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Some weakness to say in interview

So, you've finally got your foot in the door at your dream company. You've submitted the perfect resume and made a lasting impression during the phone screen. All there's left to do now is to win over the hiring manager in the face-to-face interview. As a well-informed candidate, you're doing your research on the company and preparing your answers to the most important interview questions you can think of — the most notorious of them all being: "What is your greatest weakness?" You don't want to respond, "I tend to work too hard," or "I am too much of a perfectionist." That can easily come across as scripted and insincere at best and lacking in self-awareness at worst. Alternatively, you don't want to respond with weaknesses that will prevent you from succeeding in the role. For instance, if you're applying to be a project manager, you don't want to admit that you're, "not very good with time management." Fortunately, there are ways to answer this question that will help you demonstrate your value as a candidate. Here, we've cultivated some incredible answers to the mainstay, "What is your greatest weakness" question — and don't worry, these answers aren't "perfectionism".

1. Choose a weakness that will not prevent you from succeeding in the role. When an interviewer asks, "What is your greatest weakness?" they want to find out: Whether you have a healthy level of self-awareness Whether you can be open and honest, particularly about shortcomings Whether you pursue self-improvement and growth opportunities to combat these issues, as opposed to letting these weaknesses hold you back Ultimately, you'll want to use this question to demonstrate how you've used a weakness as motivation to learn a new skill or grow professionally. Everyone has weaknesses — your interviewer doesn't expect you to be perfect. If you're applying for a copywriting position with little necessity for math skills, you might admit, "I struggle with numbers, and don't have much experience with data analytics. While math is not directly tied to my role as a writer, I believe it's important to have a rudimentary understanding of Google Analytics to ensure my work is performing well. To tackle this weakness, I've been taking online courses in data analytics." An answer like this shows the hiring manager that you recognize your areas for growth and are able to act on them without being told to do so. This kind of self-starter attitude is a plus for virtually any team.
2. Be honest and choose a real weakness. The answer "perfectionism" won't cut it when talking about your biggest weakness is simply because it's not a real weakness. Perfectionism can never be attained — it's a fear-based pattern that leads to short-term rewards like getting the job done early and exceeding expectations. However, in the long-term, trying to attain perfectionism leads to burnout, low-quality work, and missed deadlines. Burnout is one of the biggest contributors to decreased productivity, turnover, and low employee engagement — all of which cost a company money, time, and talent. Instead, choose a real weakness. Underneath the desire to do perfect work may lie a weakness of trust. Perhaps you don't trust that you'll be able to make mistakes on the team, so you strive to do everything perfectly. That's a real weakness that you can definitely overcome.
3. Provide an example of how you've worked to improve upon your weakness or learn a new skill to combat the issue. Hiring managers don't expect you to overcome your weaknesses completely overnight. Everyone has areas they must constantly work on to keep them sharp. Think of it this way — if you've dedicated six months to working out, you won't be able to stop one day and maintain your progress. It's an ongoing process that you have to work at. By providing an example of how you're working to improve your area of weakness, you'll give the interviewer a glimpse into a few positive attributes about your work style.
1. You know how to identify and mitigate issues that come up.
2. You've found a helpful solution to a problem that you and perhaps others on the team face, which means you can be an immediate resource to the team.
4. You demonstrate self-awareness and an ability to look to others to provide you with resources necessary for growth. More often than not, you're going to need to look outside of yourself to overcome a weakness. Whether you look to your supervisor, the HubSpot Blog, or a mentor for help, the simple act of asking for help demonstrates self-awareness and resourcefulness — two skills that are hard to teach, but valuable to learn. Tapping into your resources shows the interviewers that you can solve problems when the answer is not yet clear. That's a character trait that has a place on any team. Briefly share an example of a time where you asked someone for help in an area that you've identified as a weakness. This gives the hiring team a clear picture of how you'll work with the team to balance out that weakness.
5. Don't be arrogant and don't underestimate yourself. The most important thing you can do when responding to the question "What is your greatest weakness?" is exhibit confidence in your answer. (If confidence is your weakness, keep reading.) Even if you're not the most confident person, I'm going to assume you're at least honest with yourself. If you've identified an area of weakness and you're sure about it, let that assurance shine through in your answer. There's no need to feel embarrassed about something you're genuinely not good at as long as you're working to get better. Before you start expressing a genuine weakness to your interviewer, get comfortable with the types of answers that make hiring managers want to work with you. Take a look at the following examples and find a few that fit your personality and work style. Then, practice reciting them aloud so they come naturally to you. Here are seven examples of how you might answer "What is your greatest weakness?" and why they work. Here are seven examples of how you might answer "What is your greatest weakness", and why they work.
1. Patience "I don't have much patience when working with a team — I am incredibly self-sufficient, so it's difficult when I need to rely on others to complete my work. That's why I've pursued roles that require someone to work independently. However, I've also worked to improve this weakness by enrolling in team-building workshops. While I typically work independently, it's nonetheless important I learn how to trust my coworkers and ask for outside help when necessary." This answer works because the weakness — the inability to be patient when working with a team — doesn't hinder your ability to perform well in the role since it's a job that doesn't rely on teamwork to succeed. Additionally, you display an eagerness to develop strategies to combat your weakness, which is a critical skill in the workplace.
