



(Im)politeness Strategies in Workplace Interviews – A Case Study of Characterization in *The Pursuit of Happyness*

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Abstract

The Pursuit of Happyness is a famous movie directed in 2006 about the life struggle of Chris Gardner. This paper would analyse an excerpt of *The Pursuit of Happyness* to explore how (im)politeness characterizes Chris Gardner with Brown and Levinson's politeness model and Culpeper's impoliteness model. The excerpt is the scene when Chris has just left the prison to attend the interview for a broker internship. This paper argues that impoliteness reflects Chris's underprivileged background while the use of politeness characterizes honesty, respect, confidence, humor, and wit. Despite his inherent rudeness stemming from his attire, his lacklustre educational background, and his limited stock market expertise, Chris managed to project a positive image and win the interviewers over with well-executed politeness strategies. The well execution of politeness strategies allows one to gain favours from people of higher status without compromising one's morality. Although politeness theories are originated for real-life encounter in the Anglo-American world, they also play a vital role in characterisation in western popular culture. This paper aims to complement existing literature on the implementation of (im)politeness theories in digital discourse. Future research can focus on macro-analysis across multiple discourses, cross-cultural differences in characterisation, and discourse analysis with new politeness models.

Keywords: characterisation, discourse analysis, impoliteness, politeness

1. Introduction

Language is essential for daily communication, people should be able to utilize the degree of politeness appropriate for different situations (Isabella et al., 2022). The relationship between (im)politeness strategies and character development in literature, film, and other mediums, provides a nuanced way to investigate the complexity of characterisation. Politeness, or lack thereof, acts as a revealing lens through which characters' origins, ideals, and intentions can be revealed. This essay explores how (im)politeness characterizes the protagonist, Chris Gardner, in *The Pursuit of Happyness* with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness model. The 2006 biographical drama *The Pursuit of Happyness* is based on the true story of Chris Gardner, a struggling salesman who overcame many

obstacles to succeed. This film is selected for analysis because it explores the American Dream, showing how, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, success and upward mobility can be attained through hard work, perseverance, and seizing opportunities. In particular, the scene extracted from *Live By Inspiration* (2020) is one of the most iconic movie clips on the Internet. It depicts Chris having just left prison to attend an interview for a broker internship. The dialogues in this clip clearly illustrate how Chris is the embodiment of the American Spirit. Chris often used politeness to contrast with harsh and hostile environments he encountered. Fitria et al. (2020) asserted that in order to foster a positive rapport between both interlocutors, speakers must possess the ability to select a variety of communicative techniques. Studying how politeness is used for characterization in *The Pursuit of Happyness* is crucial as it helps one understand how to win favours without the expense of integrity in an encounter with interlocutors of greater status. Last but not least, analysing characterisation helps readers understand the plot thoroughly. Characterisation determines the success and appeal of a literary work to the audience, the success of a playwright is determined by how he or she draws characters (Demiray and Şekerci, 2024). To have a better grasp of the plot, one must discover the speaker's true meaning and intention behind every utterances (Du, 2022).

Research Question: How does (im)politeness characterize the protagonist, Chris Gardner, in *The Pursuit of Happyness*?

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper utilizes Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of facework and emphasizes how positive and negative politeness strategies shape the protagonist, illustrating how Chris Gardner uses different strategies in relation to sociological variables, including their social distances and relative power. As for Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness model, this paper focuses on how positive impoliteness portrays Chris's difficult background. These two models provide a balanced framework for analysing both positive and negative linguistic behaviours in the interaction. By applying these models, the analysis reveals the underlying strategies Chris Gardner employs to navigate the high-stakes interview setting.

