the trick is to think about the effect your weakness has on the way you interact with the world, and identify the positives in that effect.

(For tips on filling resume gaps, see "Fun Ways to Beef Up Your Resume.")

Other good tips from my notes that didn't make it into the article include "if you need to fidget, wiggle your toes" and "let others finish a question before you start to answer." Also, don't forget to breathe.

Get more strategies and tips on having great job interviews.

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Posted by Charles Purdy on October 21, 2010 at 06:59 PM in Interview , Job Search , Networking | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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