

How To Respond To ‘Tell Me About Yourself?’ During An Interview

“So, tell me about yourself,” the job interviewer says. Your heart sinks instantly. Here’s how to respond to this question, even if you were hoping it wouldn’t come up in conversation this time.

Weave in your credentials

This will help provide some substance.

Alison Doyle, a career expert, author, and founder/CEO of CareerToolBelt.com writes in The Balance that you should “transition to professional from personal” after sharing certain details.

“After sharing a few interesting personal aspects of your background, you can pivot to mentioning some key professional skills that would help you to add value if you were hired for your target job,” Doyle writes. “Consider using phrases like ‘In addition to those interests and passions, my professional life is a huge part of who I am, so I’d like to talk a bit about some of the strengths which I would bring to this job.’”

Consider using this approach

Kathryn Minshew, CEO of The Muse, talks about a formula from Lily Zhang, one of the publication’s career experts, in a video on the site.

“A formula I really like to use is called the Present-Past-Future formula. So, first, you start with the present — where you are right now. Then, segue into the past—a little bit about the experiences you’ve had and the skills you gained at the previous position. Finally, finish with the future — why you are really excited for this particular opportunity,” Minshew says, before giving an example of how to do this. Remember not to drone on, and on and on ...

You might be tempted to ramble on because of nervousness, but you shouldn’t talk their ear off.

“No matter how you answer this question, don’t take up too much time with your response. You don’t have to tell the hiring manager every single thing that makes you a great fit for the position. Just give a few important details that will spark their interest in learning more and you’ll get the interview off to a great start,” a Robert Half blog post reads.

Leave certain topics out

Remember that everything isn’t fair game here.

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