



Interview Workshop

**University of Wisconsin Law School
Office of Career & Professional Development**

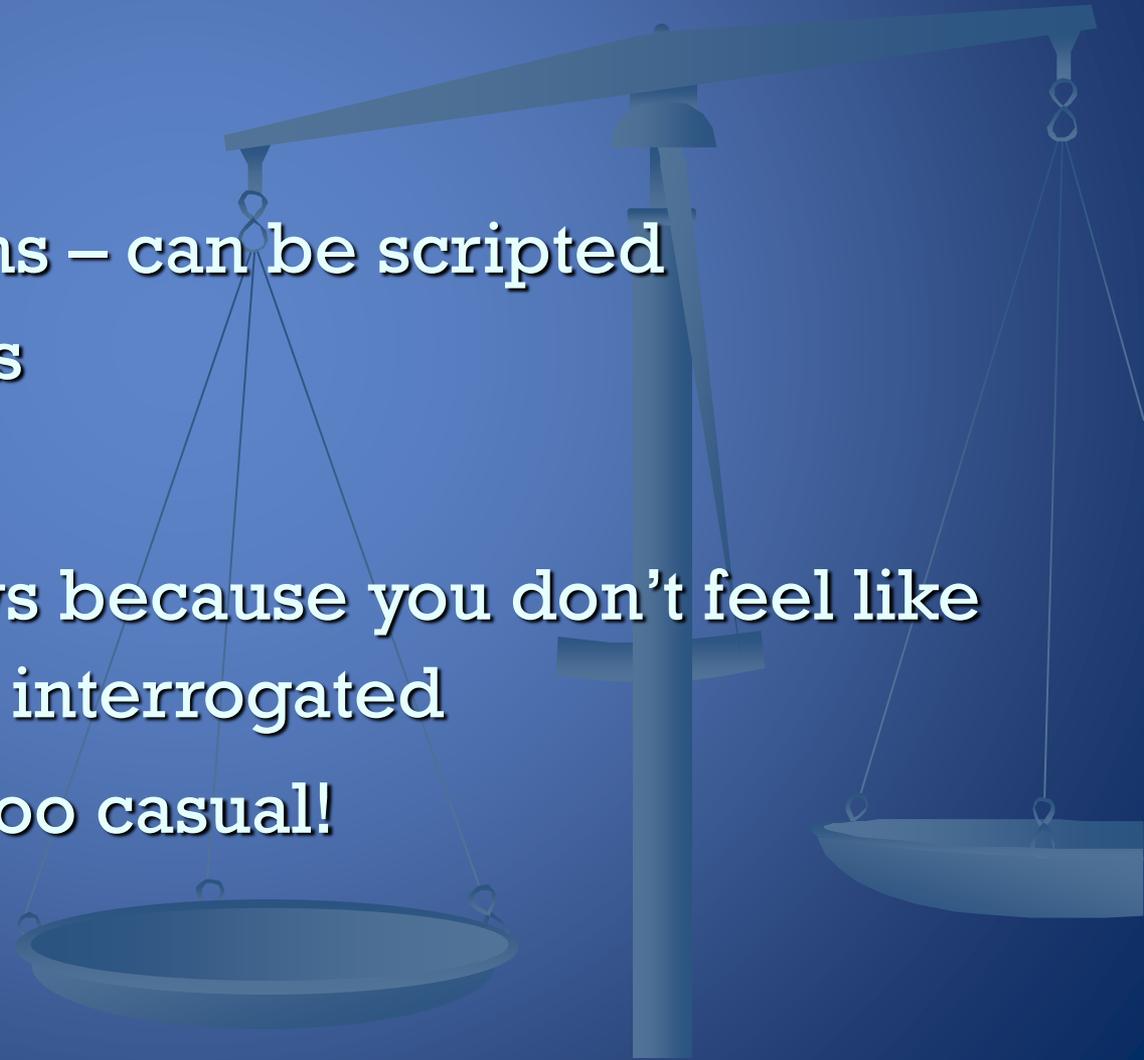
Types of Interviews

■ Traditional

- Intro
- Their questions – can be scripted
- Your questions

■ Conversation

- Best interviews because you don't feel like you are being interrogated
- But don't get too casual!



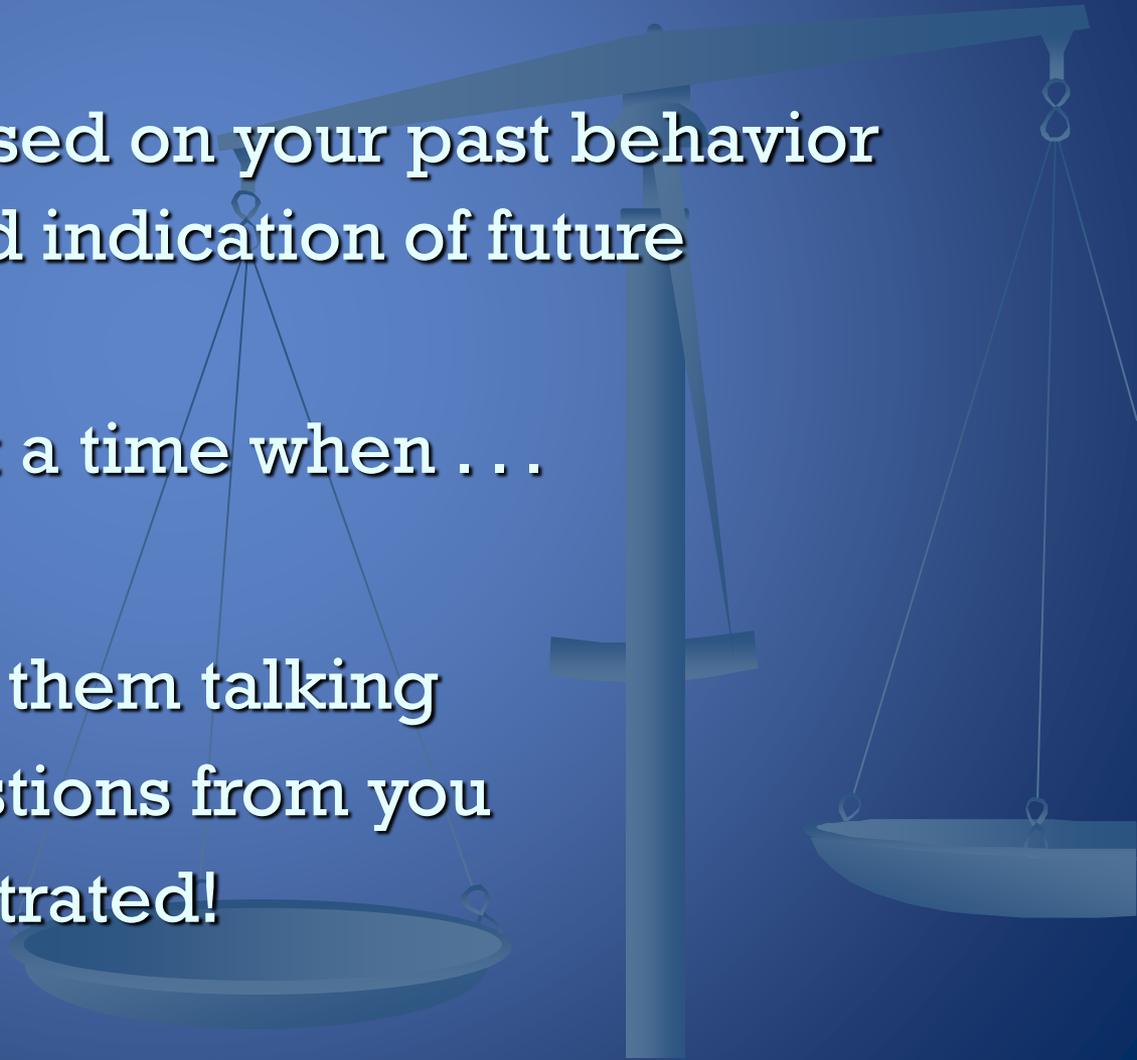
Types of Interviews (cont)

■ Behavioral

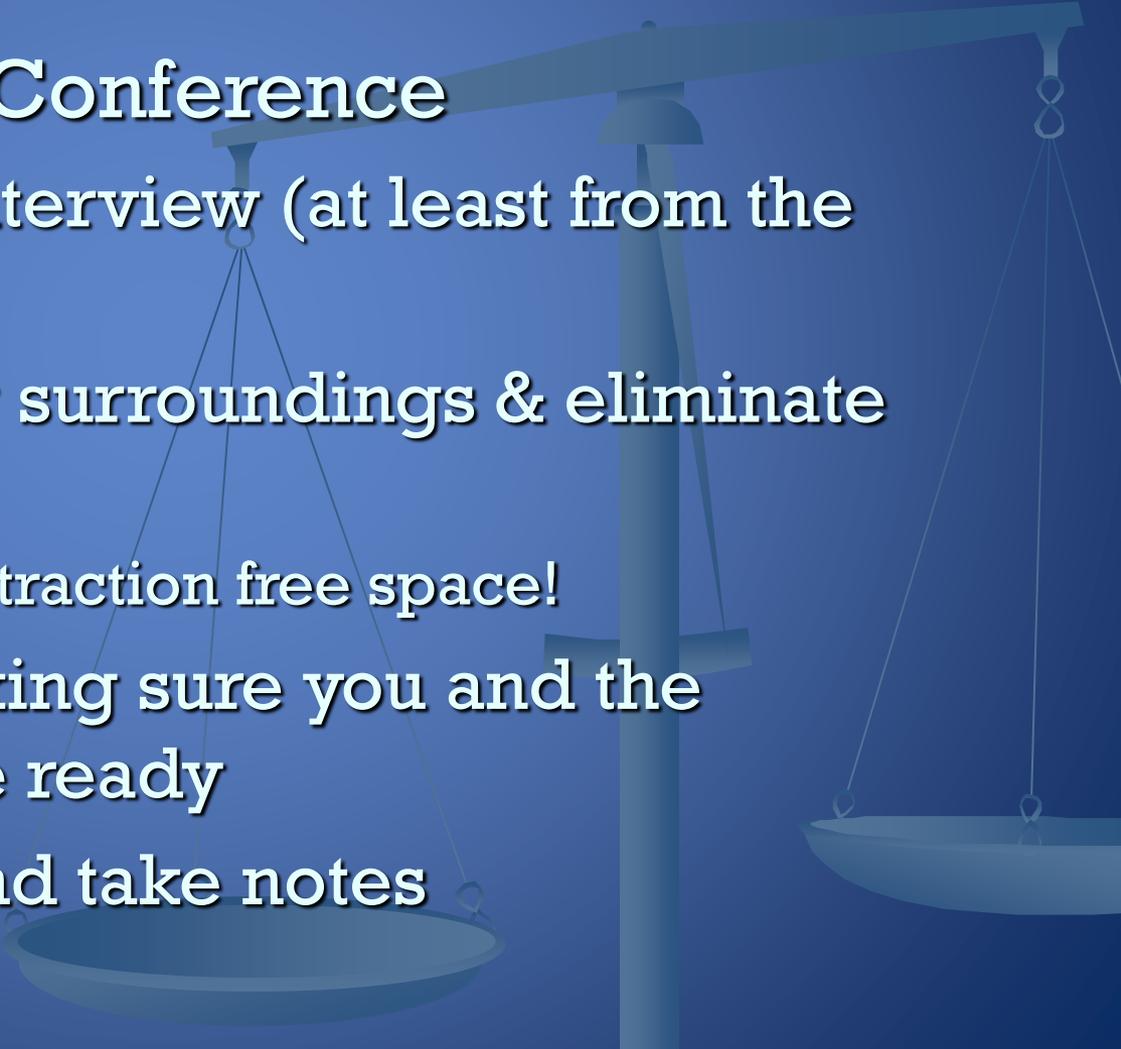
- Questions based on your past behavior will be a good indication of future performance
- Tell me about a time when . . .

■ Instructional

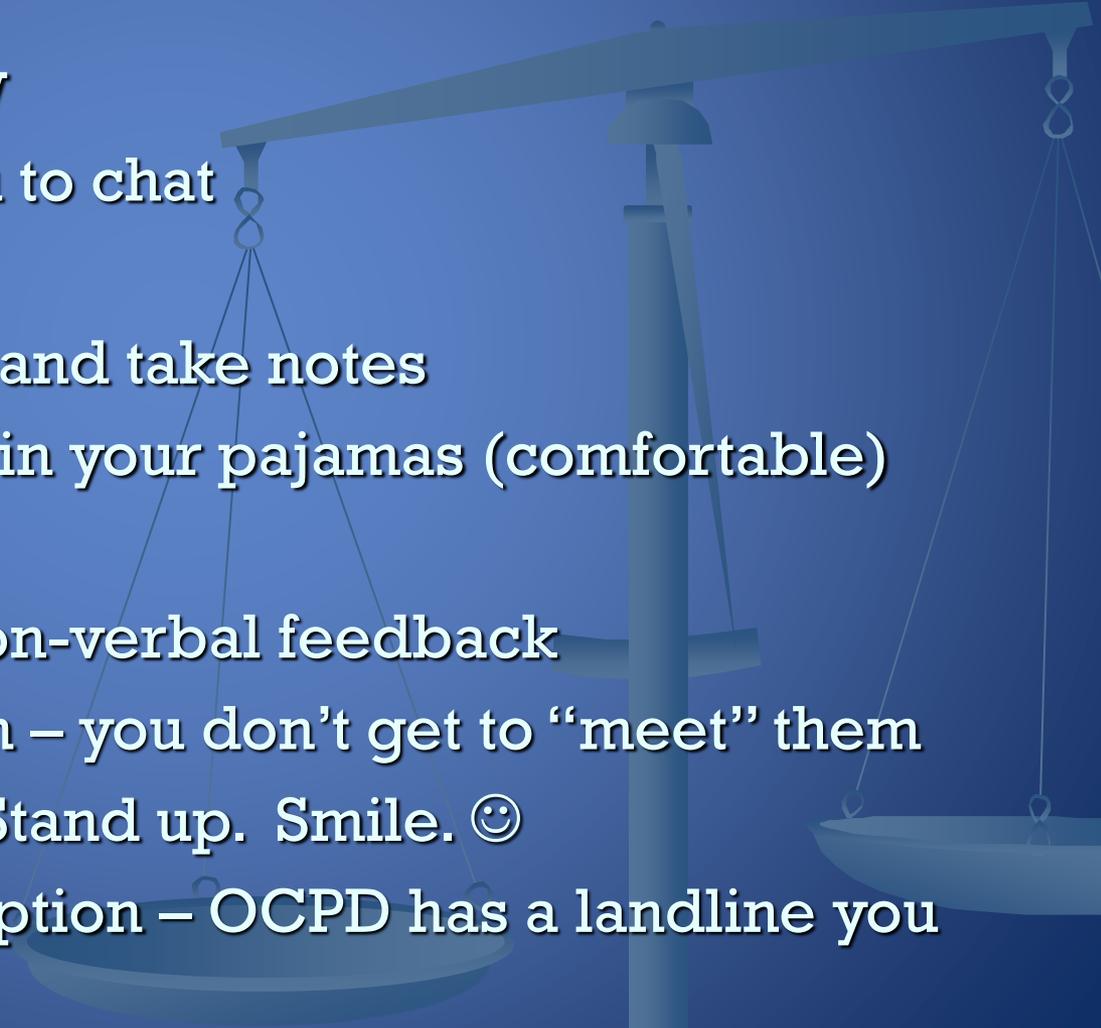
- 15 minutes of them talking
- Time for questions from you
- Don't get frustrated!



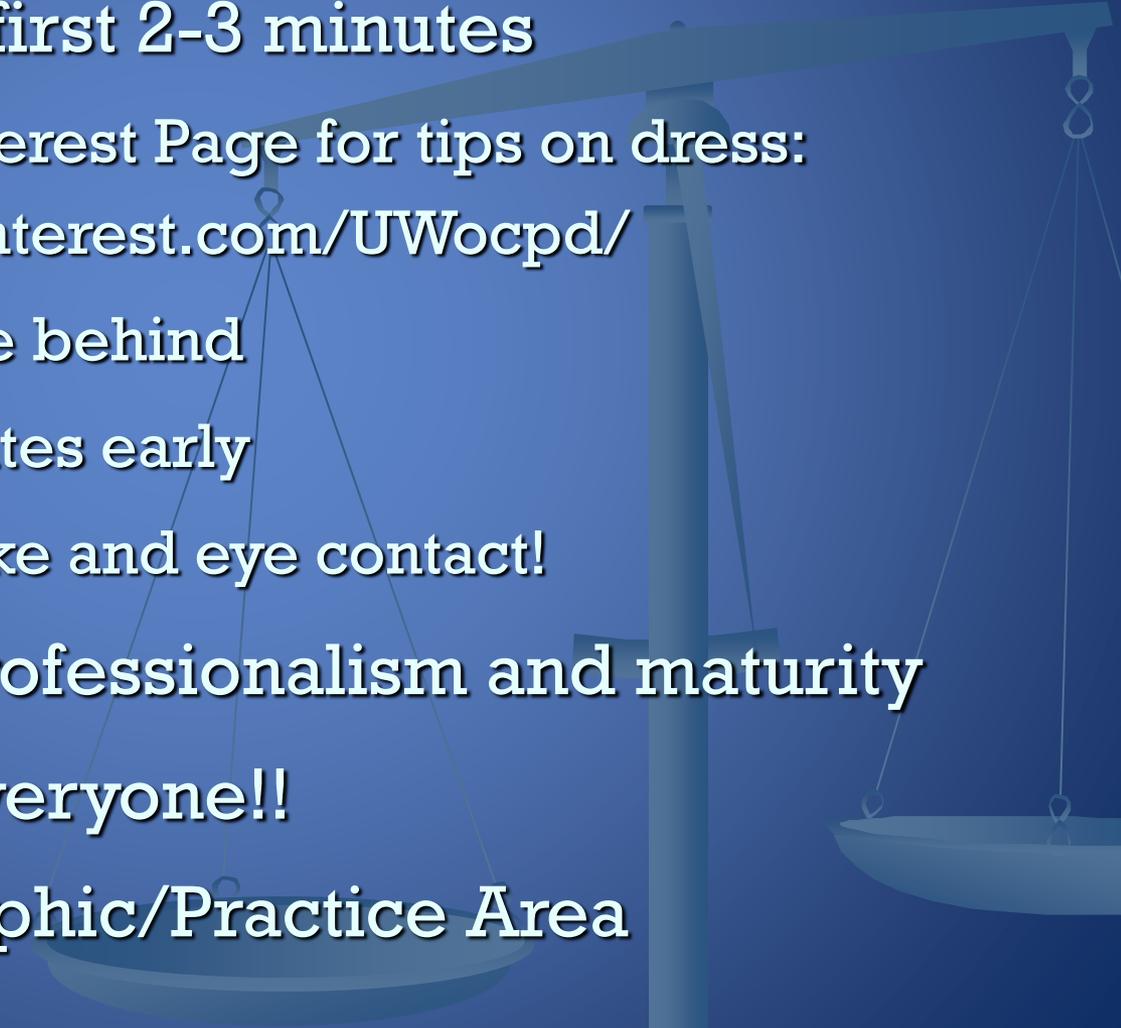
Types of Interviews (cont)

- Skype/Video Conference
 - Dress for an interview (at least from the waist up)
 - Consider your surroundings & eliminate distractions
 - OCPD has distraction free space!
 - Practice – Making sure you and the equipment are ready
 - You can use and take notes
- 

Types of Interviews (cont)

- Phone Interview
 - May just call you to chat
 - Advantages:
 - You can have and take notes
 - You could be in your pajamas (comfortable)
 - Disadvantages:
 - Little if any non-verbal feedback
 - No interaction – you don't get to “meet” them
 - Tips: Dress up. Stand up. Smile. ☺
 - Check your reception – OCPD has a landline you can use!
- 

