**Note: No cigarettes for at least 1 hour prior. No gum or candy. No perfume. No excessive jewelry. No flashy clothing. Avoid patterns –even if they are cute! (dress conservative business- example : solids rather than patterns - blazer and slacks with slight heels)**

**Start with a firm (not wimpy/not hard) hand shake, direct eye contact and a nice big smile, and do not fidget**

**After their introduction, you say**

“It’s nice to meet you \_\_\_\_ (however they introduced themselves- this will become important later on)\_\_\_”

**“Tell me a little about yourself?”**

Please translate this question in your own mind – it really means “How are you qualified for this position?”

This answer has nothing to do with your age or how many children you have. Avoid both of those topics throughout the interview as they are most often issues that will “weed” you out – not in.

You have about 2-3 minutes to tell them the most important facts about your character and why they should hire you.

Sample response might be.

(If you are bilingual it should be the very first thing you let them know and it should be completely stated: “ I am bilingual in English and Spanish, I read write and speak them fluently”) only if that is all true

Go on to tell them about your qualifications:

“ I recently graduated from Milan Institute where I completed \_\_\_ hrs in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ program. I carried a \_\_\_GPA (only if it is over 3.5) and I had \_\_\_\_\_excellent/perfect\_\_\_\_ attendance. (only if this is true)

“I learned \_\_\_\_\_ (list three or more of the specific skills you learned)\_\_\_\_, and I found that I absolutely love the \_\_\_\_ field and I am looking forward to starting my career.”

“Prior to this I worked at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Company for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years and I was responsible for \_\_\_(try to relate the past experience with something that would be transferable -useable- in this new field such as customer service etc)\_\_\_\_\_\_”

“I learned of this position on \_\_\_\_\_(website/friend )\_\_\_\_ and I am very excited about the opportunity to interview with you and the possibility of working here.”

**“What are you three greatest strengths?”**

Make sure you know what your strengths are, and try to choose those that are most applicable to the position you are applying for, you can always clump them, or expand upon them thereby giving them more than three one-word answers….some general suggestions are :

Honest, integral, attentive to details, punctual, team oriented/player, Reliable, responsible, quick learner, love working with people, positive, problem solver, organized, dependable, stable, efficient- etc etc.

Clumping may sound like this:

“Well my three greatest strengths are #1. I have a very high work ethic, you can count on me to get the job done right, I am always on time and I am very reliable #2. I am a very fast learner, I learned quickly in school and I am sure that I will pick up on all of your office policies and procedure easily as well. And #3. I am a real people-person, and an excellent team player, I have always gotten along well with my coworkers and I genuinely enjoy interacting with people”

**“What is your weakness, if you have one?”**

Listen to how they word this question if they only ask you for one weakness…then only give them one… do Not offer more.

We all have one, and if you think you don’t you will appear arrogant or appear to have a lack of introspection…so pick one, but above all else make sure it does NOT affect the bottom line of the office that you applying for. Present it as if it was in the past and you have become aware of it and taken measures to correct it. Explain how you have turned it around into a strength…. Always end on how it is a current Strength

Examples:

“I have realized how beneficial it can be to speak a second language, and I realize that is may be a drawback that I am not fully bilingual, but I did take some \_\_\_fill in blank\_\_\_\_\_\_(Spanish) classes in high school and I am always more than willing to takes more classes if it would benefit your office. I am also well versed on the Google Spanish Translator application so I’m sure that I can use that to converse with non English speaking patients.” Smile (make sure that you really do know how to use Google Translator)

-OR-

“Well I used to be shy and reserved, but I have really developed more self awareness and the confidence that goes along with knowing what my skills are and what I have to contribute to the world. So I made a decision to come out of my shell and I find that I really do like interacting with new people and helping them in every way possible” smile

-OR-

“Well in the past, because I am a great multi-tasker I found I had a tendency to take on more assignments than I was able to complete effectively, so what I have learned to do is assign degrees of priority. Now, because I still want to help out wherever I can, if a coworker asks me to take on an extra project I will determine it’s priority in comparison to those tasks which I am already in the process of handling… and if it is my supervisors request then I will ask them if it has a greater priority than the other tasks so that I know I am on the same page as my manager. So actually it was my strength gone overboard- in so much as I am great at working as a team player and I love to take on new challenges, now I have the added strength of prioritizing too ” smile

