



# **Interview Workshop**

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

# Types of Interviews

- Traditional
- Conversation
- Behavioral
- Instructional

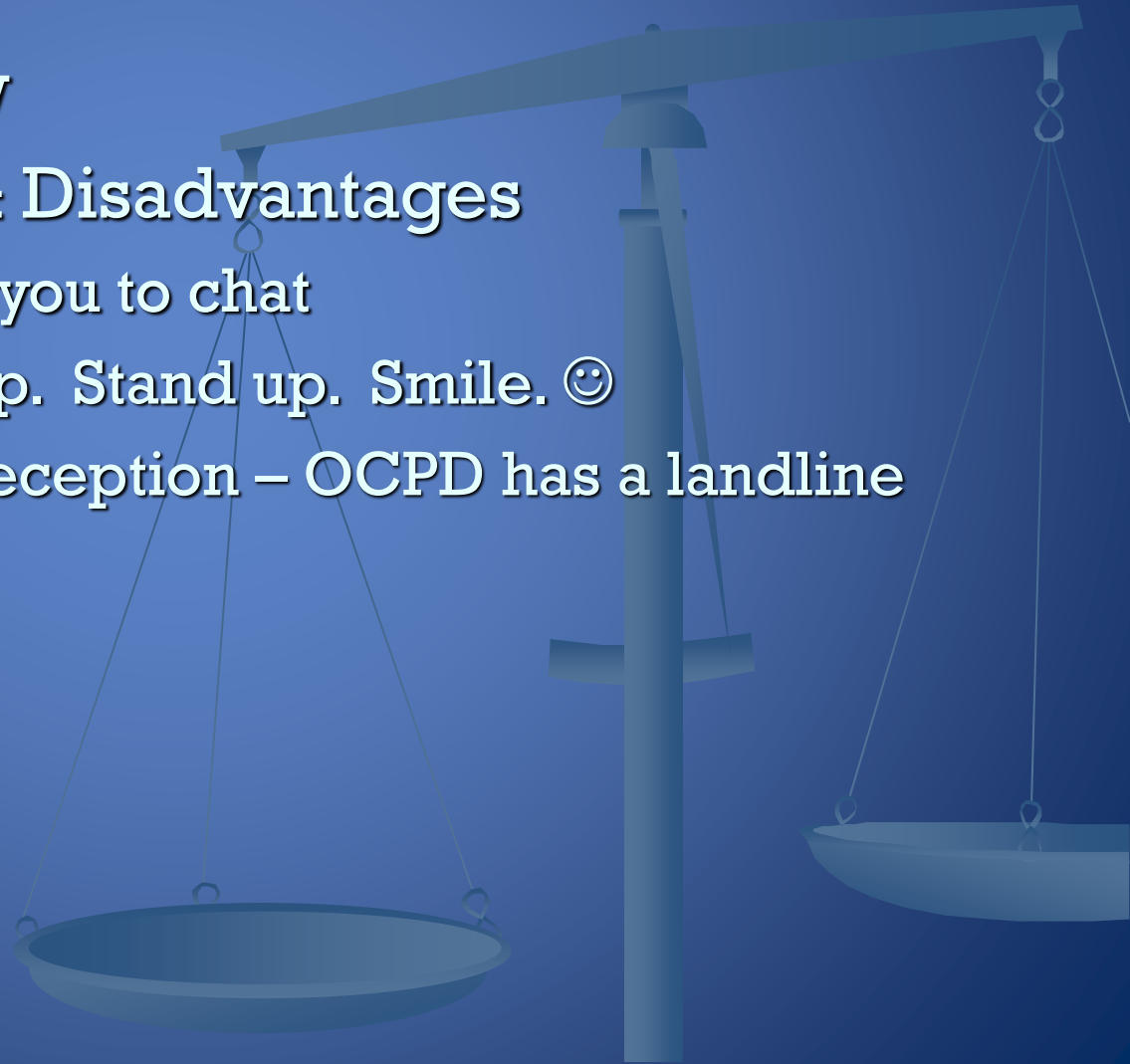


# Types of Interviews (cont)

- Skype/Video Conference
  - Dress for an interview
  - 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

