



Scott

You're Not There to Answer Their Questions
And Other Thoughts on Making Yourself More Hireable

By Scott Ginsberg

It's all about increasing the probability.

Of getting noticed.

Of getting remembered.

Of getting what matters most.

And for a lot of people right now, that means getting a job.

My name is Scott, and I've never had a real job.

I never went to the career fair.

I just hired myself and got to work.

And after a decade, I still haven't been fired.

As a writer, publisher and speaker, I've dedicated every waking hour of the past eleven years to experimenting, experiencing and educating on approachability.

Which simply means, "to come nearer to."

To increase the probability.

But lately, many of my readers have been telling me that these ideas are applicable to the world of getting hired. That being more approachable is the key to securing a new position, project or gig.

So I listened to them.

And after tens of thousands of conversations with professionals worldwide, I've now written extensively on the relationship between approachability and hireability.

This book is a compendium of that work.

Much of it comes from my regular column on www.theladders.com. If you haven't had the pleasure, they are the world's largest community of professional job and job seekers. Their amazing platform of more than four million users has secured jobs for countless businesspeople worldwide. And because of their intelligent and interactive community, this book has come to be.

This is 90-day digital devotional to help you become more hireable.

Because you're not there to answer their questions.

1. **Action is the engine of credibility.** Nobody cares what you believe. Or intend. Or say. Believing is overrated, intending is useless and talking is worthless. The word “credibility” comes from the Latin *creditum*, which means, “a loan, thing entrusted to another.” That’s interesting. *Credibility is on loan.* Which mean your stoppage in action will make the engine sputter. Which means it might take years to assemble, but only seconds to annihilate. *What is your credibility-strengthening plan?*

2. **Action trumps acquiescence.** Demonstrating that you're actively engaged in helping the organization succeed is a surefire way to retain employability. And while it's not smart to develop a reputation for challenging everything, it is possible to rock the boat without sinking the ship. Here's two ways to do so: First, disagree openly. Good naturedly test the limits without alienating the people who matter. Use the phrase "I respectfully disagree" as a vocal hanger to command attention and prime people's brains for your argument. Second, be more challenging. Instead of nodding with unexamined enthusiasm, gently poke people's assumptions in a way that encourages them to rethink their own solutions. Challenge unspecified attribution with phrases like "According to whom?" and "What evidence do you have to support that?" Remember: Just because you have the right to remain silent doesn't mean you should invoke it. *When was the last time you took the risk to stand up and speak out for something you were passionate about?*

3. **Amplify your assertiveness when needed.** If you've attempted to contact someone and that person hasn't gotten back to you yet, it means one of three things: He never got your message, he did get your message, but has been too busy to reply to you, or he did get your email, but chose not to reply to you because you're not a good fit for the job. Or he suspects you're having an affair with his wife. Here's what I suggest. Send a friendly follow up email or voicemail saying: *"Morning Tom! Looks like it's been difficult for us to connect lately. Look: I don't want to be an annoyance. Still, I do want you to know that I'm nothing less than completely professional in my follow up. So, if you would kindly pick from one of the following options – that would be great: (a) Yes! I would love to chat on the following date, (b) Right now I'm totally slammed, so I'll get back to you by Monday or (c) If I get one more message from you, I'm calling security. Thanks Tom. I'll be standing by for your decision."* If, after both of these attempts, you still haven't heard back, it's highly probably that Tom doesn't like you. Or his wife squealed. Get over it and move on. *How assertive are you willing to be?*

4. **Articulate ideas in plain language.** The less jargon you use, the more engaging you become. In the writing world, shorter sentences get read. In the speaking world, shorter sentences get heard. Think like a writer. Watch those long and cumbersome sentences. Don't construct your ideas in a way that overburdens people's brains. Don't spew one idea after another. Otherwise listeners will still be stuck on the first idea, trying to figure out what heck you meant. Be careful. Non-brilliance might be forgivable, but time wasting isn't. Keep your message lean, low-carb and plucked of nonessential words. *Are you messages simple and meaty?*

5. **Assertive trumps aggressive.** Assertion is based on respect for yourself without justifying, claiming or withholding. It's about becoming a public spokesperson for your values. It's about engaging your backbone to solidify your boundaries. And it's about being proactive instead of lapsing into passivity. If you want to rock the boat without sinking the ship, try this: Don't accept passively what is happening as the only way. Good naturedly test the limits. Become known as someone who takes action quickly, but without tramping people along the way. Remember: Companies keep people who initiate. People who can travel without a map. After all: If you don't make a name for yourself, someone will make one for you. *What is the cost of nonassertiveness?*

6. **Attitude is the nucleus of achievement.** Rabbit's feet don't work and they hurt the rabbit. Your attitude is your good luck charm. And it's time to rub it. Now, while I'm not sure that "attitude is everything" – I do think it *undergirds* everything. It does alter efficacy. And as long as your attitude *just a little* healthier than it was yesterday, it's the asset that will earn you a fortune. So, here are my suggestions. First, take some time to appraise the current market value of your attitude. Ask: If you had to put a price tag on it, how much money would your attitude be worth? Second, take some time to evaluate the future market value of your attitude. Ask: What are the giants you need to slay to make your attitude what it needs to be? Finally, learn to detect dangerous attitudes in others quickly so you can distance yourself from their blast range. Ask: Whose mental shitstorm is negatively infiltrating your reality? Remember: Attitude is the soil in which success flourishes. *What level of achievement will become possible when you realize that brainstuff determines bankstuff?*

7. **Attitude trumps age.** If you're a newbie, here's how to be taken seriously when you're the youngest person in the room: First, stop taking yourself so seriously. Be strong enough to be simultaneously self-effacing and self-confident. Second, identify opportunities for bold contrast. Develop your ability to deliver powerful perspective wrapped in a concise package, to the right people, at the right time. Third, replace bitching with evidence. When you have a problem, complaint or issue, calmly present your issue to the powers that be in a quantitative, organized, legitimate and nuts and bolts fashion. If you're a veteran, try this: First, learn the new tricks that matter. Even if you're an old dog, if there's a new trick that counts – you still have to learn it. It has nothing to do with old age and everything to do with old thinking. Second, don't just get over yourself – stay over yourself. When you share a success story, use someone younger as an example. When share tell a mistake moment, use yourself as an example. Finally, stop trying to manufacture commonality. Treat people as individuals to be cared for, not as labels to be related to. *Are you leading with the rings around your trunk or the flavor inside your fruit?*

8. **Attribute important meaning to your pain.** First, by changing your relationship with your pain from confrontation to infatuation. That's right: I'm telling you to fall in love with your pain. It's amazing how little power something has over you when you love it. Second, by recognizing that whatever pain you're enduring is a regular part of the life experience. And undergoing such feelings is what makes you feel human, what makes you feel alive. Finally, by thanking your pain for showing up to teach you something. After all, we rarely discover things when we're comfortable. May as well set up the learning moment, right? Ultimately, inner fortitude is a function of befriending your discomfort and cooperating with things that are bigger than you. *Are you brave enough to welcome the sting?*

