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Ask the Career Coach

Written by Lisa Guard,
Career Coach



How should I respond to personal questions during a job interview?

-Linda

Dear Linda,

Most interviewers, whether corporate or third party recruiters, receive some type of interview training that includes instruction on how to form appropriate, job-related questions. Often when being asked a personal question during a job interview it is because the interviewer isn't properly trained or perhaps didn't understand their training. That said you have a few options to consider. You may consider responding in a way that will re-direct the conversation to the requirements of the job without creating a level of uneasiness for each of you, i.e. "I'd like to be sure to keep my answer job related, can you clarify what you'd like to know as it relates to the position requirements?" This should clue your interviewer in that they've strayed into personal territory and, hopefully, they will reword their question appropriately. Another option is to simply answer the question as presented, however it is advisable to keep all information job related.