

Upcoming Interview? Success Starts with the Right Mindset

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Self-confidence is a powerful, but often elusive, asset when interviewing. Stiff competition, concerns over qualifications and the uncertainty inherent in the interview process can easily rattle even the most poised job seeker.

Just as you prepare your answers to interview questions, you should also prepare to be confident. Use this list of techniques to enter your next interview with the right mindset: calm, self-assured and ready for anything the interviewer throws your way.

Keep the interview in perspective. One constructive way to manage your fear is by putting your interview into the proper context. Instead of viewing it as an interrogation, think of it as a conversation. Remember, you are interviewing the potential employer as much as he is interviewing you. To boost your confidence, research the company and prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview.

Practice, practice, practice. If you rehearse answers to common interview questions you'll be more confident answering them. Use a tape/digital recorder or webcam to record yourself, or simply practice saying your answers out loud in front of a mirror. Sure, it will feel awkward at first, but after you get past your self-consciousness you will be able to critically examine yourself. Are you sitting up straight? Making appropriate eye contact? Gesturing too little or too much? What about your answers – are they concise and relevant? Once you are confident in your delivery, ask a trusted friend or relative to act as your interviewer. Ask for their honest feedback, so you can further refine your presentation.

Realize that it's natural to be nervous. Do you typically feel uptight before an interview? This is a perfectly natural response. In fact, a little bit of anxiety can actually be beneficial. When you are nervous, your body releases adrenaline, a hormone which raises your energy level. The key is to control your reaction to this feeling, before it takes control of you. Learn to recognize an adrenaline surge when it occurs, realize that it's normal, and then channel the energy you get from it.

Try calming techniques. What should you do if your nerves get the best of you? Stop them in their tracks – *before* you walk into the building. Controlled breathing is a great technique to help you relax and focus. If you feel anxious, try closing your eyes and taking a few deliberate, shallow breaths. Take in air through your nostrils and exhale, quietly, through your mouth. Repeat a few times until you feel better.

Visualize success. If you walk into an interview situation expecting another rejection, you may

create a self-fulfilling prophecy. So instead of expecting problems, expect success. Imagine yourself answering questions with ease and ultimately landing the job. Visualize success in your mind's eye and you will be much more likely to achieve it.

Display a positive attitude. Your interviewer begins sizing you up from the minute he sets eyes on you. Make sure you create a favorable first impression. Whether you are sitting or standing, adopt a posture that portrays self-confidence. Show your enthusiasm with a smile and a firm (but not bone-crushing) handshake. Channel that boost of energy, remember how well-prepared you are and – above all else – be yourself.

You Don't Have to Go It Alone

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