



THE "CALM YOUR INTERVIEW NERVES"

SPECIAL REPORT



BY THE INTERVIEW GUYS

INTRO

Stress and the resulting anxiety is a cold hard reality of life...or actually, if you're anything like me, a shaky, stomach knotting, sweaty palmed reality of life. We have all experienced nerves and tension at one point or another, from asking your crush out, to facing a page full of seemingly impossible math problems in school, to that dreaded cold call or that all important job interview. Some of us thrive on stress and live for that adrenaline rush that comes along with it. No, really, it's true. I have friends who crave stress like a science lab monkey craves cigarettes. They swear it makes them more productive and helps them to achieve levels mere mortals can only dream about.

Personally, I try to avoid stress as much as possible, but life is life, and until I figure out how to land a job that pays ridiculous amounts of cash, requires little more from me than a heartbeat and a willingness to let me work from home and never have to worry about a deadline ever, stress in my life is going to happen. Granted, my stress is proportional to my life. No, I'm not diffusing bombs in Afghanistan (thank you so much if this is your job...and if it is, we should talk about how YOU deal with stress!), but that doesn't make my heart race any less or my stomach knots any smaller when I find myself in a high anxiety situation. However...and this may come as a surprise to some...I do have something in common with the bomb squad in Afghanistan...and that is the fact that when dealing with a high pressure situation, I do just that...I deal. I don't

run and hide from it. I don't ignore it and hope it goes away. I use the tips and tricks that I'm about to share with you here.

Stress is defined as pressure or tension exerted on a material. For those of us who aren't like my stress-seeking lab monkey friends, this pressure or tension can manifest itself in a multitude of uncomfortable ways. These can include a loss of sleep, a loss of or increase in appetite (I stress eat donuts like they're going out of style), headaches, exhaustion, crying (usually while I'm eating the donuts), and irritability, just to name a few. With the exception of donut eating (which I confess I do regardless of my stress level), I have learned over the years that the key to coping with nerves is to acknowledge that being nervous is eventually going to happen, and when it does...manage it.

Now I could write an entire series of novels on dealing with stress and nerves and cover a thousand stressful subjects and still have topics to touch on, but for the sake of this little booklet, we're going to focus on the nerves that come both before and during a job interview. Here I'll show you the best ways to prepare for that interview so you can go in with a level of confidence that sets you apart from other applicants and takes your stress and turns it into enthusiasm and excitement. I'm here to help you harness those nerves and make them work for you..not against you!

This booklet is meant to be a quick reference book. That means that you should put it somewhere where you can grab it and flip through it at a moment's notice. Dog ear your favorite sections. Highlight it. Circle the parts you think apply the most to you and then sleep with it under your pillow every night. Just kidding, don't sleep with it...but definitely keep it close.

Okay, ready to get started? Let's do it.

Boom! (Just kidding...)

IT'S NOT CHEATING TO KNOW THE ANSWERS BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

This isn't college. You aren't taking a pop quiz and odds are your potential employer is going to be more impressed with you if you go into the interview knowing as much about the company and the job you are interviewing for as possible. Unless you are interviewing with the CIA or the Secret Service for a specific Top Secret mission, knowing about what you're getting yourself into before hand is perfectly acceptable...and in 99.999% of the time, absolutely encouraged. Do your homework! It's a tough job market out there and there are lots of people who apply for jobs blindly, interested only in getting hired for whatever they can. Those individuals go to interviews with little prep work beyond what they did for the initial application. Sure, they may have gotten the interview, but if they have little to no idea what or who they've applied to, will they really get the job?

Make sure when you walk into that interview that you know the company you're applying to and the job you're applying for. By knowing your potential employer, you're able to streamline your interview answers and really tailor your resume to fit their needs, a skill that will set you apart from the "dynamite fishing" approach some other applicants take.

Start by laying the groundwork for your potential interview as soon as you possibly can...and that means gathering information and learning everything you can about that job. Figure out the company's goals, their mission statement (if they have one), and how you'd work into the company if you are hired. Obviously the Interview Master System is your key to becoming that Perfect Candidate they're looking for. So go through the steps laid out there in order to be fully prepared.

