

# Interview Secrets

*How to land your dream job without compromising who you are*



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# About Me

Hey there! I'm Shannon Post and I'm a career coach—but not your conventional blue-suit-and-tie career coach. I believe **doing the work you love is a rebellion that will change the world.**



What I know is, if you hate your job right now, it isn't your fault. You simply were raised in a culture that doesn't teach you how to find fulfilling work. The good news is you have the power to change that. This is a skill you can learn.

I can also tell you that you're not alone. I searched for the work I was meant to do for well over a decade. I've had crappy minimum wage jobs and what on paper were "dream jobs." I was a professional classical singer performing on the most famous stages in New York City. I was a dog musher for a prominent Iditarod racer in Alaska. And I was a top senior IT executive leading technology and geospatial divisions.

In each case, where I had "made it" I had succeeded in society's eyes but none of the jobs felt like me. I was miserable, I wasn't fulfilled, I wasn't fully using my natural talents (mostly because I didn't understand what they were) and I wasn't making the kind of impact I wanted to make in the world.

I'd tried to find the perfect career so many times without success that I thought something was seriously wrong with me. Like maybe I wasn't allowed to have a career I loved and felt passionate about. Or maybe having a career I was naturally good at was just a pipe dream.

If you can relate, you need to know that it's not you. It's the box you're trying to fit yourself into.

That box, **the traditional career path, doesn't work for everyone**—and that's okay. There is fulfilling work out there that fits you and your personality like a glove. And it's my goal to help you find it.

My work is informed by my own experience building careers in vastly different industries, over twenty years supervising, managing, leading, and mentoring employees, continuing education and my studies at the University of Montana, the University of Virginia, and Stanford University.

But the thing I'm most proud of is that, against all odds, the life I have now includes the dream I had long ago. Alaska. Based in Talkeetna under the shadow of Denali and the Alaska Range. I am indebted to the Ahtna and Dena'ina people and their traditional lands where I do my best to make a tangible impact in people's daily lives and improve the world around me.

I've been certified as a coach by Kathy Kolbe, a leading authority on human instinct, and Dr. Martha Beck, a Harvard-educated sociologist specializing in human behavior.

I'm an INFP and my Kolbe index is 3-2-10-4. So I'm an introverted, empathic, innovative disruptor. I had a boss who said he never quite knew what I was up to, but the results always broke the barriers of what he thought was possible and changed the world. He wasn't wrong.

Now I want to break the barriers of what you think is possible and help you change your world and the world of everyone around you.

*Doing work you love ...  
...is a rebellion that will change the world.*

# My Interviewing Credentials

I've held a lot of positions over the last 30 years, most in leadership, including being a CIO. One of the main responsibilities a leader has is interviewing and hiring the right people. There are secrets I learned sitting on the other side of the desk you can't get any other way. Interviewing methods and fads come and go, but the underlying principles don't.

I want you to have **the behind-the-curtain view** of how your interviewers see you, so you can land the job that fits your strengths AND your desires. I've interviewed and hired for all kinds of companies and positions. Technology professionals, dog handlers, administrative assistants, cartographers and other geospatial professionals, janitorial staff, directors, designers, professors, accountants, performers, instructors, and more.

I've worked behind the scenes on major Broadway musical auditions (think huge cattle calls with thousands of singers) and I've judged a ton of musical competitions. Because of **my natural talent for putting the right people in the right seats**, I'm still a sounding board for leaders who are building high-performing teams.

I've watched a lot of people compete for an offer that was wrong for them—and I've watched as many people **accidentally destroy their chance** of getting their dream job by giving the “correct” or “standard” answers (we can see those from a mile away) and not showcasing their true talents. **I want to help you avoid either kind of failure.**

My experience is completely diverse, from Carnegie Hall to Wall Street to Alaska Adventure, so, no matter the industry you're in, I can help you **up your interview game and choose the right job. A job that fits YOU and your life.**

# The Rehearsal

## First, here are 7 things to know before you interview

There's always a game going on inside your head, and it can set you up to win or fail. Don't dismiss the power of your mind to sabotage your desires. But also, don't underestimate the power of your mind to be your most powerful ally.

**#1 Interviewing is only one way to figure out if you're the best person to take over a responsibility in a company.** It has elements of marketing & sales. It's also a lot like finding a good romantic partner, teammate or friend. Remember that you're all in this together trying to decide if you can be successful and happy in this role.

Trust me, you don't want a job you aren't suited for and that doesn't fit in with your life, or goes against your values.

**What an interview cannot do... is determine your worth as a person.** Don't confuse your fit in a job with your unquestionable value as a person.

A company you want to work for will have several ways to get to know you besides just an interview. It may be a skill test or a lunch. They might try you out. There are lots of ways to get to know people. If interviewing isn't your strong suit, find or ask for other ways to become known.

*What an interview cannot do...*

*...is determine your worth as a person.*

**#2 Remember that the people interviewing you are human beings.** They're regular people who eat, sleep, have families and struggle. Keep that in perspective. They aren't gods, or your parents, or "the man" or an overlord. These are just people trying to do their jobs.

**#3 People "buy" from people they know, like, and trust.** This is a well-known sales and marketing rule that's rooted in the way human brains are hardwired. Basically, we have to feel safe in order to hand over a resource like money. The same is true in hiring. People hire people they know, like, and trust. Your responsibility in an interview is to:

- **Help them get to know the real you.** If you are faking it and get a job you aren't right for, don't blame them if things don't work out down the road. They thought you were the person you were depicting.
- **Help them like you.** It's okay to be a normal person (and be yourself). You don't need to be perfect or a robot. It's hard to relate to someone who is perfect. Just be relaxed and be nice. Don't go in with a chip on your shoulder or with a preconceived idea about who they are and how much you don't like them or how evil they are. It's hard to like people who don't like you (remember: *know, like, trust*). If you get in the interview and you really don't like them, take the high road and do your best to be kind and courteous until it's over.
- **Help them trust you.** There are easy ways to do this: show up on time, be honest (that means don't over OR underestimate your strengths), and be consistent. Find common ground with your interviewers and try to put them at ease. (That's right, you put THEM at ease, not the other way around.)

**Pay attention to the red flags that  
tell you this isn't the right company for you.**

**#4 DO NOT apply solely because of the \$\$\$.** Okay, not exactly. Sometimes we have to take a job just for the money (myself included). But I want you to be honest about the very real cost of hating a job. Our brains are hardwired to sacrifice our wellbeing for our survival. So if you need to take a “money job”, ask yourself these questions: is there another job that’s a better fit, is less stressful, has better hours or perks, or could be more useful in your overarching career plan (think skills or networking). I’m not saying don’t pay the bills, but I want you to look at the big picture as well.

**#5 You need to interview yourself before the interview.** Be as honest and objective as you can (or get a friend to help you). Is this job a good fit for you? Will you be content here for a long time? Do you genuinely like the company and people you’ll be working with? Does it fit into your long-term plans? How will it affect your family, passions, hobbies, and the rest of your life?

**#6 Know your [Kolbe A™](#).** The Kolbe A™ Index reveals your natural instinct for how you take action. It’s a crucial element to your success and satisfaction in a job. If you’re working against your nature, you’ll be less competitive, burned out, and less fulfilled at work. It can also help you identify where you have the greatest potential.

**#7 Do your research.** Learn as much as you can about the company. Figure out the names, titles, and roles of the people interviewing you and you’ll be working with, especially your direct supervisor and their boss. Find out about their focuses outside of work. If their hobbies overlap with yours (for example if you’re both foodies, THIS is a great place to connect. Shared interests help bridge the gap between you). The knowledge you gain from your research not only puts you at ease, but it shows you have a high level of interest in the job and the people, not just the money. And it will give you an idea of what to ask them and a way to create common ground. It will also save you the embarrassing moment when you ask them their mission that is plastered all over the front page of their website. True story.

# Showtime

Ok—here's the core. Here's what I've observed over the last 20 years of interviewing and hiring. Here is what the rock stars do.

**BE YOURSELF**—I don't mean wearing torn sweats and flip-flops and swearing like a sailor (I mean, I tend to swear, but not usually in interviews.) If your identity is wrapped up in your fashion attire and language, we should talk.