2.1.1. Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Model

Brown and Levinson provided (1987) a politeness theory that offers a thorough framework for examining the complex dynamics of politeness in communication. The core of their theory is the concept of "face," which represents a person's public self-image and identity. Face is the public version of oneself that one wishes to project. On one hand, the desire to be liked, understood, and appreciated is known as the positive face. On the other hand, the desire to be unrestricted is reflected in the negative face. The theory defines face-threatening acts (FTAs) as behaviours that have the potential to damage another person's face, whether positively or negatively. These actions include making requests, issuing orders, criticizing, and disagreeing to name but a few. In response to potential offense, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed five superstrategies to mitigate face threats during interactions. Details are as follows:

i. Bald on record

The most straightforward, unambiguous, clear, and succinct manner is to perform an act baldly without recourse. This strategy does not reduce threats to the listener's face. The speaker immediately expresses their intentions to the interlocutor. It is the most effective for avoiding miscommunication, but it is considered impolite because it threatens the interlocutor's face. Generally, a FTA will only be executed in this manner if the speaker has no fear of reprisals from the addressee.

ii. Positive politeness

Positive politeness is directed toward the listener's positive face. It makes the listener feel appreciated and wanted. Claiming a common ground, conveying cooperation, and fulfilling listeners' desires are three main directions for positive politeness strategies.

iii. Negative politeness

Contrarily, negative politeness orientates toward the listener's negative face. It makes the listener not imposed. Being direct, not assuming, not coercing, highlighting the intention not to impinge, and redressing various wants of the listener are common methods to demonstrate negative politeness.

iv. Off record

Off record politeness uses vague language and removes any chances for being imposing. The ambiguity refers to the use of conversational implicatures, triggering the violation of the maxim of relevance, quantity, quality, and manner.

v. Not doing the FTA

This strategy prevents the speaker from saying anything that will potentially offend the listener.

2.1.2. Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Model

Culpeper (1996) examined Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model. In contrast to other models that study the interactions to maintain harmony, he developed an impoliteness theory that characterizes offense and rudeness in social interactions. He further proposed that each politeness superstrategy has its counterparts, and he pointed out how impoliteness should not equate to the absence of politeness. Similar to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, the concept of face is incorporated. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are central to Culpeper's impoliteness model because they actively challenge the interlocutor's faces. Details are as follows:

i. Bald on record impoliteness

Bald on record impoliteness is an explicit offense without any mitigation. It does not concern the listener's face. The FTA is conducted in a straightforward, clear, unambiguous, and concise manner.

ii. Positive impoliteness

Positive impoliteness damages the listeners' positive face and it emphasizes superiority over the other interlocutor. It is frequently used in real life to demonstrate the speaker's authority. Overtly hostile language, threats of violence, or overt insults intended to denigrate the addressee are examples of positive impoliteness strategies.

iii. Negative impoliteness

Negative politeness damages the listeners' negative face, making them feel restricted under scrutiny. Negative impoliteness strategies violate the addressee's independence and autonomy by giving orders directly, cutting someone off, or making disparaging comments that neglect their rights and sentiments.

iv. Sarcasm or mock politeness

Sarcasm or mock politeness is the insincere use of politeness strategies in superficial discourse, mocking the listener in reality.

v. Withhold politeness

Withholding politeness is the lack of politeness that is expected. For instance, neglecting greetings from peers and colleagues are vivid examples.

3. Methodology

Discourse analysis enables the dissection of texts by focusing on how language functions in various communicative contexts (Neumann, 2008). It is particularly useful for understanding language as both a social and communicative tool (Trappes-Lomax, 2004). This paper conducts a qualitative discourse analysis on an excerpt from *Live By Inspiration* (2022). In this scene, Chris showed up for an interview to apply for an unpaid internship at Dean Witter Reynolds, a prominent stock brokerage. This study examines Chris Gardner's characterisation with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness model.