The more you can showcase what you know about the company and the way they do business, the more you'll stand out and show that you truly care about the job. That's the backbone of the IMS process! Not only will it allow you to go into the interview armed with some knowledge, but it will show the potential employer that you're truly serious about the position. If you're interviewing with a manufacturing company, make sure you know what they make and how it's performing. If your goal is to get hired at a corporate level, make sure that you know everything about the company you're interviewing with!

Another useful tool in researching a company is to utilize your networks within your chosen industry. If you know someone working in the field or at the job you're interviewing for, talk to them! Pick their brains for gold nuggets of information. (See the LinkedIn video in IMS) Take them out to lunch and ask them about how they got the job and what that job now entails.

If you can, try to find out before hand just how many people are interviewing you, and, if possible, their names. Do your research before hand and look into the company and the job online to make sure you're going into the interview with as much information as possible. You might want to look up the people you're being interviewed

by as well, but don't go overboard. It's nice to know that you and a potential employer went to the same college, but don't creep them out by revealing that you've been Facebook stalking them or that you're photo shopped yourself into the past five years worth of company pictures. Also, in the event of a group interview, be prepared for the panel to switch up on you before you get there. Just because you were told initially that *Steve, Jason and Emily* were going to interview you doesn't mean that Steve isn't going to have Eric cover for him because something else came up.

PREP! PREP! PREP!

Speaking of streamlining...now is the time to really hone that resume as well! Depending on how you secured your interview, your potential employer may or may not have seen your resume yet. Regardless, bring one with you to the interview...and make sure that it's so absolutely perfect for the job you're interviewing for that the employer looks at it and says to themselves (or better yet, to you out loud!) "Why isn't this person already working here? They're perfect!"

Yes this takes a little tailoring, but you're already doing some research on the company so this shouldn't be hard! First thing you want to do is take stock of your relevant and transferrable job skills. Those are the skills that directly relate to your job. Review this list and really focus on the strongest ones. Write a brief example of how you have demonstrated each of the top 10 skills in a job or relevant activity. This will help you as you tailor your resume as well as help you prep for interviews (sneaky, huh?!) Remember that keywords are the difference between being at the top of the list and not on the list at all. Keep it succinct and clean. Too many words will turn them off, too few will make you look inexperienced. It's all about balance!

While you're at it, have a friend or mentor look over your resume with a fresh set of eyes. Sometimes it's possible to look at something so many times that you end up missing something vital or glaring, so it's always good to have someone else go over it as well.

Nothing creates anxiety quite like going into the unknown and the fastest way to combat that is to learn everything you can about the upcoming situation. You want to go in with a level of confidence, not blind panic. Employers, like the boogie man, can smell fear. True, they might not drag you out from under your covers in the middle of the night, but failing miserably at an interview can be just as soul-suckingly depressing. You can't know everything that is going to happen at that interview, but by going in with some knowledge, it helps to build confidence and give employer the impression that you're not the right person for the job...oh and would you look at that resume! Wow! When can you start?

THE LEAN MEAN JOB-GETTING MACHINE

Taking care of you means taking care of the machine that is you. That means proper exercise, cutting back on caffeine, eating a healthy diet, and getting enough sleep. A healthy and well rested body means a healthy and well rested mind that is clear and better to handle whatever life might throw at you. The best part about this very first, and very important step is, this doesn't just apply to job interview stress...it's literally life changing.

Let's start with the big one first. Stress and lack of sleep are literally little evil best friends. If you're under a lot of stress or dealing with high nerves, odds are you're

not sleeping well... If you're up all night worrying about things then it's almost guaranteed that the next morning you'll wake up irritable and tired. Your mind is fuzzy and your reaction time is drastically reduced. A lack of sleep affects your ability to think critically and solve problems. It affects how you interact with people and how you deal with situations. If you're going through your day irritable and tired, then you're probably going to be experiencing even more stress. It's a vicious cycle!

