

## MINDFUL INTERVIEWING: CALMING DOWN YOUR INTERVIEWING JITTERS

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Nowadays, my clients are less jittery in interviews. Why? Because they have discovered the Mindful Interviewing approach and using it can make a difference, a big one.

Becoming aware of what is going on in your seeing, thinking and feeling can help you ditch the “jitters” and become a more credible and confident interviewee. For those who have not interviewed in years, or for those who just feel plain nervous or worse, Mindful Interviewing might be helpful for you.

First, know this. No situation can make you afraid. It is YOUR thinking about it that may create the stress or the anxiety. An interview by itself has no intrinsic meaning. It's how you think about an interview that influences how you behave in it.

Harry, who lived in Connecticut, and his resume and his networking generated a lot of interviews but they always stuck at one meeting, never onto the next one. Harry was always afraid of interviews but he never realized it consciously until he discovered that he was actually making non-useful moving pictures in his mind on the train while coming to New York City. Those movies of his mind were almost Gestapo-like but he didn't know it at first. When we talked about it and I asked him questions, he said that he saw an interview as a place where people would strip away any sense of his dignity, stress him out and, well, you can easily imagine how he conducted his interviews! Until he became more mindful of the tricks his mind was playing on him he was destined to interview defensively. Who wouldn't with that internal movie? I would, wouldn't you? What is YOUR mind saying to you about your interviews?

Next, stay present. When it comes to interviewing and the interviewee, whether it takes place tomorrow, or next week, or the next hour you need to stay present in the presence of another. Any movie making prior to the event, will keep you out of the present moment. It is the present moment that counts the most. That moment is all you or anyone, for that matter, ever has control over.

So, if you have prepared, vetted the firm, Googled the interviewer, networked the company, then all that remains is for you to be present and stay connected to that other person! Yes, it's that simple, folks. As I have said for almost 30 years now, the purpose of an interview is not to get a job...it's to get the next interview! How is that done? Without exception it is done by becoming totally present with the moment and the interviewer so he or she feels safe with you and can trust to send you to the next interview.

Third, learn how to use your breath; your best friend! When you begin to recognize that there are natural rhythms to your breath and that it will always rise and fall you can also notice that you can't stop the ups and downs of life, nor the ups and downs of interviewing. But you can and do breathe. So, here's a beginning way for you to start becoming more mindful and more present for and with yourself by using your breath.

Take 5 minutes out of your day and sit in a non-distracting place. You may be tense and busy but just sit still and become a bit, just a wee bit curious about your breathing.

Just notice your breathing and without judging right or wrong notice where is it and is it deep or shallow? Is it short or long? Is it high in your chest or lower down in your abdomen? No judgment. Then, see if you can count and say quietly to yourself, "1" on the in breath and "1" on the outbreath. Then say "2" on the in and out breath and see if you can count to 10. If you find that thoughts jam your mind, and I promise they will, just begin to go back to the beginning. At first you may only get to "1" and that's a great beginning.

If you are really tense, you can slow it down with this belly breathing technique. Take a breath into your abdomen for the count of 3, hold the breath for a count of 4 and let it out slowly to the count of 5. This belly breathing is an effective way for you to calm down the jitters and balance yourself even before you do the 1-10 breathing.

So net net, what is Mindful Interviewing?

- No interview can make you nervous. It's your thinking about it that creates the feeling.
- Staying totally present in the interview can calm down the jitters.
- Beginning a daily breathing practice so you can create a great sense of calm and confidence.
- Knowing that there will be changes, ups and downs and like the breath, it keeps on going.
- Learning that to be present to yourself and others can calm down the interviewing jitters and it can calm down the interviewer as well.

One, two, three, four.....

Good luck to you!