9. **Be funny early. Humor is the only universal language.** And people want to spend their workdays with people who make them smile. So, when you introduce it early in the interview, several advantages stack in your favor: You diffuse defensiveness, you relax the situation, you break down barriers, you soften the ground and you stimulate memory. What's more, funny means listening. Funny means approval. Funny means trust. Funny means attention. And funny means engagement. The secret is, everyone is funny. The challenge is tapping into your natural humor. In the book *Throwing the Elephant: The Art of Managing Up*, Stanley Bing suggests, "You don't have to be particularly funny. The attempt to provide amusement is more important than the quality or validity of the amusement itself." So, don't make jokes – be funny. Huge difference. One is contrived; the other comes from your core. Pinpoint your natural funniness and share it early. *How funny do people perceive you as being?*

10. **Be more infectious.** A great book doesn't inform you – it infects you. That's the question I ask every time I sit down to write: *What am I trying infect my readers with by writing this?* After all, the word “infect” comes from the Latin *infectere*, which means, “to put in.” That's what you need to figure out for yourself: What are you putting into people? What are you infecting them with? Then all you have to do is administer the needle, sit back and watch people turn. And keep in mind, while making a case for yourself is primarily a function of specific, focused action, the most beautiful, sustainable and efficacious mode of infection is through being. *Not thoughts. Not words. Not even actions. Through being.* That means thrusting your whole self into the encounter, showing people your cards and passionately and respectfully presenting them with a compelling visual icon. Do that, and you'll make them want to ride along with you. *What are you putting into people?*

11. **Be persistent – not pushy. Pushy leads to suspicion.** Suspicion lowers trust. And lower trust forces people to check you off. Here's how to make sure this doesn't happen to you. First, understand the difference. The word "pushy" actually means "obnoxiously forward or self-assertive." The word "persistent" actually means "insistently repetitive or continuous." Next, the (real) secret isn't just being persistent – but demonstrating a valid motivation FOR your persistence. Otherwise you come off like a try-hard, working overtime to drum up rapport. Remember: Following up for the sake of follow up is time wasting and sour tasting. *Are you pushy or persistent?*

12. **Be radically honest.** Next time someone says, “Hey Karen – how’s it going?” respond by cheerfully saying, “Still unemployed!” Three things will happen: He will appreciate your candor, he will become one more person that is aware of your situation, and he will become more likely to help you find one. *How many people did you tell you were unemployed today?*

13. **Be visible in your element.** People need to see you doing what you do. Period. Nothing will make you more referable. So, seek out situations that vividly reveal your passions, talents, character and unique value — then make sure *lots* of people are watching. Then get it on video and publish it online everywhere you possibly can. When you sing the song that is natural for you to sing, in the way that is natural for you to sing it, people are unable to escape your awesomeness. *How many people have seen you do what you do?*

14. **Become the observed.** You attend meetings, events, job expos and trade shows to look for job openings, right? Well, let me ask ya this: When was the last time you were the guest speaker? Really? Never? Wow. Email every single chamber of commerce director in your city. Tell them you have an educational and entertaining presentation based on your expertise and career history that's perfect for their membership. If they ask what company you're with, be radically honest and say, "Actually, I've been unemployed for six months, and I've had a lot of time to practice my presentation!" They'll love you. And so will the audience, if you do it right. *When was the last time you gave a public presentation?*

15. **Blog every single day.** By sharing your expertise with the world, you will accomplish a few things: Prove to people that you deliver insight, not just knowledge, boost your web presence, and accumulate a reservoir of resources to email prospective employers. Example: Imagine if, at the end of your thank-you email to someone who just interviewed you, you included a postscript that read, “By the way, Mr. Randall, I wrote a blog post last week about the four biggest mistakes made by HR Directors. Just a few things I’ve learned in my career over the years. I hope I can help your company avoid these same mistakes!” *Why aren’t you blogging yet?*

16. **Business cards.** “But I don’t have a job!” What’s your point? All the more reason to have your own business card. Make them yourself. Use Vista Print, pay the fifty bucks and carry a dozen with you wherever you go. Tips: Red stands out. Pictures aren’t a bad idea. And for the love of God, don’t use “Papyrus” as your font. Oh, and bring them wherever you go. Because you never know. Everybody is somebody’s somebody. *How many opportunities have you missed because you didn’t have a card with you?*

17. **Can I speak with a few of your veteran employees or new hires?** Some companies will already schedule this experience into the interview process. On the other hand, some companies will not allow you to contact existing employees. Either way, asking such a question – and, if you're lucky, getting an affirmative answer – will provide the best insight into corporate culture, as it comes from a team member himself. If you can make it happen, you'll be glad you asked. Because behavior is the broadcaster of attitude, and attitude is the reflection of culture.

18. **Change the focus.** Whether or not you're the cause of the awkward situation, always have a few go-to topics ready to go. And I'm not talking about the cliché, "So, how about them Dodgers...?" or "Boy, that economy really sucks, huh?" Rather, an interesting topic of discussion that has nothing to do with the current conversation. I suggest segueing with, "Anyway, on a completely unrelated topic..." *Are you an interesting enough person to change the subject to a different topic at the drop of a hat?*

19. **Character trumps beauty.** Remember the prettiest girl in school? She received constant praise from everybody, had the world handed to her on a silver platter and rarely had to work that hard to win. But by the time she hit thirty – and the beauty started to fade – she regretted never making any effort to be special. Woops. That's the difference between eye candy and brain candy: One is physical attractiveness with little or no substance; the other is psychological attractiveness with high mental appeal. And unless you're applying for a position at Hooters, focusing on the content of your character – not the level of your beauty – is what will get you hired. And don't get me wrong: It's not that you shouldn't be mindful of personal presentation. But you don't have to be good looking to be attractive. *Are you catching people's eyes with beauty or capturing people's hearts with brilliance?*

20. **Commitment trumps talent.** I'm not saying competence is overrated – I'm saying competence is commonplace. What differentiates you is your dedication. What keeps you around is your commitment. Those are the people that companies retain and promote: The ones with a proven history consistent commitment. *Period.* Talent is so last century. Now it's merely an assumption. A commodity. And if it's the only thing you bring to the table, you will be ignored. On the other hand, if you compound talent with commitment – and communicate to the people who matter most that you're fully committed – they won't just pay attention, they'll pay dividends. All you need is a commitment device. Because if your commitment isn't symbolized, memorialized and personified in a tangible way, you're just winking in the dark. Remember: *Which of your fears are diminishing your commitment?*

21. **Compare yourself to the best in yourself.** Although many of my readers are unemployed, I'm constantly amazed at their ability to endure harrowing times. It's inspiring, really. Instead of being excessively preoccupied with how devastating the economy is, these guys invite a constant stream of excitement. They dig more into their hears and, as one woman wrote me, "Think back to their finest hours." Killer suggestion. What better way to find the inner fortitude to get up one more day than to think back to the last time getting up one more day wasn't a struggle? By regularly replaying mental reruns, you bolster your self-confidence and stimulate your self-belief. *Do you remember what you were like as the best, highest version of yourself?*

22. **Conformity is the stop sign of genius.** Screw the herd. Tell the status quo to go to hell. Give yourself permission to not need permission. And beware of the five most dangerous words in the world: “Yeah, but I can’t just...” *Really? You can’t? Says who?* Can you google that rule? Because if you can’t, it’s not a rule – it’s a self-imposed limitation that’s squelching the dream out of you. *What could you do – in this moment – that would be the exact opposite of everyone else?*