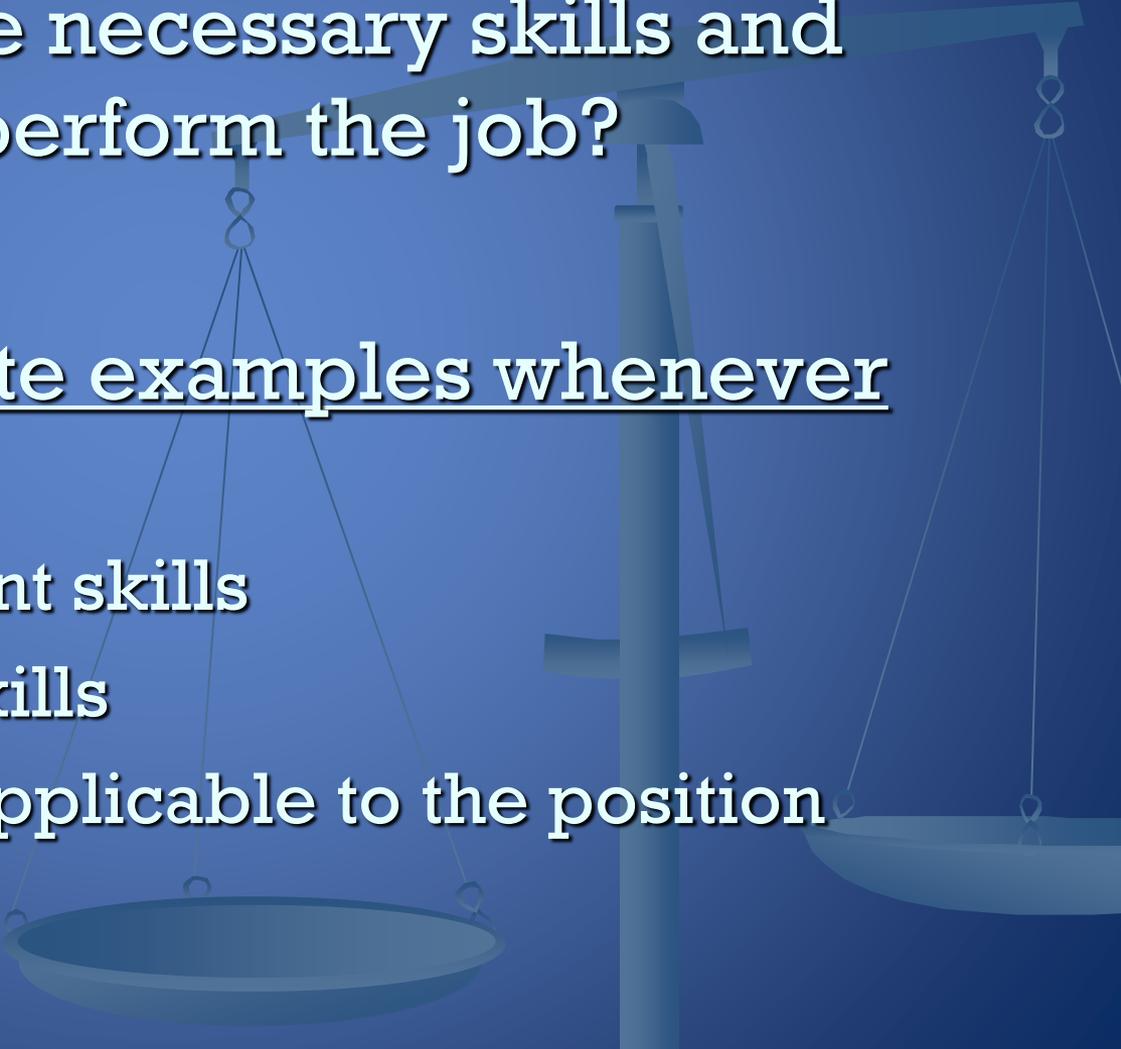
Interviews: Things to Keep in Mind

- Impressions in first 2-3 minutes
 - Check out Pinterest Page for tips on dress:
<http://www.pinterest.com/UWocpd/>
 - Leave baggage behind
 - Arrive 10 minutes early
 - Firm hand shake and eye contact!
 - Always show professionalism and maturity
 - Be kind to everyone!!
 - Focus - Geographic/Practice Area
- 

Interviews: Things to Keep in Mind

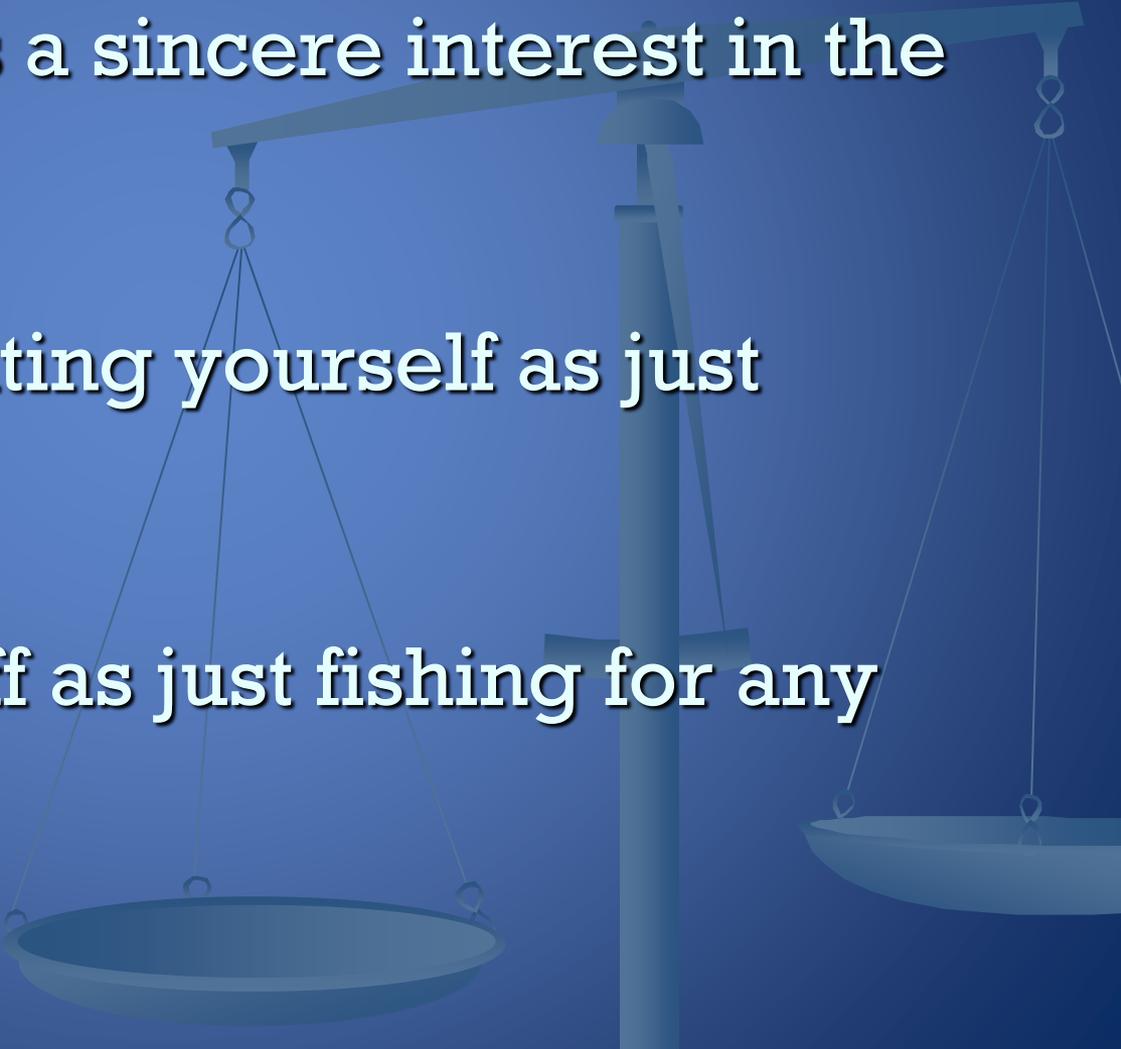
- Put yourself in the interviewers' shoes
 - Interview to their requirements
 - Can you do the job?
 - Will you fit into our workplace?/Do I want to work with you?
 - Are you enthusiastic about working for us?
 - Are you worth the investment?
- 

Can you do the job?

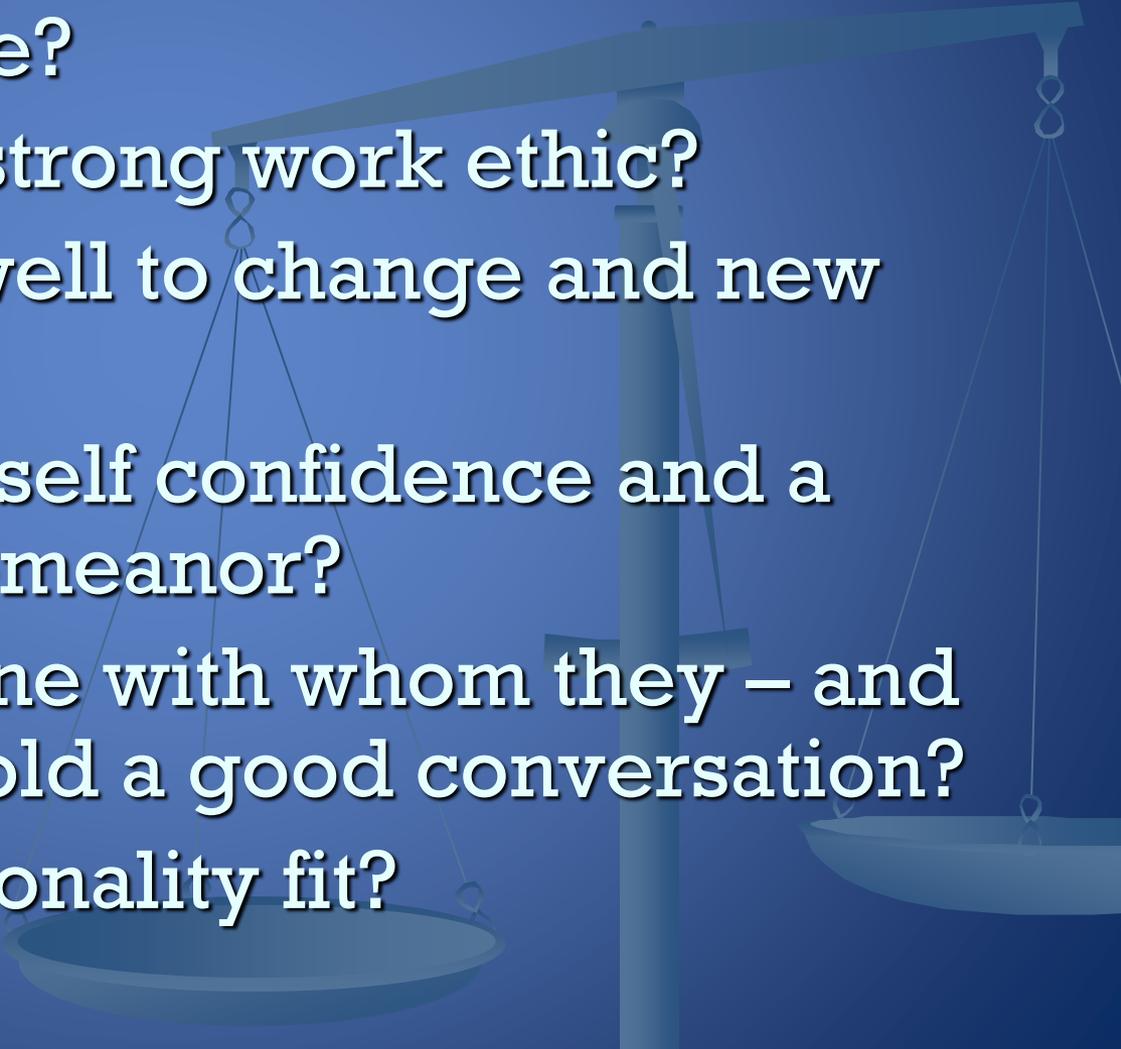


- Do you have the necessary skills and experience to perform the job?
- Provide concrete examples whenever possible
 - Directly relevant skills
 - Transferable skills
 - All should be applicable to the position

Are you enthusiastic about working for us?

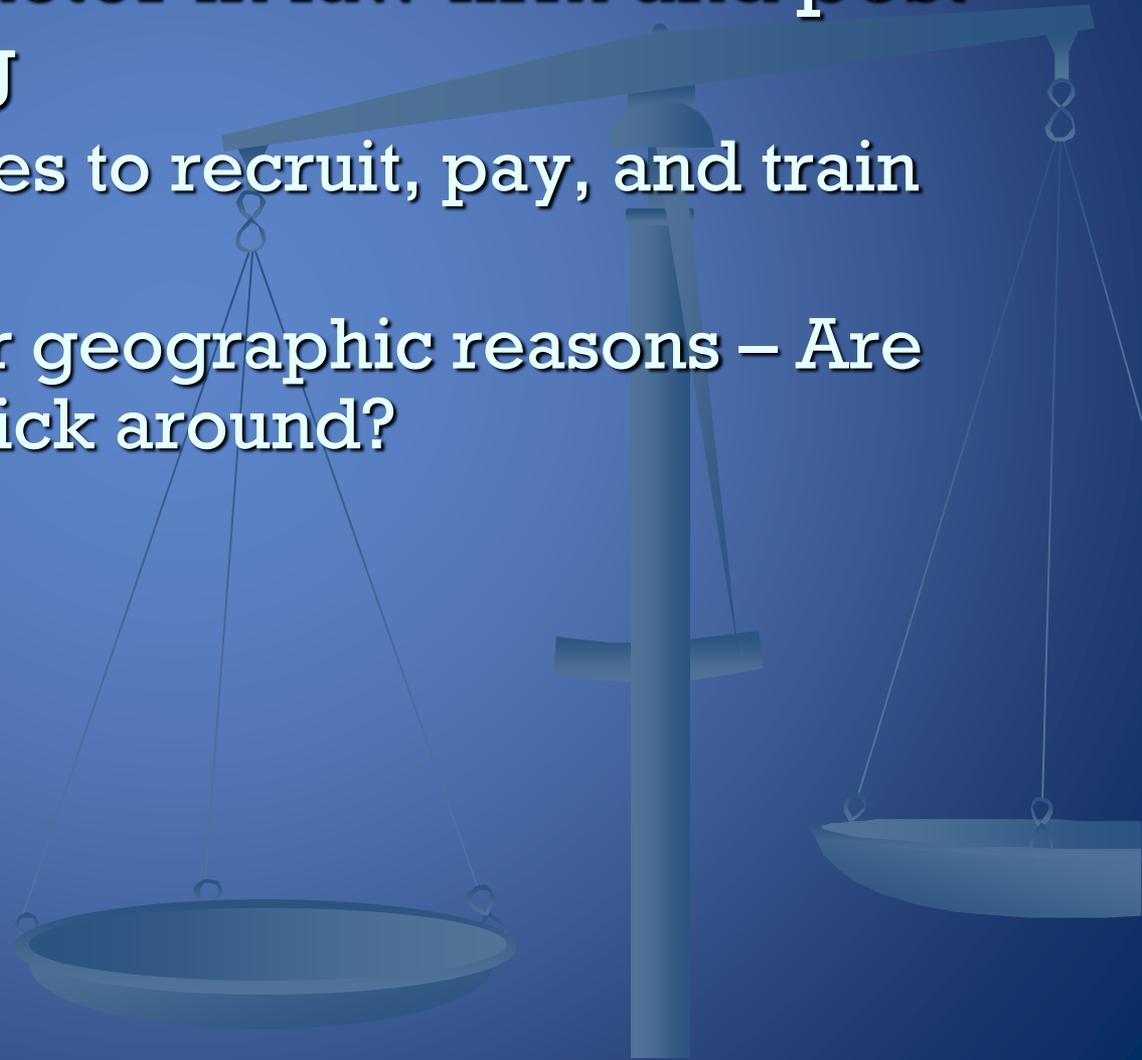
- Do you express a sincere interest in the opportunity?
 - Are you presenting yourself as just wanting a job?
 - Do you come off as just fishing for any opportunity?
- 

Will you fit into our workplace? (Do I want to work with you?)

- Are you reliable?
 - Do you have a strong work ethic?
 - Do you adjust well to change and new challenges?
 - Do you project self confidence and a professional demeanor?
 - Are you someone with whom they – and a client – can hold a good conversation?
 - Does your personality fit?
- 

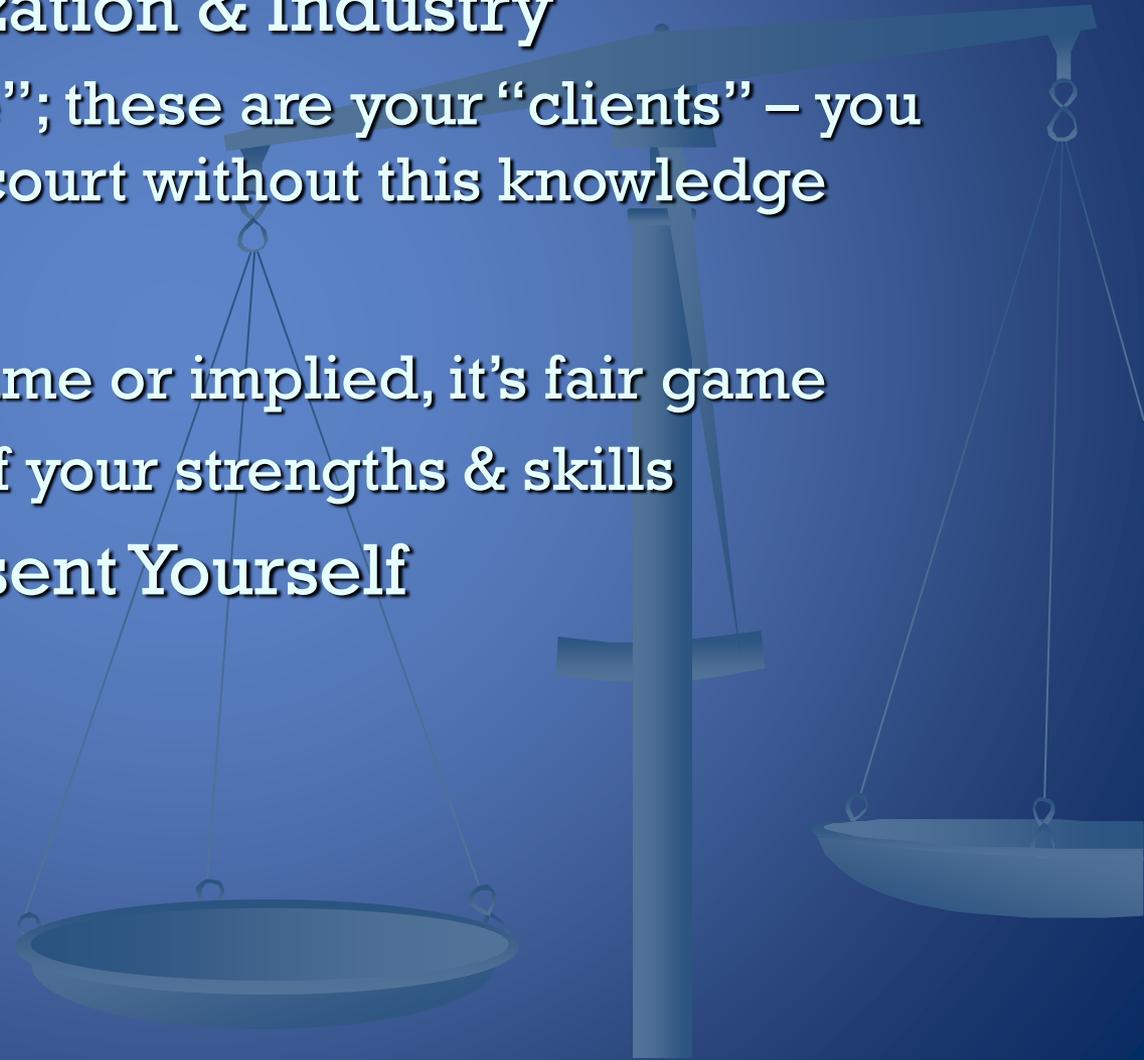
Are you worth the investment?

- Particularly a factor in law firm and post-graduate hiring
 - Lots of resources to recruit, pay, and train new hires
 - Flight factor for geographic reasons – Are you going to stick around?