What I mean is being honest about who you are, what you can and can't do, and what you do and don't like. If you hate coffee and it's offered to you, don't say yes and drink it just to fit in. They also don't need a long story or even a reason about why you hate coffee, just politely decline.

This may seem like a small detail, but humans can sense when something doesn't line up with a person, even if they can't put their finger on it. When you aren't truthful about who you are, in verbal and non-verbal ways, people sense it and become subconsciously suspicious (the opposite of trust).

Being confident about who you are also shows you have healthy boundaries and you know yourself—which is a godsend to a boss. **A boss you want to work for will rely on you to know your limits** and abilities and communicate them effectively so you don't all end up in a mess down the road. Knowing yourself and being yourself is your responsibility, not theirs.

*Your Resume is Marketing...*

*...Interviewing is Sales*



**BE PROFESSIONAL**—Which doesn't mean acting stuffy, slimy, stone-faced, or fake. True pros are genuine, kind, honest, and courteous. They do what they say they're going to do, they own their mistakes, and they do their very best work without being overly perfectionistic. Being a professional doesn't have anything to do with wearing a suit or a title. It has everything to do with your character. Your character, your values, and how you behave at work is your responsibility—regardless of your industry or what's going on around you.

*Pro-tip: Be professional with the HR, admin staff, and everyone else; don't just reserve it for the actual interviewers. I can't tell you how many people have aced an interview with me and lost the job because of the way they treated the team.*

**BE CONFIDENT**—It's part of the trust factor. It's also kind. Don't be shy about telling them your strengths and abilities. Interviews are one of the few times bragging is necessary. You only have a few minutes with these folks, and the people you want to work for will want to get to know you.

In fact, **they WANT you to be the right fit for the job**. They are praying you're the one. Trust me. They hate interviewing as much as you do. Help them connect the dots between you and this job. Help them make a case for you. Think of the pain and agony you can save them by being their dream candidate. Do your part and help them see your genius and how you fit into this job.

It's also okay to be confident and honest about areas you aren't good at. It's all in how you phrase it. If they ask you about your skills in an area you're weak in, be honest, but keep them focused on your strengths. For example, let's say you're asked about your skills in contract review, and you suck at it (and you hate it). Say something like, "You know, I'm great at organizing chaos, but contracts aren't my strong suit. My real strength is in solving big messy problems."

## If the job primarily involves things you aren't good at or hate, re-think this job.

When they ask, “what are your weaknesses”—just be honest.

Do not—I repeat with a megaphone, *do not* answer with some BS humblebrag, like “I work too hard” or “I’m a perfectionist” or some other nonsense you were told to say. Just don’t. They are testing to see how self-aware you are and if you can be honest about your abilities. A confident answer sounds something like this:

*“Oh sure, I face challenges just like everyone else. Sometimes I struggle with being on time, but I know how important it is, so I’ve created hacks and habits like alarms and reminders to ensure I’m always early.”*

Do you see the formula? I’m a real person like everyone else. Here is my real and honest weakness and here is how I solved it so it’s not a problem in a business setting. Simple, confident.

And last, if they ask a question like, “is there anything else we should know about you.” say YES! Always say yes. This is your time to shine. Highlight your strengths, talk up anything they didn’t cover that you’re great at. Even if you feel like you bombed the entire interview, tell them what you’re great at here. I’ve hired so many people based on their answer to this question, so don’t waste it.

*You don't want to just survive...*

*...you want an awesome life.*

# The Devil's in the Details

**BE PREPARED**—Preparation lets you relax and gives you a better chance of being yourself and making a good, authentic impression (and recalling answers to technical questions, like your name). Racing around at the last minute activates your fight/flight response and will bring out your worst traits.

Make the time to get your ducks in a row. Do your research, have your notes and resume with you, and bring 5-6 extra copies. You'll be surprised how often that makes you look great. You'll look prepared, even if they aren't.

Get a good night's sleep, eat a good meal, exercise, or meditate if that helps you, figure out what you are wearing, figure out where you need to be and how to get there, and show up 20 minutes early. Not to look good, but to put yourself at ease and give yourself a buffer. Do anything you can to bring out your best.

**ASK QUESTIONS**—Interviews go both ways. Make sure this job is a good fit for your skills and your life. Be engaged and curious about the working environment and culture. Show your knowledge of the industry and business and your interest in their mission. Ask intelligent, courteous questions that show them you're genuinely interested and don't just see them as a paycheck.

