

## The job interview is about sympathy

The goal of recruiters is to find the most suitable person for a job in interviews. The aim is to make a decision as objectively as possible and to eliminate everything that stands in the way of a fact-based assessment. Therefore, sympathy must not play a role in professional employee selection! Does this really make sense?

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Recruiters and hiring managers tend to give preference in job interviews to applicants who are similar to their own nature. This is known as the similar-to-me effect. In order to avoid this observation and judgement error, the recruitment process is designed according to selection criteria that are as objective as possible. Because reality shows that teams act more successfully when the team members are different, or in new terminology, diverse.

### Factual and relationship level

Applicants seem to take this particularly to heart in job interviews, wanting to come across as neutral and professional as possible. Personality is hidden behind a professional façade. However, one level is neglected: the relationship level, which exists in every interpersonal communication alongside the factual level. And the relationship level (emotional level) dominates the factual level (intellectual level). If the chemistry between two people is not good, the exchange on the factual level does not work either. That's why job interviews start with small talk to establish a good conversational atmosphere. Pleasantries are exchanged; recruiters inquire about the journey;

applicants thank you for the friendly welcome and compliment on the beautiful premises, etc.

### And it is all about sympathy

Most applicants go along with this, as it is a normal warm-up phase in a conversation with strangers. When it comes to the content of the interview, many neglect the emotional level. They communicate mostly in the abstract and try to come across as pure achievers. They answer questions the way many other applicants do. As a result, their personality remains invisible. Recruiters, however, are not looking for abstract skills and knowledge, but for people with certain experiences and specific knowledge. Sympathy as a positive emotional attitude towards other people (Duden definition) only arises because of similarities. When applicants become visible as people with similar experiences, recruiters and hiring managers develop sympathy. This is why stories of professional challenges passed are so effective. Descriptions of disappointments you have learned from or shortcomings you have learned to deal with also create resonance.

Because never forget: recruiters and hiring managers are also people with strengths and weaknesses, with experienced highlights and defeats, with fears and shortcomings. And nothing could frustrate them more than to meet a person who is simply flawless, only successful and above all.

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