Have an Interview? Boost Your Confidence with Power Poses
By: Karla Franco

As students, whether for a job or an internship, we will be interviewed at some point in our academic lives. Being interviewed is one of the most intimidating experiences I have had in my college career. The thought of someone in power judging me based on my few job experiences, appearance and speech was overwhelming, it scared me. I needed to overcome my insecurities because I knew that if I did not I would not be able to progress career-wise.

Along the course of my college years I took a sociology class and discovered that I was absolutely fascinated with human behavior. I loved observing people and I often found myself questioning the reasons behind their actions. Human behaviors then lead to a special interest in body language. Body language allows us to make social interpretations up close and from a distance (Reed 2003). Many times you can have a good sense of what someone is feeling by paying attention to the body. When observing people’s actions you can interpret emotions from the nonverbal cues of body posture (Kana 2012). This is when I realized that body language applied to me as well. If I was feeling insecure before an interview it was visible through the way I was unconsciously posturing myself.

For a long time I felt hope was lost. Even if I tried to appear confident I could not fake it because my body language would show I was not confident. Then I came across an article that caught my attention simply based on the title: “Power Posing: Fake It Until You Make It”. I was already aware of the famous “Fake it until I make it” quote. This quote is about confidence. To better explain, this quote is about pretending to have confidence until you pretend it enough that the confidence becomes real and allows you to achieve your goals, dreams, aspirations, etc. Now, I had always thought that confidence was not something you could fake, you either have it or you don’t but the fact that I found a scholarly article claiming the exact opposite intrigued me.

This article became more interesting to me when I read that it was about body language and people who suffered low self esteem. Ding! Ding! Automatically this became relatable. When it came to job interviews, I definitely had low self esteem. There was an experiment conducted by social psychologist Amy Cuddy on the effects of high-power and low-power posing. She assigned forty-two random female and male participants to a high or low power pose group. The high-power pose group was assigned to hold different high-power poses for two minutes each. The poses are show below:
The low-power pose group was assigned to hold different low-power poses for two minutes each as well. The poses are shown below:

(Cuddy 2010)

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Saliva samples were taken before and after the experiment to measure testosterone and cortisol levels. Cuddy found that high-power poses for both men and women decreased cortisol by twenty-five percent and increased testosterone by nineteen percent. In contrast, low-power poses increased cortisol by seventeen percent and decreased testosterone ten percent for both men and women (Carney 2010). In simpler words, holding the high-power poses caused higher levels of power and dominance hormones we have in our bodies and lowered the stress hormones we have as well. The low-power poses caused the opposite effect. Body language comes in congruence with body posture, and their feelings seem real (Stefano 1977) they truly felt more confident.

Body posture has a strong impact over the way you feel and what this study has shown is that you can physically make yourself confident by exercising these poses. At first, I did not think much of this experiment, but then I realized most people of authority pose all the time. Whether they do it consciously or not, these kinds of people expose their confidence through power posing.

(Left to right: Beyonce, Oprah, Mick Jagger)

We see celebrities pose all the time. Maybe because we see them while performing we don’t see them as “posing” but they are. Even successful non celebrities power pose, entrepreneurs such as Kevin O’Leary and Kelly Cutrone show their dominant body postures.

Kevin O’Leary (Chairman of O’Leary Financial Group)
At first, I felt ridiculous posing in my room before interviews but I found that these poses did work for me; however, I personalized the exercise. From my experience, posing while watching my favorite artists is what helped me the most. Whether it was a singer, comedian, or actress I would just see the brilliance in their performance or interview and found myself gravitating to their confidence. I think when we see and hear those we admire we somehow feel the energy they transmit in their distinct performances. The combination of artists performing plus power posing really helped lift my spirits. I felt as confident and powerful as the person I was listening to.

This is what I wanted to share with you, the students. Fortunately for me I have been able to achieve confidence and I want you to be able to achieve it as well. If you feel nervous about that next interview, try these poses before hand, they really do help. You can personalize the exercise as I did, watch what makes you feel confident and pose, do what makes you feel good about yourself and pose! The next time you have an interview I want you to feel like you are the best thing walking into that building, because you are.

Bio: Karla Franco is majoring in Business Administration and concentrating in Management. She will graduate, Spring 2015.
Sources:


