

Weaknesses Video: Transcript

Interviewer: What are your weaknesses?

It's a sneaking feeling if you don't get excited to answer that question. Most students don't say, "Yeah! Oh the weakness question my favorite." I'll be honest it's a tough one to answer. Sadly most students mess it up. In my days as a recruiting director I certainly asked this question of a number of students and I got a range of responses. a majority of candidates, roughly three out of four would answer that question the exact same way. I'd say, "What are your weaknesses?" They would get a sly look on their face and confidently all basically saying the exact same thing. Go ahead take a guess, I'd bet you'd know what they'd say. Cause it's probably what you would say. "Well my weakness is I work too hard." Inside you are chuckling to yourself.

I just took a strength, working too hard, and disguised it as a weakness. And this idiot recruiting director who has interviews over 1,000 students has never heard that one before. I might as well spend that signing bonus now. I'm sorry but you work too hard, or you're a perfectionist are the weakest, cheapest answers in the history of interviewing. We old recruiting directors are smarter than you think. The best way to answer that question is to be honest. What a crazy concept. I should say relatively honest. Let me explain.

Take an actual weakness talk about how you identified it, how you're working on it and why it's important for you to correct it. Let's try and look at an example, "What are your weaknesses?"

Student: One of the things that I tend to do right now is procrastinate. And to be honest I put things off that I don't enjoy doing. I'm sure like a lot of students. So whether that means studying for a test, writing a paper or even cleaning up my room I put those things off to the last minute. Right now the only one it affects is me. So if I get a bad grade on a test or have a messy room it only really is my deal. But moving forward especially when working for a company I know that I will not be able to procrastinate because it will affect everybody on the team. At the beginning of every week now I write down all of the things I need to do. I get the things that I don't enjoy doing and put them at the top of the list. And I don't let myself go to number two let's say, until I finish number one. Now I'm not perfect at it yet, but it has really sort of helped me recognize how to manage my time and help me avoid procrastination.

Now that can work for most weaknesses, being more organized, being more patient, being less of a procrastinator, managing your time more effectively all can work.

Your career center can give you some more tips on crafting a great answer. And while this can work for most weaknesses there are some red flags. "I'm horrible at math. I'm not a morning person. I hate people." My answer would not have been nearly as good if I would have said, I'm a horrible procrastinator. What's important is not just the weakness but how you talk about it. Good Luck.