The initial phase in the analytical procedure is data collection and transcription. The selected video excerpt is obtained from YouTube and transcribed on a MacBook Air, and the transcription procedure begins with transcribing the dialogue, addressing both spoken exchanges and major nonverbal indicators such as pauses and gestures. These nonverbal aspects are included since they frequently contribute to the characters' polite and impolite behaviours. The full transcription is included in the appendix for references. Following transcription, the data are framed by two theoretical models: Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness theory. The transcription is then systematically coded, each turn in the discussion is analysed for linguistic markers indicating politeness or impoliteness. Brown and Levinson's politeness method (1987) includes the use of indirect language, mitigating expressions, honorifics, and reverence. In contrast, Culpeper's impoliteness method (1996) covers interruptions, contemptuous words, sarcasm, and direct challenges to face. By coding each turn for these qualities, the study is able to map the politeness and impoliteness methods utilized throughout the dialogue, allowing a more in-depth analysis of Chris Gardner's character representation. Once the politeness and impoliteness strategies are identified and categorized, the analysis focuses on their interpretation in relation to Gardner's personality. Politeness strategies are linked to moments where Gardner attempted to maintain professionalism, present himself favourably, or navigate the power asymmetry between himself and the interviewer. In contrast, impoliteness strategies are connected to instances where tension escalates. The situational context, the hierarchical relationship between Gardner and the interviewer, and the stakes of the interview, are carefully considered in interpreting these linguistic choices. In the final stage of the analysis, the identified patterns of politeness and impoliteness are synthesized to draw conclusions about Gardner's character. The systematic application of Brown and Levinson's and Culpeper's models provide a comprehensive understanding of how Gardner's linguistic behaviour in the scene contributes to the portrayal of his personality.

4. Literature Review

To analyse how (im)politeness characterizes characters in *The Pursuit of Happyness*, literature on (im)politeness and characterization in different movies and fiction is reviewed. While existing scholarship heavily utilized Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, another

branch of scholarship interpreted impoliteness more than bald on record politeness, they drew on Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness model to complement Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model for their analysis.

4.1. Characterization in *Scent of Women*

Culpepper (2014) evaluated *Scent of Women* with (im)politeness models. He focused on two characters, Charlie and the Colonel. Initially, Charlie always implemented politeness strategies in his encounter with the Colonel. He was portrayed as a stereotypical "nice" guy. Meanwhile, the Colonel utilized mostly impoliteness strategies towards Charlie. He was characterized as a rude and grumpy old man. What interesting is that the use of (im)politeness between two characters changed throughout the story (Culpeper, 2014). After Charlie stopped the Colonel from committing suicide with an abundance of impoliteness strategies, the Colonel did not use any impoliteness strategies anymore. The shift in the habitual use of (im)politeness reflects their relationship dynamic. Charlie's use of impoliteness demonstrated his bravery underneath his usual persona. He gained the Colonel's respect after the aforementioned incident. In short, (im)politeness characterizes social relations.

4.2. Characterization in *Enduring Love*

Kizelbach (2023) evaluated McEwan's novels with (im)politeness models. In *Enduring Love*, (im)politeness is used to characterize Jed's mental illness. The constant drastic shift from politeness towards impoliteness reflected Jed's dramatic mood swings (Kizelbach, 2023). For instance, Jed wrote sweet love letters to Joe when he was happy while he was physically violent towards Joe in the restaurant. They are the reflections of his mental illness, known as de Clérambault's syndrome. Kizelbach (2023) suggested McEwan portrays Jed's religious obsession, craziness, and paranoia through Jed's implementation of (im)politeness strategies.

4.3. Characterization in *Mother*

Mirhosseini et al. (2017) analysed *Mother* with (im)politeness models. They applied (im)politeness models, which are based on Western literature, into Iranian context. In their analysis, they found out how male characters utilize more impoliteness strategies while female characters utilize primarily politeness strategies even in light of impoliteness. The prevalence of impoliteness is an extension of male's dominant power in Iranian society (Mirhosseini et al., 2017). Henceforth, (im)politeness reflects gender inequality in a patriarchal society.

4.4. Characterization in *A Doll's House*

Demiray and Şekerci (2024) examined the characterization in *A Doll's House* with (im)politeness models. The research (Demiray and Şekerci, 2024) discussed the dramatic interactions of the main characters who live in a patriarchal society, Nora and Helmer, with linguistic and discourse analysis. On one hand, Helmer wielded domineering and authoritative male power as a protector, breadwinner, and home head. Nora, on the other hand, was a housewife without financial independence. Demiray and Şekerci (2024) argued that Nora transformed from a subservient, timid, and obedient character to a rebellious and independent character, while Helmer became more passive, tolerant, and accepting. The change in politeness of their corresponding discourse indicates the change in the couple's relationship dynamic.