23. **Create a filter that evaluates the asset value of a potential new opportunity.** Learn how you make decisions. Physically write out a list of questions to ask yourself. Create a governing document that serve as a guidance system for daily decision-making in your job search. Check out these examples from my Opportunity Filter: “Will this choice add to my life force or rob me of my energy?” “How would the person I’m trying to become do what I’m about to do?” and “Is this an opportunity, or an opportunity to be used?” That question changed me forever. *How do you make decisions?*

24. **Create a network of human healing.** In the book, *Who Gets Sick*, Blair Justice revealed how beliefs, moods and thoughts affected health. In one particular study, his research found that social support protects your health by reducing the intensity with which you look at and react to stressful events. What they failed to mention however, was that that you don't realize how strong your support system is until the world on top of it collapses. And trust me: You don't want to wait for that to happen. If you plan to start over, plan to create a network of healing to keep you alive in the process. Because without support from your loved ones, the road less traveled will become very windy. The point is: Success never comes unassisted. Your personal brand can be an island. Ask for help early and often. And believe that the people who love you most want nothing more than the opportunity to come through and show you so. *Do you live in an atmosphere of encouragement and expectation-free support?*

25. **Demonstrate unquestionable commitment.** During my presentations, when I want to make a point about commitment, I show the audience a picture of my nametag tattoo. Usually it gets a good laugh or a collective mouth agape. Still, I ask how many of them think it's a fake. And when the hands go up, I advance to a picture of the needle going into my skin as I say, "That ain't no Sharpie." The audience audibly cringes, laughs or gasps, at which point I ask them, "How committed are you?" Silence. And obviously nobody is going to leave the presentation that very minute and march right into the tattoo parlor. But by going overboard intentionally, you stretch people. You force them turn inward, confront themselves and start wondering how far *they'd* go. People rarely forget self-conversations like that. Point made. *How are you letting people bond with your level of commitment while simultaneously challenging them to reexamine their own?*

26. **Develop a predisposition to compromise.** Meeting life in the middle doesn't make you weak or small – it makes you human and malleable. And if you're starting over, I can't think of two more appropriate adjectives to describe your ideal state of being. Ask these questions: What if you adopted your skills to a more vibrant industry? What if you repackaged your talents into a volunteerism lifestyle until the economy shifted? And what if you gave away your talent to the market until they were ready to pay for it? Remember: Don't commit solely to one course of action – cast a wider net. Learn to live larger than your labels, uncover new territory for personal and professional expansion and profitable use of everything you are. *Will you accept the flux of life – then learn to ride it?*

27. Develop deep domain experience. Meet entrepreneur turned venture capitalist, Mark Suster. A recent post on his blog suggested the following: “You never really have a handle on the minute details of the industry until you’ve lived in I,” Mark writes. “That’s where domain experience comes into play. It brings wisdom and relationships. This gives your business a faster time to market, a better designed product, more knowledge of your customers problems – a higher likelihood of success.” Now, obviously you can’t change the past. So, if you’re short on domain experience, find someone who’s been there. Pursue a mentoring or advisory relationship. Hell, pay them if you have to. Nothing wrong with investing a few thousand bucks in an unfair advantage. Just remember: Don’t drown yourself. “Too much domain experience has the potential to harm you,” says Suster. “You might become cynical of all the things that can’t be done because you’ve got the scars to prove it.” *How will you out experience the competition?*

28. **Diminish your unwillingness.** Marathon junkies frequently train in Colorado to practice running at higher altitudes. This gives them an advantage over the competition when running in, say, Boston, two months later. But it's not being unfair – it's being geographically strategic. It's training smart. And it's going the extra mile (no pun intended) to excel beyond the mediocre masses. Whether you're an athlete, entrepreneur or artist, you can't just pound the treadmill in your living room while catching up on season three of *Lost*. You've got to get out there, practice with distractions and make yourself better. Even if you have to climb a mountain to do so. *How are you leaving the pack in your dust?*

29. **Discomfort is the oxygen of growth.** Comfortable people rarely take action. Comfortable people rarely learn lessons. And comfortable people rarely stretch their souls. If you truly want to stimulate the greatest growth possible, you've GOT to stick yourself out there. There is a direction correlation between how uncomfortable you're willing to make yourself and how exquisitely you make a name FOR yourself. *How vulnerable are you willing to make yourself?*

30. **Do homework on yourself.** Ask anyone who's done online dating: *A good profile is priceless.* In fact, there's an entire industry of consultants, writers and coaches – that you can pay – to craft your online profile for you. And my guess is, the demand for that service isn't going away any time. After all, most people don't have a clue how to sell themselves virtually. Not because they suck at sales – but because they don't know who they are. And it's impossible to make a case for yourself if you haven't memorized what the files say. Therefore: If you want to carry your truth to market, as Dostoyevsky suggested, I urge you: Don't defend your specialness – articulate your fabulousness. Lower the bucket into the well of your own divine gifts. Otherwise your capabilities won't come across. Remember: Every encounter is a situation to teach others what you are. The real question is: *What's keeping your true identity from being known to you?*

31. **Do not let this day pass without personal growth.** That's easy. Just ask yourself before you go to bed, "How did I grow today?" And then, here's the secret: Write it down. I'm serious. Keep a Growth Journal by your bed and spend five minutes before going to bed filling it out. Then, when your interviewer asks you questions about lessons you've learned, you'll have them ready to go. They'll be blown away! *How did you grow yesterday?*

32. Do you have any questions for me? When your interviewers asks this question, try these responses. Do you see any gaps in my qualifications that I need to fill? Are there any reasons I'm not fully qualified for this position? Is there anything I've said today that might hurt my chances of being hired here? Now that you've had a chance to meet and interview me, what reservations would you have in putting me in this position? What have accidentally I said or done during today's interview that's inconsistent with your perfect candidate for this job? You put the interviewer on the spot. You prove counterintuitive thinking.. You demonstrate openness to feedback. You exhibit dedication to personal improvement. You close the sale. You walk out in a blaze of glory.

33. **Do, doing and done.** Know your customers. Know your customers. Know your customers. Since day one, those words have been pounded into your skull. Still, perhaps a better question is: “How well do your customers know *you*?” See, everyone you know needs to know three things about you. What you *do*. For a living, as a professional, for customers. The surefire way to do this is to have an unforgettable networking introduction. What you’re *doing*. As in, right now, current news and projects, upcoming events. The answer is to post an “upcoming events” widget on your blog. What you’ve *done*. Past jobs, past projects, whom you worked with, how you helped them. And the key is to post video testimonials on your Web site. Tell people not to keep you a secret. Do, Doing, Done. *Got it?*

34. **Don't be clever or cute.** Clever is using other people's conversations for springboards for your little jokes that nobody thinks are funny but your cat. It annoys people and won't encourage anyone to hire you. Cute is sending a pink ribbon on your resume because you think it will get you noticed. Nope. It won't. You need to be smart and strategic. Like calling my friend Harlan Hodge from Imagine Videos and creating an online video resume. That's smart. *How much money is being cute costing you?*

35. **Don't be shy about going on the offensive.** My friend Shari Alexander is the owner of Presenting Matters and an Executive Speech Coach and Professional Communications Expert. She suggests you observe (not only) your own body language – but that of your interviewer too. “Observe what sparks their posture. And don't be afraid to say, ‘I noticed you reacted to my last statement by sitting back in your chair. Can you share what you're thinking?’ This brings their truth to the surface and pinpoints valuable insight about organization.” For example, if your interviewer instantly crosses her arms at the mere mention of the word “Twitter,” that's quite telling about her attitude towards social media. “If you don't ask the follow-up questions after observing posture shifts,” Shari told me, “you won't know the ugly truth until you're already hired and in the middle of it.”