Your ultimate goal with an interview is to give potential employers your absolute best face and coming in haggard with a puffy face and red eyed from pulling an all-nighter isn't the first impression you want to give. An employer wants to know you're willing to put in 110% and go that extra mile. They don't want, however, to see you immediately after doing it...at least not yet...and certainly not on someone else's project! Stumbling into an interview exhausted and then muddling through their questions is not the way to win over your potential employer...unless you're auditioning for a role in a year round haunted house as a zombie...but even then if I were an employer, I'd want a well rested zombie who would be up to the task of scaring my customers for their entire shift!

Zombies aside, there is more than one way to get more sleep but the fastest way to make sure you're ready to nod off into slumberville is to cut back on any sort of stimulants...and that includes the #1 drug of choice for modern man...caffeine. Now, before you rise up in arms and drown me in double mocha-chinos or bury me in a shallow grave of spent grounds, let me say that I'm not saying you have to avoid it all together...just that you should be cognizant of *when* you consume said caffeine. If you need a cup or two (or five) to get your engine running in the morning, then by all

means...triple shot away my friend! However, if you have an interview with your dream employer the next day, think about skipping that after lunch latte and grabbing an apple instead. Caffeine, like fine grade plutonium, degrades slowly within your system. A strong cup of joe lasts on average around 10 hours and for extreme cases (or very strong brews) can take up to fourteen hours to completely work through your system...which means if you need to get to bed by ten p.m., you want to make sure your last cup is at noon.

Okay, okay. I can hear you whining from here. “I’m so tired after lunch.” “I need my coffee or I can’t survive!” “Waaaahhh.” Trust me, I’m with you. I am literally convinced that our local coffee shop is going to have a memorial erected in my name when I pass on, simply based on the amount of time I spend in there drinking turpentine equivalent black brewed magic. However, I know my limits, and on the days before a big shin-dig, it’s hasta la vista at noon. If I’m still feeling the mid-afternoon drag, I grab an apple. No really, I’m serious! An apple is just as good at kicking your mid afternoon energy back up to high as a cup of coffee and the effects last longer without having a negative impact on your sleep cycle. Unless you’re Snow White and are the unfortunate recipient of a poisoned apple, it will help keep you going strong all afternoon long! Don’t like apples? Substitute a handful of raw almonds or baby carrots.

Ooh, this is perfect! Very rarely am I able to make such a seamless segue into the next part of my topic, but here I go. Now that we’re already talking about apples and almonds, let’s talk nutrition over all!

Don’t worry...I’m not going to preach to you about a total overhaul of your diet. That’s not the point of this book. We’re tackling the immediate day prior to your

interview as well as the interview day itself. If you want a total overhaul, set up a date with your nutritionist. But for now, this is just the day before and the day of that we're going to look at.

Again, it's all about balance. Get a balanced meal the night before you have your interview. Work in lean proteins like fish and poultry or soy products. These deliver long lasting energy, help to satisfy hunger, and also help to keep you mentally alert. Add in fresh fruits and veggies and some whole grains. Avoid heavy or overly rich foods that might have a negative impact on your digestive process. Nobody wants to go to an interview all clogged up...or worse yet, bloated and gassy! Be aware also that certain foods can have a lingering effect, either through your breath or even in the pores of your skin. Skip the spicy stuff and save the big steak dinner for celebrating when you land the big job!

Finally, get in some exercise. It doesn't have to be a marathon lifting event or a swim across the English Channel, but work in a good 20-30 minute walk. Take a couple of laps around the block or stroll down your favorite street. Getting your heart rate up will help clear your mind. It also releases endorphins which make you happy and a happy person is far more likely to get hired than a grump. Plus it's a great chance to mentally run through your mock-interview and practice your potential interview question responses!

Okay, so the machine that is you has been taken care of. You're not drinking caffeine too late and you're going to get some exercise and a healthy meal. Plan on a solid 8 hours of sleep and let's move on!

COUNTDOWN: 24 HOURS

Okay, so we've covered prepping for the interview, your resume is so immaculate that the Smithsonian has asked for a copy for their archives of perfect resumes, and the machine that is you is running smoother than a finely tuned McLaren F-1 race car...now let's start the countdown clock to your interview!