4.5.Characterization in *The Croods*

Using the Descriptive method based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, Qoriah (2019) identified, classified, and described the politeness strategies and cooperative implicature used by different characters in *The Croods*. Dialogues of different characters, including but not limited to Grug, Guy, Ugga, Thunk, and Gran were investigated. Qoriah (2019) concluded that most characters utilized bald on record and off record strategies, both with 20 occurrences.

4.6.Characterization in *Avatar*

Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, Winerta and Hamzar (2012) extended the (im)politeness models toward non-human characters in *Avatar*. They analysed how different humans and non-humans make requests with different politeness strategies. 82 data were examined. From their research, all characters in the movie applied politeness strategies (Winerta and Hamzar, 2012). Most politeness strategies were seen in conversations between humans. Interestingly, only humans would use off-record politeness to address requests. Non-humans only used positive and negative politeness when they were making requests.

4.7.Characterization in *The Devil Wears Prada*

Utilizing Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, Probosini (2020) studied politeness strategies employed by the main characters, including Miranda, Emily, Andrea, Christian, and James, in *Devil Wears Prada*, the context of workplace communication. Implementing both qualitative and quantitative research, Probosini (2020) identified an occurrence of 135 politeness strategies, including 47 instances of bald on record politeness, 49 instances of positive politeness, 19 instances of negative politeness, and 20 instances of off record politeness. Probosini (2020) suggested that major characters used positive politeness to express their respect since they had to work as a team. An exception would be Miranda. She was the superior in the workplace hierarchy. She had the authority and right to be rude to her subordinates.

4.8.Characterization in *Tinkerbell*

With Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, Isabella et al. (2022) explored politeness to find out the most dominant types of politeness strategies and determine the factors that influence the choice of politeness strategies. They intended to relate the behavioural choices of characters in *Tinkerbell* to the rationale of everyday interlocutors. Through descriptive content analysis on documents, the most dominant form of politeness strategies observed in *Tinkerbell* was positive politeness. Factors influencing the choice of politeness tactics contained in *Tinkerbell* included relative power and social distance. They resonated characterization in *Tinkerbell* with the rationale provided by Brown and Levison (1987) for choosing an appropriate politeness strategy in daily communication. They supported the notion that the behaviours in movies is a reflection of the reality.

4.9.Characterization in *Bridge to Terabithia*

Fitria et al. (2020) carried out a qualitative analysis of the characterization of the main character in *Bridge to Terabithia* with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model. The main character, Jess, performed on record strategies to those close to him. In order to appear more friendly to his friends, Jess utilized positive politeness. However, when he was talking to his teacher, he preferred positive politeness to indicate respect. Fitria et al. (2020) further

reinforced the notion that speakers choose different politeness strategies based on social distance and relative power among interlocutors. Cultural influence should also be taken into consideration.

5. Findings—(Im)politeness and Characterization

5.1.Context

Chris headed to an interview for an internship to become a broker with the aim to earn a living. He was an interviewee while the partners of the company were interviewers. The partners decided if Chris would be hired. Thus, the partner held greater authority and power in the interview. Their vertical distance was large. Meanwhile, Chris knew one of the partners, Twistle. While their relationship was close, the interview also involved other partners. The hiring process was dominated by the First Partner, who had no previous connection with Chris. As a result, the overall horizontal distance between interviewers and Chris was also large. On one hand, Chris issued positive impoliteness involuntarily with his outfit. Such impoliteness characterizes his situation in life. On the other hand, Chris employed both positive and negative politeness in the interview, demonstrating his various qualities.