36. **Don't over prepare.** Study the organization. Review your notes. Google your interviewer. Eat breakfast. Do breathing exercises. Maybe listen to The Rocky Soundtrack in the car. Other than that, you don't want to prepare too much. As my public speaking mentor William Jenkins always reminds me, "Your life is your preparation." So remember: What's past is prologue. Go give that interviewer everything you've got. Use all that you've experienced up until this point to blow the doors of this mother. They won't help but be taken over by your performance. *What's your interview preparation process?*

37. Employ the diversity of the human spirit. One of the organizations volunteer with is *The Go Network*. They provide job search resources and education to displaced workforce professionals. The cool part is, unlike other organizations that support unemployed workers; this group's spirit is exceptional. Every time I host a workshop for them, I'm overwhelmed by their massive optimism, bottomless faith and respectful camaraderie. Not just in themselves, but in each other. It's not a miser-loves-company pity party. It's a weekly pep rally. It's west Texas high school football game. And the collective and diverse human spirit of the group is the very oxygen that fuels each member's inner fortitude to get up one more day and try again. My question is: *What kind of company do you keep: People who drag you into the shit or people who drive you into the stratosphere?*

38. Evaluate your value adding ability. Ask questions like: “What personal skills have I not tapped into yet to make myself more hireable?” “What skills and competences are employers asking for that I don’t currently provide, but could?” The answers to these questions will help you conquer new environments, have new experiences and take your job search to the next level. So, ask and listen. Listen to how your body responds. Because it will never lie to you. *How many new skills have you recently become known for?*

39. **Execution trumps creativity.** People know me as the guy who wears a nametag every day. But that's not my real claim to fame. What matters is that I leveraged the simple idea of wearing a nametag everyday into a successful enterprise. *That's execution.* That's taking action on what matters most. And your challenge is to position yourself as someone who does the same. Straight out of my latest book, *Ideas Are Free, Execution Is Priceless*; here's a rapid-fire list of my best practices for doing so. First: Be strategically impatient – stop waiting for permission to start. Second: Build executional capacity into your idea from the onset – calculate the cost of inaction to motivate you. Third: Develop massive intolerance for the inconsequential – make a list of twenty things that consume your time but don't move you forward, then stop doing those things. Fourth: Hustle while you wait – give away your talent to the market until they're ready to pay for it. Fifth: Ignore feedback from people who don't matter – decide whose advice you have outgrown. And lastly: Finished is the new perfect – when you get to eighty percent done, ship. Become a master of execution and you'll never be fired. Remember: You don't need an idea – you need an, "I did."
Can you turn a seed into a forest without any rain?

40. **Flexibility trumps strength.** Being flexible isn't about touching your toes – it's about responding to life – and doing so with an attitude of openness, creativity and self-belief. Here's how to demonstrate your professional plasticity: First, actively seek out ways to be stretched. Be emotionally flexible – that is, maintain a wide spectrum of emotions rather than responding rigidly and defensively. Second, adopt a predisposition to compromise. Be mentally flexible – that is, entertain multiple viewpoints and values and beliefs that are different than your own. Finally, be what the moment requires. Be contextually flexible – that is, sustain your strength amidst the rapidly changing nature of the economic environment. Remember: Nobody cares how much weight you can lift – they care how much you change can adapt. *Does the muscle of your life have a broad range of motion?*

41. **Flip the focus.** Steve Hughes, owner of *Hit Your Stride*, is a presentation coach and corporate speech trainer. He suggests that although your interview is (technically) a marketing presentation for yourself, nobody cares about you. The secret is flipping the focus. “The more they talk, the more they’re going to like you,” Steve said. “Just like a delivering a speech, make your audience (in this case, the interviewer and the company) the star of the interview. Turn it into a true dialogue, not a monologue. Nobody wants to hear you ramble on about yourself.” Ultimately, it’s about being future oriented. So, whether you’re giving a speech to a thousand people or being interviewed by the director of a potential employer, remember this: Your past is what got you in the door – but their future is what will keep you in the room. *How can you flip the focus of this presentation?*

42. **Focus trumps knowledge.** Any idiot can be smart. Employability is a function of your ability to focus your face off. That's what companies want: People who know when to stop brainstorming and start executing. Because you don't need another idea – you need an “I did.” In order to strain the impurities out of your life and free yourself to execute what matters most, two factors must be considered. First, focus comes from deleting internal noise and discarding irrelevant work. Which isn't about time management, getting things done or streamlining the quality of your process so you can maximize the efficiency of strategic productivity. It's about creating a filter for your work. Do you have one? Second, focus comes from the emotional *environment of your workspace*. And your challenge is to let people know – specifically – how you preferred to be praised. Because when you can count on the emotional release of consistent public recognition, focus will become a non-thought. *What internal and external factors keep you from keeping focused?*

43. **Follow up if needed.** If the awkwardness was especially thick, perhaps a quick email later that day will patch the scar. “Hey Mary, look, I didn’t mean to rush out of the room like that this morning. The mere mention of politics, religion and The Great Pumpkin always turns my stomach in knots. Hope you weren’t offended. I’m happy to get together later and recap if there’s anything I missed.” *How are you remedying your awkwardness?*

44. Force an opening and enter into the spiral of acceleration.

In *The Ninety Percent Solution*, author David Rogers writes, “Lasting change rarely occurs when we ease our way into the future – it comes when we leap.” Lesson learned: Hop down off your horse and pursue the beast on foot. That’s what movie heroes do. They enter into the territory their noble steeds won’t even look at. “I will die before my conviction does,” they think. And they act as proactively as humanly possible. For example, anytime I give a presentation to people who are looking for work, I remind them: “Until you find a job, looking for a job is your job.” That’s the winning mindset. That’s what gets you hired. Remember: Never underestimate the importance of sustained movement. *How will you outweigh the drag?*

45. **Forget about being memorable – be unforgettable.** At their core, all first impressions are based on how you make others feel, in that moment. And the secret is, that kind of energy, enthusiasm, warmth and positivity isn't just attractive – it's infectious. Here are three ways your first impressions can elevate your visibility: First, create conversational deficit. Upon meeting someone, try playing a game called, "Let's See How Long I Can Go Without Talking About Myself." Both you and your conversation partner win every time. Second, when you smile at people, hold that smile for one additional moment. Look them straight in the eyes. It's subtle, yet powerful. Last, insert and excavate passion. Get on the topic of passion. Enthusiasm will have no choice but to cloak the conversation. Your conversations will change people. If you execute these practices when clients are around, and it will be impossible for them not to forget you. *How do most people feel when they're around you? How are you making communication a relaxing experience?*

