

7 THINGS NOT TO DO IN AN INTERVIEW (I DIDN'T THINK I HAD TO TELL YOU)

by Ronnie Ann ~ May 10th, 2010



Other than to say I did NOT make this stuff up, my lips are sealed as to how I came up with this list of things you shouldn't do in an interview (both to protect the innocent and me). But seriously...when it comes to interviews, did I have to tell you not to do any of this? ***What You Should NEVER Do in a Job Interview***

1 Please...I beg of you...don't come to an interview if you haven't bathed or brushed your teeth! If anyone thinks I'm kidding, I'm not. While this may seem absolutely obvious to almost everyone, I assure you, there are some folks who may not realize this matters. And if you are one of them...it absolutely does! You don't have to come dressed like a fashion plate – in fact probably a good idea not to unless it's some snazzy high-fashion job – and even then, less may be more. Tasteful, well-groomed, bathed...I think this pretty much says it.

2 Don't interrupt the interviewer! Even if you think you get where they're going and have the most brilliant answer ever to their interview question, this is one of the most annoying things you can do. Give them a chance to finish. And at least do your best to maintain eye contact and show you are listening intently – and are very interested in and respectful of the person speaking.

3 Don't take off on your own and answer a question that wasn't asked. Following up on the previous “don't”, you may think you know where they're going, but they may throw you a curve ball. Or, in your nervousness or desire to make all your practiced points, you may in fact miss the point. I've seen people going off on tangents that may be interesting enough, but it showed me they weren't really listening. Listen carefully and be right there in the moment – and not racing ahead to your answer or thinking of next questions. It's probably the best thing you can do for yourself in an interview. (Other than bathing.) Of course, if there is a related key strength you want to tell them about, there may be a way to fit that into your answer, as long as you don't go on and on. But first...answer the question.

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4 Don't wear perfume or cologne. I hope I don't need to explain this, but if I do...first, some people find perfumes or colognes offensive – worse yet, some people may be allergic. They don't belong in an interview...except maybe (once again tastefully done) if you are interviewing at the company that makes the product, I guess. Once again, bathing / showering will pretty much do the trick here.

5 Don't go heavy on the make-up. (To be gender neutral, this goes for men or women.) The closer to natural you look, the more the real you can shine through. To be candid, I have to admit now I haven't used make-up for years, but if you do use it, artfully applied it can be a real asset. But too much and too bold...well, some employers will see it as a sign that you are more about looks and surface things than business. This general "don't" can be adapted to how you dress, of course.

“...YOU WANT TO SHOW YOU ARE ABOUT THE BUSINESS AND NOT YOUR OWN COMFORT OR HABITS.”

6 No gum, no candy – nothing in your mouth except teeth (hopefully) and other nature-given stuff. You're there to speak and listen – without anything else going on in there. Once again, you want to show you are about the business and not your own comfort or habits. I recently read that maybe you should even think twice about bringing your own coffee. (I'm not sure about that one – unless your choice of coffee sends the wrong message. If anyone read that article, I'd love the link.) Of course, if you're offered coffee, tea or water, by all means feel free to accept. I myself do bring a bottle of water with me and I believe it has never hurt, but I'm open to hearing otherwise if someone wants to chime in here. Oh...and while you probably shouldn't bring much of anything in with you (other than anything the employer requested), one thing you SHOULD remember to bring is a few copies of your resume, just in case. (I read some people even bring their relatives with them...ewww. Again I would love the link.)

7 Don't listen to your iPod, play video games, make cell phone calls, etc. while waiting to be interviewed. Take care of all that before you come in the door of the building. Or, if you really need to make IMPORTANT calls while you wait, ask if you may use a private area to do so. Just like with dating, impressions form quickly. Watching someone dial a bunch of friends or play video games while waiting, leaves the impression the person will be doing that during their workday too. Since you are there to present yourself as a capable, serious candidate, start your presentation from the moment you walk in. Impressions you leave can last well beyond the day of the interview. And you never know whom you run into on the elevator or even as you enter the building. After the interview, maintain your best interview attitude until you are away from the building.