

Avoid Subtracting Points from Your Personality during Interviews

- 1. Be the best-rested interviewee.** Fact: people are more articulate, happier, and look healthier after a good night's sleep. Arrive feeling well rested and sharp, and determined to make a superb first impression.
- 2. Be a gracious "guest."** If your interviewer is late to your appointment, shrug it off with good humor. If the phone rings constantly and he keeps picking it up, smile graciously, and don't let it rattle you. If people unceremoniously barge in and interrupt the meeting, laugh it off. Whatever you do, don't keep glancing nervously at your watch. Interviewers easily detect signs of irritation and boredom, so don't get irritated or bored!
- 3. Give it your personal best.** You know that you're the best candidate for that particular job. Prove it to your interviewer by strenuously avoiding canned answers and lame, generic, forgot-to-do-your-homework questions.
- 4. Recognize that every interviewer has her own style (and it may not conform to yours).** Is your interviewer asking you too many questions? Not enough questions? Questions that are weird and out there? Don't try to dominate the interview. Meld your style to your interviewer's style.
- 5. Embrace the middle.** Are you in a creative field where the daily dress code is "anything goes"? Dress more conservatively than you would if you were already working there. Are you in a conservative business where people wear three-piece suits to the office? Wear the uniform, but choose one item, perhaps a tie or belt, that expresses your personality. Don't show up in clothing that makes you look invisible, but also take care not to look too funky for the job in question.
- 6. Empathize, don't criticize.** Everyone hates to be criticized. So, if you're asked your opinion about a mediocre piece of work that the company created, or even how you like the new orange and purple lobby, tone down your criticism. If you can't bring yourself to say that you like it, tell your interviewer that it's thought-provoking.
- 7. Be there.** Resolve to be fully present and pay close attention to what your interviewer is saying. You really never get a second chance to make a first impression, so do your best to make a positive, indelible impression the first time around.