**DO NOT ASK ABOUT MONEY or benefits at this point.** That's like asking if someone will marry you on the first date. There'll be time for that in the future and if you are chasing jobs just for the money, your interviewing skills aren't your biggest problem.

Here is my favorite question to ask as an interviewee:

*“What's your leadership philosophy?”*

**The leaders you want to work for have thought about it.** If they don't know what you're talking about, that's a red flag.

# Solve Their Problems

**KEEP THE BOSS'S VIEW IN MIND**—Bosses are hired by an organization to produce results. If you can keep this in mind, and figure out how you can help them achieve those results, you'll be miles ahead.

One of the most important things you can learn in your career is how to think about your role in a company.

Your role in an organization is to make your boss's job easier and to help them achieve the goals they're responsible for. You're a team.

If you can't do that, you shouldn't work for them.

In a good company, a company you want to work for, the reverse is also true. A boss you want to work for ensures their employees have what they need and helps everyone win. Same for your colleagues. You're a team. Keep this in mind as you interview, and it'll help you resonate naturally.

I credit this mindset for my ability to get promoted quickly. Even now that my "boss" is you, my client, the principle remains true. My job is to help you have an easier time choosing a career that uses your talents and works with your life.

**ADD VALUE**—You'll be hired based on the value the interviewers think you will add to the company. Figure out how to be that "go-to" person they can't live without. You can even ask them point blank what it would take to be that "go-to" person.

So there are the top 7 traits I see in people that rock interviews and are ultimately successful in the role. There's a totally different air in the room when you are interviewing a person like this, and you can't wait to give them the job.

Now I want to give you a perspective on work you may not have thought about.

# The Ultimate Secret



There's an outdated model of working that's a "take-get" model. In this mindset, both employer and employee try to see how much they can take or get from the other side. Most people don't realize this is an instinctive survival response that sets up a scenario where your boss is the enemy and you need to attack or be on guard to "get" everything you can at all cost (and vice versa).

There's a better model—a **symbiotic (mutually beneficial) partnership (cooperation based on agreement)**. Both parties willingly add value to the other so they can create something bigger than they could create alone. Both sides get what they need and walk away with more than they put in. From a survival standpoint, getting 10x return on your effort is like winning the lottery. It's win, win, win, win.

## How do you find a job like that?

1. Look for it in the company culture.
2. Be the kind of person that sort of company wants to hire.
3. Move out of the "take-get" mindset.
4. Know your strengths and limits, and work in your area of strengths.
5. Be reliable. Good partners keep their agreements.

You'll know you've found this type of work when you look forward to going to work, days fly by, and your job gives you energy and fulfillment. I promise it's not a fantasy. It's possible to find if you're committed to looking for it.

# How to Get Support

It's easy to give advice. What's not easy is putting that knowledge into action. If you've read this guide and you'd like my support here are two ways that I can help.

## **Schedule a Kolbe A™ Deep Dive**

Whether you want to know if a job is the right fit for you or you want to know the best way for you to interview, this is a great resource. In this one-on-one session, I'll help you see where you can apply your natural way of getting things done to the decisions, jobs offers and interviews in front of you. The consistent statement I hear in every single Kolbe A™ Deep Dive is, "This information could have saved so much time, money and heartache if I'd known this earlier." I highly recommend that you sign up for this unique session before any interview and before accepting any job offer. [Click here to learn more and sign up.](#)

## **VIP Interview Prep**

One thing I gained from my years as a professional musician was the value of rehearsal and coaching prep. Your body needs to go through the physical motions. You need to get the words in your mouth. This is like a masterclass for interviews. We'll take everything you've learned here and put it into practice. We'll have three private sessions together and you get the most important feature, two "just-in-time" calls. Two calls into me that you can use when you need them. It could be the day before or right before you walk in the door. I offer this special feature because I know that a calm voice right before you walk on stage can make the difference. [Click here to learn more and sign up.](#)

***Whatever you do, do not give up hope. It's difficult to describe how profoundly different your life will become once you're doing work you love. I promise it's worth the work to figure it out. I know you have what it takes and I'm here to help you.***

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