2. Organization "I struggle with organization. While it hasn't ever impacted my performance, I've noticed my messy desk and cluttered inbox nonetheless could interfere with my efficiency. Over time, I've learned to set aside time to organize my physical and digital space, and I've seen it improve my efficiency levels throughout the week." Plenty of people have messy desks. This answer works because it's a relatable and fixable weakness. You note that disorganization doesn't interfere with your ability to do your job, which is critical, but you also acknowledge it might make you less efficient. To ensure you're performing at 100%, you mention personal steps you've taken to improve your organization skills for the sake of self-improvement alone, which suggests a level of maturity and self-awareness.
3. Delegation "I'm incredibly self-motivated, and I sometimes find it difficult to delegate responsibility when I feel I can finish the task well myself. However, when I became manager in my last role, it became critical I learn to delegate tasks. To maintain a sense of control when delegating tasks, I implemented a project management system to oversee the progress of a project. This system enabled me to improve my ability to delegate efficiently." This answer allows you to demonstrate an ability to pursue a new skill when a role calls for it and suggests you're capable of flexibility, which is critical for long-term growth. Additionally, you are able to showcase a level of initiative and leadership when you mention the successful implementation of a new process that enabled you to succeed in your past role, despite your weakness.
4. Timidity "Often times, I can be timid when providing constructive feedback to coworkers or managers, out of fear of hurting someone's feelings. However, in my last role, my coworker asked me to edit some of his pieces and provide feedback for areas of improvement. Through my experience with him, I realized feedback can be both helpful and kind when delivered the right way. Since then I've become better at offering feedback, and I've realized that my empathy can be used to my advantage to provide thoughtful, productive feedback." This answer works because you've explained how you were able to turn a weakness into a strength through real-world experience. Typically, timidity can be seen as a flaw in the workplace, particularly if a role requires someone to provide feedback to others. In this case, you're able to demonstrate how timidity can be used as a strength, through thoughtful reflection and practice.
5. Candidness "My blunt, straightforward nature has allowed me to succeed over the years as a team manager, because I'm able to get things done efficiently, and people often appreciate my honesty. However, I've recognized my bluntness doesn't always serve my employees well when I'm delivering feedback. To combat this, I've worked to develop empathy and deeper relationships with those I manage. Additionally, I took an online leadership management course, and worked with the professor to develop my ability to deliver feedback." Oftentimes, facets of our personalities can help us in certain areas of our work, while hindering us in others. That's natural. However, you must demonstrate an ability to recognize when your personality interferes with the functions of your role, and how you can solve for that. In this example, you first explain how your blunt nature allows you to be successful in certain situations. Then, you mention that you understand your bluntness can be seen as a lack of empathy and provide examples of how you've attempted to solve this issue. Ultimately, your awareness of how you might be perceived by others shows a level of emotional intelligence, which is a critical asset for a team leader.
6. Public Speaking "Public speaking makes me nervous. While I don't need to do much public speaking in my role as a web designer, I still feel that it's an important skill — especially when I want to offer my opinion during a meeting. To combat this, I spoke with my manager and she recommended I speak at each team meeting for a few minutes about our project timeline, deadlines, and goals when developing a website for a client. This practice has enabled me to relax and see public speaking as an opportunity to help my team members do their jobs effectively." In this example, you mention a skill that isn't applicable to the role, but one which you nonetheless have been working to improve. This shows your desire to meet more business needs than necessary in your current role, which is admirable. Additionally, it's impressive if you can show you're willing to reach out to your manager with areas in which you want to improve, instead of waiting for your manager to suggest those areas of improvement to you — it demonstrates a level of ambition and professional maturity.
7. Data Analysis "I'm not great at analyzing data or numbers. However, I recognize this flaw can prevent me from understanding how my content is performing online. In my last role, I set up monthly meetings with the SEO manager to discuss analytics and how our posts were performing. Additionally, I received my Google Analytics certificate, and I make it a point to analyze data related to our blog regularly. I've become much more comfortable with data through these efforts." In this example, you're able to show your desire to go above and beyond a job description and actively seek out skills that could be helpful to the success of your company as a whole. This type of company-first mentality shows the interviewer you're dedicated to making yourself a valuable asset, and try your best to understand the needs of the whole department, rather than just your role. There's Strength In Every Weakness Regardless of whether you're bad with numbers or you tend not to speak up in group settings, there's a strength behind every weakness. The strength is in how you work to overcome it. Leaning on your teammates who excel in those areas is a great way to show that you'll work well on the team and that you know how to use your resources to solve problems. Taking professional development courses shows that you're willing to work toward improvement. No matter which of these answers you share with the hiring team, they'll be more than happy to help you grow and exceed the expectations of the role.

Editor's note: This post was originally published in December 2018 and has been updated for comprehensiveness. Originally published Apr 21, 2021 7:00:00 AM, updated April 21 2021

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