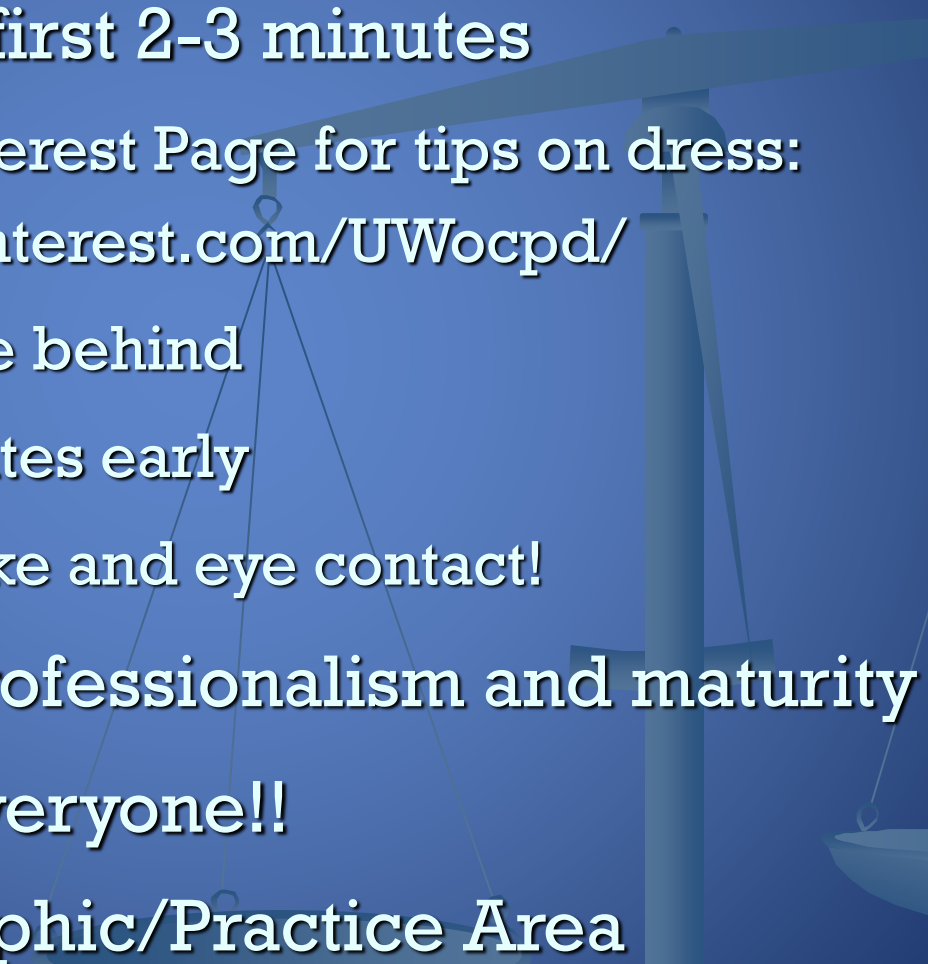
# Types of Interviews (cont)

- Phone Interview
  - Advantages & Disadvantages
    - May just call you to chat
    - 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
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# Interviews: Things to Keep in Mind

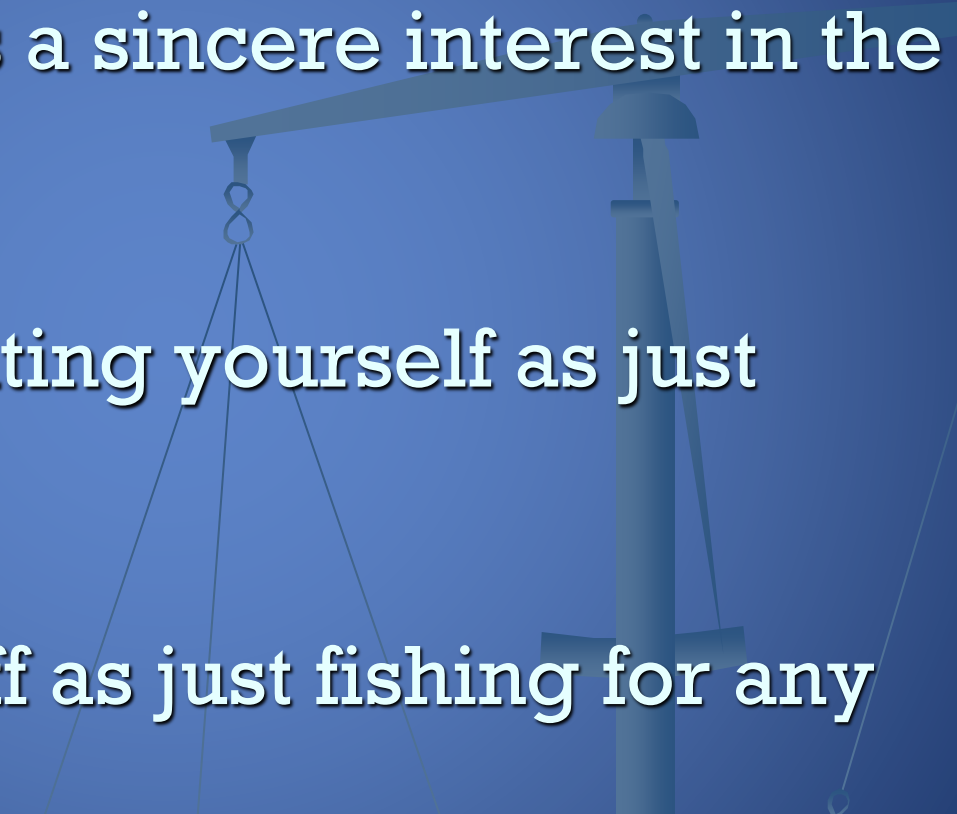
- Put yourself in the interviewers' shoes
  - Interview to their requirements
    - Can you do the job?
    - Will you fit into our workplace?/Do I want to work with you?
    - Are you enthusiastic about working for us?
    - Are you worth the investment?
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#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



