

How To Handle Terminations In An Interview

The most gut-wrenching words you never want to hear that seem like the end of the world: *“You’re fired,”* or *“We are going to have to let you go.”*

Terminations happen – whether they are your fault or because someone decided to eliminate you for their own personal ambition/agenda reasons. But the end result is the same: Being fired from a job can taint your future prospects.

The biggest worry most job seekers looking for work who have been terminated is whether someone else will give you a chance. But before you even get to the interview, you need to have an attitude adjustment about what that termination means.

You need to seize control of it, and own it. Don’t let it own you. Fear will rule your life... if you let it.

Here are some tips to help you get past this difficult time in your career and overcome the pain of a termination:

1. Bury The Negativity With Positivity

Out of work right now? Try volunteering, and wow them with going above and beyond what is asked of you. The volunteer work can be listed in your employment history (be sure to indicate ‘Volunteer [job name]’). The good news? You’ve started to create a positive track record of what you can capably deliver, and also redefined yourself in a better light. Plus, you’ll feel better so the last (and most recent) thing you had done in your career isn’t negative, which is a powerful booster to your mental state during the job search.

2. Remove Preconceptions

Act the part by dressing, acting, and speaking professionally in every single interaction you have with an employer. Don’t give them a reason to doubt your abilities.

3. Address The Problems That Led To Your Termination

If you did make a mistake big enough to warrant termination, you need to be willing to investigate those reasons. Do you have an anger problem? Are you lacking in a skill that resulted in a less-than-satisfactory performance? Be willing to examine the contributing causes, no matter how painful they seem at the time. Identifying, knowing, and then working to resolve the problems that led to this situation will help you better prepare for the future.

4. Accept Blame Where It’s Due... Then Let Go Of The Rest

If your termination honestly had nothing to do with your job performance, you can’t change the course of history. Whatever circumstances led to the termination were obviously beyond

your control, and while it is okay to be upset and angry about the outcomes, it is best to not stew about things... you can't change them and your energy is better served to helping yourself towards the future, versus agonizing about the past.

5. Understand You Will Need To Explain Your Dismissal

Potential employers will find out anyway, so this is your one opportunity to answer the question before it is even asked and to influence the decision-maker's opinion about you. Explain you ran into a difficult situation with your last employer and trying to make them happy simply didn't work out, which is why you left. Bring up the point you have good references from previous employers who can speak to your abilities and productivity.

Tackling a termination head-on is not only honest, but also empowering, so you don't let the fear of what happened in the past cloud your future.