

***So You Want To Be An Interpreter? 4<sup>th</sup> edition***

***Study Guide: Chapter 8***

***Transcript***

**1. Philosophical Approach**

***SPEAKER #1***

*<laughter>* I'm, I'm just trying to think...I think that, you know, when I was first starting out it was, maybe, kind of labeled a philosophy and I think that I've gotten more to the place where it's just, it's more comfort and I, I really like to be able to trust. I think that working with people is, is, um...more...almost...is more my skill than even the interpreting part of it and so I like to think that I'm, um, I'm intuitive in the...in the sense that, in this situation maybe, maybe more of a 'helper model' would be more like what we should be working towards...or maybe it should be more mishy model..but I, I think I'm somewhere between all of those. You know, sometimes it's more, I mean, if you're in, you know, if you're in a medical situation, if you're in an operating room with someone, you may be doing things that are more helper but it's just the appropriate thing to do...and if I was to not...if I was to not to do it, it would cause more of a problem than if I am to do it. So, I, I think I'm constantly weighing, you know, how well...okay, I'm going to do something, I'm not sure if I should be doing it or not, in my role. Okay, so if I don't do it, what's gonna to happen? Is the situation gonna be better or worse? Um, so I, I, you know, I don't know if there's just one philosophy, necessarily that I follow, but more that I'm aware of them, I think...and that, depending on the situation, depending on the people involved, that maybe I'm, I kind of travel between...from one to another.

***SPEAKER #2***

I don't necessarily follow one particular philosophy but I try to draw from all of them, uh, depending on who I'm working with, what the context is, how much background information do the consumers have in this particular setting. Uh, I don't think that I often am in 'helper model', very seldom...but occasionally I'll, I'll do things that I think, well, that was very much like 'machine' or 'conduit', uh, philosophy...and I'm quite intrigued now with the idea that, although we still talk a lot about bi-cultural/bi-lingual...that there's other philosophies that are starting to emerge, um, which talk a lot more about...well, 'ally', of course, was talking about power but then also, the whole relationship idea...um, I'm quite intrigued with that one because I think I do some of the things that would fit that philosophy but I haven't had a way of talking about it until now.

***SPEAKER #3***

Um, I believe that I do what I need to do to get the interpretation across...so, um, without explaining...so the Deaf person or the hearing person will understand but, um, I, I will make cultural changes so if somebody says something and I realize that's true in that culture but that doesn't exist in this culture, then I, I will do what I need to do to get that across. Um, if this person...whatever their goal is, why are they saying what they're saying, I will make sure that I can, I know how to do the same goal in, in the other language. So, if they want to form a closer relationship, or distance themselves, or discipline somebody, or compliment somebody then I will make sure that I doing it so that that goal is achieved. Um, I will, um, advocate for what my needs are as an interpreter, uh, so that the Deaf person will get the message across, um, or the hearing person. So, I won't...if somebody tells me to sit at the back of the room, I will advocate for what my needs are. So, it is bi-lingual/bi-cultural approach? I, I think so but also I know what my, my responsibilities are as a citizen within the Deaf community and that I, I, I take my responsibilities quite seriously. Um, and I would say that I...it's probably more of a bi-lingual/bi-cultural approach than anything.

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***SPEAKER #4***

I think I'm in more of the bi/bi, um, 'machine' model I don't like because of that fact that, you know, we're not machines, we're humans and we do have feelings, and we do, um, we're not robots...and so I don't know how a person can go into their work just being that way. Um, you know if, say, you're in a medical appointment and the Deaf person has just had a rough time, how can you just leave and not, you know, just, even to ask them are you okay, can I call somebody for you, um, to come pick you up or something...you know, um, that to me is just human nature and, and for someone to just walk in and just say, okay, bye, is, to me, is just disrespectful. You just gotta find that certain boundary in which you know you can leap from or you know when to step back and, um, just making sure you know that boundary is there and, and, and following your gut, saying ahhh, no, if I say this it's gonna go a bit too far, better keep it to myself...or saying, ohhh, this person's having a really tough time, better ask them how they're doing, you know...and, and I think that's, that's normal, that's human nature.

***SPEAKER #5***

I endeavor to subscribe to the bi-cultural/bi-lingual model of an interpreter and, to me, it's just ultra-important that Deaf person has complete control of, well, of most of the situation because I'm, you know, I'm interpreting for them. The hearing person will have control too but because of, like, so many things involved in cultural and the dominate culture, the hearing person is naturally gonna have control and, myself as a hearing person as well, will also have a fair amount of control. So, to me, it's ultra-important that I somehow convey to the Deaf person that they have independence and freedom and that, whatever happens in this situation, shouldn't depend on me but it depends on them.

**2. Description of GOOD Terps**

***SPEAKER #1***

*This portion of the study guide includes captions with English voice over.*

***SPEAKER #2***

To me, a good interpreter is someone who is, um, a citizen in the community and by citizen I mean, um, somebody who knows, as a...as an interpreter, as a hearing person what their role is, what their rights are, and what their responsibilities are within the Deaf community and are able to, um, carry that with them into their job. Um, and, and to not, um...try to take on roles that aren't theirs or try to...or try to abdicate responsibilities that are theirs by the fact that they are hearing and by the fact that they're an interpreter. So, I think, um, somebody who's very clearly aware of what their...of what all of that is, is a good interpreter. I think what we need is to have...is a good interpreter is someone who's fluent in both languages, ASL and English. Um, also a good interpreter is somebody who knows, um...how to socialize in both communities in an appropriate manner. Um, a good interpreter is someone who, then, knows how to interpret, how to be able to process a message, analyze it for meaning, drop form and produce the equivalent message in the other language. Um....so I think all of those things...and, and in...in addition to all of the professional aspect, an interpreter, a good interpreter, knows how to, um, adhere to the code of ethics. So, I think it's all of that but the beginnings have to be in fluency in the language and to know how to socialize within the communities and that's what I mean by being a good citizen...knowing what the roles and responsibilities are.

