

HOW TO GIVE AN ENGAGING LIVE INTERVIEW

Most of us haven't been interviewed on TV, radio, or in an online format, such as podcasts, webinars, and Facebook Streaming. But as an author, you may be asked to do this to promote your book or because the media frequently seeks out authors as experts on specific topics. Following are tips to help you do your best in a live interview.

These tips come from Cision, the publicity service that Mountaineers Books uses to select the media contacts who will be the best targets for your book – from national and local television, radio, and print media all the way to bloggers. We will be working to arrange interviews for you in the weeks after your book launches. We know this can be scary for first-timers, but experienced authors soon learn to have fun with these interviews. The tips here will get you started, and remember, when you're talking about your book, you're the expert!

1. Choose Your Outfit Wisely

Now is not the time for that colorful checkered or striped shirt you just bought. Patterns render oddly on screen, and distract attention from what you're saying. Instead, opt for bold and bright colors that warm up your skin tone, or, if you're dark-complected, go for basic white.



Keep accessories to a minimum. Women, apply makeup that will enhance your features (slightly bolder than you might wear day-to-day) and darker lipstick. Your goal is to look good on screen without going overboard or detracting from your message.

2. Plan and Practice Your Sound Bites

You know the topic of your interview, so spend time thinking about the key points you want to get across. And remember: even if you're interviewed for 10 minutes, the news channel will likely whittle that down to just a minute or two. So keep your comments succinct, and work on developing sound bites that will leave viewers associating you with your message.

3. Send Questions to Your Interviewer

If it's an option, send the reporter or anchor who will be interviewing you some questions to ask that you've already got the answers to. This will guide the interview toward familiar waters and keep you from hemming and hawing while you think of a response.

4. Control Your Body Language

You'll likely be nervous or amped up during your interview, but strive not to let it show. Maintain eye contact with your interviewer and avoid glancing off set. Keep your hand gestures to a minimum. Keep them in your lap if they want to wander on their own.

5. Slow Down Your Speech

Boy, is this one hard for me. I speed up my speech whenever I get excited or nervous. People can't understand a darn thing I'm saying sometimes! If you're the same, pause, take a breath, and respond slowly and clearly.

6. Practice Ahead of Time

It can make you more comfortable if you practice a faux interview beforehand, either with a friend or in front of a mirror. This can show you what you'll look like to your audience and help you correct any issues like slumped posture.

7. Choose Your Listening Face

Here's another from my personal files. I tend to look mean when I'm concentrating. (There's a meme out there on the Internet about such an affliction, but I won't bring it up here.) For interviews, I try to remember that and paste a smile on my face so I look friendly while I'm listening to my interviewer.

8. Forget Your Audience

If the idea of thousands — or millions — of people watching you on television will send you into paralysis, don't think about it (easier said than done, right?). Instead, focus on the fact that this interview is all about you and the person interviewing you. You'll feel less pressure to perform well if you ignore the rest.



9. Keep Your Answers Succinct

You might want to wax on and on in response to an interview question, but resist. Give more than a "yes" or "no" response, but wait for the interviewer to ask more questions, rather than derail her plan with your own verbose answers.

10. De-stress Just Before You Go On

If you're a nervous ball of energy before your interview, tense up all the muscles in your body for a few seconds, then release them. Practice deep breathing and calm thoughts, and you'll do just fine!