



## Overcoming Nervousness



**If reminding you not to be nervous** at a job interview were all you needed to succeed, the process would be much less stressful.

The problem is that you are taking an important step in your life and someone is scrutinizing your appearance, mannerisms, what you say and how you say it.

*Why shouldn't you be self-conscious and in fear of failing?*

Job recruiters and human resources professionals will tell you that nervousness is not only natural in a job interview, but it is not all about whether or not you get the job.

For starters, someone else is in control and you, the applicant, are not. The fear that fuels the **nervousness stems from not knowing** the answers and the embarrassment or helplessness that would inevitably result from that.

There is only one way to combat that feeling of helplessness, and any Boy Scout can tell you those *two words*...

## Be Prepared

Being prepared is probably **the best way to overcome nervousness**, along with remembering that a certain amount of nervousness in a stressful situation is healthy.

If you do your homework, preparation leads to confidence and confidence can put you in command and make you look forward to the interview. It is not so different from being a well prepared and conditioned athlete before the big game.

A certain amount of nervousness and **anticipation is healthy**, and it may actually make you sharper and help you perform better.

The more you prepare and the harder you work at that part of the process makes it easier for you when your career aspirations are on the line at the job interview.

Confidence and the feeling that you are ready for whatever comes help you focus and channel nervous energy into a positive force.

## Accentuate the Positive

Remaining positive in the time leading up to your interview is invaluable.

Once you have prepared, tell yourself you are ready. Listen to upbeat music on your radio or iPod—stuff that makes you feel good about yourself and **reminds you that all is right**.

Music and other positive motivators stop when you arrive at the job site, of course.

An unfamiliar environment can add to uncertainty, which is why career professionals generally recommend that you have paid at least one visit to the company where you are being interviewed and know the layout of the land.

No matter how desperately you want the job, **remember it is a learning experience** that will make you a better person and a better job candidate in the long run. Fear of failure is not as much of a factor approaching it with this perspective.

Remember that you are there because something about your résumé or positive impressions you made in the screening interview. That's a compelling reason for you to be upbeat on the day of the interview.

## Steadying Your Nerves

Anti-nervousness techniques like breathing exercises, self-hypnosis and mental imagery techniques work for some. For others, all they do reinforce the seriousness and importance of the upcoming interview. In other words, they make you even more nervous.

**You aren't going to know the answers to every question**, and sometimes that's intentional on the part of the job interviewer.

They ask stress questions just to find out how you react. The best way to deal with such questions is gracefully redirect the question toward a similar topic you are familiar with, preferably underlying your strengths as you do it.

The sense of the other person being in control, which contributes to nervousness, may be negated by **remembering that you are also, in a sense, interviewing the hirer.**

That allows you, psychologically at least, to claim some of the control and, again, it goes back to it being a learning experience that may position you for career advancement.

Nervousness tends to make you speed up your mannerisms and your speech. It can prompt you to speak before you think it through.

Slow down and don't be afraid to pause. Pace yourself. It could avert something from spilling out that will make you even more anxious.

A half-hour—the length of the standard in-person interview—is *a lot* of time and there is no hurry.