5.2.Chris was in Hardship

Impoliteness reflects Chris's hardship in life. Chris's interview attire contributed to positive impoliteness. In the movie, Chris was so poor that he could not afford a parking ticket. In Western society, most companies have a dress code for interviewees in an interview. Interviewees usually wear a suit with a tie to pay respect to the company. When Chris attended the interview, he was sweaty and dirty. He wore unwashed pants with a tank top, which was unpresentable. His unpresentable image disrespected the interviewers and the company, making the partners of the corporation uncomfortable and disrespected. As a result, Chris damaged their positive face. While Chris did not intend to offend the interviewers, his outfit did the offense. Such impoliteness illustrated how Chris was in a dire situation.

5.3.Chis was Honest

Positive politeness characterizes Chris with honesty. To address his inappropriate outfit, Chris provided explanations. In turn (12), Chris openly told his interviewer that he was arrested because of failing to pay a parking ticket instead of finding excuses. In turn (15), Chris further explained his outfit by stating he directly went to the interview from the police station. It was the genuine reason for his look. Through his explanations, he addressed the interviewers' displeasure with his outfit. Chris's explanations ensured interviewers would not misinterpret his impolite action as a deliberate sign of provocation. In turn (17), Chris explained that he was painting his house when he was arrested. His reason explained that he was just doing some daily chores, assuring the interviewers that he was not a deceiving criminal. He was just arrested because of unfortunate life circumstances. Therefore, Chris claimed reflexivity and conveyed both himself and the interviewers were cooperators. Hence, Chris orientated towards the interviewers' positive face. This politeness strategy established Chris an honest and sincere image. This strategy was successful. Before Chris provided explanations, the atmosphere inside the room was very tense. After hearing Chris's proactive explanation, the interviewers were laughing in disbelief. Interviewers were no longer irritated and they appreciated his honesty. Not only did positive politeness help Chris create an honest image, but it also reduced the horizontal distance between Chris and the interviewers.

5.4. Chris was Respectful

Both positive politeness and negative politeness characterize Chris with respectfulness. As for positive politeness, Chris claimed common ground with the interviewers to be friendly. Firstly, Chris exaggerated interest in each partner of the firm. From turn (4) to (10), Chris shook hands with each interviewer to acknowledge their presence. He used phrases like “How are you?”, “good morning”, “Good to See you again”, and “Pleasure” to indicate his interest towards all interviewers. He conveyed that all interviewers were admirable and interesting. Secondly, Chris sought agreement with the interviewers. In turn (25), (29), and (39), Chris responded to the First Partner’s question with affirmation. He showed that he was in line with the partner’s expectations. In turn (35), Chris nodded with approval towards Twistle’s description. Henceforth, Chris claimed common knowledge with interviewers. Through conveying interviewers were admirable and claiming common opinions, Chris claimed common ground with other interlocutors, orientating towards interviewers’ positive face. Addressing their desire to be approved and respected, Chris portrays himself to be respectful.

In addition to positive politeness, negative politeness also contributes to Chris’s respectful nature. To begin with, Chris used a question to make a request. In turn (43) and (44), Chris raised his hand and asked the First Partner if he could talk. Raising your hand before speaking was a societal norm to request approval. Following societal form paid respect to the partner, Chris was aware that the partner may thought he had sufficient information to make a decision. He made minimal assumptions about the partner’s interest in his quality. Thus, he decided to raise his hand to ask first, respecting the First Partner’s right to decline. Upon no rejections, he then forwarded to utter his statement on his strengths. Moreover, Chris made deference to make the partner’s superior authority explicit. He used the phrase “sir” in turn (25), (29), (38) to signal his respect towards a person with greater power, who is the interviewer. Subsequently, Chris’s utterances minimized threat and coercion. Through the use of questions and honorifics, Chris orientated to the partners’ negative face wants. Ultimately, Chris’s actions to make the interviewers unimpeded reinforced his respectful image.

