

Preparing for an Interview ~ by Keri Coffman-Thiede, Career Coach

So you got the call from the prospective employer saying they were impressed with what they learned about you from your resume and want to invite you for an interview. You're flattered, you're thrilled, you're relieved, and then... an excited, "Wow, I'm going to be interviewed!" is followed by an anxious, "Wow, I'm going to be interviewed!" Hold it together! You can handle this with prior proper preparation.

The biggest mistake people make in this preparation phase is envisioning horror scenes about the upcoming interview. You know what I mean...horror scenes like walking into the interview with toilet paper stuck to your shoe, or long awkward silences as you frantically search for your answers, or repeating yourself and babbling on and on trying to hide the fact that you lost track of what the question was, forgetting someone's name, etc. Envisioning the worst doesn't bring out your best. Use the suggestions below to stop the horror films and start replacing them with visions of what you WANT to see happen. Envisioning your best will powerfully impact how you present yourself on the BIG day.

Picture yourself authentically enthusiastic!

So if you're not the type to wear a big smile and be ecstatically happy just because the sun is out, don't try it on the day of your interview. You won't pull it off and everyone will feel awkward. Your enthusiasm needs to be authentic. What truly excites you about this job?

- Realize that this interview is an opportunity to paint the prospective employer the picture of the job with YOU in it! Prepare to communicate and demonstrate your excitement for what you want to do in this job. What are you excited to accomplish?

Picture yourself authentically confident!

You don't have to sell yourself as someone who can do whatever they want. Matter of fact, please don't. You look like a desperate people pleaser that can't be trusted. Instead, convey your own belief in yourself as someone who can handle whatever this job might bring. Employers aren't looking for a "yes man" or a "know it all"; interviewers want to hire the person they can count on to handle all the unexpected things that they're not even aware they should ask you about today.

- Prepare to tell them the stories about your career that give them a sense of how you go after "getting the job done!" Be sure your story includes describing the impact your accomplishments had on other and the organization as a whole.

Picture yourself authentically grateful!

Yes, grateful. What does grateful have to do with getting a job? When you're grateful, your focus is off you and on others and what you have to contribute to them. During an interview, your attitude of gratitude will allow you to let go of your self-consciousness and really engage authentically with the interviewers. It will also help you convey your appreciation for the opportunities your career has provided you so far and your

hopefulness for the possibilities available in the challenges that lie ahead. Who doesn't want this kind of person on their team!?

- Consider the challenges you've faced and find the lessons you received from them. Be prepared to share the stories of how you applied what you learned from challenges. Include examples of when you saw possibilities where others saw obstacles and the difference you made because of it.

Hire a coach!

If this is a job you're serious about, hire a coach to help you thoroughly prepare. Coaching will help you strategize the best ways to convey what you have to offer this potential opportunity and significantly enhance your performance at the interview.

- Contact me by phone (608-592-1765) or email (amazingu@merr.com) to schedule a two-hour, Interview Preparation coaching session.

Essentially, the interview is really about being memorable. I had a boss who used to say, "People forget what you say, they remember how you make them feel." Leave your interview panel feeling your enthusiasm, confidence and gratefulness and they will surely want you on their team!

About the Author

*Keri Coffman-Thiede, owner of **Amaze Yourself Coaching**, is a career coach who works with clients who are ready to go beyond making a living. She coaches her clients to make career choices that lead them to enjoying work that is personally meaningful and financially rewarding. Keri has a bachelor's degree in psychology and received her coaching training from the Coaches Training Institute. She gained inside knowledge on interviewing skills as a recruiter and staffing manager where she interviewed hundreds of applicants. To schedule an Interview Preparation coaching session, contact Keri at amazingu@merr.com. Also visit her Web site, www.amazeyourself.net.*