Written by Julie Desmond
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Wendy has an interview Thursday, and can't stop obsessing over details. It was there on her resume, detail-oriented, but who knew how accurate that could be? As the economy brightens and companies gear up to hire, more candidates are finding themselves in a quandary about interviewing. It's been so long, they say. And everything has changed since the last time I looked, they say. The most important factor in an interview is comfort level.

Stay in your professional comfort zone or you will bomb the interview the minute you walk in the door. Candidates should keep this in mind, along with a few other basics:

Do I need to bring a copy of my resume? Yes, on good paper labeled as resume weight (usually 28 lb). Ask the interviewer if he or she would like a copy of your resume. If you see they already have a printed copy, don't bring it up.

Should I bring a list of references? Yes, printed on the same good paper. But do not offer the references. Giving the interviewer too many pieces of paper creates noise and takes time that you would rather spend discussing the job. Provide references only if asked to do so.

I don't know how many other people are interviewing. One, you, is all that matters. Would you interview differently if no one else were competing for the position? Of course not. Competition is noise, too. Ignore it.

Pants or skirt? Tie or no tie? Heels or flats? Are tennis shoes okay? Pants are fine, ties are still a good idea, low heels of about an inch or two look good women, and no, never wear tennis shoes to an interview. If you are interviewing for a job as a coach or fitness trainer, bring a gym bag along in case you need to make a quick change.

Piercings okay? Ears only, for men and women. Err on the conservative side for everything else. If your interviewer is bejeweled, you can comment that you have the same nose ring at home, but were not sure if it would be allowed at work. This way, you fit in without standing out.

Should I write down questions to ask in the interview? Yes, but don't read them word for word unless you are completely nervous and cannot think without them.

Should I take notes in the interview? Always. But keep eye contact with your interviewer as much as possible.

Should I follow up with a hand-written thank you note, or is email okay? Email is okay and faster, as long as you do it the same day, and professionally.

Finally, glasses or contacts? Wendy swears her glasses make her look smarter. Then, she should wear them. But no one wears glasses anymore. Then go with contacts. Stay confident by staying within your professional comfort zone. Sometimes the only right answer is the one that felt right all along.

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