46. **Grow bigger ears.** Also for your follow-up thank you note, don't just gush about how grateful you were to have had the opportunity to connect. And don't just morph your message into mini-movie trailer summarizing why you're so awesome. Instead, prove to people that you – unlike every other sub-par candidate they met that day – were the one person who actually listened to them. Suggestion: Attach a copy of your notes. I do this daily with prospects who inquire about booking me as a speaker for their conferences, and have discovered several benefits to doing do. First, taking notes is proof. That you're actually interested. That you're actually paying attention. And that you're actually making an attempt to understand (not just) what they're saying; but also what they're trying to communicate. Next, taking notes honors someone's thoughts. Because they're worth capturing. Because they're worth considering. Because they're worth saving and revisiting for further contemplation. Finally, taking notes is respectful and reinforces openness. Because you allow people to see how they affect you. Because you allow people to experience that they can change your mind. And because you allow people to come back to you in the future with their ideas.
- How will you use your ears as a follow up tool?*

47. **Hack the rules.** Don't break them – hack them. Huge difference. And you have three options: Change the rules so you can win at your own game, change the game so there are no rules, or play the game but become the exception to every rule. The question to ask when faced with one of these so-called rules is, “Can this rule be ignored, modified or changed?” By doing so, you give yourself permission to refuse to accept your current circumstances. This opens the floodgates to diligent work on creating a new set of circumstances. Learn the rules, learn which of the rules are irrelevant, and then hack the hell out of them. *What could I do in this moment that would be the exact opposite of everyone?*

48. **Heartset trumps mindset.** The problem with attitude is that it can be faked. Read enough affirmations and you can convince anyone that you have the mindset of a winner. Heartset, on the other hand, cannot. And because this is a term I've coined, let me break it down for you: Heartset is the emotional repertoire that enables your spirit to persist. It's the durability to slog through what matters and the inner infrastructure that keeps you plugging away. Heartset is also the emotional contract you make with yourself. It's the identity and predisposition that determines how you interpret situations and respond to life. You can't fake that. And only when you make the conscious decision to adopt a winning heartset will people start to notice. Remember: Anybody can be successful for a short period of time before the rest of the world finds out about you. But if you're counting on faking it until you make it, you may never make it. *How do you bring your humanity to the moment?*

49. **If you could describe your corporate culture in three words, what would you say?** This question accomplishes several goals. First, it's creative. That positions you as a thinker, not just another resume. Secondly, it challenges the interviewer to boil down the essence of their workplace in only a few words. Finally, your interviewer's response isn't as important as how she responds. Watch her body language. Check her posture. And keep an eye on her facial expressions. Look for consistency between actions and words to get the true description of the culture. Because someone's body never lies to you.

50. If you were going to give public tours of this company, what stops would the guide make? This is another creative question to challenge your interviewer. What's more, her answers will represent the "greatest hits" of the company's culture. This delivers invaluable insight into what they perceive as the leading attributes of their company. After all, you wouldn't make it a stop on the tour if it didn't symbolize a core component to the company's culture, right?

51. **Intellect trumps smarts.** Any idiot can be smart. Real job security comes from being an intellectual. Here's the difference: Smart people have all the answers; intellectuals ask all the questions. Smart people study content for the purposes of memorization; intellectuals entertain ideas for the purpose of democratization. Smart people accumulate facts; intellectuals explore ideas, extract universal truths from their experiences – then use those lessons to make other people better. That's the kind of person companies want to hire: Someone whose mind can plug itself a variety of workplace equations. Someone who can step back from the corporate canvas and say, "Wait a minute. Does anyone else smell that?" Think of it this way: Companies, much like baseball teams, pay the most money to hire athletes – not shortstops. *How many positions do you play?*

52. **Lay some pavement.** Hypothetically, let's say your life sucks. Understood. Instead of trying to camouflage your agony, try sending your breath to where it hurts. That's what my yoga instructor, Natalie, would tell you: *To thread your breath through every action.* The cool part is: You don't have to sit in a smelly, sweaty room for two hours with a bunch of half-naked strangers to make this practice work. You just need to find something to pave yourself with. *Prayer. Affirmation. Meditation.* Whatever helps maintain a sense of inner control in the midst of outer chaos. Whatever cultivates a state of mind that entails equanimity and forbearance. Personally, I use all three simultaneously. My daily practice combines meditation, affirmation and breathing, and it's helped me find the inner fortitude to navigate even the most devastating storms. *What paves you?*

53. **Let your personal brand shine.** “Interviewing is much deeper than showcasing a collection of skills or preparing great answers to questions you may never hear,” says my friend and career coach John Suarez of *Referral Ready*. “It’s about celebrating your authentic self. The one that relates to the world on a human level and professional level. The one that helped get you where you are now. The one that leaves a nonverbal impression no words can undo.” Lesson learned: Don’t spend time all your preparing to be someone you’re not. Instead, dedicate yourself to becoming more of who you already are. *How will you allow your distinct youness shine?*

54. **Leverage your frustration.** Specifically, in this situation as motivation to grow into more of the person you've always wanted to be. Anger is pointless. All it does is induce stress, poison your relationships and keep reality television on the air. Especially with the economy the way it is, you have a choice: You can complain about the storm or dance in the rain. Which one will you pick? I suggest learning to let things go quicker and more frequently. Instead, attend your energies elsewhere. Turn frustration into growth. As the Optimist International Credo states: "Give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others." *How much longer can you put off being who you really want to be?*

55. **Make creativity a conscious priority.** Readers often ask me how I decide what to write about each day. My answer is simple: “I don’t – I just listen for what wants to be written.” That’s how creativity works: It’s a process of surrendering. And if you plan to start over, that’s the smartest attitude to maintain. Because opportunity never stops knocking – you just stop listening. The secret is to lock into the right frame of mind to pursue opportunities as they arise. To maintain the emotional willingness to open yourself to new possibilities. For example: Examine the smallest revenue centers of your business. Then ask, “With some reinvention could this become a brand new business unit?” Who knows? By giving your artistic voice another outlet, you might activate a market segment that just can’t wait for your arrival. Remember: Creativity isn’t an entitlement – it’s is nurtured by constant cultivation.

56. **Never underestimate the gravity of non-verbal presence.** Not superficialities like wardrobe, smiling and body language. *I'm talking about how you show up. What you make people feel. And how you leave people feeling.* Those are the foundational components that either enhance or detract from the case you're making. The secret is to walk the fine line between confidence and arrogance. Note: The former comes from the Latin *confidentia*, which means, "to trust." The latter comes from the Latin *arrogantia*, which means, "to assume." That's the distinction: Confident people trust in their abilities when they walk in the room. Arrogant people assume they're the only people in the room who *possess* those abilities – then kill themselves making sure everybody else in the room knows that. If you want to make a case for yourself, you have to keep unadulterated self-belief at the forefront of your attitude. Otherwise you'll get rejected faster than a ginger kid at an orphanage. As Keith Richards wrote in his autobiography, *Life*, "Worry makes your performance so small that it's not interesting to watch." *When you walk into a room, how does it change?*

57. **Paper isn't enough.** The problem with your resume is that you wrote it. You may as well call it a resu-*me*. Besides, anybody can look good on paper. My dog could get a job with the right resume. How you show up online, offline and in person is what determines the case you make for yourself. Interestingly, the word *resume* comes from the Latin *resumere*, which means, “to sum up.” As such, your resume is anything (or anyone) that sums up the case you’re trying to make: Your Google ranking. Your testimonials. Your media room. Your positive repute in the market place. Remember: If someone wants to hire you – for a job, a project, an ongoing gig or a one-time engagement – you better believe she’s going to validate your credibility from multiple sources. Not just from one piece of paper. *What type of person do you have to become on the inside to become the person you want to become on the outside?*

