

## At Your Interview:

**Advice from a vet:** *"I leverage my military experience bigtime. People love to hear military stories. It makes conversation easy, it's an opportunity to brag, and I stand out. It's worked for me so far."*

**Make a connection right away.** Often times hiring decisions are made early in the interview based on rapport, so make it easy for the interviewer to decide they like you right from the start.

- Come prepared with a funny story, and don't be afraid to let your personality shine through. You'd be surprised how many times during the interview process you're sitting there making small talk, so come prepared with something to say. Think about it... the walk from the lobby to where you're interviewing, the time between you meeting with one person to the next... the list goes on. Be social with everyone you encounter – you never know who has input or influence in a hiring decision.

**Be yourself.** Don't try to be what you think they want you to be- not only will you be more genuine, but you won't waste your time pretending to be what you're not. After all, they may not want to hire exactly who you are pretending to be so why risk sabotaging yourself?

**Lighten up.** People hire those they want to work with. A little humor goes a long way. Remain professional and serious, but definitely embrace some humor.

**Advice from a vet:** *"Often times when interviewers learn of our military background, they tend to have a preconceived prejudice that we are going to go postal on them. Or, they assume that because we must have seen so much at a young age, they can't give us orders or we'll freak out. While of course this is ridiculous, it's a reality that I've dealt with on several occasions. Use this opportunity to address this situation in a positive and relatable manner. I typically bring it right out by making a joke about it and say something like "Some people might think that we're all ready to lose it, but it's actually the complete opposite. My time in the military gave me a keen sense of teamwork and doing whatever is necessary to get the job done."*

**Body language.** Over 80% of your impression will occur through non-verbal cues: the way you sit, stand, eye contact, and more. Here are some body language tips.

- Make sure you are full of energy.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- When answering a question, make sure to avoid shifting your eyes away or it may come across that you are not being genuine.
- Don't cross your arms, as it comes across being closed off and not open to new things.

- Maintain good posture and don't slouch when sitting.

**Don't One-Word Answer.** Avoid answering questions with one word. If someone asks how your day is, the answer is not: "Good." Elaborate, and be polite. Responses could be:

"Great." Then lead into a topic such as: "Great – It's my daughters birthday." or "Great- I went to a concert this past weekend." This shows well roundedness and allows the interviewer to engage with you personally, which is what you want.

**Turn off your phone.** There is absolutely no excuse for you to have your phone turned on during an interview. From the minute you walk into the building, make sure your phone is turned off and put away until you are out of the building.

**Say Thank You.** Make sure to get the contact information of those who interview you. Send all of the people you spoke with a follow up thank you email or note the day of the interview. This shows you are professional, gracious, and serious about the job: all things an employer wants to see.

**Use the environment to create a bond.** If you see something that catches your eye (on the walls, something on the interviewer's desk, or something in the lobby), comment on it. A little side talk will make you more memorable (and more human).