

Bad Job Interview? 4 Good Ways to Learn From It

by Amy Levin-Epstein /
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Bad job interview? Be sure to learn from it and then move on without further ado, advises Heather McNab, author of "What Top Professionals Need To Know About Answering Tough Job Interview Questions." Dwelling on it will only hang over you and kill your confidence. "You certainly don't want to one bad experience to impact your future interviews too," says McNab. Here's how to learn from a poor performance -- and then let it go.

Laugh it off

Sometimes, you're just not on your game. Other times, there is no chemistry and you're not sure why. Realize that bad job interviews happen. "Let yourself be human even if you did feel you made mistakes," says McNab. Often, lack of chemistry may signal a job isn't the right boss or company for you.

Inventory the experience on paper

Get it out of your system, and stop obsessing. "The worst thing you can do is talk about it non-stop and dart from moment to moment about what went wrong," says career expert J.T. O'Donnell. She advises going through each stage of the interview and rating how you felt. By laying out the interview stage by stage, you'll be able to pinpoint when things went downhill, and look for the reason. "In some cases, we realize we said/did the wrong thing. But, in other cases we realize we stand by what we said and that the reaction should be a sign that it wasn't the right place for us to work." Make sure to identify at least one thing that can be improved, and one thing that you nailed. "Then, take the piece of paper, crumple it up and throw it out. Time to move on," says O'Donnell.

Bring in a professional

Sometimes, it's easy to determine what went wrong and how to fix it. For example, if you were rushing because of traffic, make a mental note to leave extra early next time. Or if you simply couldn't remember great examples of work you've done as they relate to the position, practice explaining them a friend before your next meeting. But if you're stumped as to why you aren't impressing hiring managers once you're in the door, consider getting a consultation with an interviewing specialist. "Getting an interview assessment completed by a professional is an easy way for you to understand what you are doing right and finding out what changes you can make to improve your interview skills," says McNab.

Keep moving -- and move on

Ideally, you'll be able to find the humor in a job interview gone awry. At the very least, treat yourself as you'd treat your best friend if they had a bad day and do something relaxing that you enjoy. The next day? McNab says to get back on the horse and keep applying: "Whatever you do, don't stop. Momentum is key especially, if you felt you did a bad job. Move forward."

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