58. **Passion trumps leadership.** To make yourself more employable, you don't need a title on the outside – you need a burning fire on the inside. That's the thing about employability: It doesn't matter who you know, it matters whose life is better because they know you. It doesn't matter if you're a leader, it matters is how many people are warming their hands by your fire. Here's how to ignite the flame: The word "passion" comes from the Latin *passio*, which means, "to suffer." Therefore, the two questions you have to ask yourself are: *What would you suffer to do? What would cause you suffering if you did not do it?* That's passion. And if you can uniquely infect people with that fire every time you interact with them, they won't even care what title you hold. Remember: True power comes from personhood. *When you walk into a room, how does it change?*

59. Pinpoint the excuses that are preventing you from getting started. Examples include, but are not limited to: “I don’t have the money,” “I don’t know what I’m doing,” “I’m too old” and “But I can’t just...” If that’s the case, my question is: What’s your point? Do you think Mark Zuckerberg made those excuses when he created Facebook as a junior in college? Nope. He remembered the credo: Just go. Change the rules so you can win at your own game. *Why are you still waiting for permission to be remarkable?*

60. Prepare yourself to endure the failure that growth requires.

Contrary to popular conditioning, failure is an option – not learning from that failure isn't. Remind yourself that it wasn't you who failed, necessarily. It was something in your strategy that failed. That's the attitude that allows you to fail your way to success. *Are you making new mistakes or repeat mistakes?*

61. Proactively explain the anomalies of your past. Everyone has baggage. It comes with the territory of being human. And to deny what you've been through is to dishonor your truth. But don't expect it not to come up. Making a case for yourself means owning every minute of your personal history. And you better be ready to explain the speed bumps, should you drive over one. The trick is: How do you stay loyal to your imperfections without weakening your case? My suggestion is to be selective about what you reveal. Focus on what you learned, how you grew and what you would do differently next time. No need to hold onto your past with an angry bite. As long as you remember what my friend Dixie Dynamite says, "What you've gone through is not who you are – but what you've chosen to do with what you've gone through, is." *What part of your past are you afraid to own?*

62. **Qualify yourself to the customer first.** There's one question you have to be ready for: "Why should I buy from you?" Whether it's asked explicitly or implicitly, your answer determines whether or not you make money. For example, if you tell people, "I sell advertising," you're written off as irrelevant. But if you say, "I teach people how to convert the leads (from ads) into money," it's a different ballgame. The key is to be proactive, interactive and reactive. To escalate when necessary. And to remember what Don Draper says: "Eventually, there comes a point where seduction is over and force is being expected." Remember: Self-qualification makes people's jobs easier – including yours. Beat customers to the punch and you'll beat competitors into the ground. *How are you lifting people out of their petty preoccupations?*

63. **Quality can't be your sole signature.** People need to fall in love with your process as much as your product. Because if they don't love the person doing the work as much as the work itself, starting over is going to take forever. My suggestion: Articulate the portrait of the person you want to be. Start serving people from who you are – not who you pretend to be. As you extend your brand into the marketplace, consider branding your service, your language and your honesty. That's what will get you noticed, get you remembered and get you the job. *What gives your personal brand its power?*

64. **Reduce your mass.** During a recent post-race interview, NASCAR driver Robby Gordon complained about the unfair advantage of fellow driver Danika Patrick. But not because she made racing history as the first female driver. And not because she's beautiful enough to make gay men drool. According to Gordon, "Danika weighs seventy pounds less than most drivers. Her car is lighter. She goes faster. And I won't race against her until something is done about it." Good luck, Robby. NASCAR's bylaws don't indicate a weight restriction. Either learn to drive faster or take a trip to the liposuction clinic. Lesson learned: Lowering mass means raising profits. Cut. Cut fast and deep. Cut down to the bone. Just be sure not to cut an artery. Or muscle. And be sure not to cut so deep that you diminish your capabilities. *What do you need to delete from your business?*

65. **Reflect their reality.** In my mentoring program, note taking is essential for point making. My favorite move is to select something in particular from my notes, turn the piece of paper around, then ask the mentee to read the passage to me. More often than not, people are shocked when they hear themselves speak. Which only reinforces the idea: *We know now what we say*. Fortunately, this feedback process (which I learned from Presidents Council) offers a verbal mirror. It reflects the other person's reality and helps people see themselves as others see them. What's more, there's no greater way to make a point than to people's own words. *How are you using note taking for point making?*

66. **Reframe your approach.** Job interviews are marketing presentations for yourself. You're not there to answer their questions – you're there to make enough of a mark that people can't leave you out. The secret is to be memorable for the right reasons. Try this: Instead of dwelling on past experience, share how you see the current state of the industry. Instead of giving predictable, stock answers, offer tips on how to make the company better. Instead of passively answering people's questions, take control of the conversation and address the unspoken need. And instead of talking about your last job, envision what you would do if you were hired for this job. The point is: Very few people change the world with their mouths shut. Don't refuse to share your thoughts – that weakens them. People love to feel like they're watching a brain working. And people want to experience the version you that you mean to mean. *How are you putting your thinking on display?*

67. **Relax into the reality of your life.** Denial is drug more addictive than crack and meth put together. I know this because I used to be a heavy user. For me, pretending that something wasn't really a problem was ten times easier than confronting the result of my own immature decisions. Too bad the aftermath of such denial was taking its toll on my body, my attitude and my relationships. If only I'd been smart enough relax into my realities and face them head on. Fortunately, making that mistake over and over taught me to continually ask the question: *What am I pretending not to know?* This courageous inquiry makes denial melt under the stare of self-awareness. And that's where inner fortitude grows: From your willingness to stand up to yourself. Don't avert your eyes. Confront your truth. Ease your way into it. And remember that all trouble carries with it the capacity to conquer it. *What are you pretending not to know?*

68. Release your current knowledge to take in new information.

It's not just about learning; it's about unlearning. Taking out the mental trash. Making room for new ideas and insights that were previously uninvited into your fertile mind by that no-good, defensive- ego of yours. And then, most importantly, using this new information to boost your hireability. For example, how many books did you read last month? *How much money are you losing by assuming you already know everything there is to know about your area of expertise?*

69. **Resumes are for amateurs.** The problem with your resume is that you wrote it. If you want to persuade potential employers, prospects and customers to hire you, remember this: Your resume is most effective when someone *other than you* writes it. In fact, the word resume comes from the Latin *resumere*, which means, “to sum up.” Your resume is anything (or anyone) that sums up why you rock so hard. Your resume is your Google ranking. Your resume is your comments section on your blog. Your resume is your testimonial page on your Web site. Your resume is your book review section on Amazon.com. Your resume is what people are saying about your name. Your resume is what people are saying *after* your name. Your resume is what people are saying behind your back. I’m not saying there’s anything wrong with having an actual, traditional resume. It’s still a valuable professional tool. Just remember: If someone wants to hire you, she’s going to validate your credibility from multiple sources. Not just from one piece of paper that you wrote. *What’s your (real) resume?*

