Never Go to a Job Interview Unprepared for This One Question

You've gotten through the curveball questions, dodged that question about your greatest weakness, and made a decent impression overall during your interview. Just as you begin to relax, they ask what may seem to be a throwaway question, "Do you have any questions for me?"

Don't let this opportunity to stand out from the crowd pass you by.

The key lies in preparation, as well as avoiding certain responses. You may want to throw your own curveball back at the interviewer or even ask for feedback. Here's how to really shine in the moment.

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1. Be Ready For It

This question is asked so often, no one should be surprised or unprepared for it. Have a plan going in for that moment. Write down rather than memorize your key points. Better yet, take a notepad to write notes down during the interview just in case something sparks a new question.

While you can prepare a list ahead of time, you should adapt in case the person conducting the interview changes. If you have questions aimed at the director of H.R. and the supervisor for your potential department shows up instead, you'll need to table some questions for later.

Plan out ahead of time whom you might encounter during the interview and have some questions ready for several scenarios.

Also, make sure you note if the interviewer answers any of your questions during the interview. You don't want to sound like you didn't listen the first time.

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2. What Not To Say

The question "Do you have any questions?" may be open-ended, but that doesn't mean you can ask anything you want. Certain topics raise red flags automatically, and some, while they seem important to you, can give the wrong impression of you as a potential employee. Here are some examples.

- **Outside Activities** – The standard rule of thought here says do not ask about non-work activities. It may imply you're more focused on that than working. However, don't pretend that you don't value something outside of work too. If family or religion matter to you, be true to yourself and word a question from that part of you. Authenticity matters and interviewers can spot when something is off. It should also be clear that the quality of your work will not suffer just because you value many aspects of life.
- **Questions You Can Answer** – If a Google search or trip to the company website can answer a question, don't ask it. It wastes time and interviewers expect potential employees to do some research on their own time.
- **Salary/Benefits** – During a first interview, try to avoid asking about money unless it feels necessary. This can paint you as self-interested and, while you do need to look out for yourself, an employer may expect you to put this aside when you first meet. Keep in mind that this information often appears in job postings if you research in advance. One exception may lie in inquiring about work hours in relation to family obligations. An employee deserves to know if a company offers parental

leave for example. Just remember: your family issues and needs are not the company's necessarily. If you can tell such a question won't go over well, don't ask it at this moment.

- **Complicated Questions** – Don't force an interviewer to take notes just to keep up with your question. Ask a simple question and move on to another part of the interview if necessary. This moment is conversational. Keep it that way.
- **Too Many Questions** – Keep it simple and keep it short. Interviewers often ask you if you have questions as a courtesy. Don't overstay your welcome, per se, by bringing up too many questions. Watch for signs from the interviewer that he or she needs to wrap up.

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3. Prepare A Question

This opportunity offers you a chance to show your level of engagement with the interview, a clear sign that you value the exchange. Use this moment to recall previous statements or reference relevant good news about the company.

Do some research on not only the company, but the industry as well. Brush up on literature covering a new development in the field that applies to the employer, and focus a question around that information. Even if the question isn't complex or thought-provoking, it displays that you've already invested time and energy into the company.

Avoid yes or no questions, which may fail to engage the interviewer during this moment, or even negate an opportunity to build on a positive interaction.

Aim for questions regarding your role in the company, things you want to know about the employer or the interviewer, or, if you are very confident in yourself, ask them questions about

you. This gives you feedback as well as the chance to either respond to a weakness on the spot or follow-up on the subject in a thank-you letter.

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