

Secrets of Acing Your Scholarship Interviews.

After attending many interviews both online and face-to-face for scholarships, I received countless rejection emails. Every rejection felt like a knife pierced right through my heart.

Why wasn't I selected? why?

I decided to spend a huge amount of time researching everything involved in a scholarship interview process. I went from reading tons of website articles to watching myriads of youtube videos just to try and figure it out.

And guess what? I did!!.

And in this document, I am going to share with you exactly what I learned so that the next time you are going out there for an interview, you will be going to nail it. So let's dive straight in.

1. Have a Wild Card Before An Interview

Here is what happens at interviews.

Interviewers get bored to their stomach from listening to the same rehearsed story coming from the interviewees over and over. They sometimes can just zoom out while you are speaking.

Does this sound unfair? It sure does!!.. But look at it with a different lens. An optimistic lens to be precise. This presents a unique opportunity for you to explore.

How is that? you must be thinking.

KeyNote

Knowing that most candidates before interviews memorize mundane sentences which they deliver like robots during the interview, gives you more room to become a little creative.

The key is , you have to be different.

You have to try as much as possible to stand out from the crowd. It doesn't matter how. This always grabs the interest of the interviewers because haven't interviewed a bunch of normal boring candidates, they are seeing someone different and unique.

But, how can I be unique when I am just a normal candidate like everyone else?

This is where what I call the **wild card** comes into play?

Let me explain with a practical example of how I used my wild card to earn a prestigious fully-funded scholarship.

I went into the interview room with a **printed copy of my master's thesis proposal---my wild card**. This document had a title, literature review, objectives, and methodology of thesis research with a 2 years plan of how to execute it.

Interviewer: Are you for PhD or Masters?

Me: Masters.

They looked at each other back and forth. Notice, they didn't expect that from any master's candidate because it wasn't in the list of requirements, but I did. The rest of the interview was like singing **Perfect by Ed Sheeran**.

What is your wild card?

Take some time to really think about what you could possibly present to the jury that will wow them. Something they didn't expect. Something the other candidates might not think of doing and use that as your own little weapon during the interview. This

will tremendously increase your chances of getting selected. This can be a project idea.

Just be Different!!

2. Be Natural and Authentic

An interview is meant to be a conversation, not an interrogation.

It is often natural for us to feel nervous and overwhelmed with anxiety when we are in an interview and this often makes us screw up lifetime opportunities.

Interviewers have been trained for many years and have lots of experience in detecting when someone is nervous and that can be interpreted as you not knowing what you even talking about.

In an interview, try to visualize yourself having an honest and normal conversation with some group of new friends who just want to know more about you. That's all.

This relaxes the mind and takes the pressure off. It helps you maintain a natural flow of words and sentences leading to a smooth, scintillating, and probably successful interview.

3. Power of Eye-Contact.

Do you know why maintaining laser-focus eye contact is super important in interviews?

Because confident and trustworthy humans are those who look you straight in the eye while making their point. Eye contact is one of the key indicators interviewers use to judge if you know what you are talking about.

Most of the time, the interviewers do not even understand what you are saying. For example, an **engineering student explaining the Law of Relativity** to an interviewer who might have never been to a physics class before.

The interviewers simply stare at you to assess if you truly know what you talking about. So maintaining eye contact gives them **the impression you are well acquainted with the subject matter** and your field of studies.

One more thing, when you find yourself in an interview of 2, 3 or more interviewers, ensure that when you are speaking you look across them all in the eyes. Don't just focus on the guy in the middle of the panel.

This makes the other interviewers feel like they are also part of the conversation and that is a plus for you.

KeyNote

If your interview is online for example on skype, here is something you should attention. While speaking, **focus on looking at your computer's webcam and not on the face of the interviewer's on screen**. This will help maintain eye-contact with the panel.

4. Practice, Practice Practice

No one has ever achieved anything great without putting in hours of sufficient practice. That goes too for interviews.

I know this might not sound like something you thought you have to do before the interview but believe me, I made the same error multiple times and had to learn the hard way. Luckily for you, you don't have to go through what I went through.

Here is what I personally do before heading out for an interview. For example, a scholarship interview.

Three days before the interview date, I go to google and search for some common interview questions that are standard for all scholarship interviews. Then write these questions down on a piece of paper.

For example: Why do you deserve this **scholarship**?

Then with a pen and paper, I write down just **two to three sentences which completely explain the reason I think I deserve the scholarship**. This can be simple and short sentence such as: ***I am a dynamic student.***

Notice that I didn't write down on my paper why I am a dynamic student.

Why is that?

The answer is simple, If I write down my complete answers like an essay, this will force my brain to **memorize the words and sentences** making my mind less-flexible during the interview. So on your paper, avoid putting down complete responses.

Next what I would do is **call someone I trust** like my best friend and ask them to help me out. I give my friend the list of possible questions and he becomes my interviewer. The first 3 interviews are always are usually a complete mess. So don't worry about it.

My friend gives me his honest feedback about my responses. He tells me if I sounded natural like I would in a normal conversation. If I was confident etc. We do this a couple of times and this boosts my confidence level.

After this its **GAME TIME!!**

So if you want to win that scholarship you dream about every day, **don't forget to practice** for as many times as you have to. This will make you sound natural and tremendously increase your confidence

The TakeAway

In this document, I have shared with you everything I learned from my experience in applying and taking several scholarship interviews.

I talked about the following

Have a wild card before interview

Be Natural and Authentic

Power of Eye Contact

Practice Practice Practice

So whats next?

In the upcoming posts, I will continue to share articles related to scholarships and education in general such as **how to write a compelling motivation letter, Life abroad as a foreign student, etc.** So, please don't miss out on any of this by subscribing to this blog.

I hope this knowledge helps you succeed in your next scholarship interview so that your wildest dreams can become a reality.

Good luck!!

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