

Don't Torture Yourself Post-Interview

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Last week, I prepared a very qualified candidate for an interview for her "dream job." Sure, she was a little nervous about a few questions she might be asked about her resume. After all, about a year ago, after working at her law firm for a number of years, she up and quit her job to care for an ailing family member and do volunteer work. Plus, she felt "rusty" in terms of her interviewing skills, in large part because she had not interviewed for a job since before graduating from law school.

By the time we conducted the preparation session for the interview, this candidate had done her homework and practiced answers to many of the questions we anticipated she would be asked. As we spoke, she fine-tuned her answers and articulated them in the most concise way. Moreover, she had researched the individuals with whom she was going to meet and crafted some insightful questions for each of the interviewers. By the time she was finished [preparing for the interview](#), she was confident, excited and ready to go. As I always do, I asked her to call me after the interview to provide me a summary of how she thought it went.

As the obedient candidate that she is, she called me as soon as she finished the interview. That is when the self-torture began. She began recounting each and every sentence she articulated to each interviewer and began tearing each response apart. Within two minutes of calling me, she was practically in tears, convinced that she had sounded like an uneducated, inarticulate, unqualified candidate who had no chance of receiving an offer.

Now, don't get me wrong, we are all human, and sometimes candidates say stupid things in interviews. But as this candidate recited the answers she provided to the questions asked, I thought she sounded fantastic. Sure, her answers were not "perfect," and she may have said "ah" and "um" a few more times than she needed to, but overall, she relayed professional, concise answers that showed not only an interest in the job but a true expertise. However, in her mind, she had failed to explain in the best possible detail how and why she was the best candidate for the job. As our conversation continued, and her panic grew, I had to cut her off and begin my Post-Interview Lecture, which goes something like this:

- See [Top Ten Interview Questions](#) for more information

DO NOT TORTURE YOURSELF AFTER AN INTERVIEW. Once it is over, there is absolutely nothing you can do to go back and re-answer the questions asked of you, so there is no use in obsessing about each and every word you said during the interview. Instead, take a deep breath, pat yourself on the back, and remind yourself that you prepared for the interview to the best of your ability and gave it your best shot.

- See [Interviewing Tips](#) for more information

Of course this lecture is completely inapplicable to the candidate who thinks he or she does not have to prepare for an interview, but I will save those individuals for another blog. If you have thoroughly prepared for an interview and given everything you have, then torturing yourself after the interview with the things you said (or failed to say) is completely counterproductive. Sure, there is always room for improvement and things that can be learned from an interview, and for those reasons, reflecting on the interview is very important. But reflecting on an interview is very different than obsessing about it and convincing yourself that you completely blew it.

After multiple calls to me, during which she relayed additional "stupid" things she said during her interview, I finally convinced my candidate to let it all go. Easier said than done, but I think she is starting to realize how

destructive her behavior was. While she has not yet heard from the firm, and she is not confident that she will receive an offer for this job, she is no longer spending 90% of her time thinking about the "deficient" answers she gave and the "proper" answer she should have provided.

See [6 Things Attorneys and Law Students Need to Remove from Their Resumes ASAP If They Want to Get Jobs with the Most Prestigious Law Firms](#) for more information.

Or at least that is what she is telling me.

**Learn why attorneys usually fail law firm phone-screening interviews in this article:
[Why Most Attorneys Fail Telephone-Screening Interviews](#)**