

Confident Interviewing

Be the me that you
deserve to be

- Carmel Morrissey -



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Confident Interviewing

Helping you to do and be your best

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BONUS PRACTICE QUESTIONS TO GET YOU AHEAD

Welcome

Hey there!

Welcome to "Confident Interviewing". Whether you are here because the very thought of interviewing makes your heart race or you want to elevate your performance, I am here to help you. On our journey together I am going to show you that you hold the key to your own confidence and how to access it when you need it most.



I am also going to share strategies from my last decade as an interview coach that will bring clarity and help you get the results that you deserve.

I'm inviting you to begin by setting some intentions initially for our time together. It's not about perfection, about getting things right or chasing an invisible ideal. Instead it's about moving towards your goal with purpose every single day.

The best place to start?

Exactly where you're at right now. So get yourself a cup of tea, clear some space around you and then get started on the next page. Now, it might feel like you are alone at this, but please know that you are just one of many people who are taking time out to imagine their next move and build confidence.

Each with their own hopes and dreams for the future.

You never know you might even enjoy interviewing by the time our journey is complete!

Your Career & Mindset Coach,

Carmel

So let's get started, shall we?

Impact of our words and thoughts

I want you to put your hand out in front of you and imagine that this lemon is in your hand and you are taking a big bite out of the juicy lemon.

What's happening in your body, what do you notice?



Impact of our words and thoughts

Most likely you have noticed that your mouth is salivating, your body is preparing to digest the lemon, because your mind told your body that you had a lemon.

So even though we know we do not actually have a lemon in our hands, our thoughts have enough power to make our mind send a signal to our body and for our body to begin to prepare to digest the lemon!

Our mind is designed to keep us safe and is constantly ready for fight or flight. So even statements like:

So even statements like *"The traffic is killing me"* or *"I can't cope with the commute"* have a physical impact on our bodies. This is because our body provides an adrenal response and increases our cortisol levels, leading to anger and stress.

Words are powerful and the mind is always listening for that reason. If we are moving away from the feeling of being stuck or lacking in confidence we need to pay attention to our words.

Old stories

Let's look at a story that you have been telling yourself that has been unhelpful or has made you feel stuck or just not good enough.

Write it down in the space below.

Now that you have written it, I want you to write in a couple of sentences the following:

☐ How does that story that you tell yourself make you think?

☐ How does this story that you tell yourself make you feel?

☐ How does the story make you act?

New stories


Now I want you to take that same story and imagine that you no longer believe it to be true.

- ☐ What story would you tell yourself instead?

- ☐ How does this new story make you think?

Just Breathe

Watch and practice the videos and audios accompanying this program for techniques including Grounding and Box Breathing.

 Remember...
your energy goes where
your attention goes and
your attention goes where
your energy goes.

Keep both in the present using these techniques.

Bank your confidence

Generally we can connect very quickly with times that make us feel anxious or stressed.

- ☐ Notice how you think in that state and feel?

- ☐ Where do you notice stress in your body?

Now spend some time thinking about the last time that you felt confident, don't worry if it takes some time to remember.

Notice what you were doing at the time, what were you thinking that helped you understand that this was confidence that you were feeling.

- ☐ How did it make you act?

- ☐ Where did you feel that confidence in your body?

Remember the more that we can understand how confidence feels in our own body the more that we can reach for it when we need it most.

Bank your confidence

Try the Circle of Excellence and learn how to access your own inner confidence when you need it most.

Tip

Remember...

practice your anchor as this will help you access confidence quickly.

Bank your confidence

We need to actively bank our confidence because for most of us, positive experiences are like Teflon and negative experiences (feedback) are like Velcro.

We need to actively pay attention to the small things that we are doing well, this will help us navigate difficult situations as we will have enough confidence currency in our bank.



Teach your mind to recognise
your state of confidence and
your body will follow.

Visualise the future

Once you have identified the thoughts, feelings and behaviours that accompany confidence for you.

- Close your eyes
- Make your anchor and
- Imagine a situation that might have caused you to feel anxious in the past.

Remember...
your circle of excellence,
make your anchor and visualise
you in that situation reacting in
a calm, relaxed and confident way,
communicating effectively.

Create a Positive Future Memory that
your mind will recognise

Interview Coaching

Interviewing Effectively

When preparing for interview, it's important to learn how to step into an employer's shoes psychologically and consider what their wants and needs may be when evaluating a potential employee. Interviewing is usually a time consuming and costly process, so if you are called for an interview it is because they genuinely believe that you have potential for the role. So how do you close the deal?