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Twenty four hours before your interview you should be focusing on you and making sure that you are the absolute best version of you that you can be. Like I said, we already covered what to eat and getting enough sleep, but we also need to make sure that you're dressed for success. Ideally you've already gone through your wardrobe and made sure you have an appropriate outfit for an interview. If not, now is definitely the time to do it. Your appearance is as important as anything you could say during the interview. First impressions are lasting impressions so make sure you're making the right ones. If it's wrinkly, get it pressed. Stinky? Dry clean that puppy. Don't have anything to wear...get something! Try on your interview wardrobe BEFORE the interview. Make sure it's comfortable. No, really. Sit down in it. Walk in it. Crouch down in it. Does it fit well? Is it too tight? Too loose? Too long? Too short? An interviewer is going to form an opinion of you the instant they see you simply based on how you look. It's human nature. So it behooves you to arm yourself with the best possible impression before you even open your mouth and blow them away with how amazing you are as a person...not just as a walking fashion statement! What you're

interviewing for should factor into what you wear as well. Remember, it's always better to be overdressed than underdressed. Even if the environment you're going to be working in is casual, make sure to dress professionally. You can always relax when you get the job but right now is all about impressions. They say dress for the job you want, but unless you're interviewing at a theme park, I'd skip the superhero costume...

If you are going to have a series of interviews with a company, you might want to use 3x5 cards to record what you wore to each interview. You don't want a prospective employer to think that you only have one outfit of clothing. Neutral and dark muted colors are the best. Save the Hawaiian shirt for the luau party at the end of summer. For guys, wear nice slacks and a button down shirt. Ladies, yes, it's the new millennium and progress is marching on, but skirts still rule supreme! A nice knee length pencil skirt is always a winner. If you just can't wear a skirt, an equally nice pressed dark pantsuit is acceptable. Wear clothes that look nice, but that you feel comfortable in. If you're concerned about what you're wearing, it will come through in your physical movements...and the last thing you want to do is squirm through an interview, or worse yet...suffer a wardrobe malfunction. You always want to leave an interview knowing that your potential employer will have a hard time forgetting you, but let's try to make it for all the right reasons, not the wrong ones.

PRINT AND PREP

You will want to print out a few copies of your resume and make sure to tuck them into a folder or a binder so they will stay crisp and unwrinkled. If you are going in for a group interview, be sure to print out one resume for each interviewer and add in a few extras just in case. Throw in some business cards as well. If you're in an interview

that relies heavily on portfolios or visual examples, now is the time to go through yours and make sure it's presentation ready. It also looks good if you include a letter or two of recommendation.

While you're printing those out, use this time online to map out where you're going for the interview and check out the route to make sure you're familiar with it. Print out a map if you have to, or make sure to put the directions into your GPS. Make sure to write down any applicable phone numbers just in case (and ONLY just in case) something horrible goes wrong and you have to let them know you're going to be (gasp) late.

ONCE IN A LIFE TIME OFFER!

Prepare a two to three minute "You-fomercial." Hang on, a what?! A "You-fomercial." It's like an infomercial, but it's all about you! Prepare yourself so that when someone asks you to tell him or her about yourself or what you are looking for, your thoughts are organized and you can clearly articulate exactly what you want to say. Many job seekers fail to think ahead about how they will answer these questions, which inevitably come up and when they do, they spend two to three minutes stumbling over their words looking like a deer in the headlights! Write down your "You-fomercial," memorize it and practice until it becomes second nature. Keep it entertaining, but don't turn it into a two minute comedy routine. This is a job, not the Apollo. Cover important issues including your past history of work that relates to the jobs you are applying for. Include a bit of personal information to help the listener relate to you, but don't make it all about your private life.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

Remember how I told you to have a good dinner of lean proteins and lots of leafy greens and veggies? Tonight's the night to really make sure that you're taking care of the machine that is you...and speaking of that machine, don't forget your brain! Tonight have some fun watching a light comedy or doing something you really enjoy. Relax and unwind! The goal is to go to bed early and to get a great night's sleep so you can wake up refreshed and energized tomorrow!

