Job Interview Poise: Using Alexander Principles in Everyday Life

What does your body language say about you? Confident? Aggressive? Uncomfortable? Sloppy? Uptight? Are you sure, for example, it's what you want to communicate about yourself in a job interview? Are you (even a little) collapsing toward a slump, listing to one side, puffing your chest out or jutting your chin forward? Is it possible you aren't consistently aware of what you communicate by how you use yourself? Is your use "really" you, or is it primarily a habit of posture that you acquired a long time ago that has stuck? What can be done if we are communicating an unwanted impression?

Many were brought up believing the best way to make a good impression is to stand up straight, sit tall and look the other person in the eye. Unfortunately, this often is an almost militaristic rigidity...chin tucked, shoulders back, etc. This not only can give an impression of inflexibility, but it is difficult to maintain, and can actually lead to back, shoulder and neck pain.

A job interview can be compared to a stage performance. Strong internal and external pressure to do well and make a good impression often leads to feelings of fear and anxiety, which lead to pushing against these feelings by over-exerting and tightening the muscles throughout the body, including the vocal mechanism. The fight, flight or freeze/startle response in which the head pulls back and down in relationship to the neck then often becomes exaggerated.

Wouldn't poise be a more desirable behavior in such a situation? The Merriam Webster definition of poise is: "Balance: to hold or carry in equilibrium." Most of us came into the world with poise, i.e., effortless support of the head, lengthened spines and flexible joints. The Alexander Technique helps you regain natural poise by teaching you body awareness and how to undo unnecessary tension by using constructive thinking rather than muscular effort.

Preparing for a job interview can include knowing your habitual body language. Practicing poise can defeat body use patterns giving the wrong impression, thereby allowing effective communication so vital to success.