70. **Self-deprecation helps.** If you say something stupid, playfully admit your blunder. By honestly recognizing your humanness, people will usually forgive your mistake. For example, if you accidentally walk in on a private conversation between two coworkers discussing their inter-office affair – and the record scratches the instant you walk in the door – just say, “Whoops! I appear to have terrible timing. Excuse me while I go bang my head against my cubicle wall.” *Are you willing to poke fun at yourself to save the situation?*

71. **Send a credible signal.** The first time I walked down the Reno strip, I noticed an abundance of buffets. Now, I'm sure they were all delicious. But the problem was, every restaurant posted a sign that read, "Voted Best Buffet!" And I thought, "By whom? A sample of customers? Zagat? The guy who owns the place?" That's when I learned: Credibility without specificity is audacity. If you want to send a credible signal, avoid unspecified attribution like the plague. Delete from your vocabulary phrases like: *Research proves. Scientists say. Psychologists report. Experts believe. They say. There's an old story that says. I've heard. Most people agree. It is said that. Critics say. Statistics show. Somebody once said. The reviews say.* Remember: You're starting with a negative balance. We live in a low-trust culture, and the baseline posture of most customers is not to believe you. As such, making a case for yourself means making morsels of your credibility expand in people's heads. Otherwise they'll pick someone else. *What can you do – right now – to create greater trust on both sides of the sale?*

72. **Shift your attitude.** You may be unemployed. You may be broke. But the reality is, finding a job needs to become your job until you find a job. Let me say that again: Finding a job needs to become your job until you find a job. That means structuring your days. That means having regular lunch meetings. That means treating like any other job. *How much television did you watch yesterday?*

73. **Stand firm against the seductiveness of slander.** You see this in a lot of political elections. Candidates focus on childish, negative attacks that lack substantive data. Instead of showing the voters why they're better, they ride the current of whatever media narrative makes the other guy look worse. And instead of making a case for themselves, they spend millions of dollars trying to pick holes in the case of the opposing candidate's. Now, historically, this tactic has worked well to scare voters; but it's not especially effective for getting elected. And whether you're a politician, company leader, salesperson or unemployed professional, the goal is stop making war on the competition and start making love to the customer. As I learned from the credo of my client and strategic partner, Optimists International, "Give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others." Remember: Making other people's case look weaker doesn't make yours look stronger. Keep your eyes on your own paper. *Do you still think negatively looks good on you?*

74. **Start branding your own language.** The most overlooked personal branding hotspot is your language. Language is everything. Language increases hireability. Language changes minds. Language makes money. Language communicates presence. Language reveals brilliance. Most of all, language differentiates you. Consider two suggestions for increasing your *Language Equity*. First, quote yourself more. If you don't quote yourself, nobody else will. And you can quote me on that. Have confidence in your cranium. Even consider writing down a list of your twenty best sayings, "you-isms" or one-liners. It's not about marketshare – it's about mind share. Your goal is to begin owning words in people's minds. I challenge you to become known for your language, expressions and ideas. *How are you branding your own language? Have you gone public with your thoughts, ideas, words and expertise?*

75. **Stories trump resumes. Bikram Yoga is my religion.** Naturally, friends of mine who are considering taking a class often ask me what it's like. "It's tough," I used to say. "Ninety minutes. 110° heat. 100% humidity. The absolute hardest workout you'll ever experience in your life. But it will change you forever." Unfortunately, that didn't make the point very well. Hell, you could learn that on the studio website. Facts are the refuge of the unimaginative. Instead, I tell people the story about Rhonda. She's a friend of mine who came to class with me. Afterwards, when I asked her how she felt, her exact words were, "I think I saw God." She now practices four days a week. Lesson learned: Facts are retained – stories are retold. *Which one are you sharing?*

76. **Story trumps statistics.** Numbers lie. And they can be manipulated to prove pretty much anything. On the other hand, if you position yourself as a compelling storyteller, it will be impossible to disagree with you. What's more: Stories aren't just remembered – they're retold. And the number of positive stories that are circulating about you is what measures success in any organization. But here's the secret most experts won't tell you: *It's not enough to tell the story – you have to stick the landing.* Here's how: First, extract the universal human experience from the story so every listener can relate to it. Second, tell people what you learned from the story and how that lesson can make their lives better today. And third, drive home the actionability of the story by giving people simple instructions that make them think, *"I believe this, I can do this and I'm willing to try this."* All the statistics in the world won't be able to contain your employability. *Are you known as an employee who depends on numbers or commands with story?*

77. **Strategic subject lines.** Since you will most likely be following up via email, remember to use engaging, noticeable and emotional headlines. That's how people will decide whether to open or delete your message. Fortunately, that's also the secret to immediately differentiate your letter in their inbox. Here are a few examples: You were right ... I need your help ... I took your advice ... Your ears should be ringing ... I need your opinion on something ... Somebody paid you a compliment yesterday ... Here are five lessons you taught me during yesterday's interview. Remember: The subject line is the most important component of your follow up email. *How will your message stand out among the other 397 they received that week?*

78. **Study your advantage carefully – it's not what you think it is.** I'll never forget the day my mentor pointed out my unfair advantage. Completely blindsided me. I thought my advantage (as a writer, speaker, entrepreneur) was based on *volume* alone. But Arthur explained to me that *volume + velocity + value* was the real differentiator. "Scott, your biggest advantage is that nobody can keep up with you," he said. "That's what you bring to the table. You are dangerously prolific. You will out execute anybody. Nobody who does what you do can do what you do, as fast as you can do it. Nobody who does what you do can do what you do, as much as you can do it. And nobody who does what you do can do what you do, as well as you can do it. And even if they could, they won't." Thanks to a pair of unbiased eyes, Arthur helped pinpoint my unfair advantage: That my velocity and volume are unmatched and uncopyable. That it's not about intellectual property – it's about executional velocity. Your challenge is to gather feedback from dispassionate observers. Ask people with no stake in your company what *they think* your unfair advantage is. You might be surprised. *How are you immune from imitation?*

79. **Tell me about yourself.** With this question, the medium is the message. The interviewer cares less about your answer to this question and more about the confidence, enthusiasm and passion with which you answer it. And the speed of the response is the response. The biggest mistake you could make is pausing, stalling or fumbling at the onset of your answer, thus demonstrating a lack of self-awareness and self-esteem. Try these: “I can summarize who I am in three words.” Grabs their attention immediately. Demonstrates your ability to be concise, creative and compelling. “The quotation I live my life by is.” Proves that personal development is an essential part of your growth plan. Also shows your ability to motivate yourself. “My personal philosophy is.” Companies hire athletes – not shortstops. This line indicates your position as a thinker, not just an employee. “People who know me best say that I’m...” *This response offers insight into your own level of self-awareness?*

80. **Tell me about yourself again.** Also, try these: “Well, I googled myself this morning and here’s what I found...” Tech savvy, fun, cool people would say this. Unexpected and memorable. “My passion is...” People don’t care what you do – people care who you are. And what you’re passionate about is who you are. Plus, passion unearths enthusiasm. “When I was seven years old, I always wanted to be...” An answer like this shows that you’ve been preparing for this job your whole life, not just the night before. “If Hollywood made a movie about my life, it would be called...” Engaging, interesting and entertaining. “Can I show you instead of tell you?” Then, pull something out of your pocket that represents who you are. Who could resist this answer? Who could forget this answer? “The compliment people give me most frequently is...” Almost like a testimonial, this response also indicates self-awareness and openness to feedback.

