

5 Tips To Guarantee A Good Interview

- 1. PREPARE** The *only* way to *guarantee* an amazing interview is by preparing for it. And I really do guarantee that preparation can result in amazing interviews. Why? Because at the very start of your interview, you are going to ask a question that shows your interview subject you did your research. Not a surface level question. A question about something SPECIFIC and PERSONAL to them. This is priming your subject for the rest of your interview. It *immediately* communicates that *you care* about them and that you are interested in them. You have put the time in to prepare for them, so they immediately feel like the rest of the interview will be worthy of their time. This is the moment you will see your interview subject sit up a little straighter, lean forward, and listen to your words more intently. They are *engaged*. So spend the time before your interviews, researching your subjects. Go back on their social media. Read up on their journeys. It takes time, but there is almost always information available. Put the time in with research and preparing quality questions (If you're interested in my guide on how to write quality questions, visit mikeytolvo.com).
- 2. PRACTICE** Once you have prepared your questions, practice them. *Study them*. Recite them. Imagine you are sitting across from your interview subject, and deliver the questions. Practice delivering the questions at different speeds, with different emphasis on different words. Try to find the best delivery for each question *before* you've asked it. Review all the research notes you've collected on your subject. You may not use all your research to write your questions, but many times, the information still comes up in the interview. You never know when the opportunity will arise within an interview to use some of the information you collected. When your subject brings up a topic you researched, you'll be ready to speak on it. Some of the *best moments* from my interviews have come from random bits of information that I had no intention of using.
- 3. KEEP digging** No matter how much preparation you've done on your interview subject, there are no better sources than the people who already know them, or your interview subject themselves. Before the interview, make an effort to strike up conversations with people who know your subject and/or with your subject directly. To their friends, I'll often say very directly, "I'm interviewing [insert name], what should I ask them about?" If I'm speaking directly to the interview subject, I'll ask things like, "What have you been working on lately? What are you excited about these days? How is [insert topic you researched] going?". When something comes up that piques your interest, *USE IT!* Find a way to fit it into your interview! Combine it with your current questions and your researched knowledge of your subject. When you incorporate these nuggets into the interview, it makes the audience feel like you have a *connection* with your subject. And you do! And the result is a more *compelling* and *memorable* interview.
- 4. SMILE** Mirroring is real. If you want your interview subject to look like they are enjoying the interview, YOU need to look like you are enjoying the interview. Give your subject something positive to mirror. Smile. *Show enthusiasm*. Be excited. *Provide the energy* for them to feed off of. People often forget the words that were said in an interview, but they almost always remember how the interview *made them feel*. You can help ensure they leave feeling positive by exhibiting positive emotions and energy yourself.

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5. ADAPT Let me paint a picture for you. You're doing your interview, you've prepared amazing questions, and it's off to a great start. All of a sudden, your interview subject throws a *curveball*. The topic of discussion gets way off the line of questioning you prepared. That's ok! Now it's time to make a decision - is the new topic of discussion better than what you had prepared? Often, it is! Now, it is your job to *dig* into this new topic a little deeper. How do we do this? A few simple strategies. Mirroring, again, is a great tool to get your interview subject to expand more on a topic. Simply repeat their words back to them. For example, say your subject finished their answer on this new topic by saying "it was amazing, I couldn't believe it". Simply *repeat* back to them, "You couldn't believe it??" This opens the door for them to continue talking on the subject. Another strategy is to simply ask, Why? Really? How?? Pay attention to their responses. When it feels like the discussion on this topic has come to an end, simply move on by asking your next prepared question.

BONUS TIP! **PACING** In an interview, keeping the *energy up* and avoiding lulls can add an air of professionalism. If you hear your subjects' answer beginning to come to an end, be ready with your next question. You often don't need to respond to their answer. You can *affirm* their answer as they're speaking with your *body language*, with smiles and head nods. If you have nothing to add to their answer, move right along! Jump right into the next question. Don't leave an empty space after their answer for them to second guess anything. Just ask the next question. Give them something else to think about.