If you consider the following four elements both while preparing and in interview you are setting yourself up for success.

1. Can you do the job?

So, you have sent in your CV, highlighting your skills and achievements, hopefully tailored to the role that you are applying for, but can you talk comfortably and competently about your responsibilities and achievements?

2. Do you want the job?

Obviously, we all need to generate an income; however, a potential employer needs to feel that you are passionate about the role that you are applying for, even if it is a stop gap role. So always ensure that the employer is aware of how much you want the role. Recent studies have indicated that a main reason why people are not successful in interview is that they don't ask for the job!

3. Will you fit in to the culture of the company?

Research the company online, what are their values? What do they value in an employee?

4. Finally, can they afford you?

This is a difficult question as it is important not to over price or indeed under-price yourself. A possible approach to answering questions around salary is again to stress your enthusiasm for the role so for instance, "this is a role that I really want and if you were to make me a fair offer, I would be more than happy to accept".

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Preparing for the Interview

Can you list 10 reasons why you are right for the role? Match your experience back to the requirements of the job description.

- 1 →
- 2 →
- 3 →
- 4 →
- 5 →
- 6 →
- 7 →
- 8 →
- 9 →
- 10 →

Interview Coaching

Seven Commonly Asked Questions in Interview continued

1. Tell me about yourself?

THIS IS YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH. WHAT IS AN 'ELEVATOR PITCH'?

Imagine getting into an elevator with the director of a company that you have always dreamt of working for.

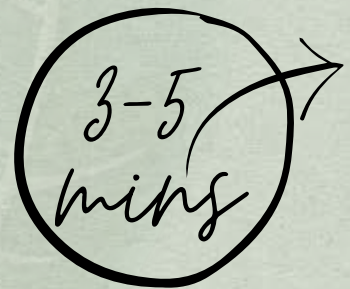
They turn to you and say that you have until the elevator stops to convince them as to why you would be the best choice for a role in their company.

You have three to five minutes, tops, to convince them of your suitability.

1. HOW WOULD YOU USE THAT TIME?

2. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

This is an 'elevator pitch' - a succinct sound bite which is a summary of why you should be hired - and it's very relevant to an interview situation.



Questions such as *"tell me about yourself"* and *"why should we hire you?"*. These are all scenarios which allow you to use an elevator pitch.

Seven Commonly Asked Questions in Interview continued

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is clear, concise and uses powerful and targeted action words. It is a summary of your key skills, education, attributes, why you are interested in their company and how you can use your skillset to help drive the business.

Ensure that it puts a focus on where you have been, where you are and where you are going, always keeping it relevant to your audience.

In order to impress with your elevator speech, you need to ensure that it rolls off your tongue. You should show your personality, sound enthusiastic, speak confidently and make eye contact.

STRUCTURING YOUR ANSWER

Summary of qualifications and education, followed by key areas that you have worked in or gained experience of relevant to the role.

Include attributes again relevant to the role for instance:

"My previous employer would probably describe me as flexible and adaptable with a genuine desire to learn and develop and add value to the organisation"



- Look at several job descriptions for similar types of roles and try and get an understanding of the types of attributes that they place a value on.
- Ensure what you are feeding back in this answer is similar.
- Finally finish your answer with the reason that you have applied for this role, this allows you to demonstrate your genuine interest and excitement for this role. This will help you to stand out.

Interview Coaching

Seven Commonly Asked Questions in Interview continued

2. What are your strengths? Why you for this role?

- Again ensure that you have done your research and that you understand from your analysis of the job description and the role itself what strengths are valued in this role.
- Choose 3/4 and remember to give an example of how or where you have demonstrated this strength in your previous work history / academic experience or voluntary or sports capacity.
- Remember always compensate for a lack of experience with enthusiasm so passion and commitment to learning and developing can be a very useful strength to highlight.

EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHS - DON'T FORGET YOUR EXAMPLES

- **Problem solving and analytical skills** - Identifying, Prioritising and solving problems, individually or in groups. The ability to ask the right questions, sort out the many facets of a problem and contribute ideas as well as answers regarding the problem.
- **Technical skills** - Skills needed to deal with the technical tasks required by the job. Remember to list them.