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*SPEAKER #3 - #6: Signed by a Deaf speaker with English voice over.*

*SPEAKER #7*

I think a good interpreter loves language, um, and they love people...and they are, uh, fascinated and, sort of, um, always drawn into exploring further what makes us human and how communication plays a role in that and how language, um, shapes our experience and how experience shapes our language. So, I...I think a really...a good interpreter, um, is energized by all of ...all of, all of that thought and one thing I always like to say is that a good interpreter is a sponge and you're the sort of person that likes to soak up whatever you can, wherever you can. You've got a whole bunch of files in your head because you never know when you're gonna draw on any of your previous knowledge or experience and so you just live life that way...sucking it up...no <laughter>....SOAKING it up! <laughter> Oops!

*SPEAKER #8*

*This portion of the study guide is signed by a Deaf speaker with English voice over.*

### **3. Tips for New Interpreters**

*SPEAKER #1*

In my recent years of experience, um, working with new interpreters because I think this has changed over the years with the program being more developed...in my recent years, my number one thing is please admit your mistakes. Um, I, I constantly see new interpreters who muddle through translations or interpretations and they make errors and when we talk about it afterwards, they realize they made the errors...and I say, why didn't you stop and they go, I don't know...and that's something that, they need to stop because one mistake grows into another, grows into another, and it snowballs, and what happens is the community doesn't have that time to trust you. In fact, most, um, most Deaf community members that I've ever worked with say the best interpreters are the ones that, that interrupt at the right time, the ones who ask for clarification at the right time. Um, and so for new interpreters, I expect them to admit to their mistakes because I think that allows for more personal growth in their field. Um, being able to, you know, work as a team player, um, being able to, uh, be a good model for the interpreting profession. They have to realize that when the Deaf community talks about interpreters, they clump us into this one group and so when we have one bad apple, it's unfortunate but, within the community, because it's a 'stereotype', you know, marginalized community, it makes it look bad for every single interpreter, even if you've got, you know, 15, 20 wonderful interpreters...the one poisons that within the Deaf community and so we all have to strive to make sure that that interpreter does get better.

*SPEAKER #2*

*This portion of the study guide is signed by a Deaf speaker with English voice over.*

*SPEAKER #3*

I think my own advice is to have fun, um, to laugh at your mistakes, 'cause there's gonna be many and they're gonna be quite funny..and to realize that it's an interpretation and it's not about you...and to make that separation and learn that separation really clearly in your career. That, um, your interpretation may need work but that's an indication of your interpretation, not of who you are and to be able to separate that...and to be able, just, be quite reflective and be

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able to look at your work and think what worked, what didn't work, and how do you want to work on getting better at some of the things you've been able to identify.

*SPEAKER #4 -#7: Signed by a Deaf speaker with English voice over.*

*SPEAKER #8*

I guess my advice to a new interpreter would be to be open. Um, I think our whole lives are a learning journey and you never know it all, not even close...and, um, the older I get the more I appreciate, um, how much I don't know, how much I haven't experienced, and how I can always add to my files every day. So, um, for a new interpreter, I think, just be prepared to be, to be that sponge that soaks up everything you can as, as you go through, um, your life, whether that's at work or in any situation.

*SPEAKER #9*

It's funny because yesterday I was working somewhere and one of the hearing people asked me how long I had been doing it and how long did it take me to learn it. I said, how long did it take me to learn it? I, you know, I can't answer that yet because I'm not finished learning and I guess my biggest piece of advice for a new interpreter is you're not ready yet...and honestly, I didn't feel, I, those butterflies didn't stop until 2 years ago. After 7 years of interpreting, I felt like, okay, I'm really ready and there's not too much that I would turn down. You know, and you have to be willing to say no to an assignment and pass it on to somebody who's gonna do it more justice...and my other big piece of advice, if I can get on my soapbox for just one minute, is join your professional association. Uh, you might wonder what they do for you but...all you need to do is look at where interpreting is now as a profession and that's what they have done for you...and if that's not enough for you to commit to your professional association and give back to it, then I don't know what is...and if you are wondering what they, what your professional association can do for you, why not join and make it do something for you...become active it and then you won't have to wonder anymore because you will be doing that something.

**4. What I NEED**

*SPEAKER #1 - #7: Signed by a Deaf speaker, with English voice over.*

*SPEAKER #8*

I once had a conversation with my Deaf friend over the telephone using one of the telephone, uh, data people. That was an incredibly frustrating conversation. Not only did it take a long time...you cannot communicate voice tone...you can't communicate enthusiasm, you can't communicate those kinds of things. I would think that there may be a similar difficulty using an interpreter unless they can communicate and get in to them my enthusiasm for my subject, my value for the listener...some of those kinds of things. The communication isn't going to happen the way that I need it to.