5.5. Chris was Confident

Positive politeness characterizes Chris with confidence. Chris presupposed the interviewers’ interested traits in an intern. In turn (45), he deemed himself straightforward, honest, and willing to overcome challenges. He assumed these were the traits the partner was looking for in an intern. He was courageous to predict what the interviewer wanted considering their horizontal distance. He even made a bet with the interviewer. Such a bold statement reflected Chris’s courage. In other words, Chris provided the answers which interviewers wanted to hear before they needed to ask. Indicating his understanding of the interviewer’s preferred qualities, he took their requirements into account and conveyed that both himself and the interviewers were cooperators, orientating to the First Partner’s positive face. Successfully predicting what the interlocuter wanted and addressing them correspondingly illustrates Chris with paramount confidence.

5.6. Chris was Clever and Humorous

Chris’s positive politeness strategy reflects his sense of humor and wit. Chris was asked the reason to hire him in turn (46). Given how he didn’t even wear a shirt to an interview, it would be rather unusual, if not ridiculous to hire such a candidate. In response to such a difficult question, Chris did not give a cliché answer. “My network in my prestigious university helps my work” and “My experience would make me contribute to the company” would be typical responses. Instead, he told a joke. He did not answer this question from a pragmatic approach.

Focusing on the First Partner's concerns in turn (46) about the absence of a dress shirt, Chris emphasized his pants' quality. In turn (48), he replied "He must've had on some pretty nice pants." This was a smart and humorous response. No one would be bothered by the quality of Chris's pants. He simultaneously deflected his shortcomings in educational background and addressed the First Partner's question directly. Hearing the joke, all the partners laughed and held a positive opinion towards Chris. Since Chris also viewed himself favorably for the internship, he claimed a common attitude and common ground, orientating towards the partners' positive face. Therefore, the joke characterizes Chris's smart and humorous personality.

6. Conclusion

In *The pursuit of Happyness*, impoliteness reflects Chris's underprivileged background while the use of politeness characterizes honesty, respect, confidence, humour, and wit. Notwithstanding his inherent impoliteness caused by his outfit, his underwhelming educational background, and limited expertise in the stock market, Chris was successful in establishing a positive image, winning the interviewers' favour through careful implementations of politeness strategies. He was eventually hired. Examining how *The Pursuit of Happyness* uses (im)politeness to characterize Chris reveals more depth and nuance of the protagonist. Despite his challenging circumstances, Chris exhibits resilience, maintaining a polite demeanour. It offers motivation to those who are also in hardship. People can gain insights on how to forward their standing with integrity and confidence.

While this study sheds light on the use of (im)politeness in one specific film, future research can adopt a broader perspective. First, scholars could perform a macroanalysis across different films and genres, focusing on how (im)politeness strategies vary in the depiction of protagonists and supporting characters. For instance, comparing the representation of politeness in genres such as drama, comedy, thriller, and biographical films could reveal whether different storytelling conventions influence the strategic use of politeness to build or transform characters. A potential methodology could involve conducting a corpus-based study that categorizes and codes instances of (im)politeness across a large set of films, allowing for the identification of genre-specific trends. To enrich the corpus and compliment corpus analysis, a long-term investigation into (im)politeness tactics in films from different eras can further provide insight into how society norms and values affect character growth. Films from the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s can be examined to see how changing societal views on authority, respect, and individualism affect how polite or unpleasant characters conduct in social situations. By using a historical perspective, it is possible to determine whether changes in gender roles or increased cultural consciousness have an impact on how politeness is viewed in films.

Additionally, future studies can focus on cross-cultural comparisons of (im)politeness in characterization. While Western films often emphasize individual achievement, Japanese dramas may highlight hierarchical relationships, seniority, and collective spirit. Researchers could examine whether the politeness strategies that are effective in Western narratives differ from those in Eastern narratives, where collectivism and group harmony are prioritized. This could be expanded by looking at films from additional cultural contexts, such as Indian, Korean, or Nigerian cinema, to identify region-specific politeness norms and their implications for character portrayal. To further explore cross-cultural difference, the impact of (im)politeness on audience perception can be included. Surveys or experimental studies can measure how audiences interpret characters based on their (im)politeness strategies, shedding light on whether certain strategies enhance character likability, credibility, or relatability. This

approach can help understand whether characters' use of politeness aligns with audience expectations and whether such alignment influences overall audience engagement with the film.

