The Interview
Getting a job is hard!

- Finding a job posting
- Getting the application in by the deadline
  - writing things you have not thought much or any about before like your “teaching philosophy”
  - writing your research plan (5-10 years)
  - getting your CV in shape
  - writing the personalized cover letter
- Finding the right recommenders and getting them to send their letters in on time
- (Making it to the video interview with the whole committee)
- Giving the Job Talk
- Giving the Chalk Talk
- Lunch with students? Dinner(s) with Staff
- Individual interviews with staff/faculty

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Four things to keep in mind

1. Why is an interview necessary?
   • They have your CV and pdfs of all your papers
   • They have heard you speak
   • They have letters of recommendation

Q: What do they want to learn that they don’t already know?
A: They want to learn about your *character*

Character: The mental and moral qualities distinctive to you. Your personality, disposition, temperament. The things that motivate you
2. Why do they care about your character?

Because they are hiring a long term colleague.

In this sense your goal (to get a job) is different than their goal (to find someone who will be in their acquaintance for potentially decades).

You have to see it from the perspective of the interviewer: He or she wants a colleague who they would look forward to talking to when they meet incidentally in the hall or at a staff meeting—this is not strictly the same as being a good researcher.

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3. How do you give them a sense of your character?

This is hard. It gets to the core of who you are (private)

To reiterate: In this sense your goal (if it is to get a job by playing up your qualifications) is different than the interviewer’s goal (which is to find someone who will be in their acquaintance for potentially decades). Thus you need to show something that may go beyond what is in your portfolio.

Q: What might that be that you show in an interview that reveals your character and is not already crystal clear from what they already have?
A: You show them *what you stand for*. You show them your *point of view*

Point of view: Your opinions, attitudes, and judgments that reveal your feelings about the work you do and thus gives others a sense of your character.

You should be able to answer questions like:

Why are you passionate about the subject you study?

How is your view of the subject unique from the views of others?

What is the long term payoff for pursuing this subject?
3. How do you give them answers that are convincing and compelling

1. Show don’t tell
   Don’t say “I am passionate about what I do”
   Say “I have been thinking about this subject for the past ten years.”

2. Create a narrative arc (be able to tell the story of your professional life) where all the parts of your life story (that they know about) fit into a scheme where it is:
   i) inevitable that you are doing what you are doing because it relates to you as a person
   ii) you are uniquely qualified based on your history
   iii) it is the most important thing in the world (in your view)
4. How do you get them to like you?

1. Treat them like friends (assuming your friends like you)
2. Show humility
3. Show humor or at least geniality (friendly and cheerful manner or affability)
4. Be relaxed
5. Be open
6. Show familiarity with what they do (do your homework)
7. Show genuine curiosity about what they do by for example proposing or asking about the ways their work and yours might overlap.
8. Show confidence. You know in your heart of hearts you deserve to be among them – they may be older but in some sense you see them as equals- don’t fawn over the interviewer
Mock Interview