



Outwitting And Taking Care Of Interviewers

While you all know that I do not ascribe to "taking charge" of an interview, due to the anxiety that sits across from you in the form of an interviewer, I do believe that being prepared for the worst, is not always a bad thing. But I do believe in taking charge of yourself.

Now, given that some of you are chronic optimists others of you, who are getting your final fair shake with Barbara Ehrenreich's "Bright Sided" -a book at about the tyranny of positive thinking, are not. To you I say, as well as to the others, when you are interviewing plan for the worst questions, the ones that totally trip you up or make you crazy, the ones that freeze you so that you can barely breathe.

Over the years, I have coached people about how to handle some show-stopping questions, and objections, but this approach is something totally different. It's one that was originally presented as a real question from an HR professional to every candidate she ever interviewed. It's her question, but you can turn it into your advantage before it is ever asked. Yes, before it's ever asked. I like that!

The question is, "Tell me about your most difficult client and can I have that client's name as a reference?"

Imagine hearing that for the first time. How would you feel? Respond? Would you be caught up short?

If you are like most executives, you don't like to share bad news and in the moment, being asked that question could really cut the flow of the interview. It could make your heart stop too. If you don't have an answer, then the inference is that you are not being honest. If you don't respond well, the inference is that you aren't prepared.

But now you are!

You can take that scary question and immediately use it for yourself, and never worry about being asked it. You can swiftly turn it into your advantage. Go ahead and dare to try something a bit different.

Think about the clients that indeed you or your team did turn around. They could be external clients or internal ones, no matter. Recall all the details and then tell your story, with rich color and drama so that it sticks in the mind of the interviewer and create a huge strong impression. Oh a good story is worth everything!

Prepare your answer to the unspoken query and then go daring and bold and say, "I have a list of references, including one where a client had been giving us a great deal of trouble and through our team's efforts we were able to turn her around to not only stay with us but she now enthusiastically refers business to us and has been doing so regularly for the past three years. Would you like me to give you her contact information?"

Now, I ask you? How does that pre-empt a scary question?