HEY SLEEPING BEAUTY!

Tonight, before you go to bed, spend five minutes in the dark thinking over all the great things in your life that have led up to this interview. Don't focus on the bad, let that go for this evening...focus on the good. It's easy to get wrapped up in the frustrations of the job search, but stay focused on the end goal, which is getting that job! This isn't always easy to do, especially if you've been job searching for months. But think about it this way... no one enjoys being around negativity, and people are less likely to want to hire you if you have a negative outlook. Nobody wants a grump in the office. Stay optimistic. It may sound like a silly load of hooey, but it's been proven that if you got to bed with a positive attitude, your dreams will be better and you will wake up feeling more refreshed.

So, get to sleep!

COUNTDOWN: THE DAY OF

Okay, Tiger! Today's the big day! Get up early enough that you're not rushed. Enjoy a solid hearty breakfast and take your time making sure you look your best, but keep an eye on the clock at the same time! Nothing stresses me out more than being late, especially when I'm trying to make a solid first impression. Plan for the worst and hope for the best is a good mantra to keep in mind when figuring out when to leave for an interview. To that end, BE ON TIME! No, actually, don't be on time...be early. Try to arrive at least 15 minutes (but not more) early. It will give you time to catch your breath and get settled in. I'm not saying leave three days early for an interview (unless you live in Ohio and your interview is in Nevada and you're planning on driving) but make sure to judge the distance as well as the time of day you're travelling. The extra time in the car can be used to practice your interview skills, meditate, or take that last reassuring phone call from your support team, spouse, child, parent, dog or whoever else is rooting for you.

The key is using that extra time wisely. Do not, I repeat, do NOT go to the bar for a few shots of liquid courage. Also, skip the sugary drinks and steer clear of caffeine. The last thing you want are the jitters or a sugar crash. If you HAVE to have something to drink, grab a bottle of water from the local café. Put a roll of sugar free mints in your pocket or have a tiny tube of toothpaste or bottle of mouthwash in your glove box for a last minute freshen up. A spare stick of deodorant isn't a bad idea either.

NO PRESSURE!

When you get to the interview, take a deep breath and just be yourself. If all else fails, pull the classic move they tell everyone who has a case of nerves before going up in front of an audience. Imagine them in their underwear...but please, don't laugh. They're probably imagining you in yours. Greet everyone you're interviewing with and remember their names! It will benefit you to be able to call on people by name and show employers that you pay attention to details. It also makes writing those follow up thank you notes much easier if you know who to address them to.

Make sure to think about each question before you answer it. When they invited you in for the interview it was because they saw something in your application that they liked. Emphasize your positives and be honest in your answers. Be confident but not cocky, and above all else, be yourself. Know too that this isn't the only job you'll ever interview for, which means if you bomb, it's okay...there will be other opportunities. Don't go in expecting to fail, but if things go sideways (and sometimes they do), don't beat yourself up too much about it. Take what happened and learn from it. Remember, no matter what, the guy interviewing you was in your seat at one point too.

EYE TO EYE

When answering questions, be sure to address whoever asked you the question, but don't ignore the rest of the panel. Include each person as you answer. Make eye contact and remain engaged. Keep your answers thoughtful and intelligent and don't pile on BS. Refer to your interviewers by name as you answer. *"Thank you Bob. I'm glad you asked that. My last job gave me the ability to address that very situation..."*

PEN AND PAPER

Bring a small notebook and a pen with you. It's a good idea to take notes and write down any questions you might have. Rather than interrupting an interview to ask questions that might be answered later, save them for the end. It shows you were paying attention and prevents an employer from having to repeat themselves half a dozen times.

WORK IT, WORK IT!

Nerves are going to happen no matter how much you prepare, but if you're confident in your skills and your abilities and have done your research, you should be fine. Honestly, if you haven't got a little tingle or thrill before going in, then you should really think long and hard about the job you're interviewing for. Follow this little handy guide and know that no matter what, the guy (or gal) interviewing you was in your spot once upon a time too! Just take a deep breath, keep yourself calm, and knock 'em dead!

~ Jeff Gillis