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# 7 TIPS FOR OVERCOMING INTERVIEW NERVES INTERVIEW

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It is perfectly natural to be nervous prior to and during your interview. In fact, if you were not nervous, I would question your desire for the job you are being interviewed for.

The key to nerves, is to manage them and to actually use them to your advantage during the interview.

The interview panel will be fully aware that you are nervous, and they will take this into account during the interview. This is one of the reasons why most interviews will start with the question “Tell me about yourself?”, or “Why do you want this job?” The questions are relatively easy to answer, and they are designed to get you comfortable before the panel starts asking you questions such as “Tell me about a time when you delivered great customer service?”, or “What are your weaknesses?”.

The simple fact is, if you prepare fully for your interview, your confidence will grow. Let me give you a few tips and motivational pieces of advice to help you only overcome your interview nerves and perform to the best of your ability.

## 7 TIPS FOR OVERCOMING INTERVIEW NERVES

### TIP #1 – Try not to care.

Well, I don't actually mean do not care about whether you pass or not, but if you have a slightly blasé attitude about the interview, you are more likely to perform better and pass. The simple fact is, if your mind is focused on failing the interview due to your nerves, there is obviously a higher chance of your failing.

I can remember attending my driving test when I was 17. I'd had literally seven driving lessons and my attitude was – "I'll probably fail because I haven't had enough lessons. This attitude made me feel relaxed, simply because I removed the pressure from myself to perform. The end result? I passed with ease.

The worst thing that can happen is you fail, and you get another chance to apply for a different job and improve. That's it! Nothing more, nothing less. So, go into your interview with the attitude that you are going to do your best, and that you are not going to let nerves get the better of you – you are in control.

## **TIP #2 – Get ready for the simple interview questions.**

Before your interview, practice your answers to the simple interview questions, such as “Tell me about yourself?”, “Why do you want this job?” and “What can you bring to the role?” These questions should come very early on in the interview and this is your chance to get comfortable, with the result of reducing nerves.

## **TIP #3 – If you can't answer one of the questions, be honest and move on!**

There is a chance you won't be able to answer one of the questions at the interview. If this happens, don't let this be the catalyst for you going to pot and breaking down. Just say: “I am sorry, I cannot answer that question, but I will find out the answer and let you know later on today.” Obviously, if you do say that, make sure you get in touch with them to give them your answer.

## **TIP #4 – Your likability factor can win you the job!**

Yes, it is important you can answer the questions that are posed during the interview, but your likability factor is just as important. You see, employees want people to fit into their team and be liked by everyone else within their organisation. Likability can make up for a short fall in academic ability, so play to your strengths at the interview if you are genuinely a

nice person. In fact, I personally was not the brightest person at interview I had just 3 GCSEs to my name, but I could always guarantee one thing – I would always be the hardest worker and the one who would go out of their way to help my employer. When answering the interview questions, I would always give examples of evidence of achievements in the past where I had excelled at work. Interview panels always seemed to like this more than academic ability. Again, play to your key strengths at interview!

### **TIP #5 – Demonstrate good manners.**

Good manners go a long way, but they are not commonplace in today's society. The chances are, the person (or people) interviewing you will be from an era where good manners were important. Good manners all form part of the likability factor.

- When you turn up to the interview location, be nice to the reception staff.
- When you are sitting waiting in the corridor or waiting to room to be called in to the interview, sit upright in the chair and be respectful/polite to anyone that comes in or who speaks to you.
- Have a firm handshake and look the person in the eye.
- Don't sit down in the interview chair until invited to do so.
- Smile throughout the interview.
- Do not say "I'm nervous."

## **TIP #6 – Carry out a mock interview before you go to the real thing.**

This is a great way to reduce nerves and to get yourself used to answering the interview questions. A mock interview is where you dress up in your proposed interview outfit and ask someone to sit in front of you and fire the questions at you that you have received as part of this package. Keep answering the questions until you get comfortable with what to say. This is something I used to do before every interview I attended, and more often than not, I would get the job.

## **TIP #7 – Not getting the job is perfectly OK!**

Now, of course, I want you to get the job – genuinely! However, if you do not get the job there will be a perfectly good reason why. Either they already had someone else in mind (which can and does happen), or you weren't quite as good on the day as you could have been. People sometimes say to me "I failed my interview!" I always respond with – "You didn't fail, you just had a learning experience that will make you improve for next time." If I ever did not get a job I wanted, I immediately sat down and wrote everything I had learned from the experience. I would take a note of the interview questions, anything I said that I felt was positively received and also anything I said that might have hit the wrong tone with the panel. Then, as time progressed, I became extremely good at passing interviews and my success rate soared!

## **BONUS TIP – Always send a follow up email or letter after the interview.**

Whether or not the interview went well, as soon as you get home after the interview, send a polite 'thank you' email or letter to the employer thanking them for the opportunity to be interviewed. Here's why: A few years ago, I interviewed a young man for an admin position within my company. He came along to the first interview and he was very nervous, and I could tell his nerves were getting the better of him. He failed the interview. However, he sent me a follow up letter thanking me for the opportunity and that he would still very much like to work for me if any opportunities came up in the future. I liked his email so much, I invited him back for a second chance. That young man is now my Managing Director.

Best wishes,

*Richard McMunn*

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