How to be successful: BE PREPARED

- Know the Organization & Industry
 - This is your “case”; these are your “clients” – you wouldn’t go into court without this knowledge
- Know Yourself
 - If it’s on your resume or implied, it’s fair game
 - Have examples of your strengths & skills
- Know How to Present Yourself
 - Substance
 - Style



RESEARCH



ORGANIZATION & INTERVIEWERS

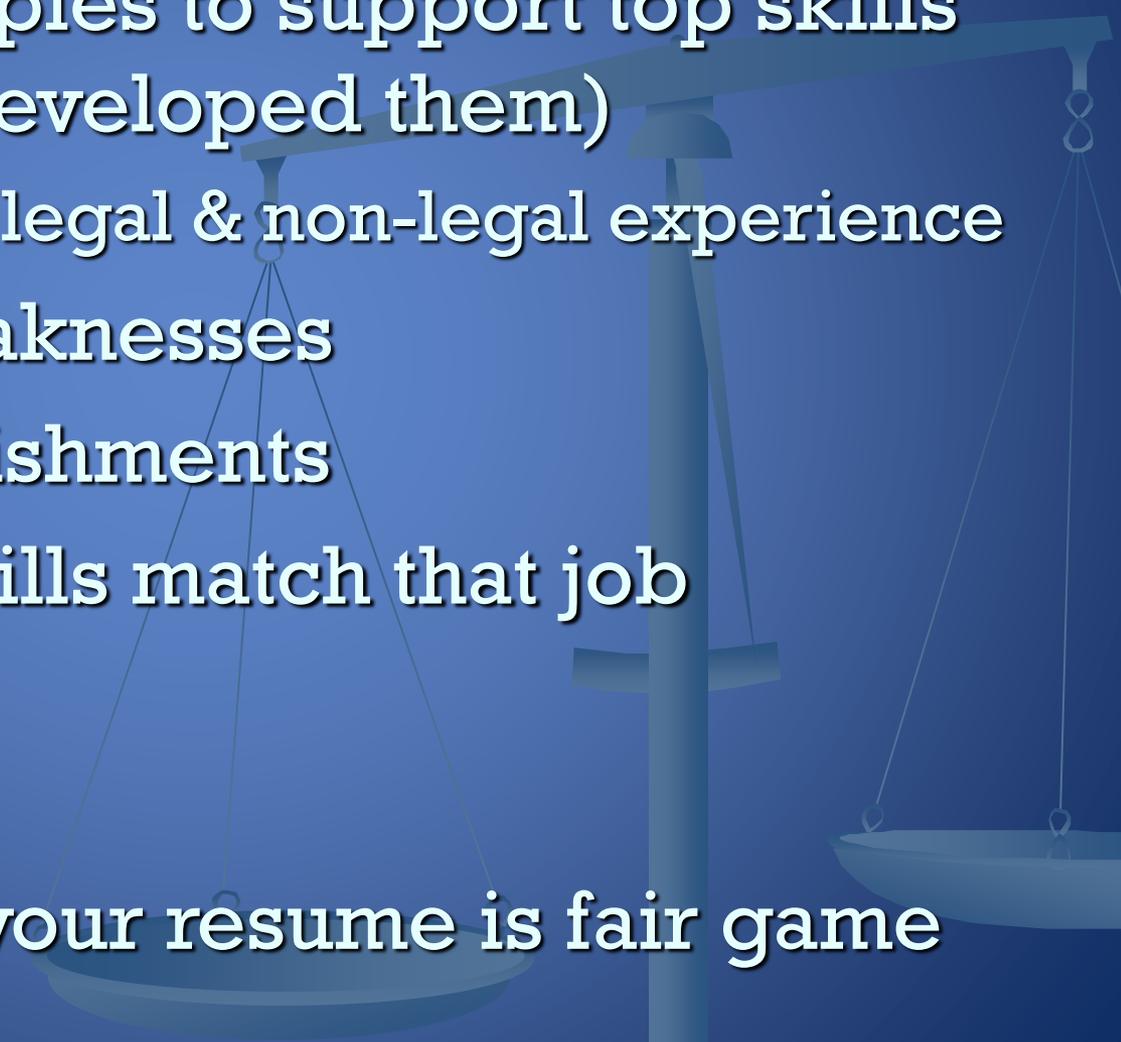
- ✓ Websites
- ✓ Recruiting Materials
- ✓ NALP Directory
- ✓ navforward.com
- ✓ Lexis and Westlaw
- ✓ Attorney bios

INDUSTRY

- ✓ Trade Journals & Current Trends
- ✓ Informational Interviews
- ✓ Martindale.com
- ✓ OCPD Team
(We know the scoop!)

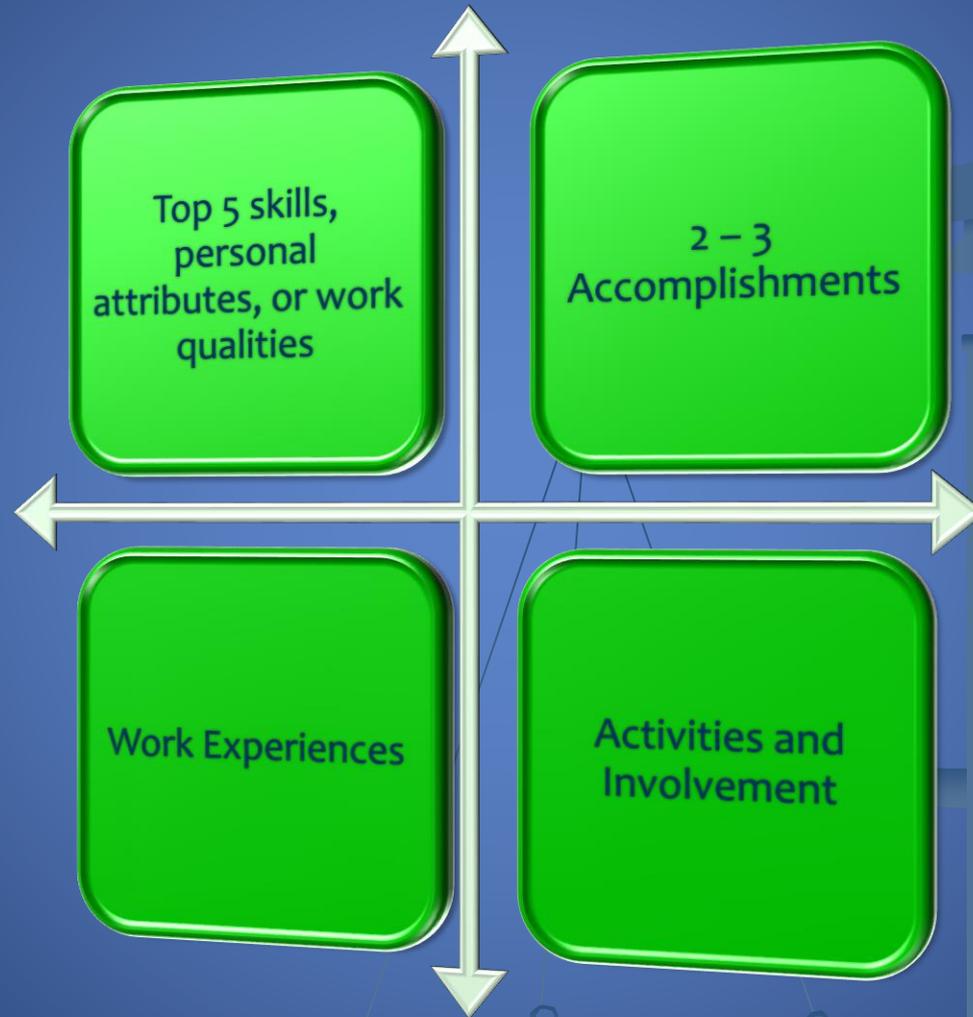
NETWORK!

Know Yourself



- Concrete examples to support top skills (and how you developed them)
 - Consider both legal & non-legal experience
- Strengths & weaknesses
- Major accomplishments
- How do your skills match that job description?
- Future Plans
- Everything on your resume is fair game

Your Interview “Cheat Sheet”

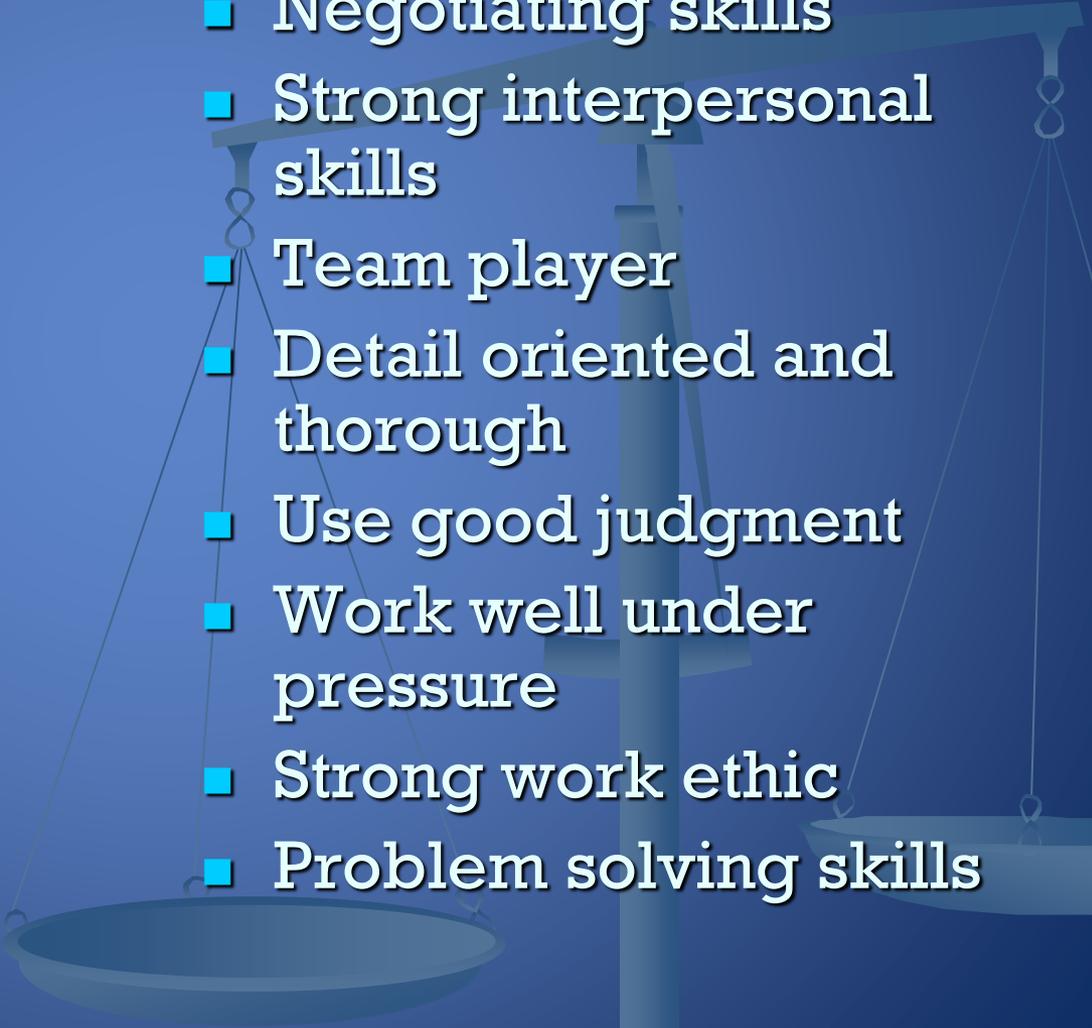


Use Your “Cheat Sheet” To:

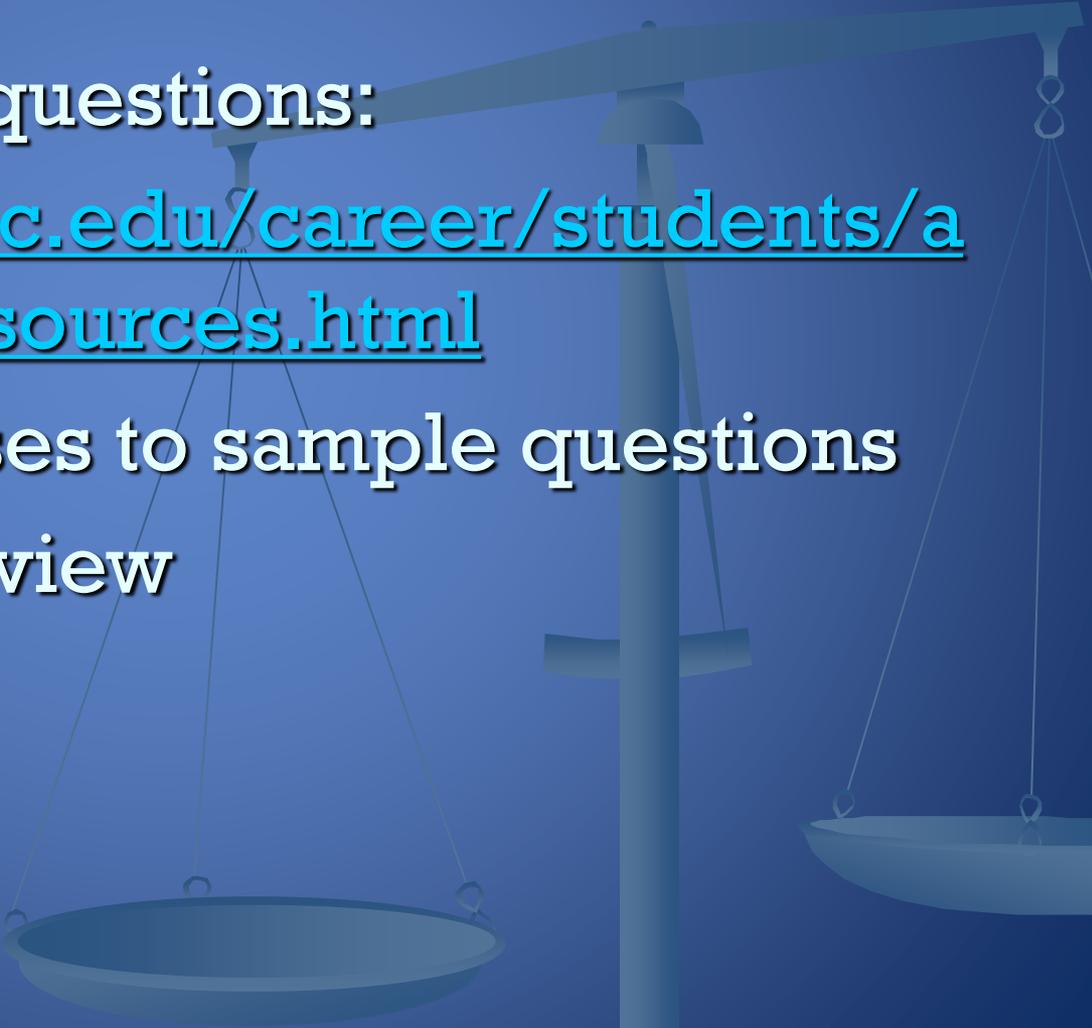
- Build your brief introduction or pitch
- Practice answering questions
- When you get “stuck” on a question
- Summarize why you should be considered as a candidate at the end of the interview

* The cheat sheet is a great way to practice but it's best to know your information cold for the interview.

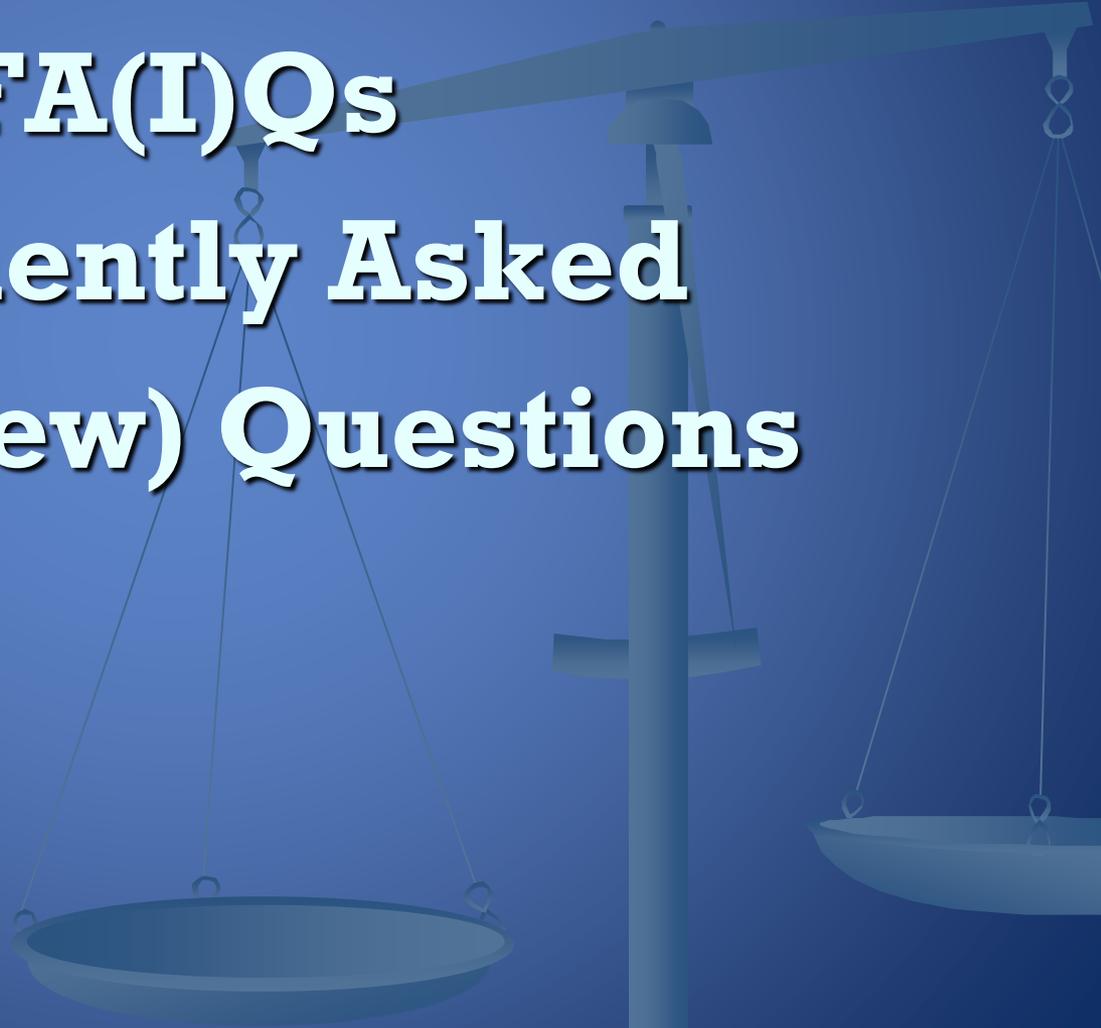
Experiences and Skills to Illustrate

- 
- Writing ability
 - Analytical skills
 - Research skills
 - Effective oral presentation skills
 - Organization/time management
 - Quick learner
 - Self starter with demonstrated initiative
 - Negotiating skills
 - Strong interpersonal skills
 - Team player
 - Detail oriented and thorough
 - Use good judgment
 - Work well under pressure
 - Strong work ethic
 - Problem solving skills

PRACTICE

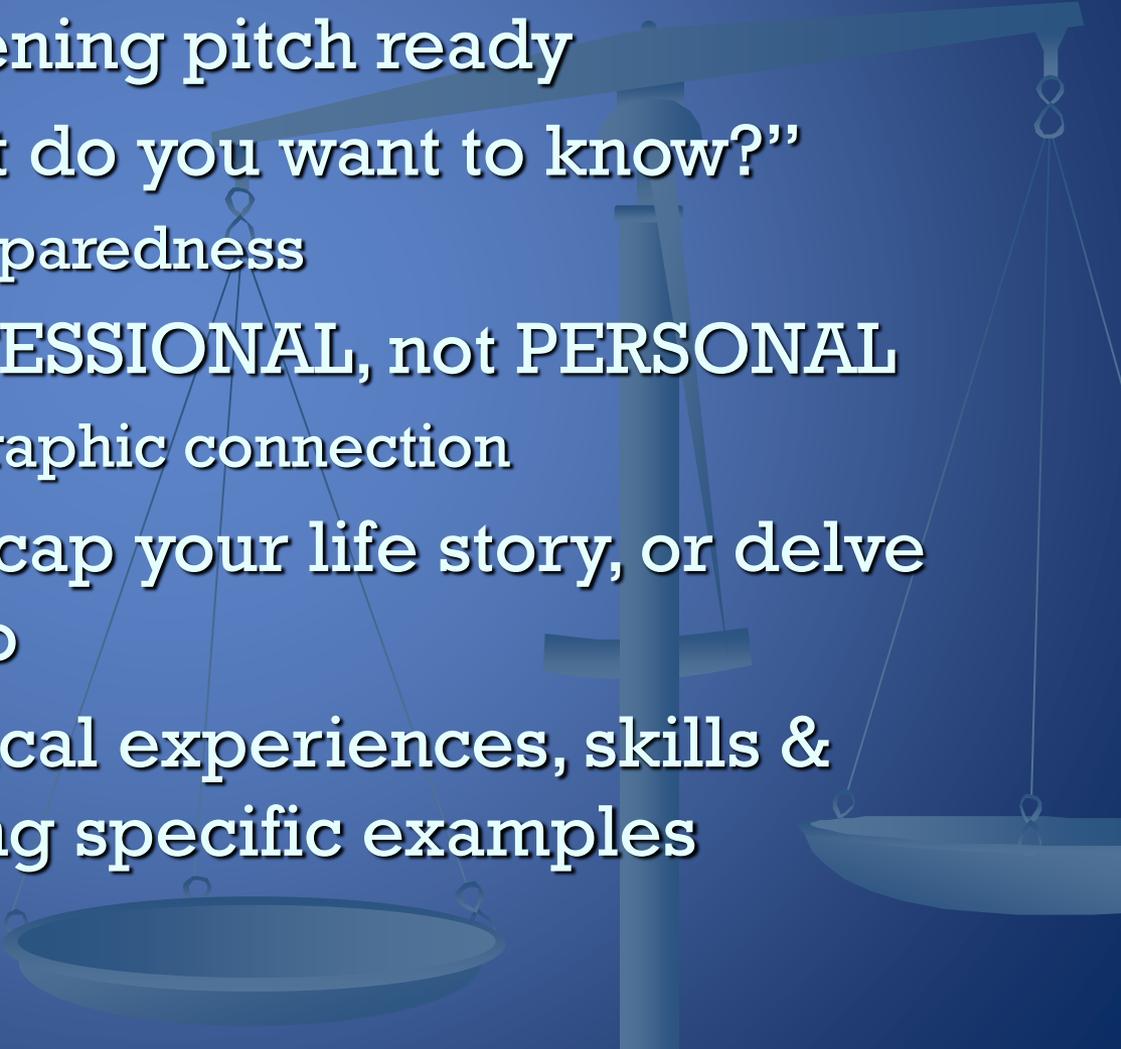


- Review sample questions:
 - http://law.wisc.edu/career/students/application_resources.html
- Prepare responses to sample questions
- Do a mock interview



