

On job interviews and gorillas

Sometimes applicants tell the most exciting and interesting things in interviews just when their interviewers are not listening. It makes a difference when we tell something. Find out what this is all about and what it has to do with Gorillas.

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There is a famous experiment "Gorillas in our midst" by psychologists C. Chabris and D. Simons (book: The Invisible Gorilla). Test persons were given the task of watching a film scene in which two teams threw basketballs at each other. And they were asked to count how often a particular team had possession of the ball. At the end of the experiment, they were not only asked how often the team had control of the ball. The psychologists also wanted to know if they noticed anything else. After the participants answered in the negative, they were asked more specifically if they had not noticed the gorilla moving across the field. All the test persons again answered in the negative. Only the repeated viewing of the video convinced them that a man dressed as a gorilla was indeed moving through the scene, stopping and drawing attention to himself with wild gestures.

Tell when your listener is ready

How is it possible that the participants missed something so obvious? Apparently, we only see what we expect to see. And all the more so when we focus on something very concrete. That in itself is a helpful ability. In goal-oriented perception, we block out everything that is not relevant

for the moment. In this way, we concentrate our energies on the goal and only perceive selectively.

This poses a danger in job interviews. Applicants often try to place important information in the interview to show their suitability for the position in question. If they do this at the wrong moment, their inputs go unnoticed. When interviewers ask questions, they are fully focused on all the information that answers the question. Everything else is blanked out like the gorilla in the experiment. And there is another disadvantage: Applicants will not tell their concern a second time if the opportunity arises, because they assume it has already been received. Important information is thus lost in the interview.

It already didn't work at school

You may know this phenomenon from school. You couldn't think of the answer to a certain question. So, you wrote down a lot of what you had learned in the hope that it would make the teacher feel better. But here, too, the rule was: only the knowledge that was reproduced at the right time, i.e., after the relevant question, scored points.

Therefore, in the interview, always answer the questions you are asked. And wait patiently for the moment when your interview partners are ready to receive your prepared information.

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