**“Have you ever worked with a coworker or supervisor that was doing something unethical or asked you to do something unethical? What was the scenario and what did you do?”**

Keep this answer short and sweet and do not spend anytime bashing the coworker or supervisor. If they don’t ask for the scenario – DON’T offer it. They just want to know the basic scenario and the following:

That you had NO part of the unethical behavior and that you followed “policy and procedure” whether that was reporting it to management or saying something to the coworker at the time.

**“Have you ever had and angry or irate customer, what was the scenario and what did you do to deescalate or calm them down?”**

Keep this answer short and sweet and do not spend much time on it. Definitely do not bash the angry customer or roll your eyes about their bad behavior- don’t elaborate too much on them. The interviewer just wants to know the basic scenario and that you implemented the following three steps to defuse and deescalate the situation.

#1. You listened to their concerns- #2. You resolved to the best of your ability and #3. That you turned it over to the proper management when it exceeded your authority.

**“What is your 5 year plan?”**

Ideally this pertains to your career goals and ideally it is within the same realm that you are currently seeking to be hired for … it is generally not about your personal goals. If you are applying for Medical Assistant, then your answer might be… “Well I intend to become the very best Medical Assistant I can, and learn all of the ins and outs of this field and then I intend to go back to school and perhaps become a Physician’s Assistant at some point “ smile

If it really is not in your intentions to advance your position you can say “I really just want to become the best at this position- and expert in my field- and see where this takes me”

Please refrain from comments such as “I hope to have your job some day” or “I intend to own my own business someday (same kind of business)” The interviewer may feel threatened for their own position or concerned that once you build a rapport with their clientele you will take some of them with you when you open your own business.

**“Do you have any questions for me?”**

*This may be the most important question of the whole interview and how you answer it could be the difference between never hearing back and actually getting hired. The optimum response to this is***…**

“Well yes I do have a question for you. \*I have read the job description, and I have gone online and researched your company-I’ve read your mission statement and I believe I have a good understanding of who you are in our community, But Ms/Mr \_\_\_\_(however they introduced themselves to you)\_\_\_You already work here, so in your opinion…what are the ideal qualities for the perfect candidate for this position, in this office specifically, from an insider’s perspective what really makes the most successful Medical Assistant/ Dental Assistant/Pharmacy Technician/Massage Therapist?”

Note: \*It is important that you let them know that you have done your research on the company first, then go into the question.

They will appreciate that you have requested their opinion; you have in essence just formed and ally. As they give you the list of ideal qualities they are looking you straight in the eye, making the psychological association with you. More importantly, you should be listening to every quality they give you. *When* they finish –*and not before they finish*- You say

“Oh that sounds wonderful, I feel I do have many/all of those qualities, I already mentioned how I (insert the qualities that the interviewer listed which you have already mentioned) and I’m sorry I don’t think I mentioned – or I’m not sure if I mentioned it in our interview but I am also (insert the other qualities that the interviewer mentioned that you did not bring up in the previous interview- ideally- get a feel for those which seemed most important) so I feel I would be a great fit for your team and I would love to come to work for you” smile

**“Is there anything else you would like me to know about you?”**

This is what I like to call *‘The Bow’* because it is just like tying a big bow around the gift of yourself that you are giving the interviewer. Use this opportunity to quickly reiterate the strengths that you have already mentioned, including the ideal qualities that they gave you in answering your last question – remember the slogan in advertising “if you didn’t say it three times you never said it at all”

Sample:

“Well, I think we have pretty much covered everything, I’m honest, integral, flexible, easy to get along with and I love working in a team-I am also capable of working independently, I learn quickly and after hearing a from you about all that you office offers, I would really love to be a part of your team!” smile

When shaking hands thank them for their time and let them know you really appreciate how helpful/friendly they have been.

Ask them if you can have their card and when you may call them back to check on their decision. smile