Last but not least, future research can apply alternative politeness models beyond traditional frameworks. Exploring whether more recent models, including but not limited to Spencer-Oatey's (2015) rapport management and Watts' (2003) discursive approach to politeness, offer better analytical tools for understanding film characterization could deepen theoretical insights. Comparative analyses could reveal which model is most effective in capturing nuances of (im)politeness in various cultural contexts or film genres, potentially leading to adaptations of existing frameworks to better suit cross-cultural film analysis.

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Appendix

The appendix is the full transcription on the excerpt of *The Pursuit of Happyness* from Live By Inspiration (2020).

1. (A group of Dean Witter Partners waits for Chris in the board room. Chris and the receptionist enter.)
2. Receptionist: Chris Gardner.
3. (The receptionist nods to Chris and gives Chris a look of affirmation, signaling Chris to go in)
4. Chris: Chirs Gardner. How are you? Good morning.
5. (He shakes hands with the Partner A.)
6. Chris: Chris Gardner
7. (He shakes hands with the First Partner. The First Partner does not look at Chris and he is indifferent)
8. Chris: Chris Gardner. Good to See you again.
9. (He shakes hands with the Twistle firmly. Twistle welcomes Chris warmly)
10. Chris: Chris Gardner. Pleasure
11. (He shakes hands with the Partner B. Partner B is indifferent)
12. Chris: I've been sitting out there for the last half hour trying to come up with a story That would explain my being here dressed like this. thinking of a story about some series of events that would have led me to be here like this. And... and I wanted to come up with a story that would demonstrate qualities that I'm sure you all admire here, like... like earnestness or diligence, and team-playing. Something. And I couldn't think of anything. So the truth is I was arrested for failure to pay parking tickets.
13. Twistle: Parking tickets? What?
14. (Other partners are laughing in disbelief. There's some good cheer in the room.)
15. Chris: And I ran here from the Polk station, the police station.
16. First Partner: What were you doing before you were arrested?
17. Chris: I was painting my apartment.
18. First Partner: Is it dry now?
19. Chris: Uh. I hope so.
20. First Partner: (looking at Chris) Jay says you're pretty determined.
21. Twistle: Oh, he's been waiting outside the front of the building with some forty pound gizmo for over a month.
22. First Partner: He said you're smart.
23. Chris: Well, I like to think so.
24. First Partner: And you want to learn this business?
25. Chirs: Yes, sir, I wanna learn this business.
26. First Partner: Have you already starting learning on your own?
27. Chris: Absolutely.
28. First Partner: Jay?
29. Twistle: Yes, sir.
30. First Partner: How many times have you seen Chris?
31. Twistle: Yeah, I don't know. One too many, apparently.
32. (Chris giggles)
33. First Partner: Was he ever been dressed like this?
34. Twistle: No. No. Jacket and tie.
35. (Chris nods with approval)
36. First Partner: (looking at his resume)
37. First Partner: First in your class in school? High school?

- 38. Chris: Yes, sir.
- 39. First Partner: How many in the class?
- 40. Chris: Uh, Twelve. It was a small town.
- 41. First Partner: I'll say...
- 42. Chris: But I was first in radar class in the navy and that was a class of Twenty.
- 43. Chris: Can I say something?
- 44. (Chriss raise his hands)
- 45. Chris: Uh.. Um.. I'm the type of person if you ask me a question, and I don't know the answer, I'm gonna tell you I don't know. But I bet you what. I know how to find the answer, and I will find the answer. Is that fair enough?
- 46. First Partner: Chris, what would you say if a guy walked in for an interview without a shirt on, and I hired him. What would you say?
- 47. (Chris thinks about it.)
- 48. Chris: He must've had on some pretty nice pants.
- 49. (First Partner laughs. The whole room laughs)