

How to Stay Relaxed in an Interview

1. Know Your Power

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

Wise words from author and activist, Alice Walker.

It’s easy to give away your power before you even set foot in the interview. Your power lies in your understanding of your worth, knowing your greatness and knowing it extends beyond this singular position. This may feel like the perfect job for you, but it’s not the only one out there. It might not even be the best one.

When looking for work, remember that employers want to find you as much as you want to find them.

2. Calm Yourself, Don’t Cram Yourself

Take some time before the interview to relax your body. Hang out in your car for a moment to close your eyes and breathe in and out. If you must think about something, think about the finish line. Visualize walking out of the front door triumphant because you did everything in your power to slay the interview. Think of the feeling that will be in your body and put it there now.

Don’t wait for victory. Start with victory.

3. Ask Questions Often and Early

Why wait? Ask questions early, even right off the bat. Shake up the interview structure. Jar your interviewer out of that impersonal Q&A mode and into a real conversation. That’s where you want the interview to be.

There’s another benefit to asking questions early: you get answers... the answers to the

test. Interviewers, in talking about their own experience, career path, or even just about their morning, will provide you with information that reveals the company. With these insights, you’re no longer dancing in the dark. You can see the room and think about how your feet are hitting the floor.

4. Tell Stories about People You Like

Ever watch someone talk about a friend or a loved one? They smile, they open up, they get giddy with excitement. Then, watch that same person talk about someone they don’t like — their whole demeanor changes.

You can use this.

Tell stories people you like. Start with the challenge, move into the action, and end on the result, being sure to include an interaction with colleagues that makes you smile. You will inadvertently brighten up.

Stories are evidence of your value, a way to brag without bragging, a comfortable pitch to which people relate.

5. Plan Your After-Party

It doesn’t matter what the outcome is; you should have some allies waiting for you to hear about your experience. If all went well, you can celebrate, and talk about all the money you’ll be making. If it didn’t go so hot, you can discuss exactly why and work through it, instead of dealing with the thoughts in your head alone.

Whether it’s a friend, family member, or a counselor here at Merritt, be sure to have some fans waiting in the wings. People want to root for you. Give them the chance.