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Handy Hints

BY BREANNA LEUZE

SIX HANDSHAKES TO AVOID AT THE INTERVIEW

Have you ever shook someone's hand and thought to yourself what just happened? What were your thoughts of the person? Did you feel like you were shaking a wilting flower or someone's hand was full of what you think, was lotion? How did it make you feel?

Remember how we discussed you have 30 seconds to make an impression on the person interviewing you?

Your handshake is the start of your body language with the interviewer. Consider this a top concern. The handshake is the start of the bond between two people.

In the Paleolithic era, a caveman would greet others with open hands to demonstrate they were not going to attack or club others. In Greece, there are sculptures of Hera and Athena shaking hands to demonstrate peace. In most cultures, the handshake represents an act of goodwill and peace.

Your handshake says a lot about you as a person. Are your hands sweaty? Maybe you are a nervous nelly? Are your hands cold, maybe you have poor circulation? Are your hands super dry and rough, maybe you work with your hands often and do not use lotion? You may think the handshake is pretty simple, extend with the right hand, clasp, pump, shake three times and release. What is the worst that could happen? Here are six examples of common handshakes and what could go wrong.

The Sweaty Betty

Are you nervous and get sweaty hands? Unfortunately, there is not much you can do to avoid this. As an interviewer, I can assure you, no one wants to shake hands with sweaty Betty. The only thing I have on my mind is, where is the hand sanitizer? Before you lock into the handshake, discretely wipe your hands on your clothing.

Another option is using baby powder and putting a little, and I mean a little on your hands after you wash them. The baby powder will help to soak up the dampness. You do not want to go and shake the interviewer's hand and leave them with what appears to be a chalk handprint on their hand. Deep breaths, and try to control your breathing. This should help to calm your nerves.

The Wilted flower

Have you ever went to shake someone's hand and it feels like a limp spaghetti noodle or dying flower? Aside from telling you not to be that person, there is another reason. Having a faint, limp wristed hand shake demonstrates you have zero confidence in yourself or you are really tired.

I will share with you however, different cultures have different styles. As an example, the Japanese prefer someone with a delicate handshake. Some cultures prefer not to shake hands at all. For all intents and purposes, have a firm, handshake and grip.

Death Grip

When you lean in to shake someone's hand, make sure you do not crush it. You are not interviewing for the WWE. Aside from potentially hurting the person, you are interviewing with, an over the top death grip handshake can demonstrate that you are overly aggressive and a bully. Quick, firm grip, not a grip that is going to break a bone.

The Nosy neighbor

Have you ever had that neighbor that follows you around your yard doing yard work and won't leave you alone? It gets weird, fast. Remember this simple rule. Shake the hand three times and call it done. Do not be the person that gives the person you are interviewing with carpal tunnel and an awkward moment. If you are guilty of this, it may show you have the inability to walk away and will be at places longer than you should, like the water cooler.

Slide, Slide, Slippery Slide

You shake hands with someone that just put on lotion that you are allergic too, and now you smell like Aunt Gene's parlor. Was that enjoyable? Not likely. Please, do not be the interviewee that sends the interviewer into anaphylactic shock because they are allergic to peanuts and you had peanut oil in your lotion. Or, you put so much lotion on, you go to shake hands and end up at their elbow.

The Failure to Launch

Let's say you go in and decide to shake someone's hand. But it is damp, cold and slippery and you are not sure if that tiny speckle is a wart or a booger. You are terrified. You pull your hand away so quick you barely shake hands. That was probably the wrong move. Once you go in for the shake, you commit and see it through.

Close the Deal

How do you close the hand shake? Look into the person's eyes, smile, shake for three and say nice to meet you