

## OVERCOMING NERVOUSNESS AND SHYNESS IN JOB INTERVIEWS



### Overcoming Nervousness

As if formulating solid answers to interview questions isn't tough enough, if you are like most job hunters, you'll have to overcome your own nervousness. Most employers will not condemn job candidates for a bit of nervous behavior after all, it's only normal but they will pay close attention to how you hold up under pressure. Displaying excessive nervousness can easily eliminate you from further consideration.

One good way to overcome nervousness is to exercise positive thinking. If you're feeling nervous about an upcoming interview, rehearse the scenario in your mind. Think of what you'll say, the questions you'll be asked, and how you'll answer them. Imagine yourself responding calmly, effectively, and in a controlled manner. This type of mental rehearsing won't guarantee your success, but it should help you feel more optimistic and self-confident, which will in fact influence your final presentation in a positive way.

Also, you should practice interviewing as much as you can especially with real companies. You will become more confident and your answers will become more polished with each interview you have. If you have a terrible interview, don't let it shake your confidence! Realize that everyone has a bad interview experience sooner or later.

Learn from it, work on your performance, and keep looking for other opportunities.

### Overcoming Shyness

For most employers, shyness is not a major problem unless it interferes with your work. In fact, employees are often valued for their shyness because they tend to get along well with other workers and don't participate in office politics. However, shyness can hurt your chances of landing a job if you resist contacting new people or fail to communicate that you're qualified for the position.

There are several steps you can take to overcome shyness. First, when networking, contact only people you feel comfortable with and ask them to introduce you to others.

This way, you don't have to call any strangers and you know that all of your inquiries will be welcomed. Begin with friends, relatives, neighbors, and close business associates and you will soon be well on your way to making important contacts.

Another idea that can be particularly valuable for first-time job seekers is to seek out volunteer work or an internship in your chosen field. Volunteering and interning allow you the opportunity to show an employer your skills and abilities rather than having to discuss them in a pressure-filled interview. Many employers prefer to hire volunteers and interns because they are already familiar with their strengths and work habits.

You probably won't be able to avoid job interviews altogether, though. Your best bet is to manage your shyness as best you can. For the first few minutes of your interview, just listen to the interviewer talk, interject a few questions or comments here and there, and let yourself relax. When you're asked about your accomplishments, simply be frank and relate what occurred. Don't feel pressured into giving the "hard sell" by telling the recruiter that you were brilliant or that you did a great job if you are uncomfortable doing so. Let recruiters come to their own conclusions; they'll not only see the positive qualities that led to your accomplishments, but they'll appreciate your frank but unassuming manner as well.

If it makes you feel more comfortable, tell the recruiter right away that you tend to be shy and you're feeling a little nervous. This often breaks the ice and will keep the employer from concluding that you're trying to hide something or that your shyness is a sign of some larger problem.