Seven Commonly Asked Questions in Interview continued

- **Written communication** - Effective transfer of written information either formally through reports and business correspondence or informally through memos and notes.
- **Personal organisation and time management** - Managing several tasks at once, being able to set priorities and to allocate time efficiently in order to meet deadlines.

3. What is your Weakness?

WHY DO YOU EMPLOYERS ASK THE WEAKNESS QUESTION?

- Generally it is to measure your level of self-awareness. It is a relatively easy question to answer if you have spent some time considering your answer.
- Choose an obvious weakness for the role, for instance for many people it is a lack of experience. Highlighting this as a weakness is an opportunity to turn this into a positive and demonstrate your commitment to learning and developing and that you understand the challenges that may be ahead. Again, always compensate for a lack of experience with enthusiasm.
- If asked specifically for a personal weakness choose a weakness that you have already recognised in the past and demonstrate how you have worked on it and it is no longer an issue. Ensure that you avoid any weaknesses that may raise red flags for the interviewer.

Interview Coaching

Seven Commonly Asked Questions in Interview continued

4. Questions for the Employer?

WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DOES WELL HERE?

This is an excellent opportunity to ask a question that will give you a glimpse of what the employer places a value on.

HOW DO THEY DESCRIBE THEIR IDEAL CANDIDATE?

IS THIS YOU?

- Remember to feed this information back in the 2nd round interview.

5. Why do you want to work here?

- This is the question that employers will use to ascertain if you have done your homework. You have already touched on this in your elevator pitch when you mentioned why you had applied for this role.
- This is an opportunity to demonstrate that you know the industry, competition and the direction that the company seems to be going in. Know their values and mission statement and if possible demonstrate that you can align yourself with them.

Seven Commonly Asked Questions in Interview continued

6. Talk me through your CV?

Remember this is not the same as “Tell me about yourself”.

- This is an opportunity to sell back your experience to date.
- Tell them where you are going to start and then take them through your roles but this is not about telling them about everything that you have ever done.
- Be strategic, in advance of the interview as with the rest of the questions write out this answer using the following format.
- Summary of the role, key skills gained relevant to the role that you are applying to and key achievements.
- This is an opportunity to create your narrative and highlight a common thread throughout your journey.
- Don't underestimate your opportunity to sell your suitability here, always remember to tie back to the role that you are applying to.

7. Salary Expectations

- This is a challenging question; the first thing to do is research salary ranges in your field. Check out the range of salary guides produced yearly.
- Avoid discussing salary if possible in the interview as in the first instance it is very easy to oversell or undersell yourself.
- An answer that works very well is *“This is a role that I really want and if you were to make me a fair offer, I would be more than happy to accept”.*

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Competency based / Behavioural / Scenario Based Questions

These questions generally begin with:

- Tell me about a time.
- Give an example or describe a situation.

Competency based questions are designed to assess your past behaviour and use it to predict future behaviour.

**Use the SAR method (Shortened from STAR) to construct an answer.
Remember the employer is interested in the actions that you took and why?**

Situation

Action

Result

Tip

Look at the job description and determine what competencies are the most relevant to the role, then spend some time thinking of examples to demonstrate these.

Competency based/Behavioural/ Scenario Based Questions

Example: Planning and organising

Employers want you to demonstrate that you prioritise, set stretching but realistic targets and deadlines. That you plan ahead and that you have a structured approach to work.

Employers generally see the following as negatives- working late but unproductively, seldom completes a task unless you do all of the work yourself, reactive approach and inflexible.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- ① Describe a project that you have worked on where you have met obstacles.
- ② How did you deal with these obstacles?
- Make a list of examples using SAR technique of a time when you displayed each of these skills.
- Draw on work, academic, and extracurricular and produce a variety of stories to use at interview.

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Competency based / Behavioural / Scenario Based Questions

- **Oral Communication** - The ability to present information verbally to others.
- **Listening** - Being attentive when others are speaking and responding effectively to others' comments.
- **Continuous improvement and excellence** - Being able to work properly in a precise way and paying attention to details.
- **Team work** - Collaborative work and acceptance of suggestions/ recommendations from other members of the team. To work cohesively in order to find better solutions.
- **Personal strengths** - A variety of personal traits that assist individuals in dealing with day to day work situations.
- **Written communication** - Effective transfer of written information either formally through reports and business correspondence or informally through memos and notes.
- **Personal organisation and time management** - Managing several tasks at once, being able to set priorities and to allocate time efficiently in order to meet deadlines.
- **Interpersonal** - Working well with others including superiors and peers. Understanding their needs and being sympathetic with them as required.
- **Ethics & integrity** - Demonstrate personal values and behave in a way not simply because it is law but because it was our personal responsibility.

