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## Your Next Blind Date

By Janet White

If you do any kind of research on job interviews, invariably, the topic of job interview jitters comes up. You'll read all about stress and its symptoms, such as dry mouth, shaking hands, tight muscles, forgetfulness, quick breathing, increased blood pressure, nervous habits, perspiring, poor speech patterns, upset stomachs, and fast heart rates.

And you'll read that is "normal" to be nervous before a job interview but that you can learn to disguise, hide or overcome these symptoms. Of course, it's only human to feel nervous when a total stranger, who you believe have authority to pass judgment on you and deem you worthy of being hired, asks you intimidating and sticky questions like:

- \* Where do you see yourself in five years?
- \* Tell me about a time when you failed.
- \* On the scale of one to ten, how would you rate yourself as an employee?
- \* Why should we hire you?
- \* Tell me about that gap in your resume.
- \* How much did you earn in your last position?
- \* If you had the last ten years to live over again, what would you do differently?

This is the model of job interviews in what I call the "Traditional System" and what nearly everyone believes is how job interviews are supposed to be conducted. Very, very few people emerge from such an interview happy and hired. If you're not one of them, you might be ready for a different way to think about job interviews.

Instead of an interrogation, think of your job interview as a blind date. In fact, everything you know about blind dating applies to interviewing:

- \* You both know enough about each other on paper to want to meet each other.
- \* You want to make a good impression but simultaneously, want to "read" the other person as much as possible.
- \* It goes without saying that you make yourself look presentable, are polite, courteous and listen more than you talk.

Are you nervous? Perhaps, but it's more like anticipation of something good, isn't it? As you have a conversation with the other person, you ask yourself how you feel about them and if you want to take the next step to having some sort of a relationship with them.

If the answer is "no," well, nothing ventured, nothing lost and you part amicably. If "yes," then you're off to the races – for a while anyway.

So you're on your blind date with a potential romantic partner. In order to get to know you, did the other person ask you questions like:

- \* What did you want to be when you were 10 years old?
- \* Why did you break off your last relationship?
- \* On the scale of one to ten, how would you rate yourself as a lover?
- \* Why should I date you?
- \* Tell me why you've been single for so long.
- \* How much money do you have?
- \* If you could redo your last relationship, what would you do differently?

Wouldn't you be nervous if you knew you might be facing such questions? Of course you would, and you would probably never want to see that person again. How dare they ask such questions! What possible relevance could any of those questions have at this point? Who do they think they are, anyway?

Although you probably have your share of blind date horror stories, being interrogated with personal, irrelevant questions that have nothing to do with why you're meeting them is probably not among them.

So why are you on this blind date, anyway? Well, based upon the information provided to you, you know as much as you need to know at this point about the other person, and believe you two have enough in common to at least have a decent conversation. In other words, you've already said "yes" to the other person, and they've already said "yes" to you, which is why you agreed to meet.

Do you see the parallels between a job interview and a blind date? You're qualified for the job and the employer knows it, which is why they asked to see you. (Hopefully, this company doesn't waste time interviewing unqualified people just to tell them they're not going to be hired. If they did, you wouldn't want to work for them anyway.)

The real reason for the interview is the same as it is for a blind date – it's to see if the two of you like each other as people so you can move forward along the same path in some fashion. If you do, great! And if you don't, it's best you found out right at the beginning that it wasn't going to work, because if the vibes aren't there, nothing will ever make them be there.

So think of your next job interview as a blind date and be prepared to meet a new colleague you like very much, because if the vibes are right, you'll hopefully be working with them a long, long time.