

## DEALING WITH INTERVIEW NERVES

### WHY DO WE GET NERVOUS?

An interview is considered a high-stakes situation as it could affect your livelihood and future, and your body responds accordingly by sweating, a racing heart, a knot in the stomach, etc., i.e. it's gearing up to fight or run. And that's ok if you are facing a high-stakes situation like a hungry lion or an avalanche, but not so much when you are going into a job interview where you would like to come across as cool, calm and collected!



Besides this, you know you are going to be scrutinised and judged and this also makes most people feel exposed and nervous.

So, it's quite natural to feel some tension. The good news is that there are ways of managing this so as to minimise any negative impact on your performance during an interview because as you know, employers are looking for self-assurance and not someone who is going to crumble under pressure.

There are two critical points at which you can tackle your fear: before and during the interview.

### BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

#### **Enjoy the Moment**

The first thing you have to do is give yourself a pat on the back. Clearly the company saw something in your application and/or CV that made them interested enough to want to meet you, so give yourself a few minutes to bask in that glow.

#### **Time of the Interview**

If at all possible, try to have the interview arranged for the morning, when you will be fresh and at your best.

#### **Preparation, Preparation, Preparation**

The more time you spend preparing, the more confident you'll be. Those who have done their research and can articulate how their skills and qualifications align with the position will be prepared, even when they're asked the tough questions.



Being prepared is also one way of making sure there are no nasty surprises. Find out about the company's vision, products, culture and the kind of people who work there. Then use that information along with the job description to provide examples of why you're a suitable candidate.

There's no way you can prepare for every question they throw at you, but if you've thought about possible responses to the more common questions, you will be less likely to be tongue tied during your interview.

Role play your interview. Grab a friend or a family member and have them play the part of the interviewer. Aim for a

conversational style with your answers, not just parroting back word for word – imagine you are just having a conversation with someone who shares the same interests and passions as you. If there is no-one to help you, practising in front of a mirror is also very effective.

## Plan the Route to Your Interview

Travelling to your interview can be stressful. Try to do a trial run before the day of your interview so you know exactly how long it takes and can plan accordingly, i.e. plan for little unexpected bumps in the road like traffic, finding parking, etc. The last thing you want to do is panic before you even get there because you can't figure out which building is the right one.

## The Night Before

### *Eat Right*

Don't forget the importance of eating right. The night before, be sure to reward yourself with a good meal, but don't go too heavy on the rich or exotic. And whatever you do, skip any alcohol. Not only can it leave you fuzzy the next day, but it's also a diuretic and can overly dehydrate your body...which can lead to the dreaded dry mouth bad breath dilemma, among other unpleasant little side effects.



### *Get Plenty of Rest*

This will allow you to feel alert and fresh.

Going to bed in a good mood can also help, so put on your favourite feel-good film in the evening so you're smiling as you're sleeping.

Sort out your interview attire and polish your shoes before having a nice bath or shower and a long sleep.

### *Boost your Self Confidence*

Focus on your positive points and remember when you have done well at work and the good things past employers have said about you – read through complimentary written references you have received, etc.; focus on how this makes you feel, and hold onto that feeling and remember it whenever your nerves start to get the better of you.

### *Visualize A Successful Interview*

Before you go to sleep, pre-visualize your interview one more time. Imagine yourself doing well and really sailing through it with no problems.

## The Morning of Your Interview

### *One Last Practise Run*

Run through your mock interview again and really focus on being positive.

### *Get Some Exercise*

Another great way to relax is through exercising a few hours before the interview, as it releases endorphins in your system that will naturally make you feel good and help calm you down.



## DURING THE INTERVIEW

During the interview, you're bound to still feel some nerves. It's human nature. No matter how much you've prepared and practiced, you're bound to still have a slight flutter in your stomach...and its okay! Just don't let it overwhelm you; taking a few deep breaths just before you go in, and this will help you to calm down.

### **Body Language**

Body language is the number one give away when it comes to revealing nerves. To that end, make sure you're in control and even if you're not feeling confident, make sure you act confident. Give a firm handshake but don't break any fingers trying to over squeeze. Look your interviewer in the eye, and sitting up straight in your chair. Avoid any shifting, tapping with your hands, bouncing your legs, darting your eyes around, or any other dead giveaways of interview nerves.

### **Watch Your Pace**

Don't talk too fast. Take the time you need to answer the questions honestly and fully.

## CONCLUSION

So, if you do find the interview process daunting, it is good to know that there are ways of overcoming your nerves and being able to put your best foot forward. Solid preparation and practise are the keys to success!