FA(I)Qs
Frequently Asked
(Interview) Questions

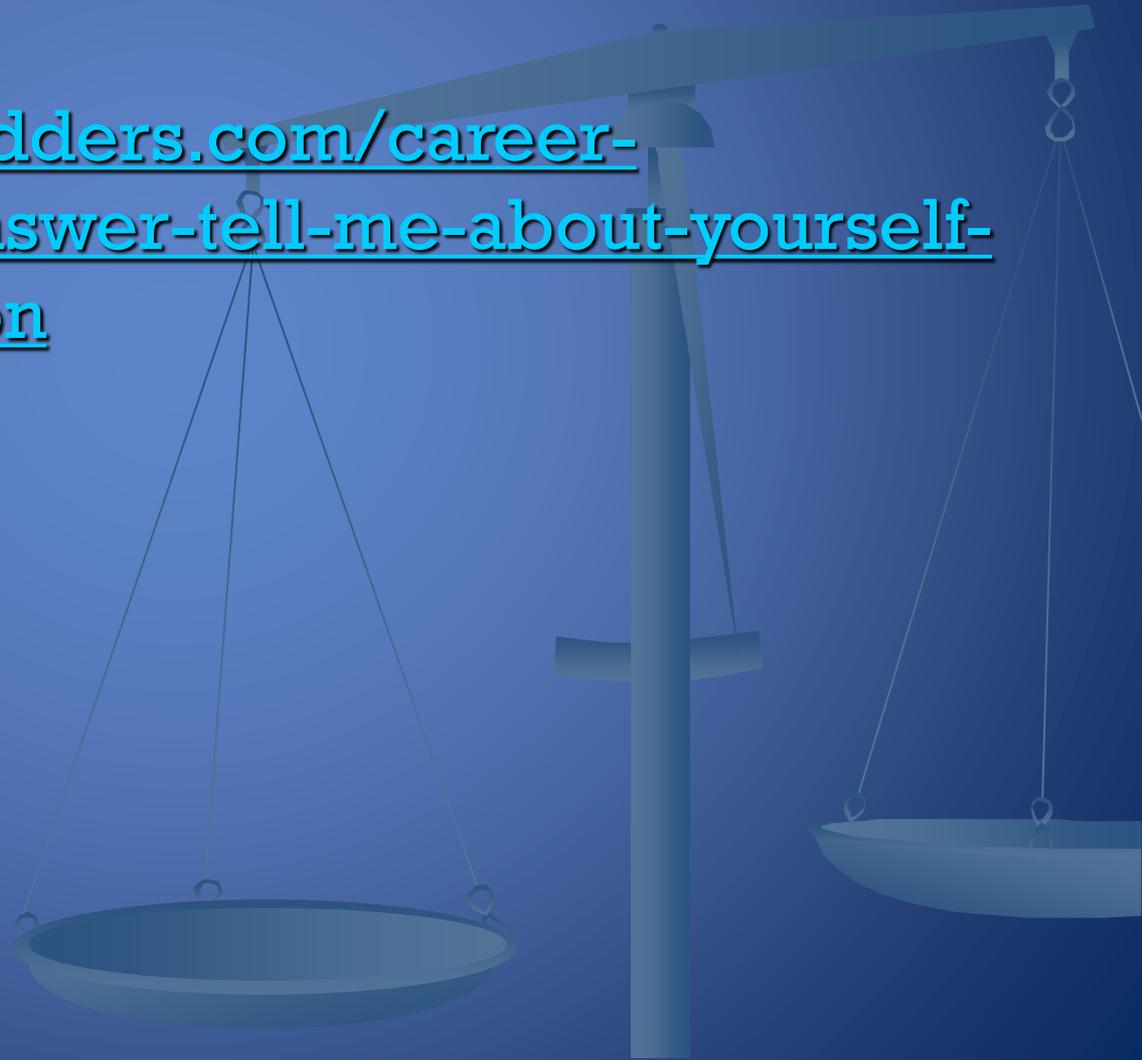
So, tell me about yourself...

- DO have your opening pitch ready
 - DON'T ask "What do you want to know?"
 - Shows lack of preparedness
 - Do focus on PROFESSIONAL, not PERSONAL
 - Exception: Geographic connection
 - DON'T ramble, recap your life story, or delve into irrelevant info
 - DO include practical experiences, skills & qualifications using specific examples
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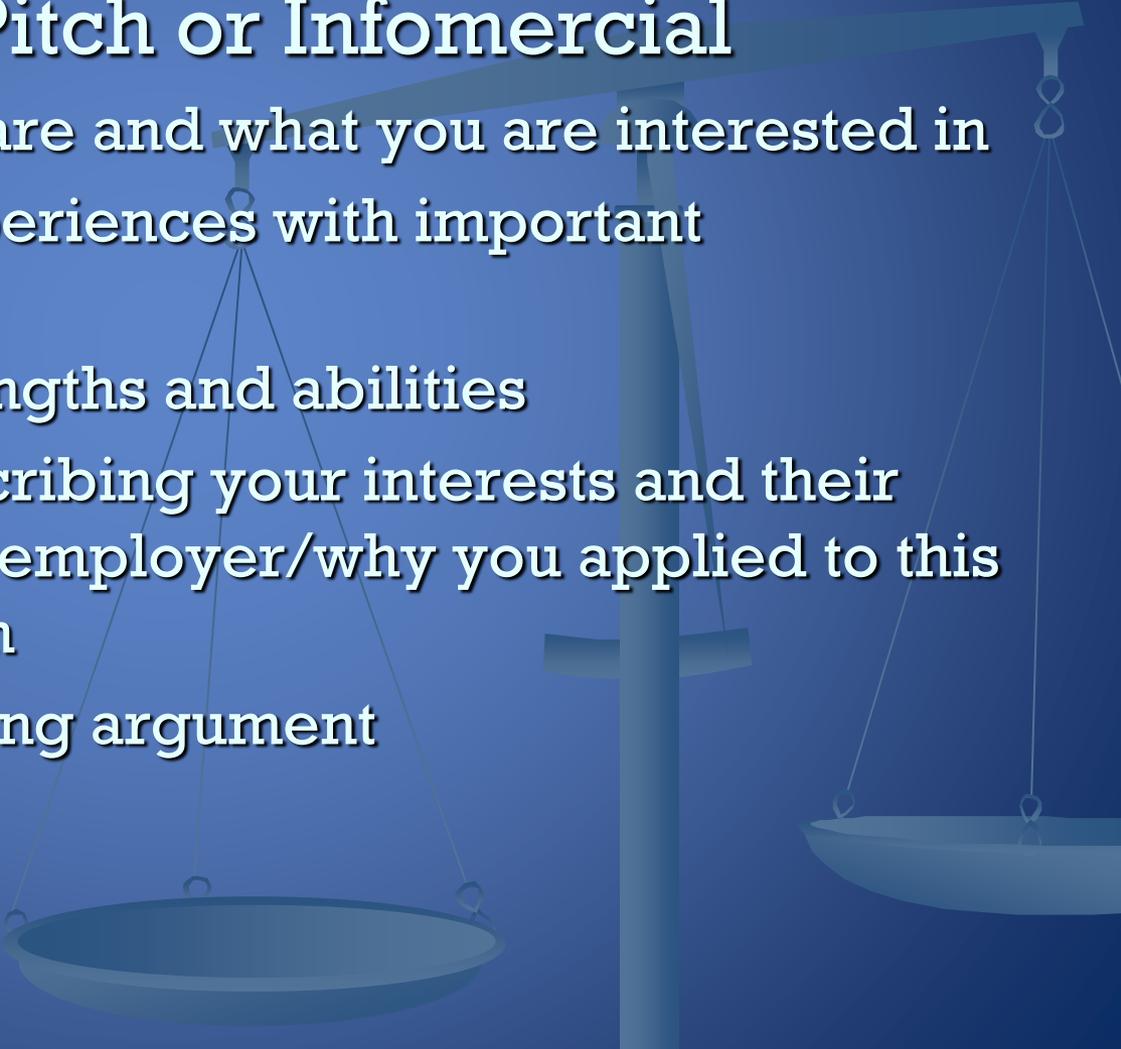
So, tell me about yourself...

- DO read this:

<http://www.theladders.com/career-advice/how-to-answer-tell-me-about-yourself-interview-question>



So, tell me about yourself...

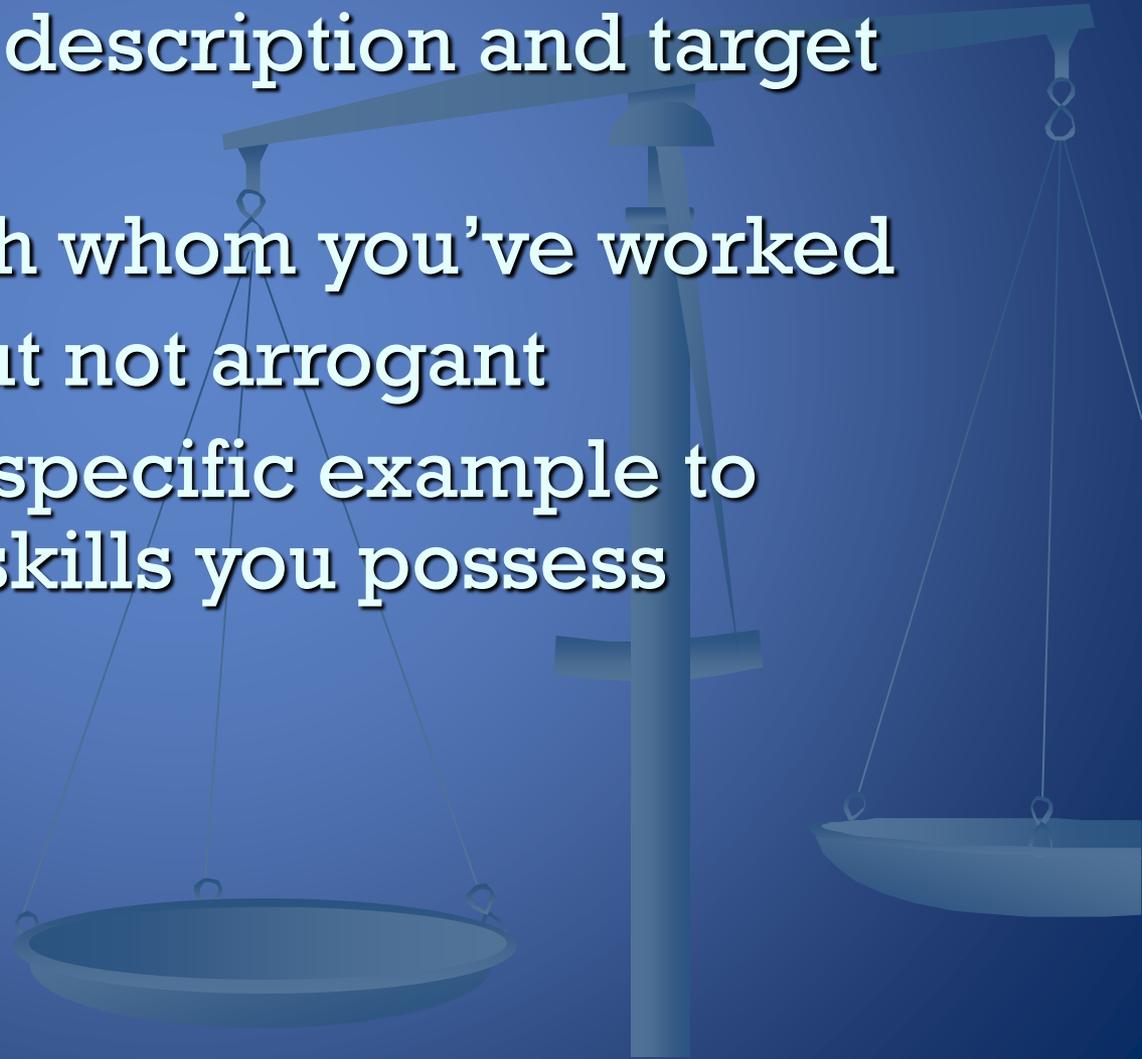
- Your 2 minute Pitch or Infomercial
 - Explain who you are and what you are interested in
 - Illustrate past experiences with important accomplishments
 - Convey your strengths and abilities
 - Conclude by describing your interests and their connection to the employer/why you applied to this particular position
 - This is your opening argument
- 

So, tell me about yourself...

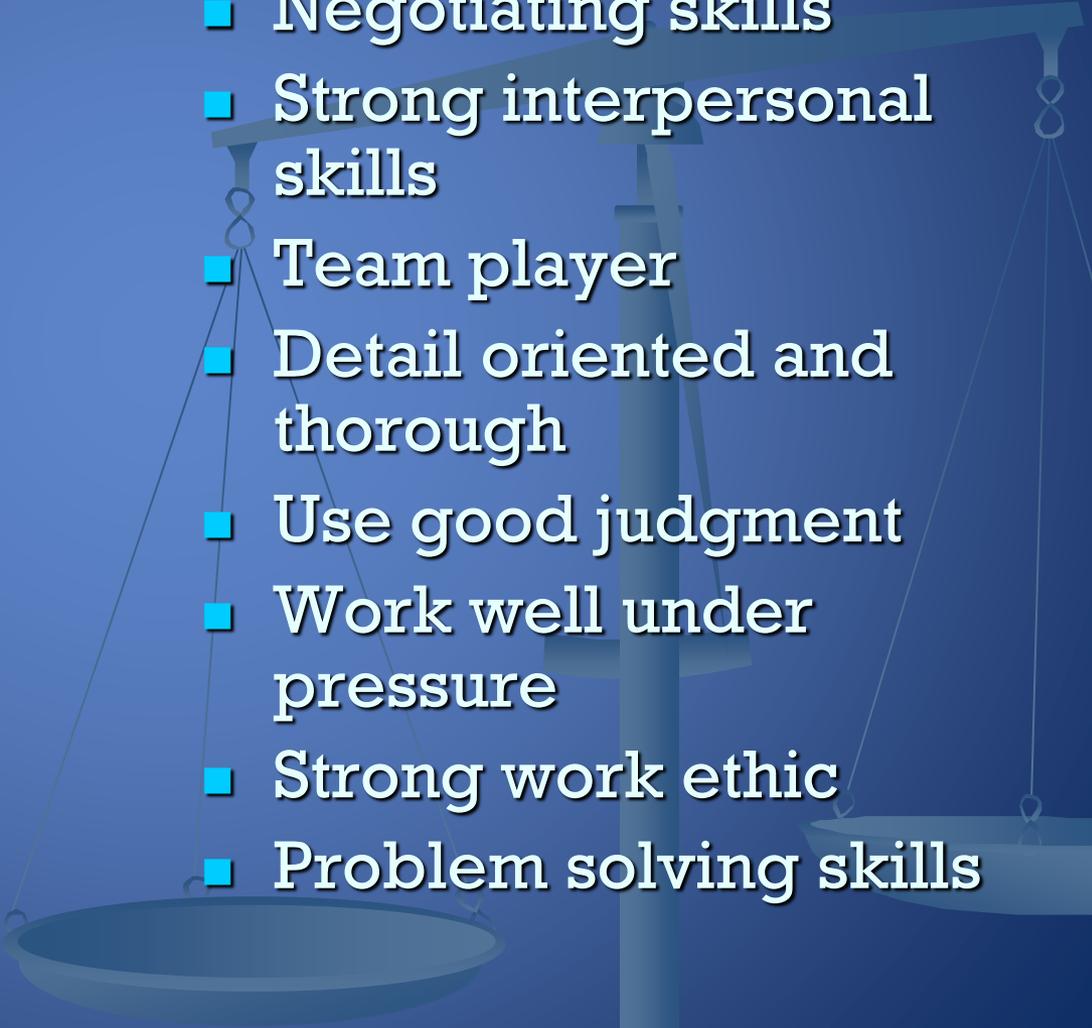
- “I grew up in Minnesota and moved to Madison for college, where I majored in education. I taught for two years after college, and I really became interested in some of the policy and legal issues that directly impact public schools. That’s why I decided to come to law school. I became a 1L representative in the State and Local Government Law Society here at law school, and, after attending several panels, I am even more certain that I want to work in state government after graduation. An internship with the Department of Public Instruction seems like the perfect place to combine my interests.”

What are your Strengths?