81. **Truth trumps academics.** The reason I'm so widely read as an author is not because I have an unparalleled command of the English language – it's because I write in blood. That's what my readers have come to expect: More honesty per square inch than anyone out there. Sure, it's not exactly academic, but at least I won't bullshit you. *How are you branding your honesty?* Maybe it's by being microscopically truthful in those little moments where lying would probably be easier and quicker. Maybe it's by encouraging the truthful self-expression of everyone around you. Or maybe it's running the risk of appearing inconsistent for the sake of preserving the truth. Either way, remember this: Honesty is attractive because it is rare. And unexpected. And underrated. Be known for it. *Would you rather be remembered as the employee who thought he knew everything or the employee who always told the truth?*

82. Uncover the mental obstacles that are preventing you from being an effective entrepreneur. Like your incessant need to be applauded. Like your gargantuan ego that won't allow you to admit to people that you've been unemployed for 5 months. Like your delusional belief that you're too old to go back into the workforce. Look, contrary to popular conditioning, vulnerability is strength – not surrender. So, identify the behaviors are preventing you from making progress towards becoming the best, most hireable version of yourself. And pinpoint the obstacles or threats that might prevent your career vision from being fulfilled. *In the past year, what choices and thoughts have renewed your entrepreneurial hope and energy?*

83. Unfair means committing to being the best. Actively seeking reasons for your mediocrity – then defending them to the death with twisted logic – is a one-way ticket to failure. Instead, think about the one task, that if you could do exceptionally well, could propel forward in your business. Then, ask two questions: What is the next step in becoming remarkably proficient in your ability to perform that task? What three people need to experience you performing that task in person? Remember: As Seth Godin wrote in the dip, “Average is for losers. Quit or be exceptional.” *Are you spending your time searching for excuses for poor performance, or investing your time in becoming a better performer?*

84. **Use gentle reminders.** You don't want to be a pest. But you do want to follow up in a non-threatening, non-overly salesy and value-driven way. For example, let's say a certain prospect hasn't returned your calls or emails. Maybe she's busy. Maybe she forgot to reply. Maybe she has more important tasks to get to that week. No problem. Your mission is to gently remind that person who you are and how you uniquely deliver value. Consider sending a link to a relevant blog post you read. Or, better yet, send a link to a relevant blog post you wrote. Gentle reminders sure beat leaving another annoying, predictable and unremarkable voicemail saying, "Hey Mark, did you get a chance to look at my resume?" *Are you gently reminding people?*

85. Use writing to exponentially increase growth in this experience. You've already read my mantra in previous columns: "Writing is the basis of all wealth." For several reasons. First, writing is the great clarifier – perfect for practicing your answers to tough interview questions. Second, writing makes everything you do better and easier – especially networking for a new position. Third, writing triples the learning of any experience, because if you don't write it down, it never happened. This also helps when you tell employers what you learned from previous positions. They love meaty, bite-sized, content driven, ROI based answers. For example, remember those 45 questions from last month? Have you written out all your answers to those yet? *What did you write today?*

86. **Why trumps how.** Anyone can learn how to do anything. But if they're not in touch with why they're doing it, the lack of vision will stain every part of the process. That's what employers are looking for: People who are plastered with purpose. People who are the walking translation of their vision. If you want to tap into the reservoir of why power and pinpoint the deepest motivations behind what you do, try this exercise: Make a list of a hundred reasons why you do what you do. Keep a copy in your wallet. And on your next interview, pull it out and read it. I'm serious. People won't just pay attention – they'll pay money. The point is: You can teach a monkey how to email, but you can't teach it why the message is important. My suggestion: Will trumps skill. Demonstrate a deep enough purpose behind your work and you can invent the technique of your work. *Are you at war with how when you need to be in love with why?*

87. Work and you shall receive. Snowboarding legend and multi-gold-medalist Shaun White receives constant criticism for his success. But not for his natural athletic ability over his competitors. And not for his trademark mop of flowing red hair. Rather, for his personal training facility in Colorado. That's right: White has his own private half-pipe. On a mountain. In the middle of The Rockies. Totally friggin awesome. And it's not like his parents cashed in his trust fund to pay for it. It was only after fifteen years of hard, long and smart practice; his commitment to building a personal brand and his ability to command legions of fans that White (finally) earned a major sponsorship from Red Bull. Then, while training for the 2010 they made Shaun's half-pipe a reality. Lesson learned: Hard work pays off; but hard patience pays millions. *How long are you willing to sweat in obscurity before the right people notice?*

88. **Writing changes everything.** You've already learned that writing is the basis of all wealth. Here's another axiom of creativity: *If you don't write it down, it never happened.* What's more, writing makes you better at everything you do: Thinking. Speaking. Planning. Marketing. Selling. Consider this three-part exercise for turning your pen into a new position. First, brainstorm your personal philosophy. At the top of a piece of paper, write the following: "If everybody did exactly what I said, what would the world look like?" Take some time to answer this question with five to ten bullet points. Second, organize your Personal Philosophy. Your answers will become the framework of your Personal Philosophy. Your way of treating people. Your manner of doing business. Your Theory of the Universe. Then, share your personal philosophy. Eventually, once your philosophy is perfected, print it out on small laminated cards and give it to everybody. Also publish it online in an easily accessible location. People will start talking. Writing brings clarity. Writing intensifies impact. Writing untangles threads. Writing makes interviewing easier. *What did you write today? What philosophy are you known for? And is everything you know written down somewhere?*

89. You're not in the job market – you're in opportunity market.

Branding is no longer a novelty – it's a necessity. It's the price of admission. And it's got nothing to do with dressing for success, company logos or flashy websites. Branding is the best version of you. Branding is how people experience you. Branding is how people experience themselves in relation to you. Branding is what you're known for, what you're known as and what you're known for knowing. Think of it from an algebraic perspective: Your brand is the coefficient, and the goal is to make that number a little stronger every day. That way, when a new job enters the equation, you're prepared to multiply the hell out of it.

90. **You're not there to answer their questions.** You're there to articulate your fabulousness. You're there to deliver an impeccable performance. You're there to blow everyone else out of the water. You're there to guarantee that nobody forgets you were there. You're there to make enough of a mark that people can't leave you out. You're there to help morsels of your credibility expand in people's heads. You're there to advance your agenda and get what you came for. You're there to advance confidently in the direction of your dreams. You're there to tell people what they need to hear to fall in love with you. You're there to think, say and do the polar opposite of what everyone is expecting. You're there to make yes the easy option. You're there to teach these people how to trust you. You're there to create an aura that makes you more desirable. You're there to relentlessly pursue the visions that possess you. You're there to bring all of who you are to the statement you make about the world. You're there to be seen as a problem solver. You're there to start positive rumors about yourself. You're there to let the best have a real chance at you. You're there to create a compelling, credible composite of your character. You're there to make it impossible for people to escape your awesomeness.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Ginsberg is an author, speaker, consultant, mentor, publisher, award-winning blogger & one smoking hot piece of brain candy. He also wears a nametag 24-7. Even to bed.