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**Whoops! How to Handle a Tough Media Interview**

**By Susan Harrow**

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Whoops! How to Handle a Tough Media Interview

1. When asked an embarrassing or inappropriate question.

Reframe the question by beginning with, \*What I felt was....\* Then focus attention on a broader social issue or expand it to encompass what many people might feel. An interviewer asked one of my clients who had been raped: \*Did you feel dirty, unlovable, ashamed?\*

Instead of answering, \*Yes,\* she might have responded, \*Many women whether they've been raped or not, have been made to feel that way about their bodies or sexuality at some point in their lives. That's why I've chosen to speak out on this sensitive issue now. To give a voice to all of us, even those who have no voice.\*

2. When asked a question that is too personal.

Use humor to lighten the atmosphere. Or change the nature of the question gracefully by saying, \*What I'd really like to say is....\* Or, \*The question I'd really like to answer is....\* Or, \*In my book I say....\* Or, \*I'd like to keep that part of my life private, but I would like to share this....\* Then offer something else delicious and intimate.

3. When an interview is lagging.

Ask to read a passage from your book or describe your service with a tightly condensed and powerful phrase. You

will have already chosen in advance a paragraph or two that is particularly exemplary. Don't feel shy about offering. Most interviewers are so busy they may not have had a chance to review or even peruse your book or the information you've provided. You are the person most familiar with your book, personality or business and the best parts of it! When she was being interviewed for her book, *\*Some of Me,\** Isabella Rosellini delighted her audience by picking an imaginative and lively section which she read with feeling.

#### 4. When you're pressed on a sensitive point.

When Terry Gross pressed Chuck D, leader of the rap group Public Enemy, about one of the members of his group making anti-Semitic remarks, he answered vaguely a number of times and then said bluntly, *\*Let's move on,\** which made him appear rude. Instead, he might have said, *\*I've really said all I can say about this. Can we go on to the next question?\** Or, *\*I've really answered this to the best of my knowledge at this time with the information I have available.\**

Another way to handle persistent questions on a topic you wish to avoid is to give a series of very short responses, or answer them with information that is so charming or captivating the interviewer won't notice you've deviated from his/her request. The interviewer will then feel as if his/her questions have been answered satisfactorily without being embarrassed by not being able to elicit a direct response from you.

#### 5. When you haven't been asked something you want to cover.

Offer to share something the interviewer hasn't thought of. Most often he/ she will greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness. Use a teaser tidbit. *\*I could tell you about...if you'd like.\** It may surprise you but people rarely remember the questions an interviewer poses. What they remember are your answers. And when they no longer remember your answers they remember the feeling they received when hearing you speak.

Learn how to handle the 4 most difficult types of interviewers in *\*Sell Yourself Without Selling Your Soul\** (HarperCollins). Need to prepare for a meeting, promotion,

presentation, job or media interview? Go to  
<http://tinyurl.com/6ypqj>

Susan Harrow is a top media coach, marketing strategist and author of *\*Sell Yourself Without Selling Your Soul\** (HarperCollins), *\*The Ultimate Guide to Getting Booked on Oprah\**, and *\*How You Can Get a 6-Figure Book Advance\**. Her clients include Fortune 500 CEOs, millionaires, best-selling authors and successful entrepreneurs who have appeared on Oprah, 60 Minutes, TIME, USA Today, People, O, The Wall Street Journal, Inc., and many others.

## **Preparing For Your Media Interview**

**By Judy Jernudd**

Media interviews are an important part of an overall public relations campaign. Any size company from entrepreneur to Fortune 500 can benefit from media interviews. Always arrive for a media interview prepared and early. We've seen competent CEOs drown in uncharted media waters. Being unprepared guarantees you won't get asked back. When you are contacted for any kind of media interview ask the following questions: What is the angle of the interview? Is the interview for Television, Radio, Print or the Internet? Will the reporter be interviewing anyone else for the same story? How much time will you have for the interview? What is the date the story will air?

Keep adding questions to your own checklist to help you prepare for your interviews. The following tips will help you:

Tip 1: Preview any show or publication before your interview.

Tip 2: Know what you want to talk about so you get your main messages across.

Tip 3: Prepare for the questions you expect to be asked.

Tip 4: Create 10–15 second sound bites that are memorable and get your point across.

Tip 5: Understand colors and styles that are effective for on camera interviews.

Tip 6. Create any graphs, photos, or video to enhance your story in advance of the interview.

Being prepared and knowledgeable about your impending interview will boost your confidence and help you get the most from your media experiences.

Judy Jernudd is the CEO of STARtegit, a Media Consulting and Coaching firm in Beverly Hills, California. Companies that benefit from STARtegit Media and Presentation Coaching include IBM, Mobile Corporation, Dow, NASA and the United States Postal Service. Judy is the author of "Media Star Power ABCs to Successful TF, Radio, Print & Net Interviews." More information can be found at:

## Whoops! How to Handle a Tough Media Interview

Preparing For Your Media Interview

A Simple Technique to Remember Grocery Items

Top 10 Super Job Interview Tips

The 7 Tough Job Interview Questions That Can Make or Break You – and How to Answer Them

Crazy Interview Questions

The Ultimate Guide To Acing ANY Job Interview

Expand Your Professional Coaching and Consulting Business

The Classified List

Press Release E–Manual

Blog Biz For Beginners



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