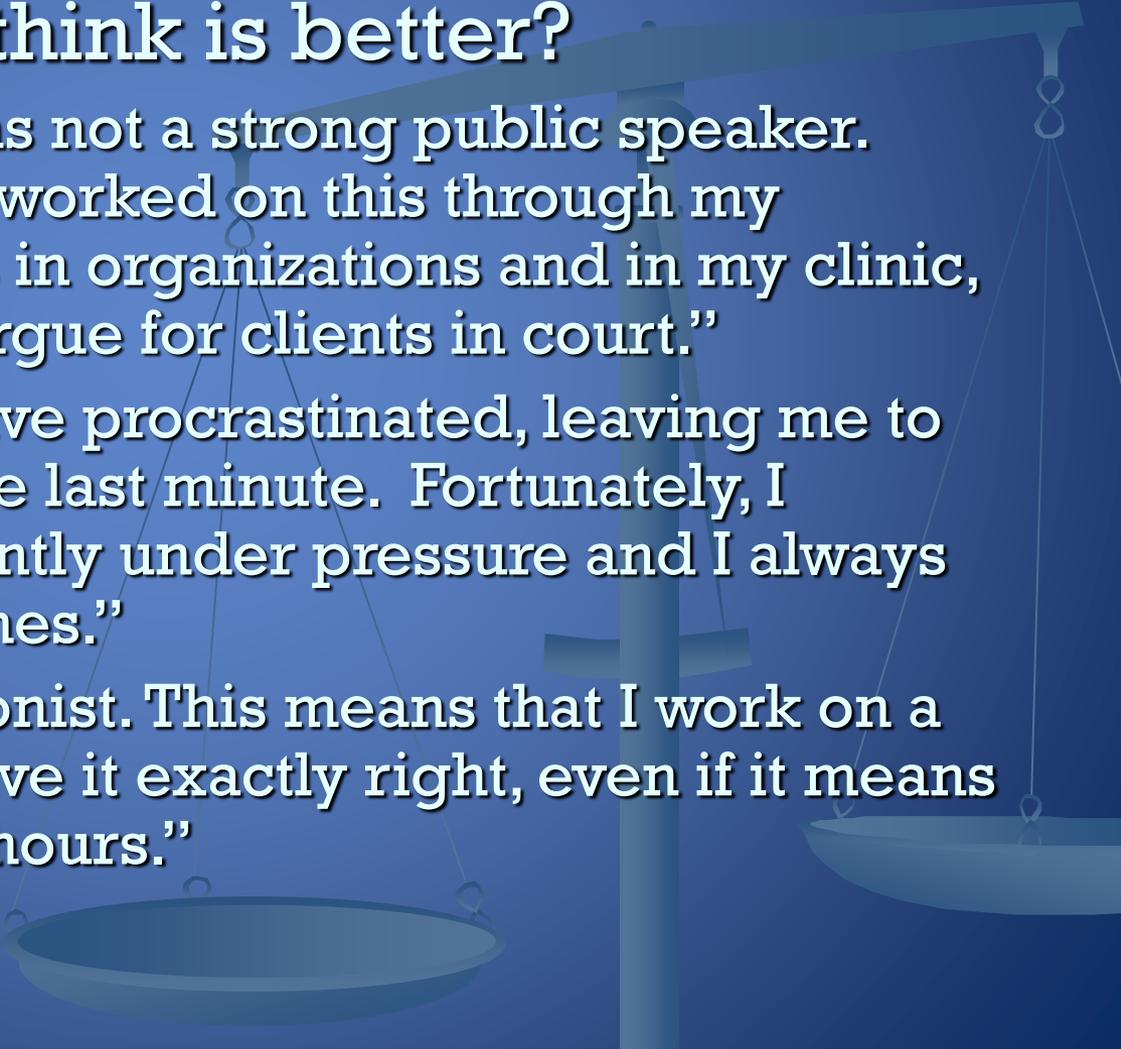
- Look at the job description and target your answers
- Ask people with whom you've worked
- Be confident but not arrogant
- Back up with a specific example to illustrate what skills you possess



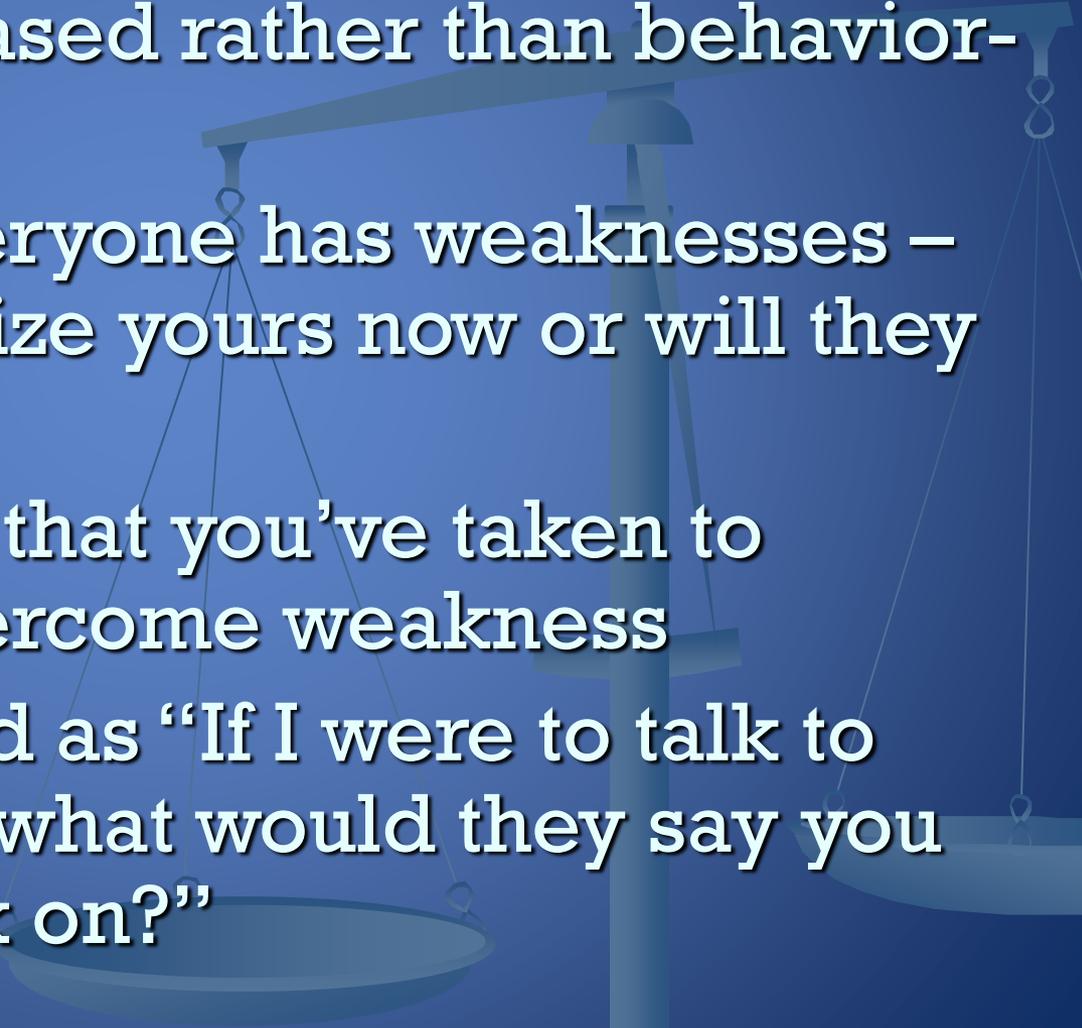
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 - Detail oriented and thorough
 - Use good judgment
 - Work well under pressure
 - Strong work ethic
 - Problem solving skills

What about your weaknesses?

- Which do you think is better?
 - “In the past, I was not a strong public speaker. However, I have worked on this through my leadership roles in organizations and in my clinic, where I had to argue for clients in court.”
 - “Sometimes I have procrastinated, leaving me to do projects at the last minute. Fortunately, I perform excellently under pressure and I always meet my deadlines.”
 - “I am a perfectionist. This means that I work on a project until I have it exactly right, even if it means putting in extra hours.”
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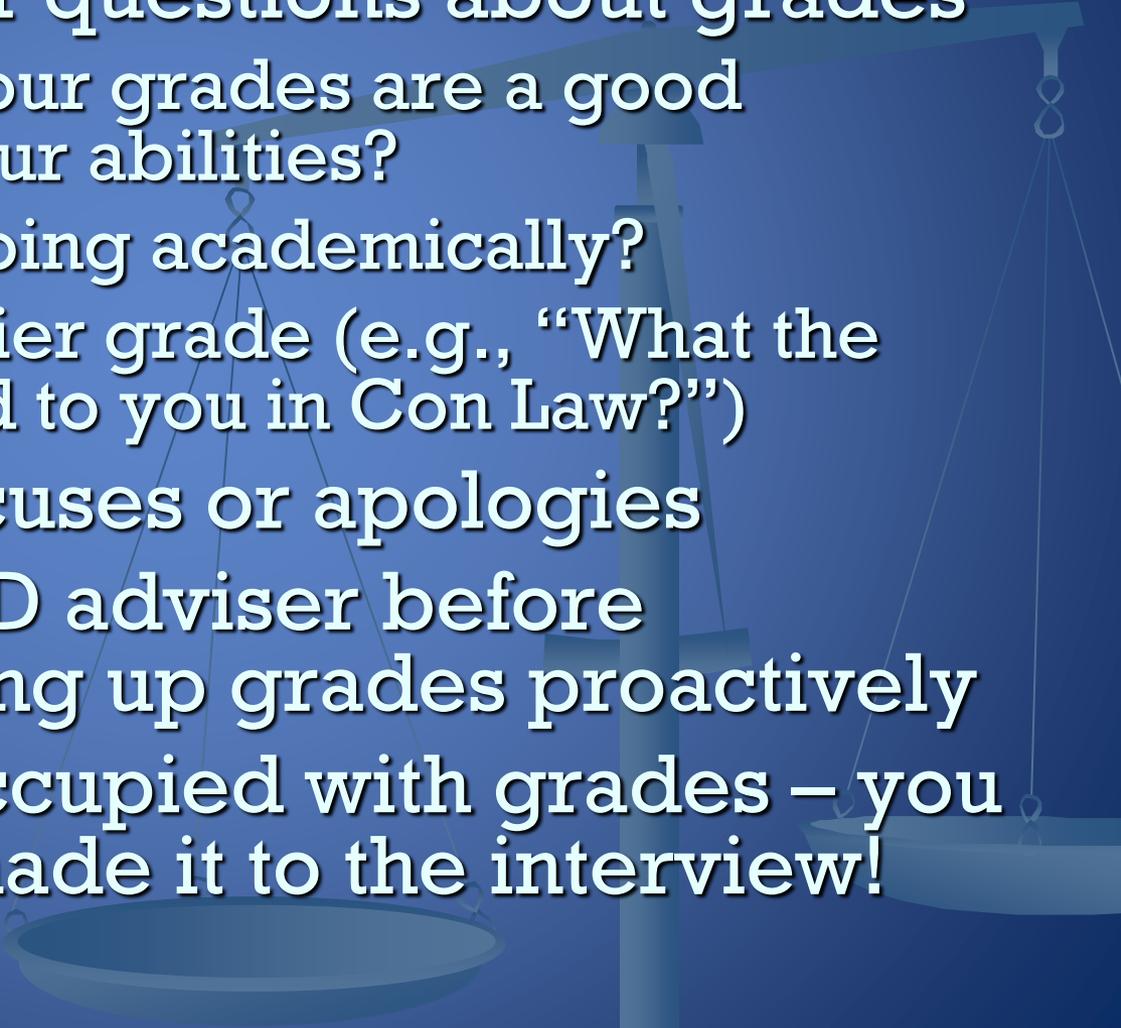
Weaknesses (cont)

- Make it skill-based rather than behavior-based
 - Be honest! Everyone has weaknesses – Do you recognize yours now or will they surface later?
 - Focus on steps that you've taken to proactively overcome weakness
 - Could be asked as “If I were to talk to your last boss, what would they say you could still work on?”
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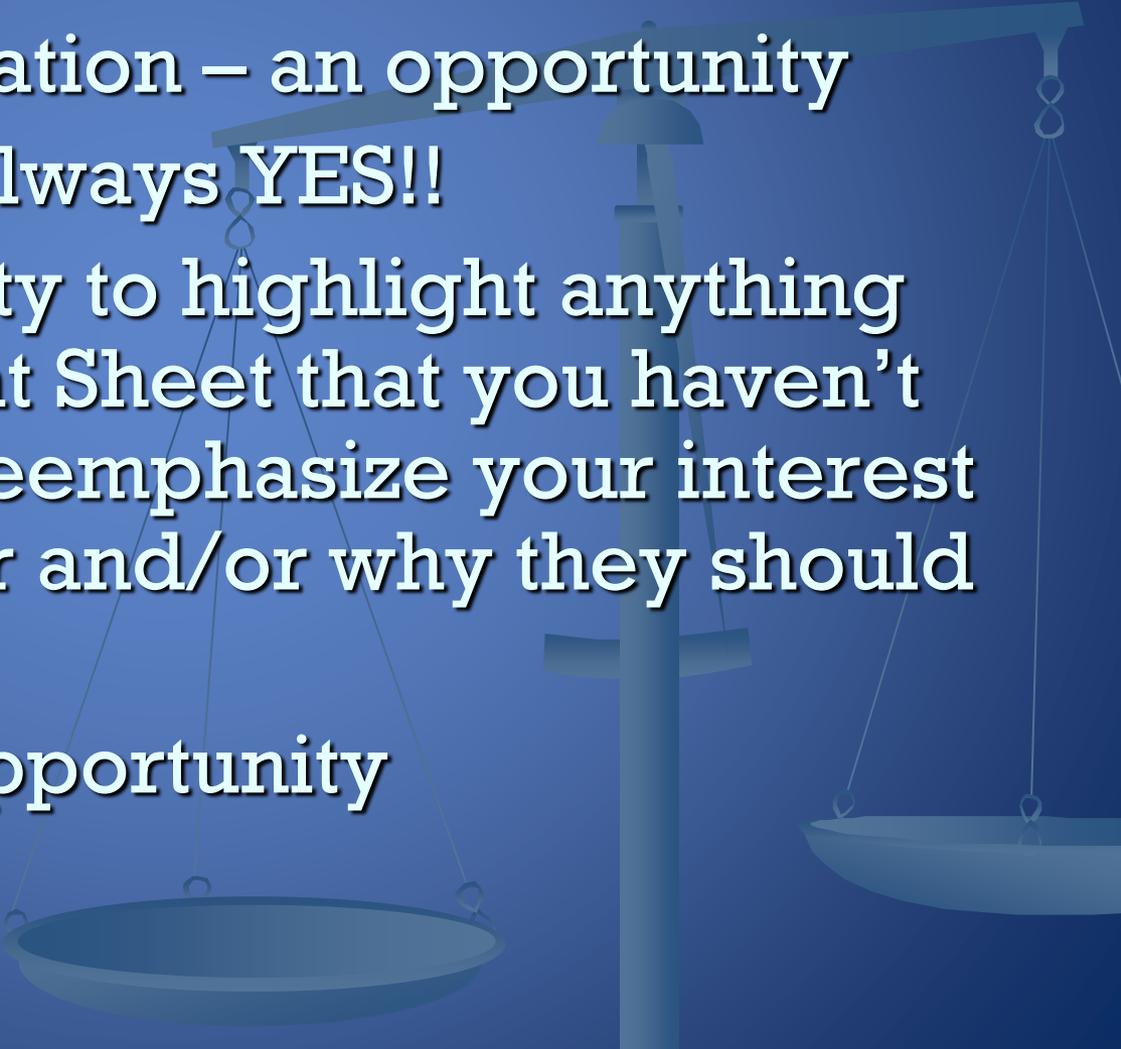
Weaknesses (cont)

- Avoid “canned” responses
 - *“I’m a perfectionist.”* Translation: *You are difficult to work with!*
 - *“I’m very detailed oriented and will work to make something as good as I can.”* – And the weakness is?
 - DON’T be Michael Scott:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPeVlduKfyU>

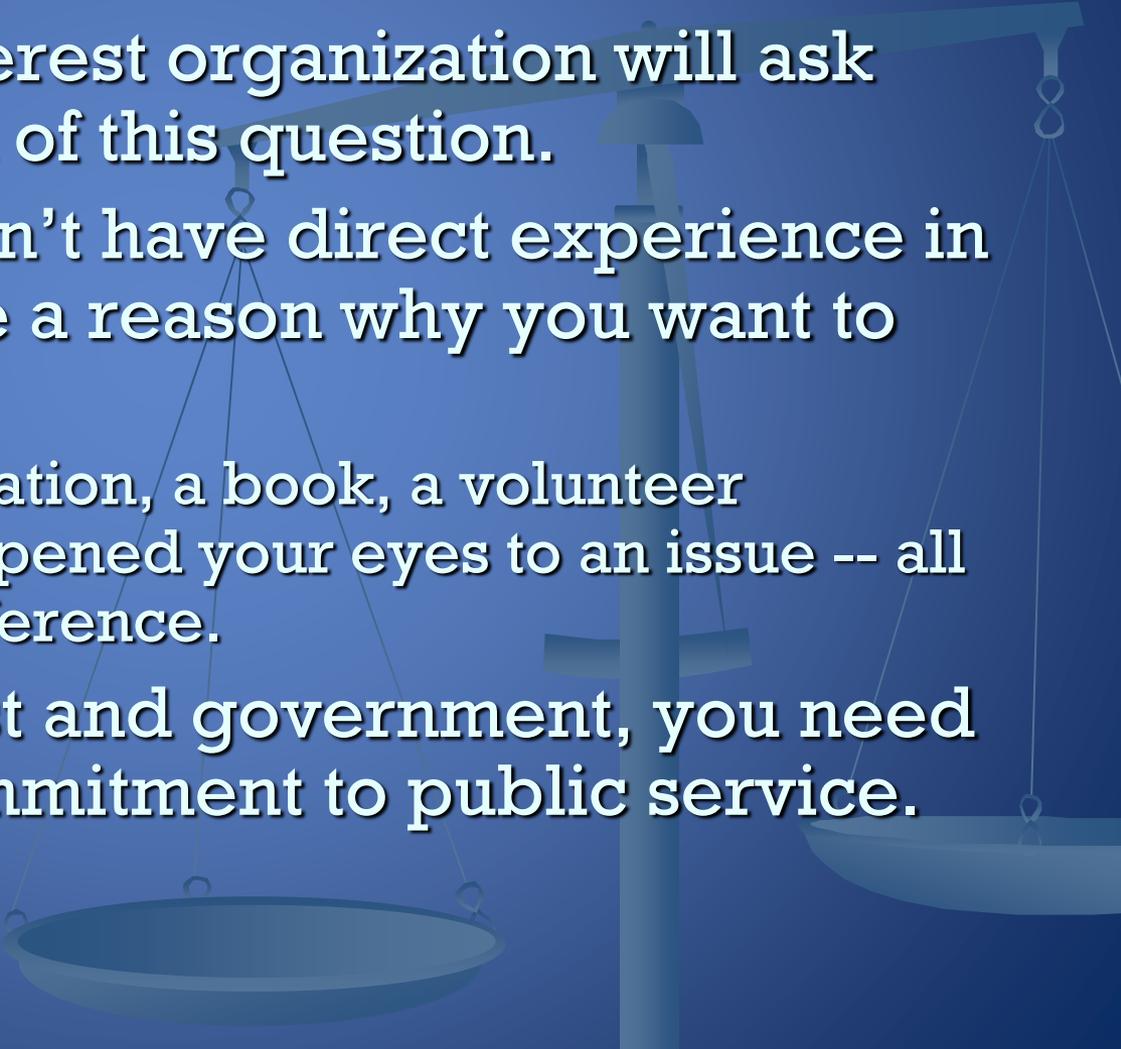
Questions about Grades

- Be prepared for questions about grades
 - Do you think your grades are a good reflection of your abilities?
 - How are you doing academically?
 - Explain an outlier grade (e.g., “What the heck happened to you in Con Law?”)
 - Don't make excuses or apologies
 - Talk to an OCPD adviser before deciding to bring up grades proactively
 - Don't get preoccupied with grades – you have already made it to the interview!
- 

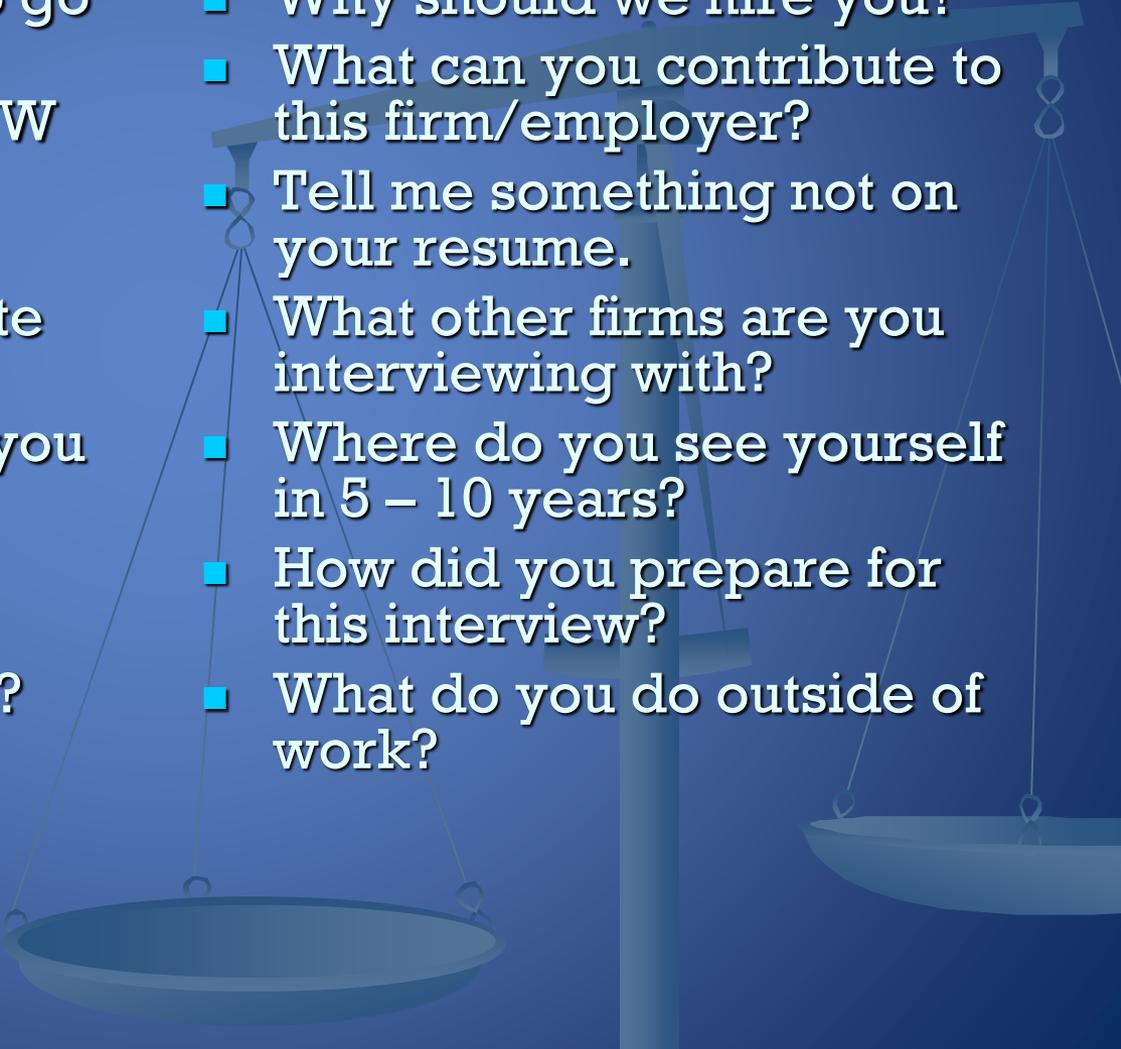
Anything else we should know?