Competency based / Behavioural / Scenario Based Questions

- **Responsibility** - Professionalism and sense of duty, thinking beforehand on tasks that must be done, trying to resolve a problem that others are unaware or not yet begun to solve.
- **Commitment and persistence** - Accomplishing all the objectives while always focussing on improvements, facing the difficulties and possible contingencies
- **Resilience and motivation** - The ability to overcome problems and adversaries. Being able to look at mistakes as a challenge and to deal with pressure in an appropriate way. Being optimistic about solving problems.
- **Problem solving and analytic-identifying** - Prioritising and solving problems, individually or in groups. The ability to ask the right questions, sort out the many facets of a problem and contribute ideas as well as answers regarding the problem.
- **Learning** - The ability to gain knowledge from everyday experiences and to keep up to date on developments in the field.
- **Technical skills** - Skills needed to deal with the technical tasks required by the job.
- **Decision-making** - Make timely decisions on the basis of a thorough assessment of the short and long term effects of decisions, recognising the political and ethical implications and be able to identify those who will be affected by the decisions made.
- **Critical thinking** - Being active, asking questions and analysing the answers with scepticism, willingness to challenge beliefs and investigate competing evidence.
- **Planning and organising** - Being able to determine the tasks to be carried out, towards meeting objectives (strategic and tactical)) perhaps assigning some of the tasks to the others, monitoring progress made against the plan and revising a plan to include the new information.

Interview Coaching

Competency based / Behavioural / Scenario Based Questions

- **Creativity, innovation and change** - The ability to adapt to situations of change. At times the ability to initiate change and provide novel solutions to problems.
- **Coordination** - Being able to coordinate the work of peers and subordinates and encourage positive group relationships.
- **Managing conflict** - The ability to identify sources of conflict between oneself and others or between other people and to take steps to overcome disharmony.
- **Ability to conceptualise** - The ability to combine relevant information from a number of sources, integrate information into more general contexts and apply information to new or broader concepts.
- **Initiative and proactivity** - The ability to anticipate situations, needs and future problems in the workplace. To always be aware of the surroundings, analyse the context in order to develop alternative scenarios.
- **Risk taking** - Taking responsible job related risks, by recognising alternatives or different ways of meeting objectives, while recognising the potential negative outcomes and monitoring progress towards set objectives.
- **Leadership and influence** - The ability to give direction to others and to delegate work tasks to peers and subordinates in an effective manner that motivates others to do their best.
- **Visioning** - The ability to conceptualise the future of the company and to provide innovative paths for the company to follow.

Competency based / Behavioural / Scenario Based Questions

Preparation for Interview

- 1 **Do your homework**
Know how you will answer at least the 6 questions above and especially your elevator pitch. Practice your answers out loud and in front of a mirror.
- 2 Arrive professionally dressed even if it is for a casual role.
- 3 Know what to expect and who you will be meeting.
- 4 **Body language** - keep your hands on your lap and remember to smile.
- 5 Listen to the question and think before you answer. Clarify if you are not sure on what is being asked. Reflect and pause before answering and take a sip of water if necessary.

After the interview

- 1 Write down some notes after the interview, were there any questions that you struggled with? This will be useful if you are called to a second round interview.
- 2 Remember if you are unsuccessful in the interview process you can ask for feedback. This can be a vital learning tool.


Carmel Morrissey


It is really hard to get what you want out of life if you don't know who you are and you don't know what you are looking for. If this sounds familiar, you are not alone. The truth is everyone experiences times in their lives when they feel stuck.


But it doesn't have to be that way. You deserve to live your life to its fullest, and you don't have to figure it all out on your own. I am here to help.

Sometimes a lack of confidence can leave us feeling unhappy and too scared to move forward, I help my clients find those opportunities, feel confident and discover what they really want. Whether you need help transitioning careers, are feeling stuck, want more confidence or preparing for interview, get in touch and I can help you take the next right step.






 Follow me on Twitter @EquilibriumIRL

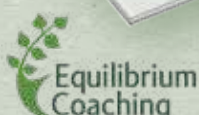
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