

## **Does Anyone #\*~@&^\$! Care About Swearing During an Interview?**

**Categories :** [CANDIDATE CONNECTION](#)

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Historically, interview coaches, recruiters and most experts across the web have given the same advice....to never, ever curse during the job interview. Even if it causes you to fumble around with your words....the advice goes....do not do it.

However, dissension is starting to spread. With the advent of casual dress at work, texting, instant messaging and even the loss of penmanship in school curriculum, our society has gotten more casual. Cursing is now more common on TV, and the Supreme Court has even thrown out the FCC fines and penalties against broadcast companies for violating established policies around curse words, etc. on TV.

Interestingly enough, our very definition of a curse word has changed. Many are losing their powers, so to speak. For many, "damn" is no longer a curse word; it is simply an intensifier. Dropping the f-bomb to make a point is less "bomb" than it used to be. For many, a certain s-word is easily substituted for the word "stuff".

Will these words (if uttered) send you to the depths of job-interview-purgatory or will they promote you to the top of the list because of your passion and enthusiasm for the job and life?

Some are saying the latter because – well – the curse words of your grandparents' time are not the curse words of today. Yes, we are taught that certain words are not ok to say, but (let's face facts)

many of us do. We teach our kids not to, but we are not really surprised when they do.

So, why, many ask, are we not able to embrace these words in the workplace? They are “real” and we, Americans, embrace the “real” as pointed out in a [CNN article on swearing in America](#). In many workplaces and industries, cursing is acceptable and even advocated.

However, a job interview is different. When a person is on a job interview, s(he):

- is making a first impression
- does not know her/his audience
- needs to demonstrate a working knowledge of general etiquette and societal norms.

This is the critical differentiator. A job interview is all about first impressions. Think about this....how many people out there in the world think less of you because your behavior and/or mood was not the best during the first meeting. You were angry at your spouse, and (therefore) snappish with the barista at Starbucks. You spent the weekend by yourself, and then talked the ear off the person behind you in the checkout line at Target. It is true that you are a fantastic person with many different facets to your personality, but you only showed that complete stranger one uncomplimentary facet at your initial meeting. Therefore, you made a bad first impression.

So during an interview, you should not swear, even if the interviewer, himself, throws out a couple of well-placed curse words. You do not know your audience. In all reality, you do not know if the person on the other side of the table will stand up and cheer for your forthrightness or be horrified at your language. Remember, we all have different backgrounds and different outlooks on life. So, whereas, the word “crap” might not be offensive to you in the slightest, it could be to the person across the table.

Now, I know that this stance may cause surprise, especially given that I am not known to “shy away” from a well-placed curse word now and again. In addition, I am not disputing the fact that there are times when a mild expletive might earn someone a job offer. The problem is that there is no way to know (truly) what the right environment is. Because of this, I have never cursed in a job interview. I refrained because I am a professional, and that is the impression you want to give – no matter the job for which you are applying. You want to give the impression that you are in control, are able to manage your emotions, and are proficient in the English language. Your ability to describe a process as something other than a “damn process” speaks volumes about your awareness, expertise and knowledge- more than any curse word could.

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