- Not an interrogation – an opportunity
 - The answer is always YES!!
 - Your opportunity to highlight anything from your Cheat Sheet that you haven't covered or to reemphasize your interest in the employer and/or why they should hire you
 - “No” is a lost opportunity
- 

Why are you interested in this opportunity?

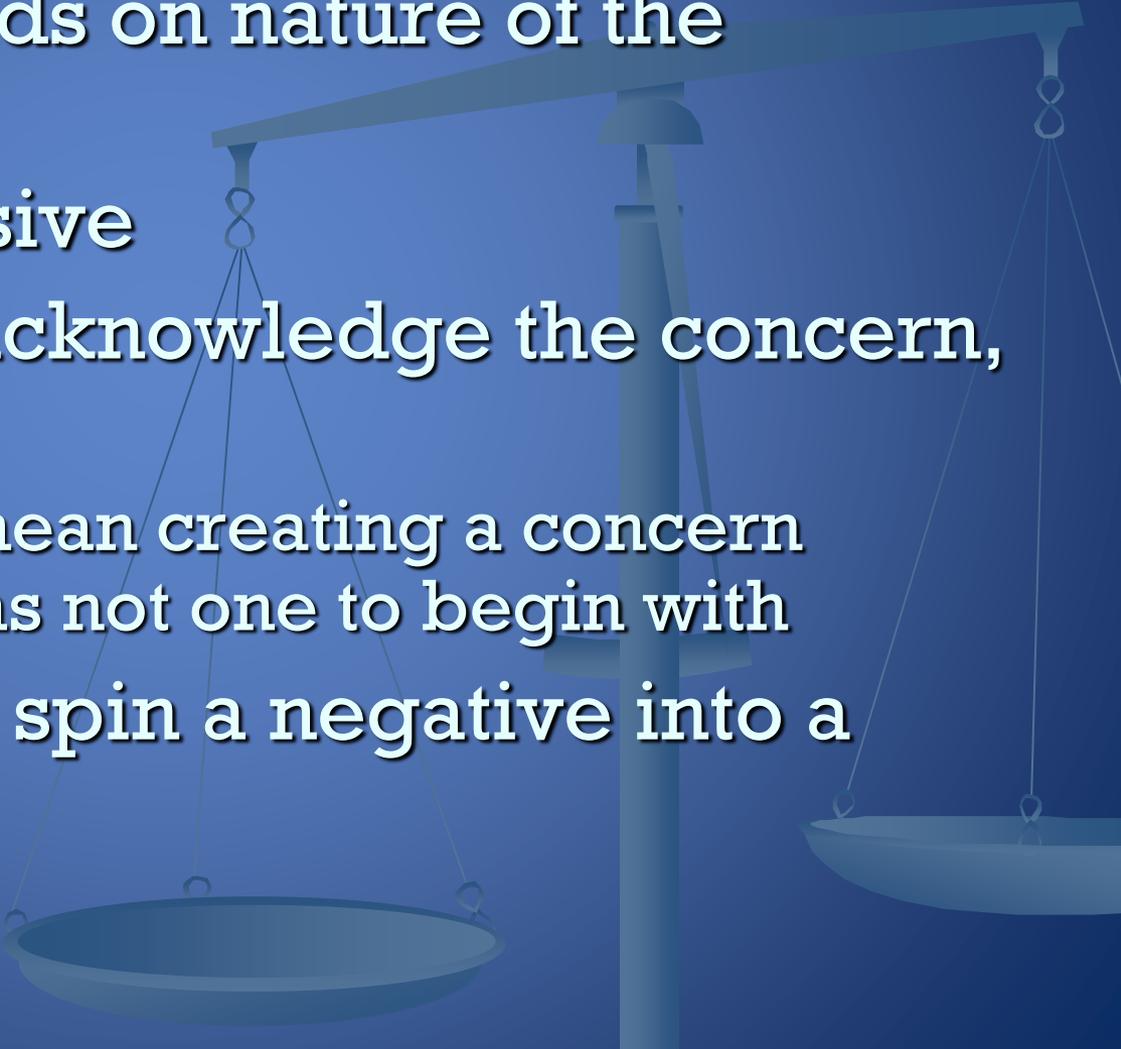
- Almost public interest organization will ask you some version of this question.
 - It's okay if you don't have direct experience in the field, but have a reason why you want to work in it now.
 - A class, a presentation, a book, a volunteer experience that opened your eyes to an issue -- all good things to reference.
 - For public interest and government, you need to show some commitment to public service.
- 

Other Questions

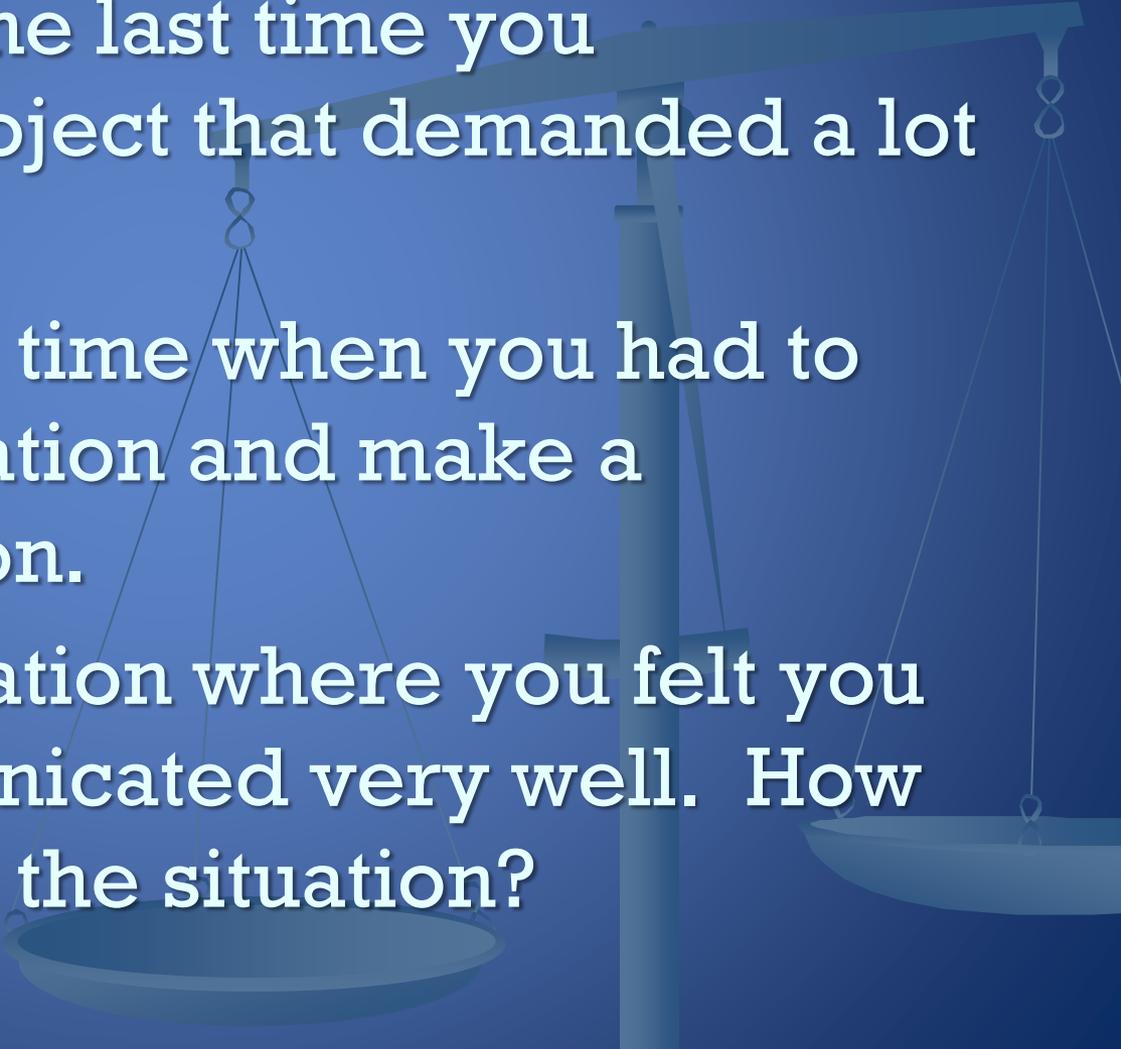


- Why did you decide to go to law school?
- Why did you choose UW Law School?
- How do you like it?
- What were your favorite classes?
- What areas of law are you interested in? Why?
- What office(s) are you interested in?
- Why [employer's city]?
- Why should we hire you?
- What can you contribute to this firm/employer?
- Tell me something not on your resume.
- What other firms are you interviewing with?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 – 10 years?
- How did you prepare for this interview?
- What do you do outside of work?

Answering Difficult Questions

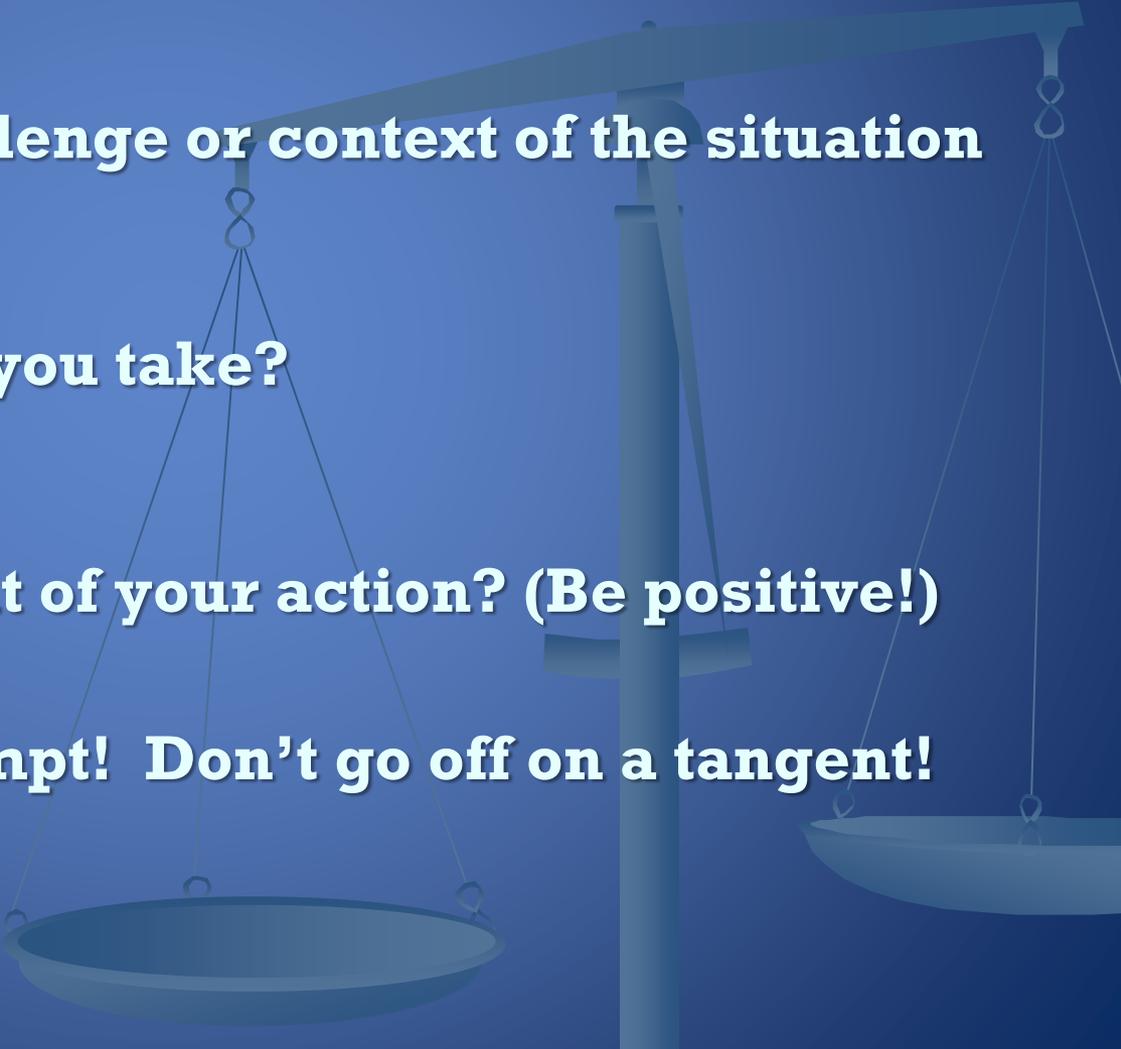
- Strategy depends on nature of the question
 - Don't be defensive
 - If appropriate acknowledge the concern, then dissolve it
 - This does not mean creating a concern where there was not one to begin with
 - Do your best to spin a negative into a positive
- 

Behavioral Based Questions



- Tell me about the last time you undertook a project that demanded a lot of initiative.
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation.
- Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated very well. How did you correct the situation?

Behavioral Based Questions



■ Challenge

- Identify the challenge or context of the situation

■ Action

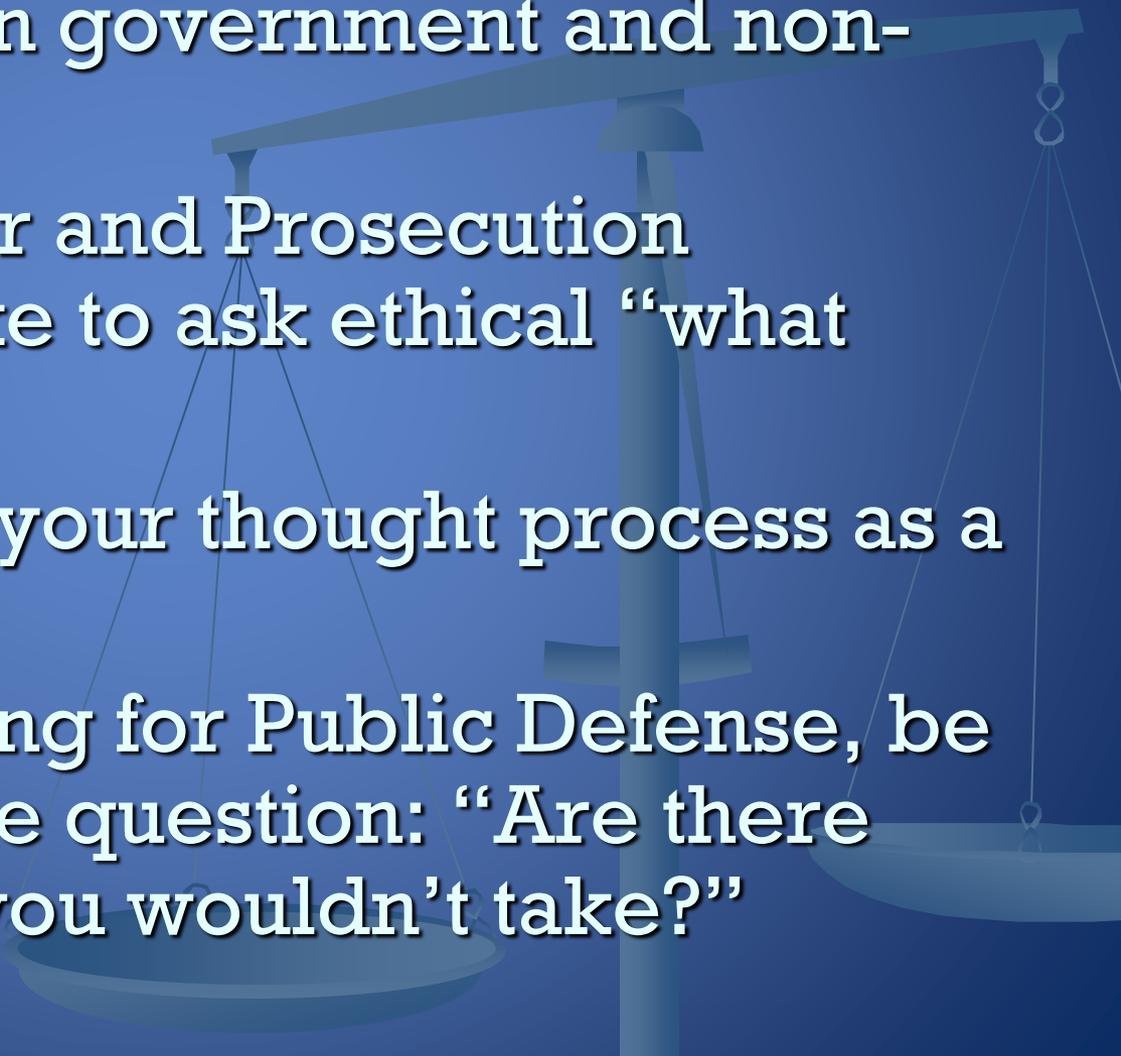
- What action did you take?

■ Result

- What is the result of your action? (Be positive!)

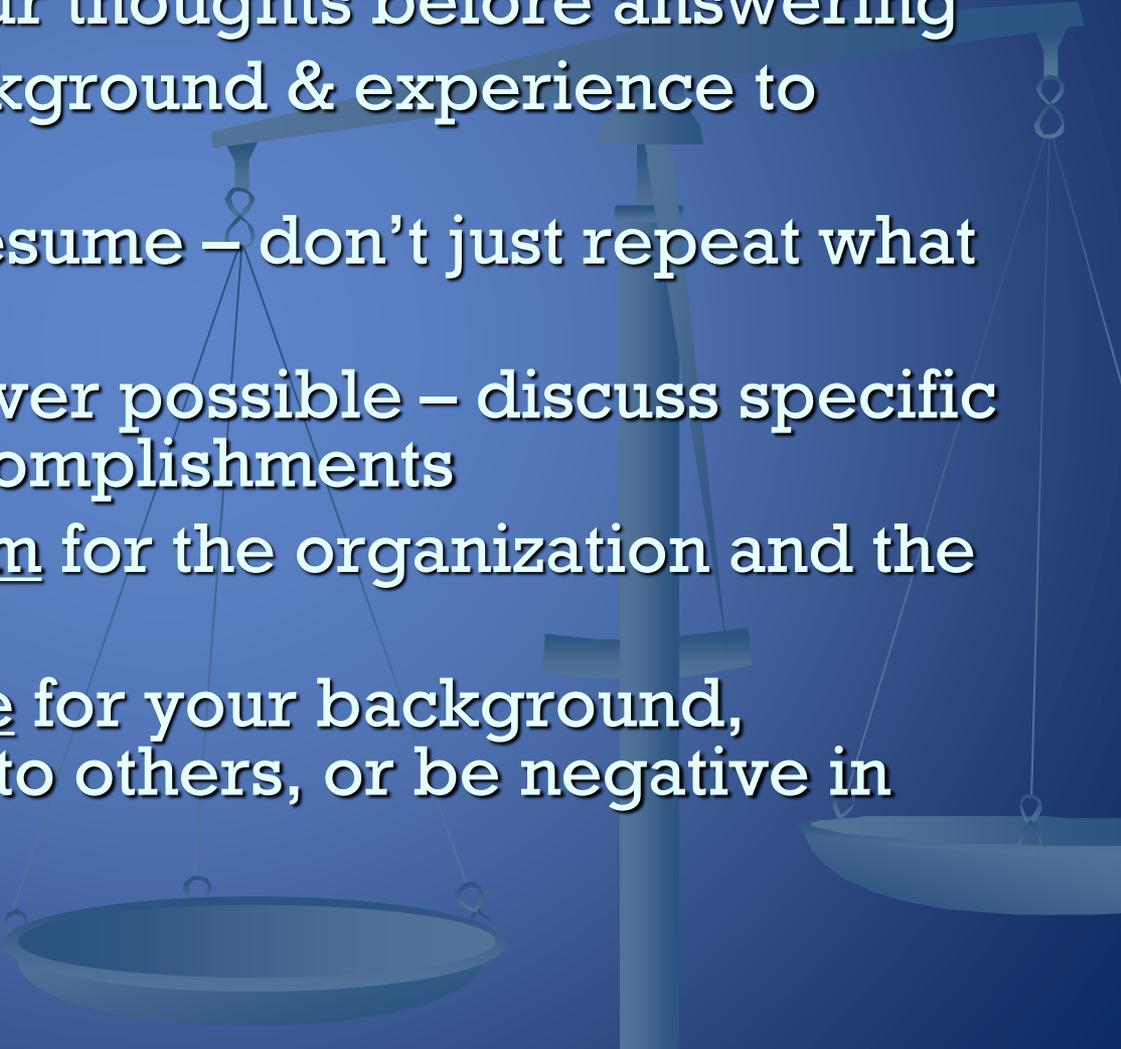
Answer the prompt! Don't go off on a tangent!

