Interview Anxiety

What is Interview Anxiety?

Interview Anxiety is a response to fear and it manifests itself in a number of ways. Physically it may result in blushing, shaking, stuttering, sweating, or being tongue-tied. Mentally you may become muddled, feel as if you are not making sense, or losing your line of thought. These feelings can become so unpleasant that you actually want to avoid interviews altogether.

The Facts about Interview Anxiety

It is reassuring to realize what scares you. The first step to getting this fear response under your control is to demystify it. Consider the following:

- Interview stress is normal. If you’re human, you’re going to get it.
- Interview stress hits most people, even experienced performers.
- You may never completely conquer interview stress, yet you can manage it.
- The more techniques you have to beat interview stress, the better you will perform.
- People interview fine all the time—even though they are suffering from interview stress during the actual interview.
- Beating interview stress is not about being perfect or about being free of fear. It is about adjusting and managing your anxiety and using it to fuel your performances.

What Causes Interview Anxiety?

People rarely get interview anxiety hanging out with their friends since there is no perceived hostile audience; there are no consequences if you “mess up.” Add a combative, evaluative interrogator at an important interview and you have the potential for a nice case of interview anxiety.

So why does it happen?

- Your body’s chemistry kicks in to get you ready to perform; you may inaccurately interpret this reaction as nervousness.
- You mistakenly believe nerves to be “bad.”
- You then worry that this is proof that you are about to fail and embarrass yourself.
- You then worry about worrying.
- The negative cycle continues.
- You selectively choose further nervousness as proof that you are panicking and about to fail.
- All these symptoms combine to ignite a full blown attack of nerves.

Conquering Interview Anxiety

HOW TO PREPARE

One good way to overcome pre-interview nervousness, of course, is to spend time preparing. Preparation will make you feel more confident and less anxious.

- Make sure that your schedule has adequate time so you do not rush.
- Have the areas to the interview well mapped out.
- Have professional copies of your information ready.
- Make sure that you have the proper attire for a professional interview.
- Make sure your attire is clean and prepared.
- Be well rested.
- Be well groomed.
- Avoid smoking, drinking, eating odorous food, etc. before the interview.
- Practicing interviewing by role-playing, participating in mock interviews with a counselor, and going on as many interviews as possible (even if for those jobs that may not be your top choices).

But what if you’ve already done your homework? What if you know more about the company than the Managing Director, but are still nervous going into your interview? Being mentally prepared enables you to be more relaxed and self assured.

- Be ready and prepared to answer questions from the interviewer/s (anticipate the question)
- Be confident in your skills and abilities.
- Know the name/s of the person/s and their position/s interviewing you.
- Have the proper attitude of interest in the position.

Practice Relaxation Techniques

- Meditation – if you meditate, you give your attention to one thing, and do not think about anything else as way of calming or relaxing your mind.
- Breathing Exercises – a few nice deep breaths can be so relaxing. It can be a quick and easy stress reliever. You can do this anytime and anywhere. It is not visible to others.
- Physical Exercises – any form of physical exercise can be a great way to reduce stress.
- Yoga – yoga postures balance the different systems of the body. By slowing down the mental activity, and by gently stretching the body and massaging the internal organs yoga creates a climate of dynamic peacefulness within.
- Visualization – many people find it relaxing to visualize a peaceful place, whether real or imagined.
- Positive/Confident Thinking – you may find it useful to counter negative thoughts with positive affirmations. You can use affirmations to build confidence and change negative behavior patterns into positive ones.

Seven Keys to Overcoming Anxiety

1. Educate yourself.
2. Address roadblocks.
3. Set gradual, progressive goals.
4. Train your body and mind to respond to stress differently.
5. Make wellness a way of life.
6. Personalize your solution.
7. Celebrate your success.