



## [DR. SHIRLEY SAYS...]

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# Job interviewing tips, Part 2

In this second segment of "Job interviewing tips," pointers for rehearsing the interview along with handling yourself during and after the interview are addressed.

Even though the employment interview is the single-most important event in the job-search process, interviewers are constantly amazed at the number of applicants who drift into interviews unprepared, having only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say. So, make sure you have your act together.

Honing your interview skills takes practice. Think out your answers to the types of questions you know you will typically be asked, such as: Tell me about yourself. What are your strengths? Your limitations? What do you consider to be your key accomplishments in each of the jobs you've held? What can you contribute to this job? Why should I hire you for this position? What are your compensation requirements?

Review your job skills, major accomplishments and outside interests, placing emphasis on how you can use these experiences to aid the potential employer.

Rehearse the interview. You don't want to memorize answers, but you'll find it much easier to respond to questions without stumbling and hesitating if it's not the first time you've expressed your thoughts aloud. Practice until you can respond easily and enthusiastically. If you have solid answers prepared for the typical interview questions, you can often adjust them to answer new or surprising queries.

If you have access to videotaping

equipment, use it. Seeing yourself hunched over or squirming in a chair, fiddling with your hair or clothing as you stutter along can motivate you to practice until your actions are more suitable to the situation. In lieu of a camcorder, use a full-length mirror to evaluate your posture, gestures, facial expressions, how you seat yourself, and how you walk through the door. Use a tape recorder to listen to and judge your voice.

During the interview is the time to put your best foot forward: Stand tall, smile, have a firm handshake, sit only after being asked, place no personal items on the interviewer's desk, call the interviewer by his/her last name, and most importantly, have a positive attitude.

Be prepared to like the person interviewing you. As one employer said, "It's hard not to like someone who likes you." Do not, however, try to "psych" the interviewer. He or she is generally a reasonably bright individual who has seen it all before.

Be prepared to listen and pay attention. Respond fully to each question, and ask for clarification if you do not understand a question. Keep the job for which you are being interviewed in mind at all times, and talk about your strengths and qualifications most appropriate to that position.

If asked about a negative aspect of your background, show the interviewer how you have turned a negative into a positive, that you have learned from the past.

If you can, keep the interview moving forward. Be prepared to ask questions of your own. Remember, a

good interview should be a two-way conversation. So, develop a short list of questions and use them. However, put off comments about benefits, vacations and the like until you have a firm offer. This information, including salary, should normally be initiated by the interviewer.

Above all, continually emphasize your competence. The message you should convey, loudly and clearly, is: "I can do this job, and I will do it well."

After the interview, thank the interviewer for his/her time, and express your interest in the job. Before you leave, get business cards, and clarify what the next step will be (second interview, etc.).

It is advisable to send a brief, well-worded, handwritten or typed thank you note for the courtesy extended to you during your interview. This follow up puts your name back in front of the interviewer in a positive way. Make sure you mail the note within 24-48 hours after the interview.

Look upon each job interview as a positive adventure. Examine your impressions. You should have learned something, if only what not to do the next time around. Always keep your objective in mind as well as the fact that research indicates it takes an average of eight interviews to land one job offer.

Good luck on your job search!

**For more information, Dr. White's "101 Winning Tips for Getting a Job" can be ordered online at [www.successimages.com](http://www.successimages.com) by printing the order form and providing the method of payment via e-mail or U.S. Postal Service. You may contact Dr. White at (225) 769-2307. □**