



Rifka Schonfeld STRATEGIES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

Preparing for an Interview

Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter will discuss preparing for an interview.

Rifka Schonfeld
STRATEGIES

QUESTION:

In these difficult economic times, it is so hard to even get an interview.

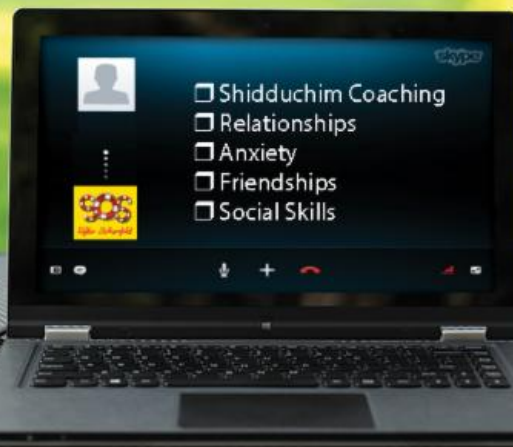
But, once I get one (after sending out dozens of cover letters and resumes), I don't know what to do. How can I prepare for an interview?

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Rifka Schonfeld
DIRECTOR S.O.S.

718.382.5437 | rifkaschonfeld@gmail.com | www.rifkaschonfeldsos.com

Rifka Schonfeld
STRATEGIES

ANSWER:

That's a great question that is particularly relevant in this competitive job market right now. There might be many other highly qualified candidates going after your job. So, how can you prepare for your interview and ensure that you shine brighter than the rest?

First, know where you are going. Find out where your interview is located and figure out how you are going to get there on the day of the interview. Allot the amount of time you will need in order to get there about 10 minutes early. This might seem like silly advice, but if you are late, you can mess up your job interview before you even say hello.

Next, do your homework about the company and job you are interviewing for. Read whatever you can about the company and, if possible, speak to people who currently work for that company or in a similar position somewhere else. This will better prepare you intelligent questions to ask your interviewer.

Then, look the part. Your clothing should be neat, ironed, and professional looking. Because it is not always possible to know the dress code of an office before you go on the interview, err on the conservative side. Even if you end up being overdressed for the interview, it will keep you looking professional. Of course, don't be afraid to inject a little of your personality into your look with a special piece of jewelry or a pop of color in your tie.

Always, rehearse beforehand. There are some common questions that most interviewers ask, such as "What are your strengths and weaknesses? Or why do you want to work here?" Consider asking a friend to allow you to answer those questions in a mock interview. This way, you will be able to hear the missteps in your answers. Also, if you prepare for the expected, you will be more prepared for the unexpected.

Don't forget to sell yourself. The interview is not the time to be humble, rather it is your time to shine! Develop a short (less than one minute) "pitch" that explains why you are wonderful. In business, this is called an "elevator speech" – something you could quickly say to someone if you bump into him or her in an elevator. This should include your strengths, your abilities, and what sets you apart from other applicants.

After your interview, follow up. Write a thank you note or friendly email expressing your appreciation for the time the interviewer spent with you. In addition, restate your interest in the position.

Remember that every job interview, regardless of the outcome, is a learning experience. Even if you do not get the job, you will be better prepared for the next interview. So, relish the experience and learn from both your successes and your failures!

Incidentally, preparing for an interview is very similar to preparing for a shidduch. Of course, looking for a partner for the rest of your life is significantly more important than a job interview. However, knowing where you are going (both geographically and emotionally), doing your homework on your date, looking the part, rehearsing beforehand, and knowing your best attributes are integral elements of preparation for a *shidduch* as well.

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