Hypothetical Questions

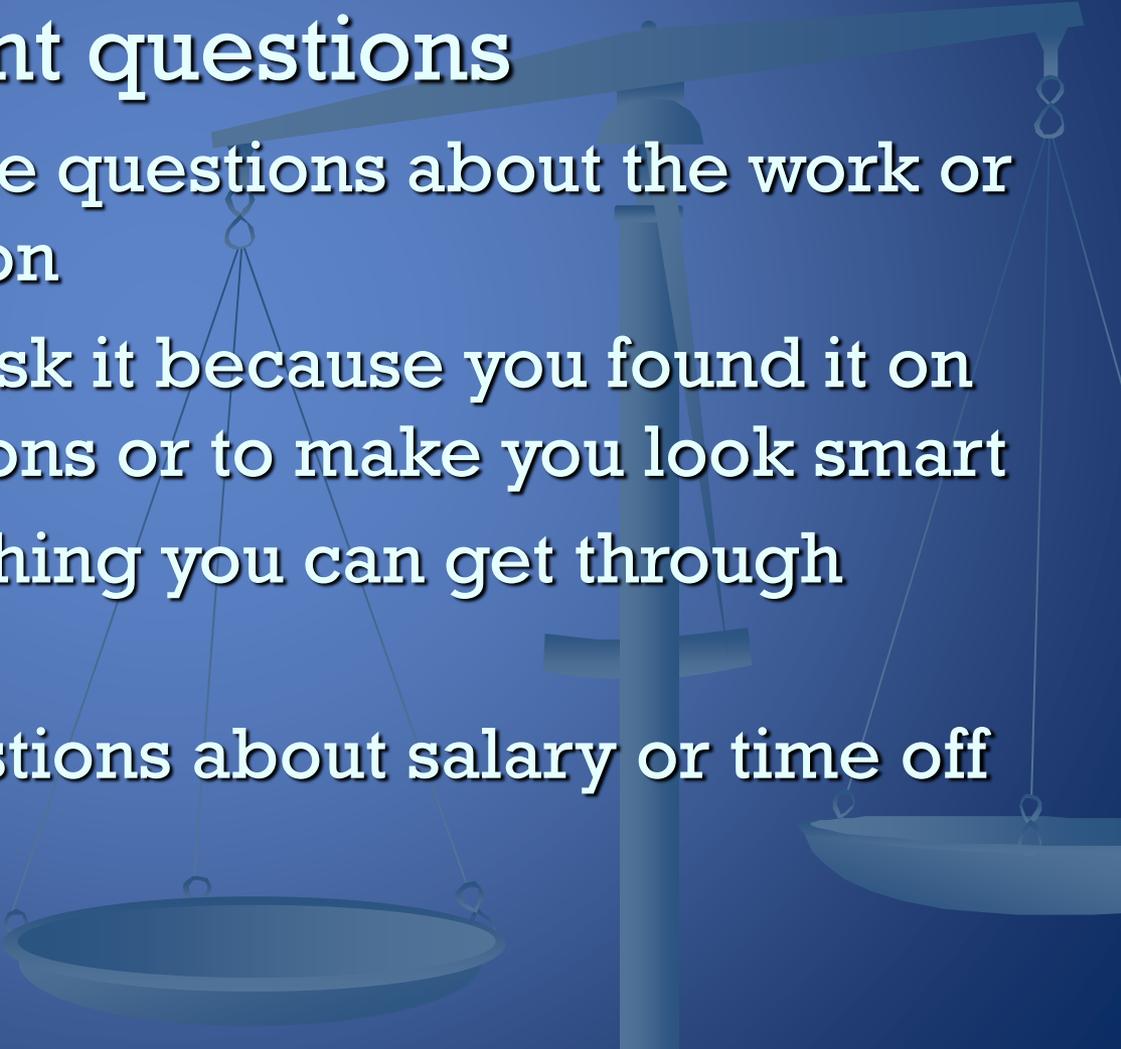


- Most common in government and non-profit hiring
- Public Defender and Prosecution interviewers like to ask ethical “what ifs...”
- As much about your thought process as a “right” answer
- If you’re applying for Public Defense, be prepared for the question: “Are there any cases that you wouldn’t take?”

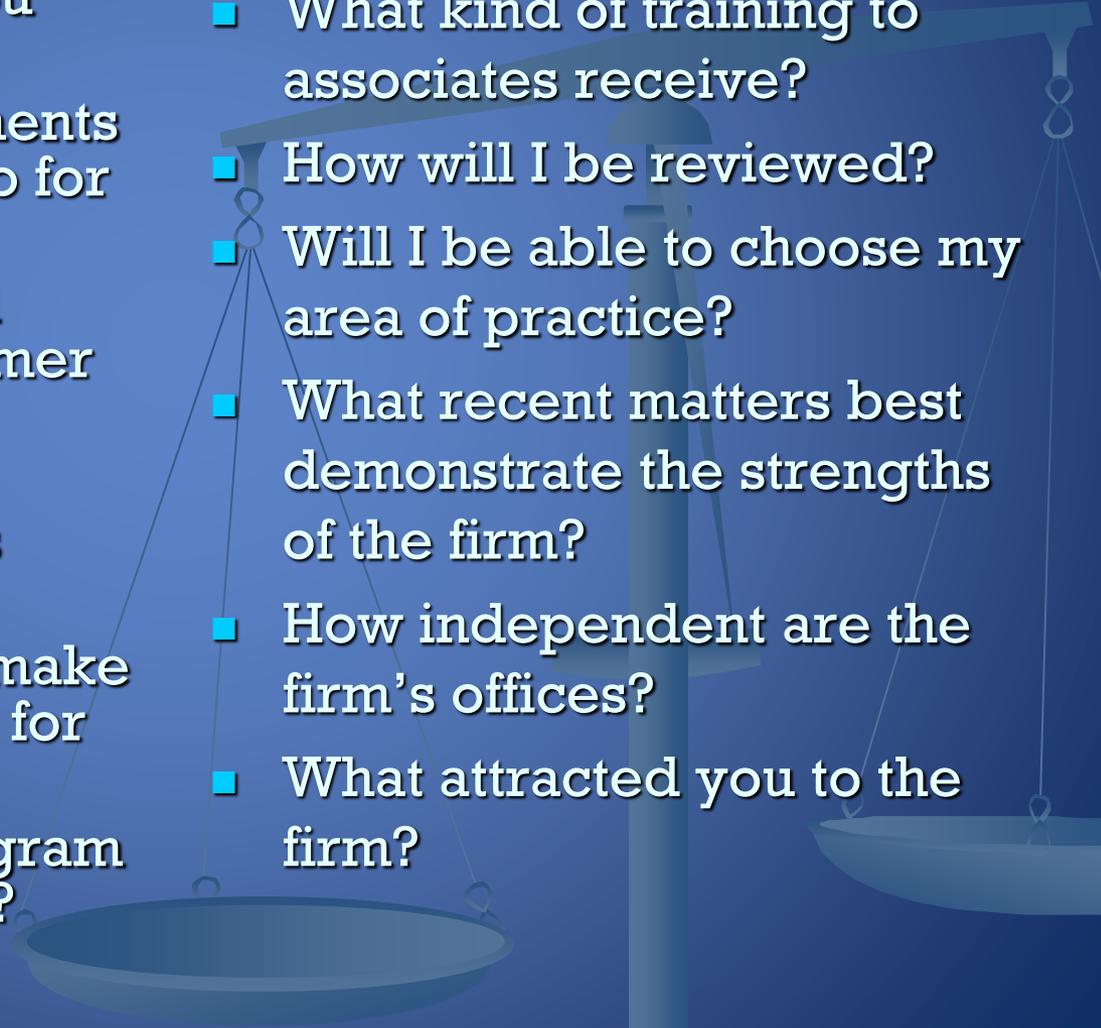
Think about Your Answers

- Pause – gather your thoughts before answering
 - Connect your background & experience to employer's needs
 - Expand on your resume – don't just repeat what they can read
 - Be specific whenever possible – discuss specific examples and accomplishments
 - Convey enthusiasm for the organization and the work
 - DO NOT apologize for your background, compare yourself to others, or be negative in any way
- 

Closing the Interview

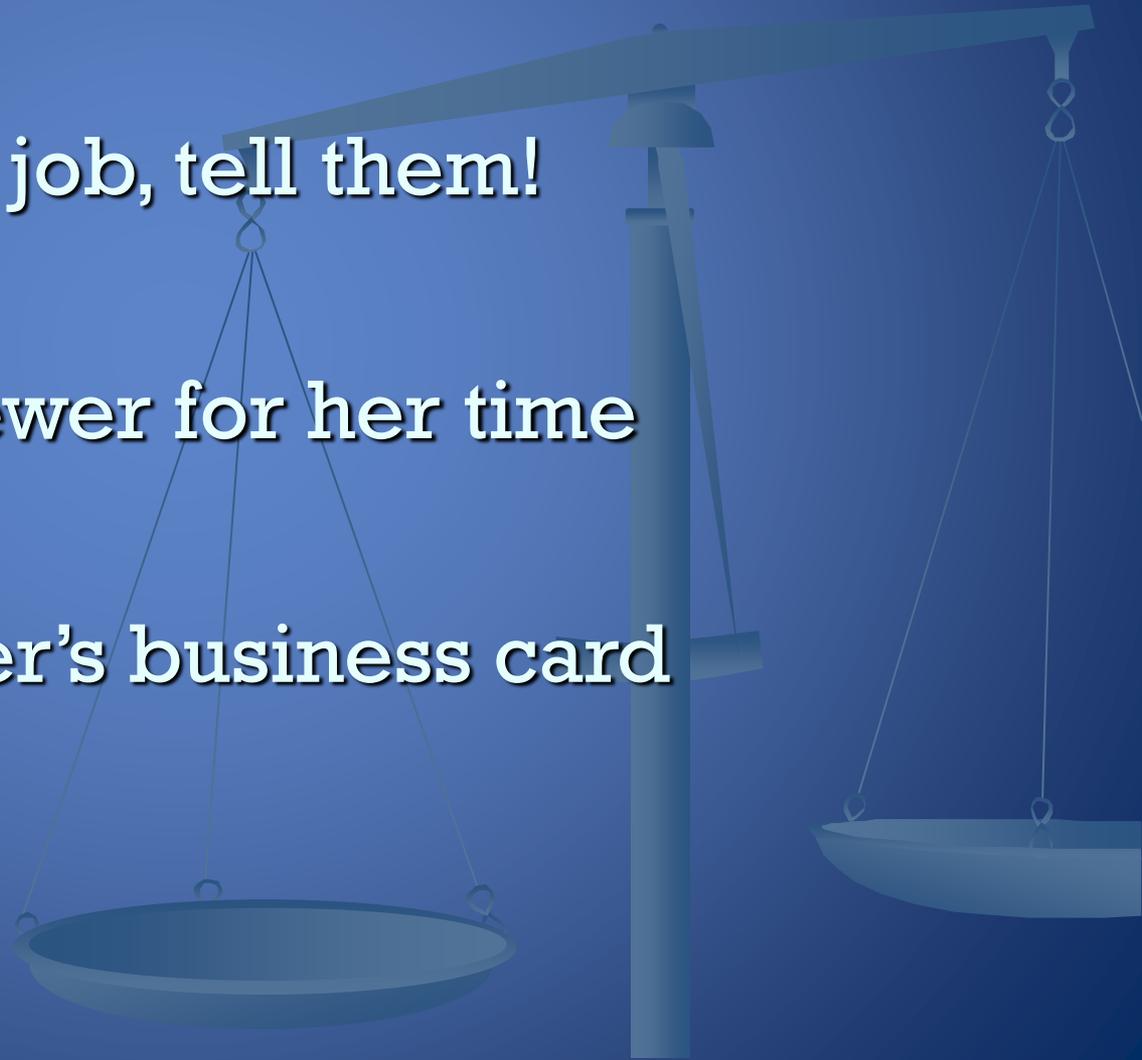
- Ask intelligent questions
 - Do ask genuine questions about the work or the organization
 - Don't simply ask it because you found it on a list of questions or to make you look smart
 - Don't ask anything you can get through research
 - Don't ask questions about salary or time off
- 

Closing the Interview

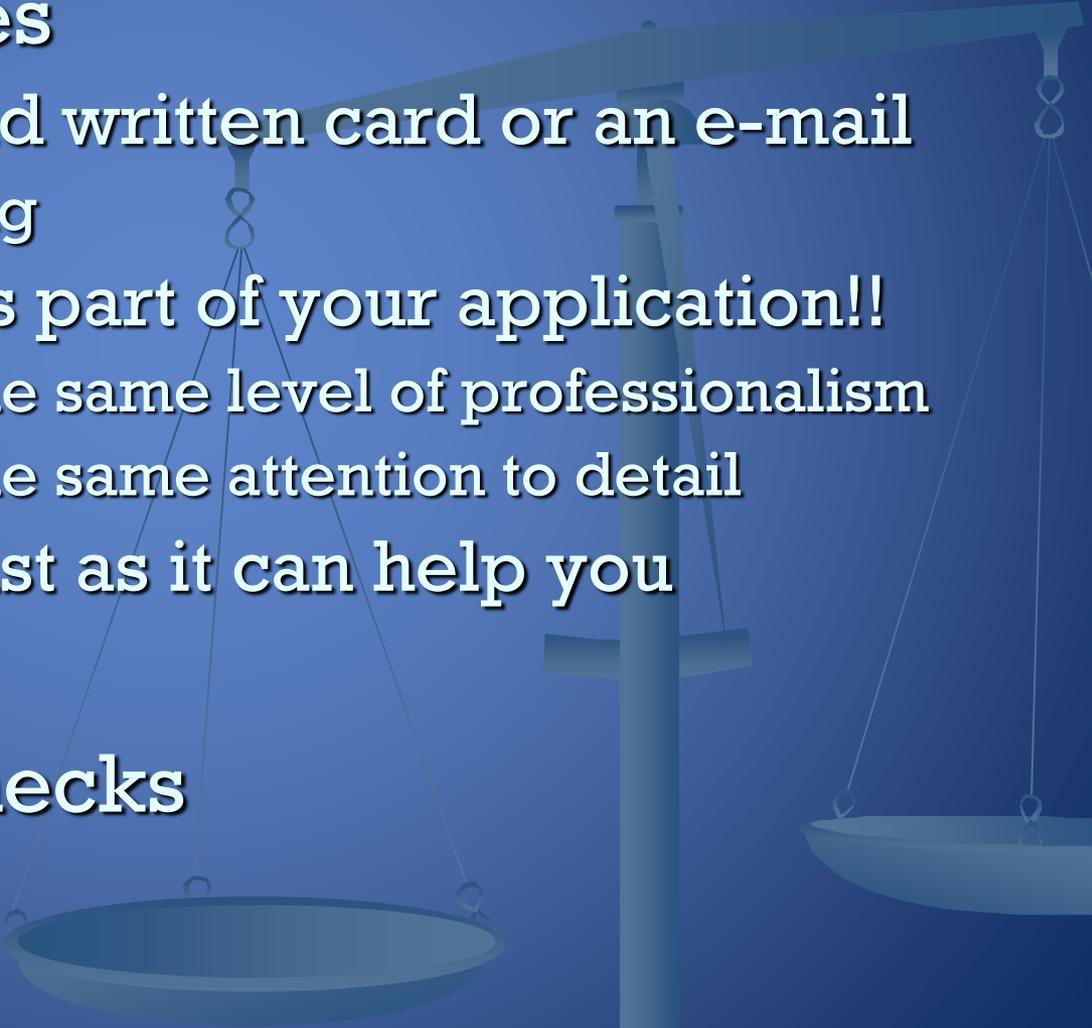
- 
- Of what project are you most proud?
 - What kinds of assignments do junior associates do for you?
 - Describe a few typical projects done by summer associates.
 - How would you characterize the firm's personality?
 - What qualities would make an associate a good fit for your firm?
 - Does the summer program have a mentor system?
 - What kind of training to associates receive?
 - How will I be reviewed?
 - Will I be able to choose my area of practice?
 - What recent matters best demonstrate the strengths of the firm?
 - How independent are the firm's offices?
 - What attracted you to the firm?

Closing the Interview

- If you want the job, tell them!
- Thank interviewer for her time
- Get interviewer's business card

