

Are you still tapping or are you already telling?

The psychological experiment "Tapping melodies", described by Chip & Dan Heath in the book «Made to stick», illustrates one of the most common mistakes in job interviews: assuming too much knowledge from the other person.

Peter Näf

The arrangement of the exercise is as follows: Two subjects form a team. One person taps the beat of a melody with his fingers on the table. The other person has to guess the melody. So far so unspectacular.

What do you think: How many melodies do the listening test persons recognise on the basis of the tapping signs of their counterparts? The researchers asked the test persons exactly this question before the experiment. After many repetitions of the experiment, the estimates averaged over 50%. In reality, the recognition rate is in the low single digits. What is the reason for this striking misjudgement? The tapper hears the melody in his head while tapping the beat with his finger. And he unconsciously assumes that his counterpart is on the same audio track and hears the same thing as he does. However, his conversation partner moves in his own mental background noise and hears only tapping.

Knocking Arrangement Job Interview

When I first read about this experiment, I had to laugh out loud. It reminded me of job interviews. Job applicants often describe their stories in a

similar way: They give some clues and leave it to their counterpart to make up his or her own mind. Or to put it another way, they give a few taps and leave huge holes in between for their interviewer to fill with meaning. Most of the time, we don't realise that we are watching an inner film that our counterpart can't see. We give too little information for our conversation partners to get a realistic picture.

Take me with you into your film

Communicating understandably requires that you pick up your conversation partner and take him or her into your world. When you speak to a little child, you do so automatically. You know that she has too little experience to form a clear picture based on a small amount of information. You will therefore tell her exactly what is going on. We often shy away from doing the same with adults. We don't want to bore them with too much information or take them for fools by telling them seemingly obvious things. Don't worry! When it comes to your experiential world, your counterpart never has enough prior knowledge.

If at your next job interview your interviewer looks at you a little confused, she may not be questioning what you are saying. It could simply be that you should tap less and tell more.

[#Job interview](#), [#Storytelling](#), [#Strengths](#)

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