

- Informal talk time: Just attending to the business of "cream and sugar, etc." can be another level of small talk.

For all these reasons, the "hosting" posture you can attain by offering something to drink or personally arranging for coats, gear, and so on to be cared for is a valuable adjunct to the ice-breaker aspect of the Opening segment.

Visitor

What if your host doesn't offer and you're nervous and need a little more time to get into your subject? It's really quite all right to say something like "You know, this is the first moment I've had all day. I'd just love to get myself a cup of coffee before we begin. Okay?" But pick your host. If he/she is formal and snappish, swallow and go on!

Body Language

For both sides, this is a *great* clue giver as to the general attitude toward the encounter and what else you might want to do to counteract what you see. These are the areas to look at:

How They Sit

- Forward on the edge of the seat = tension, anxiety.
- Lounging back = not necessarily relaxed. Sometimes this is an attempt to *look* relaxed. Need other clues to verify this.
- Changing positions = too much movement means they literally can't find a comfortable place; it's hard to settle down. Sometimes the result of the adrenals overflowing at the beginning of a meeting.

Or—it could mean they're getting impatient . . .

Hands

• Clasped = perhaps tense, but notice *how* tightly they're clasped. Do they open and close their fingers? Another sign of tension and nervousness. For some people, clasped hands are a sign of orderliness and doing things correctly, like in school, remember?

• Open and relaxed = a good indicator that this person *is* feeling in control.