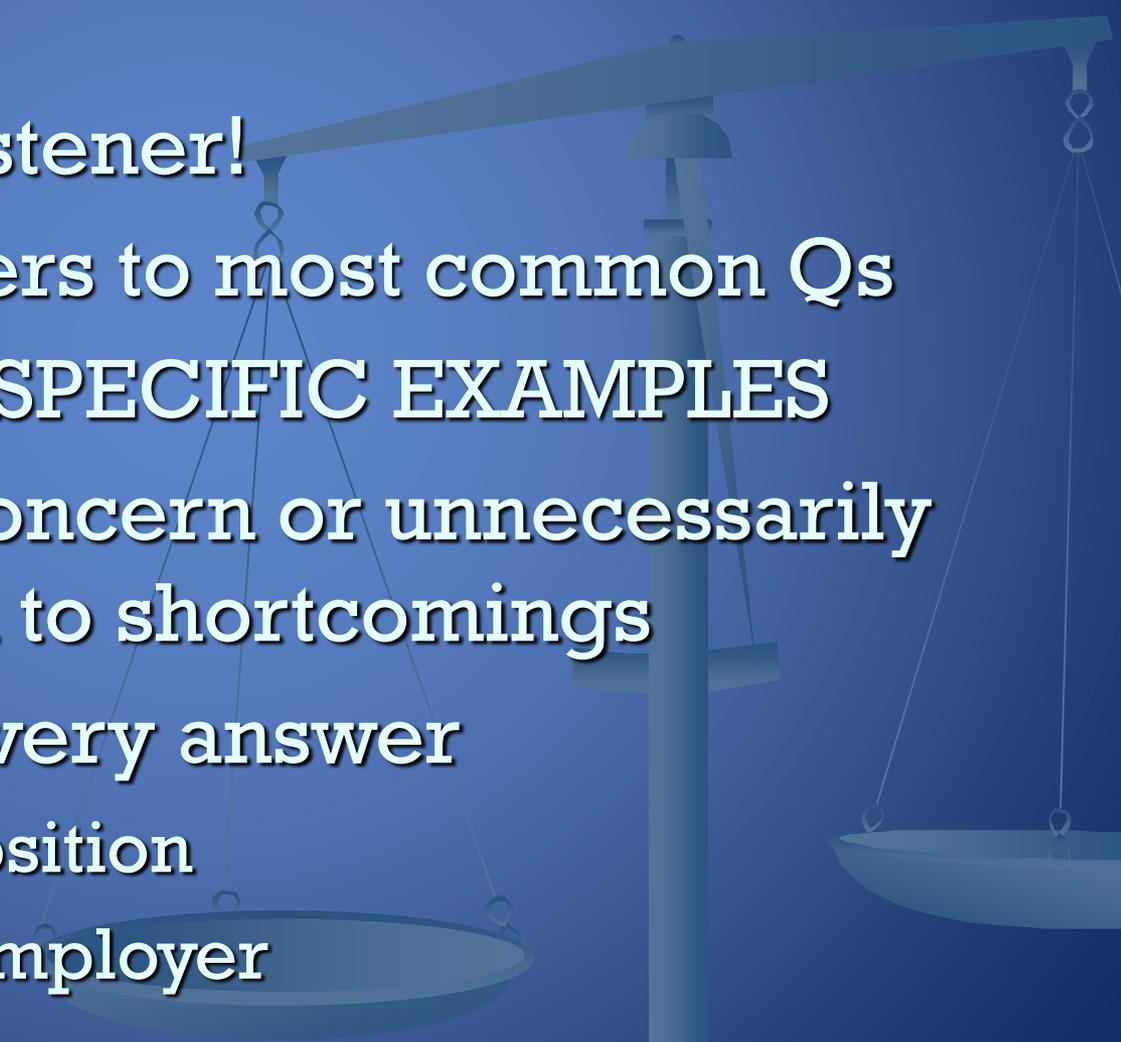


After the Interview



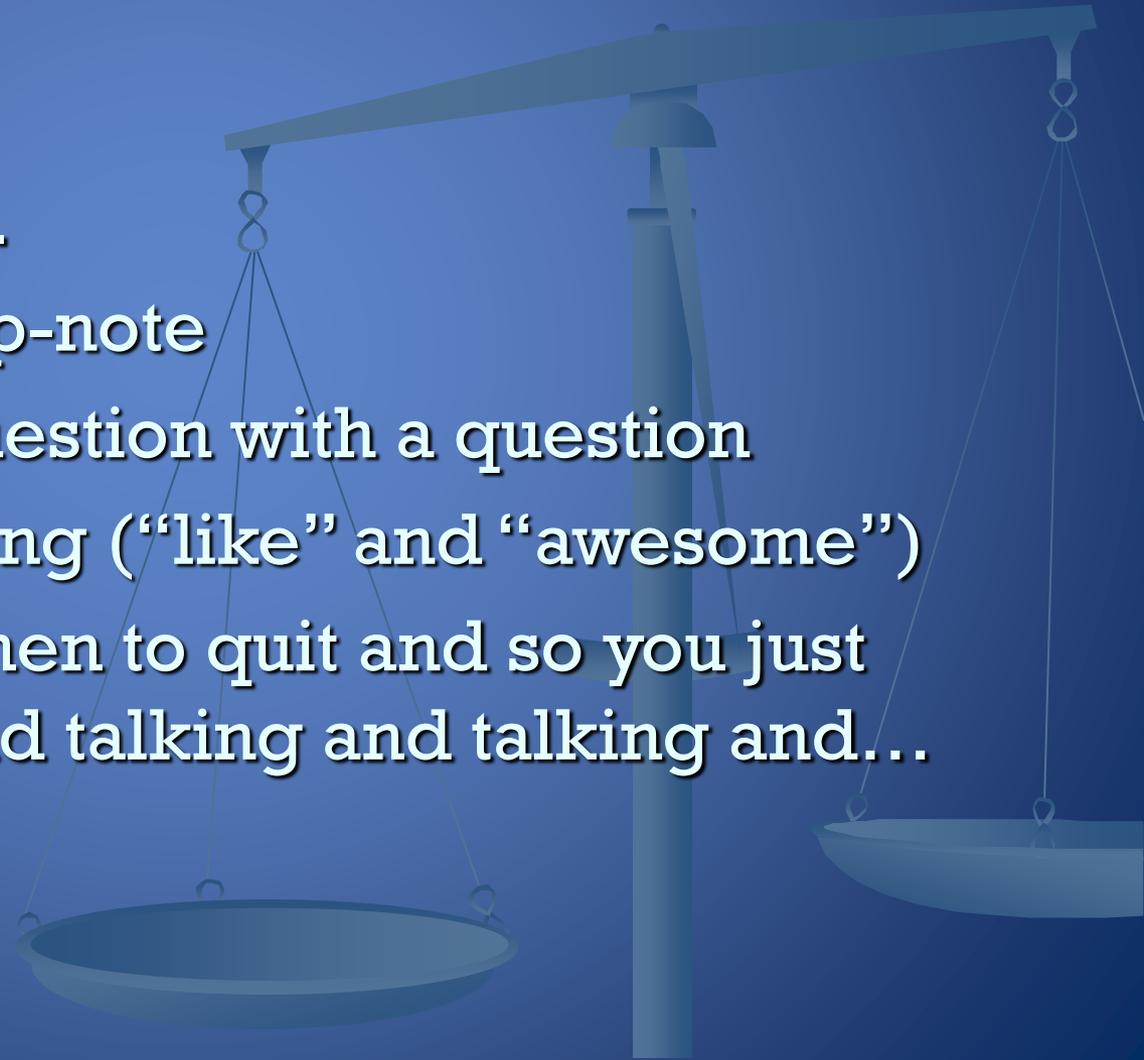
- Thank You Notes
 - Could be a hand written card or an e-mail
 - Consider timing
 - If written, this is part of your application!!
 - All REQUIRE the same level of professionalism
 - All REQUIRE the same attention to detail
 - Can hurt you just as it can help you
- Social Media
- Background Checks

Interviewing: Important Takeaways

- RESEARCH!
 - Be an active listener!
 - Practice answers to most common Qs
 - Be ready with SPECIFIC EXAMPLES
 - Don't create concern or unnecessarily draw attention to shortcomings
 - 2 “rules” for every answer
 - Relevant to position
 - Value to the employer
- 

Verbal Communication Traps

- Rushing
- Speaking softly
- Trailing off.....
- Ending on an up-note
- Answering a question with a question
- Over-casual slang (“like” and “awesome”)
- Not knowing when to quit and so you just keep talking and talking and talking and...
- Pauses are OK!



Non-Verbal Traps

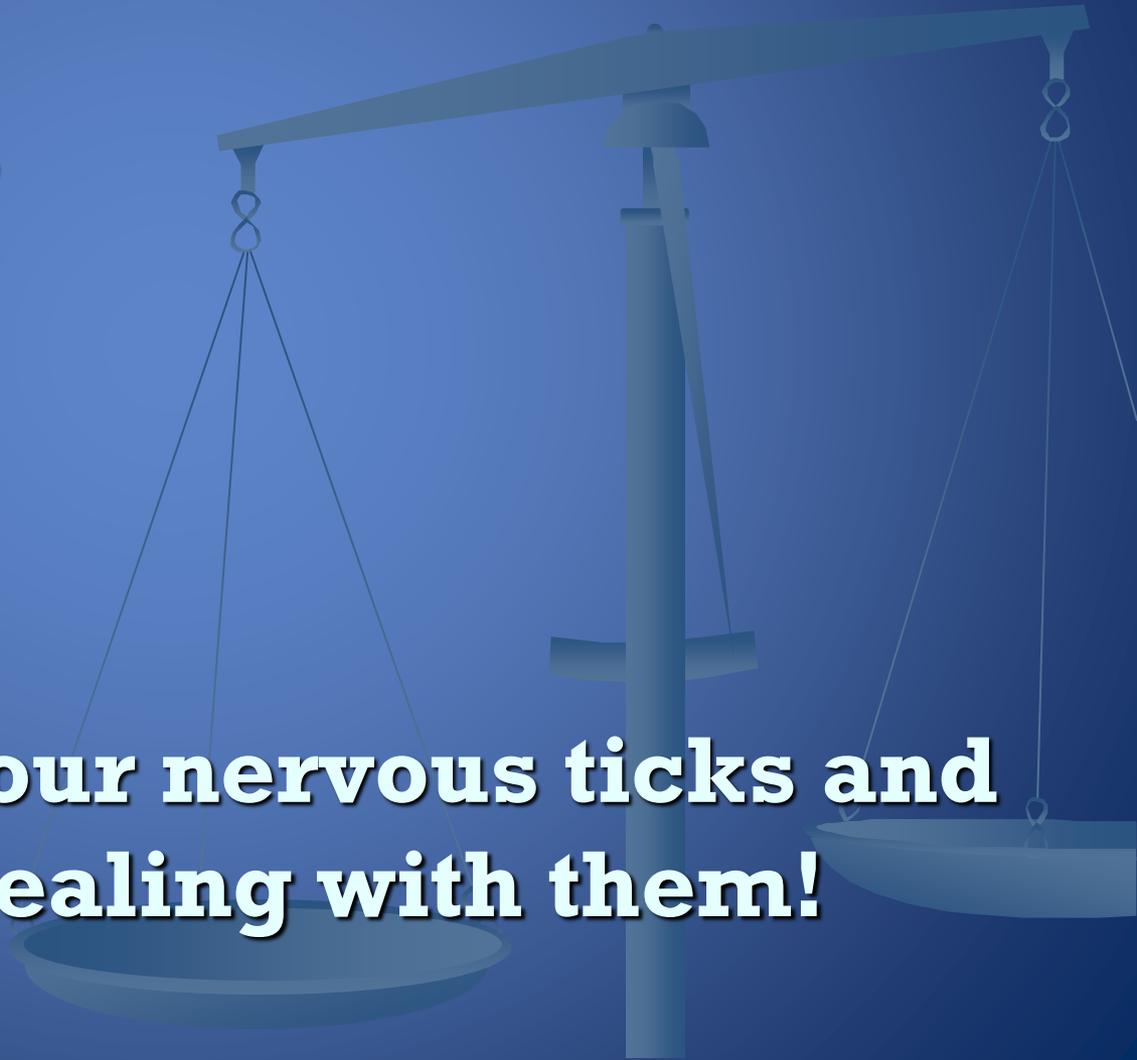
- Slouching or casual posture
- Closed versus open postures
- Wild extremities!
- Sighing
- Avoiding EYE CONTACT
- Lackluster enthusiasm



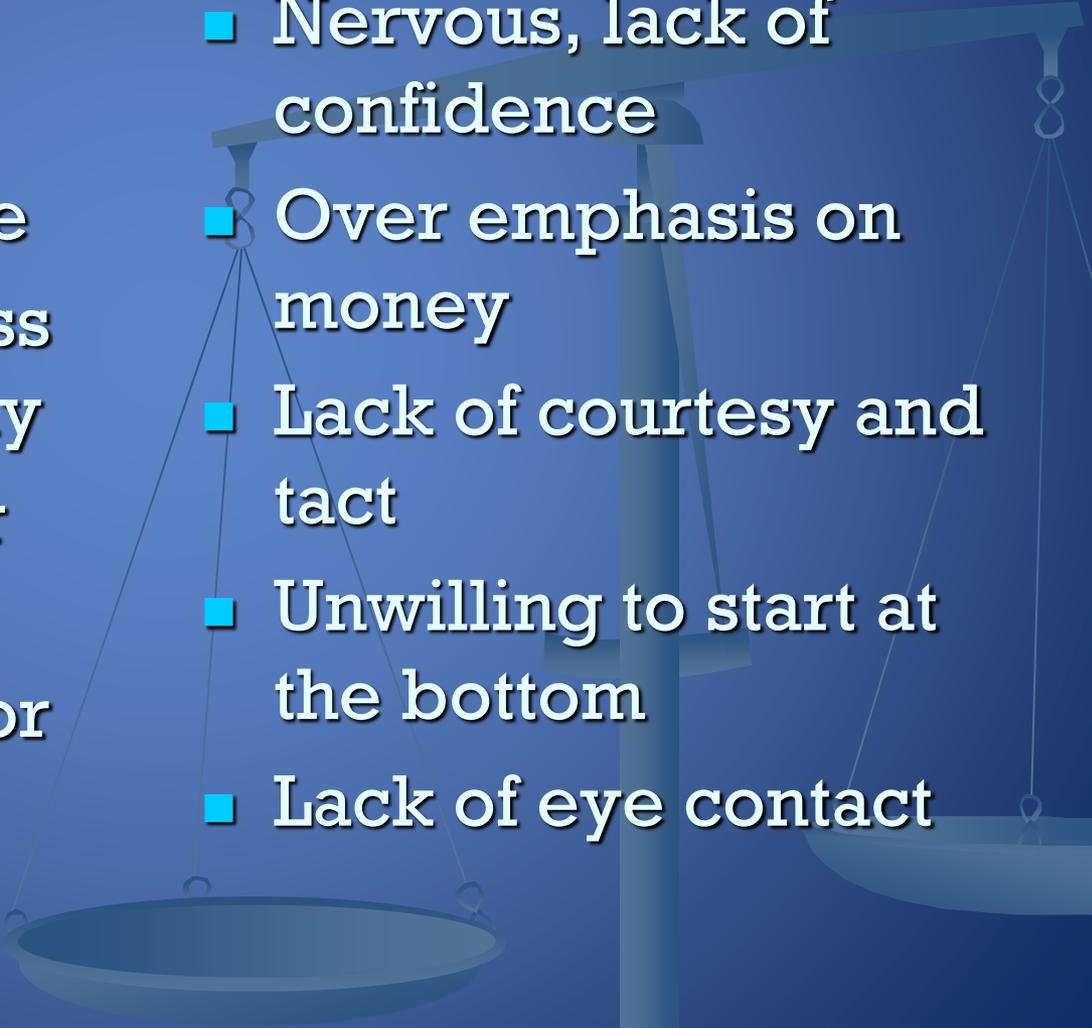
Are you nervous?

- Talk Fast?
- Voice Quivers?
- Palms Sweat?
- Knees Shake?
- Stammer?

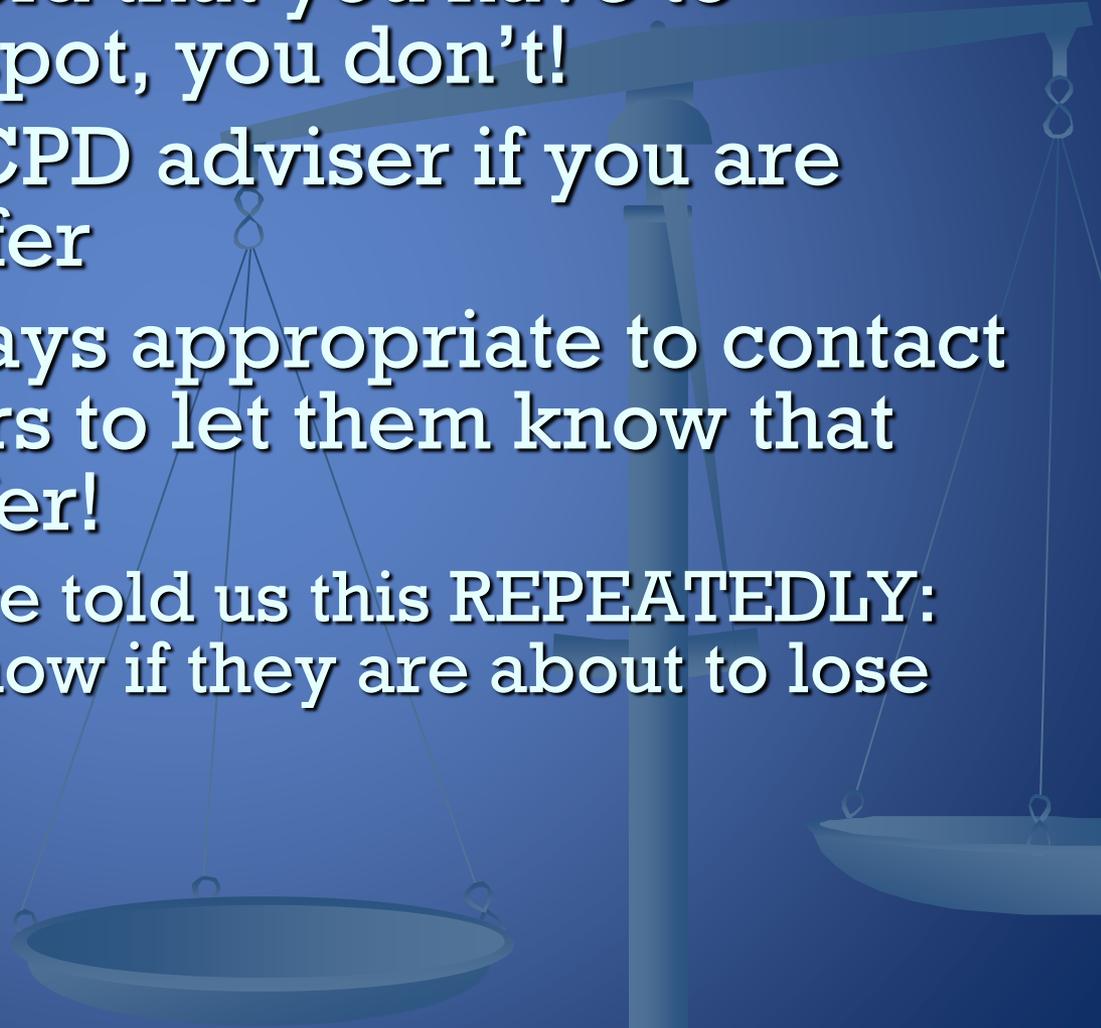
**Be aware of your nervous ticks and
practice dealing with them!**



Reasons People Don't get Hired

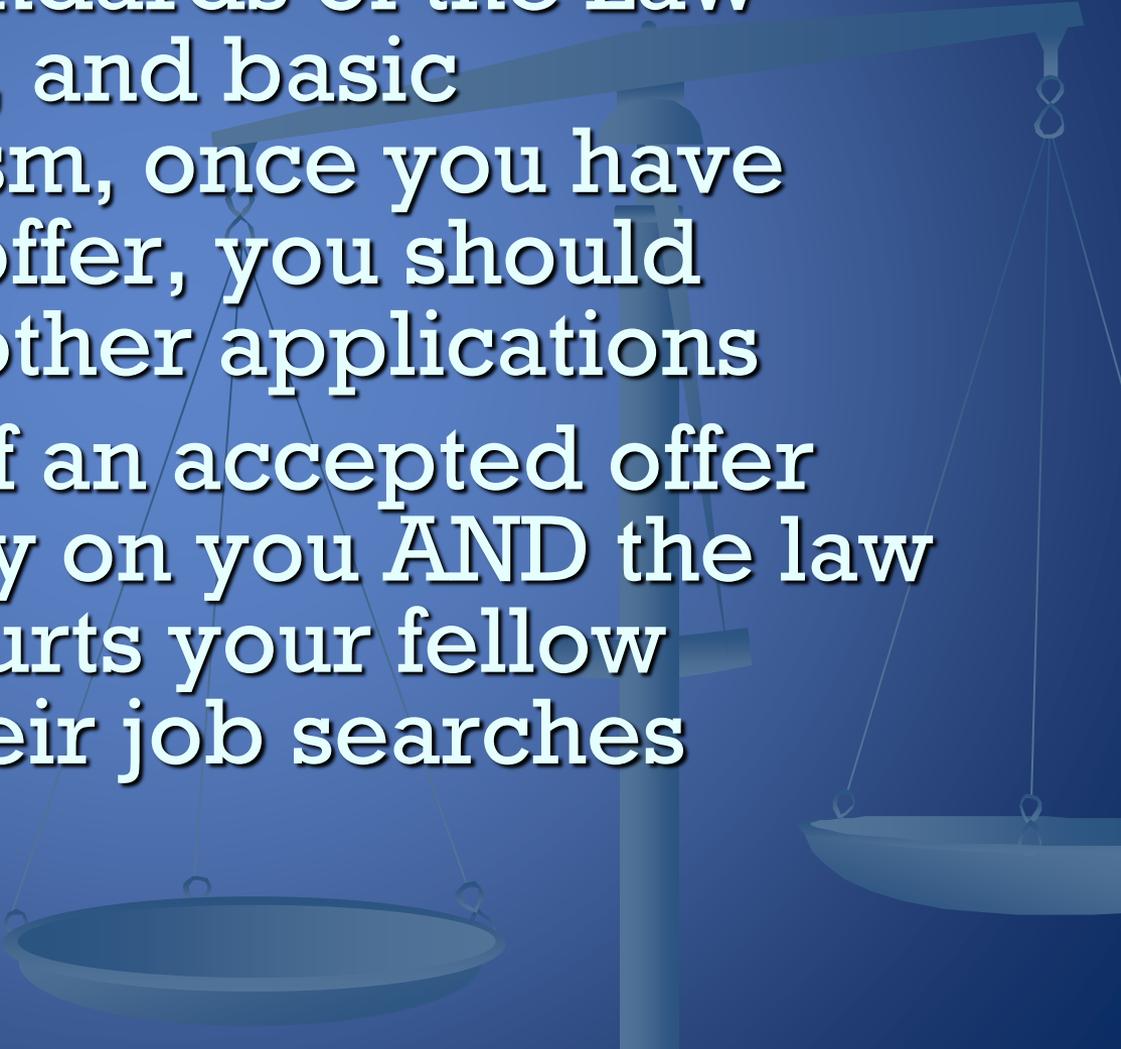
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- Poor personal appearance
 - Overly aggressive
 - Inability to express information clearly
 - Lack of interest or enthusiasm
 - Lack of practice for interview
 - Nervous, lack of confidence
 - Over emphasis on money
 - Lack of courtesy and tact
 - Unwilling to start at the bottom
 - Lack of eye contact

Offers



- If you are not told that you have to decide on the spot, you don't!
- Talk to your OCPD adviser if you are weighing an offer
- It is almost always appropriate to contact other employers to let them know that you have an offer!
 - Employers have told us this **REPEATEDLY**: they want to know if they are about to lose you!!

Offers

- Under the standards of the Law School, NALP, and basic professionalism, once you have accepted an offer, you should withdraw all other applications
 - Backing out of an accepted offer reflects poorly on you AND the law school, and hurts your fellow Badgers in their job searches
- 

Use our Career & Professional Development Team

- Mock Interviews with OCPD throughout the semester
- Interview attire review

Bring on your questions!

