

Tell us about yourself

 By Juliette Attwell

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This week we look at how to answer that time-old question that pops up during interviews: "Tell us about yourself", and the difference between a career in psychology and industrial psychology.



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There's this question always asked in an interview ,and am sure I lost the interview on it: "Tell us about yourself". What must I tell the interviewer about myself, my background? If it is, where must I start with my background and where do I end. If it's about my skills, what kind of skills is the interviewer looking for in a marketing-related post.

My answer used to be, "I am Samuel from Tembisa and is where I grew up and did my junior and high school grades. I then moved to the western cape to look for a job, and fortunately I got a forklift operating job. After a year, I got a transfer to Penbev in Cape Town, and after two years I started furthering my studies. I am doing my Diploma in Marketing on a part-time basis and am in third-year this year. I am a good listener, good working with a group and, as a result, I've been chosen to be a team leader."

I'm not sure if I am on the right track? Please advise? - Samuel

Hi Samuel,

Thanks for your question, it's a really good one!

I think the key in this circumstance is to relax and be yourself. When you get asked the question, say something like: "What I can tell you about myself is that I'm very hard working and I take my career and goals very seriously. I'm studying a marketing diploma on a part-time basis as I am passionate about learning and developing my own skills, and I believe that you should never stop learning. I'm an excellent listener and I love working in a team and with people. I've excelled in this and have recently been made a team leader in my current role. I've had quite a varied background career-wise, but I

believe it's all taught me the skills that I carry today. I believe I can add great value to your company and I would love the opportunity to show you what I'm made of."

You will see I've left out quite a bit, interviewers want to know about your skills, not necessarily your history. So I would suggest using the above word for word... hopefully it will help you!

Please let me know how it goes.

Psychology vs Industrial Psychology

I am a Bcom Economics and Econometrics graduate and currently doing a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management. I, however, only have experience in BEE, both verification and consulting.

I am interested in a career where I will be able to help people. I had initially decided to study Psychology, during my search for courses I came across the Industrial Psychology course. My question is how similar or different are these two courses and what advice would you give me in branching into a totally different career path. - B

Hi B,

Thank you for your question. Well done on completing your degree!

To answer your question; Psychology and Industrial Psychology both deal with people, however in two very different areas. An industrial psychologist will involve themselves in the wellbeing of an organisation and its employees from ergonomics to HR to union and CCMA involvement. They are responsible for formulating strategies to enhance and ensure the wellbeing of employees. Pure psychology is incredibly broad and includes clinical, educational and more. You are therefore dealing with a very different set of people including children and the elderly. To practice as a psychologist in South Africa you need to have a Masters degree. Industrial Psychology on the other hand can be utilised in any business area and complements your BCom very nicely. You would not be branching into a completely different career path, but still learning about psychology which you are clearly interested in.

Best of luck in your decision, I wish you the best!

Remember to always love what you do!

Juliette

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