

Trick Interview Questions And How To Answer Them From [Jobs.AOL.com](#) By [Brazen Life](#) Sep 4th 2012 By Amy Knapp

## Headed to a job interview and worried about bombing?

First, remember that someone has always done worse.

Second, and by far more important, remember this: HR pros often ask [trick questions](#) knowing you might screw them up. In fact, trying to make you screw up is the whole point: I'll just throw this little hand grenade and see if she can defuse it before it explodes.

How to train for combat? Rather than preparing generic answers to the same old questions everyone can expect ("What are your weaknesses?" "Why did you leave your last position?"), the savvy interviewee-that'd be you!-should have both ears open for [tricky questions](#) that are designed to throw them off their game.

Here are a few to watch for, and how to handle them shrewdly:

1. The most innocent-sounding doozy? "Tell me about yourself..."

As many as 80% of all interviews begin with this breezy landmine. It often leads to the most common interviewing faux pas: revealing too much.

So what's universally accepted as too much?

Sometimes it's a seemingly inconsequential bit of information that conflicts with your resume.

Or it's a lack of preparedness.

Or a simple inability to express yourself clearly.

When the interviewer says "tell me about yourself," what he or she is really doing is checking to see if you're articulate and professional. The way you answer is as important as the things you say.

### *Tips:*

- Keep your game face on; don't get too personal.
- Give them the facts, not your life story.
- Do your homework, know what they are looking for and design your answer accordingly.
- Ask questions and generate conversation. It's a two-way street.

2. "Tell me about an instance where you failed or did something you are

### **ashamed of."**

Whatever you do, don't get defensive. And avoid confessing something you regret-feeling ashamed is a shade different than talking about an error in a calm, unemotional way.

While it's important you be prepared for this question, it's equally important to appear perplexed by it. A touch of theater, perhaps-but true, unfortunately. You want to send the signal that thinking of a mistake requires a bit of rummaging through mental files otherwise stuffed with successes.

Start by touting your ability to work peacefully and effectively with coworkers or clients, then pause, have a think and tell the interviewer about your philosophy of dealing with regrettable situations in a timely manner so you don't have to harp on them for years to come.

#### *Tips:*

- Keep your emotions firmly in hand.
- Resist clichéd or generalized answers such as "I'm a workaholic" or "I'm too hard on myself."
- Be honest and address the interviewer as a colleague, not a therapist or buddy.

### **3. The last tricky question is a non-question. It sounds a lot like this: Silence. Cough. Ahem.**

Maybe it's the dreaded silent treatment, or maybe it's just a deliberately awkward pause. Either way, that quiet lull in conversation has ruffled many feathers, and it's designed to reveal how you react under stress.

Not all interviewers will play quiet to see if the applicant will launch into nervous, oversharing chatter-but that's how most people respond.

Luckily, you know better than to ramble. You're cool and calm. You're relaxed and relish the chance to catch your breath. Perhaps you even grab the opportunity to ask a question of your own.

#### *Tips:*

- Look the interviewer in the eye. Don't fidget.
- Resist the urge to fill the space unless you have something important to say.
- Ask your own questions.
- Be cool as a cucumber. Because you are.

Tough questions are a great opportunity to flex your muscle and show the employer you're

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resilient, solid and made to last. Be professional, be genuine and be ready.

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