

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

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Interviewing Techniques 1B



A second installment in a two-part series (the first was in November's e-newsletter), *Interview Techniques 1B* will introduce you to the next part of this learning process.

That's right, this is a learning process, and that's why we suggested you "practice" on a relative or friend. We're going to pick up from last month's session—you were interviewing Aunt Betty:

1) **Make a back-up copy of the interview *and* your handwritten notes.** It's important to do this immediately following the interview for several reasons, the primary being so you do not lose any portion of the session.

If you electronically recorded the interview, create a duplicate copy and store it in a safe place. It's equally as important to make a photocopy of your handwritten notes. Also store away your original notes for safe-keeping, and then treat the photocopy as your working copy. You can write on the copy, jot additional notes, doodle, whatever you want, knowing that the original is accessible in case you need it for reference.

2) **Migrating the electronic and handwritten notes into your computer.** If you're tech savvy and have the fancy equipment, you can probably zap your electronic recording to your computer via a software program. Dahlynn does this with Dragon Naturally Speaking, a voice recognition system that she has trained to respond to her verbal commands; she listens to the interview then talks it into her computer (she often wishes that Dragon was available in husband and kid versions!). But for the purposes of learning, we'll go the "old-fashioned" route—dictation.

Yes, dictation. You listen to the interview, stop the tape, type in what you heard, then listen some more. Dictation can be tedious work, but the degree of tediousness is what you make of it. We suggest that you adopt "quick notes" verses "word-for-word" dictation: using the counter on your recorder, type the counter marker along with key points. For instance, if Aunt Betty shares a story about learning to ride a bike, note as "#1357 (or minute 23:58, depending on your recorder) – childhood bike story." Now you have a quick reference marker to jump to if you decide to use that story, which is when you do the word-for-word dictation!

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P . S .

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3) **Ethical issues such as correcting the person's grammar** is something we run into all the time. We work with and interview public figures for books, so when possible, we will correct minor problems with their grammar (i.e., "I says we won't go there," to "I said we won't go there."). This is done to avoid embarrassing the person.

But there are times when we add a [sic], which is commonly used in newspapers and magazines to represent "thus so." To assure proper reproduction of a quote, the print media will list the quote word-for-word, and when a word is left out or used incorrectly (i.e., improper grammar), the "[sic]" reference is inserted.

It's your decision if you want to massage Aunt Betty's unique grammar or keep it in for flavor. Many times it is left as stated when the person has an accent or an interesting or distinct way of speaking.

4) **Next is clarification of comments**, and this usually occurs for many reasons (i.e., inaudible answer on the tape, an important point is overlooked or you are confused about a statement or answer). Don't be afraid to call Aunt Betty and ask for clarification. She will appreciate your efforts to get the facts straight.

5) **What do you do with the completed interview?** Whatever you want to do with it—it's your decision. This was a practice interview, so we're fairly certain that the *Times* or MSNBC may pass on a query from you regarding an interview with your Aunt Betty reminiscing about her childhood (or maybe not?). We recommend you share the interview with your family—a gift for generations to come—then immediately set up your next interview. Remember: practice...practice...PRACTICE! Great job! 

Another year...

It's hard to believe that 2006 is nearly over...it seems like yesterday our first grandson was born. He just turned one last month!

We want to take this moment to reflect on 2006 and thank many of the people who have helped make our business a success. From amazing cartoonist Jonny Hawkins, who supplies all of our great cartoons, to Shayla Johnson, who keeps our office running smoothly and keeps us on deadline...always with a firm smile!

But most of all, we want to thank you for your support and encouragement. Without our e-newsletter fans and book readers, we wouldn't be teachers or authors.

...thank you!

Jonny Hawkins



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HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

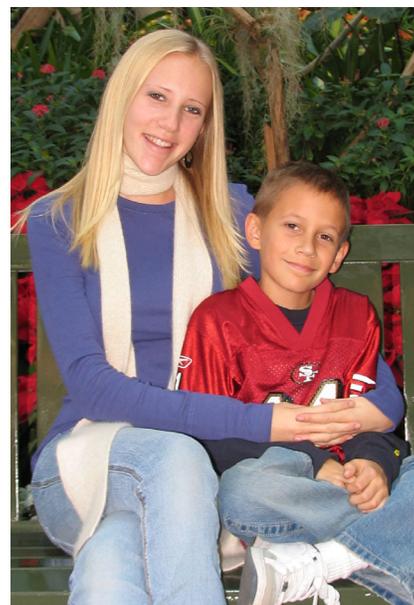
Chicken Soup for the Sisters' and Brothers' Soul

RELEASE MOVED UP BY ONE YEAR!

We're still in need of great sister and brother stories for this title! Stories must be about a sister-brother relationship, not sister-sister or brother-brother relationship. If your story is selected, you will be paid \$200. For more important information, zip to our website!

Deadline: Jan. 15, 2007 -- Release: Sept. 2007

We got in trouble from our two kids for running the "food fight" photo last month in the newsletter, so we're including this year's Christmas photo. They're as close as a sister and brother can be and are excited about helping us with this title!



Chicken Soup for the Red Hat Society Soul

Stories needed by Red Hat Society members, about RHS. Deadline: January 1, 2007

IMPORTANT: Submit stories for the two books above to Story@PublishingSyndicate.com

Submit stories for the following three books to www.ChickenSoup.com



Christmas Collection: A timeless collection of stories that celebrate the magic of the holiday season. We have the inside scoop that Chicken Soup plans on releasing one Christmas book a year, so here's your chance to possibly get a story into a series, that is, if you have a few good Christmas stories! Deadline: March 31, 2007

Nurse's Soul II: A second collection of stories to celebrate the rewards and challenges of the nursing profession. Deadline: January 31, 2007

Divorced Soul: Stories of hope and encouragement for divorced people or people going through a divorce to let them know that they are not alone. Deadline: May 31, 2007

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