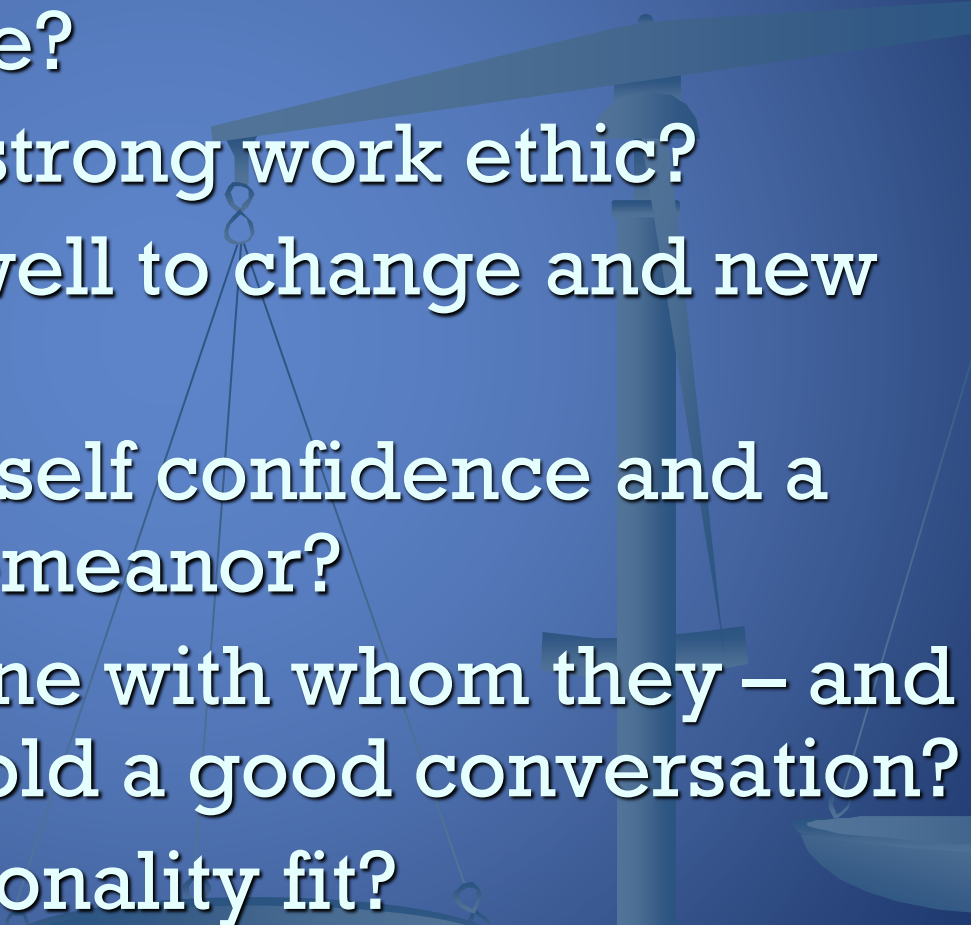
- Do you have the necessary skills and experience to perform the job?
- Provide concrete examples whenever possible
  - Directly relevant skills
  - Transferable skills
  - All should be applicable to the position

# 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?
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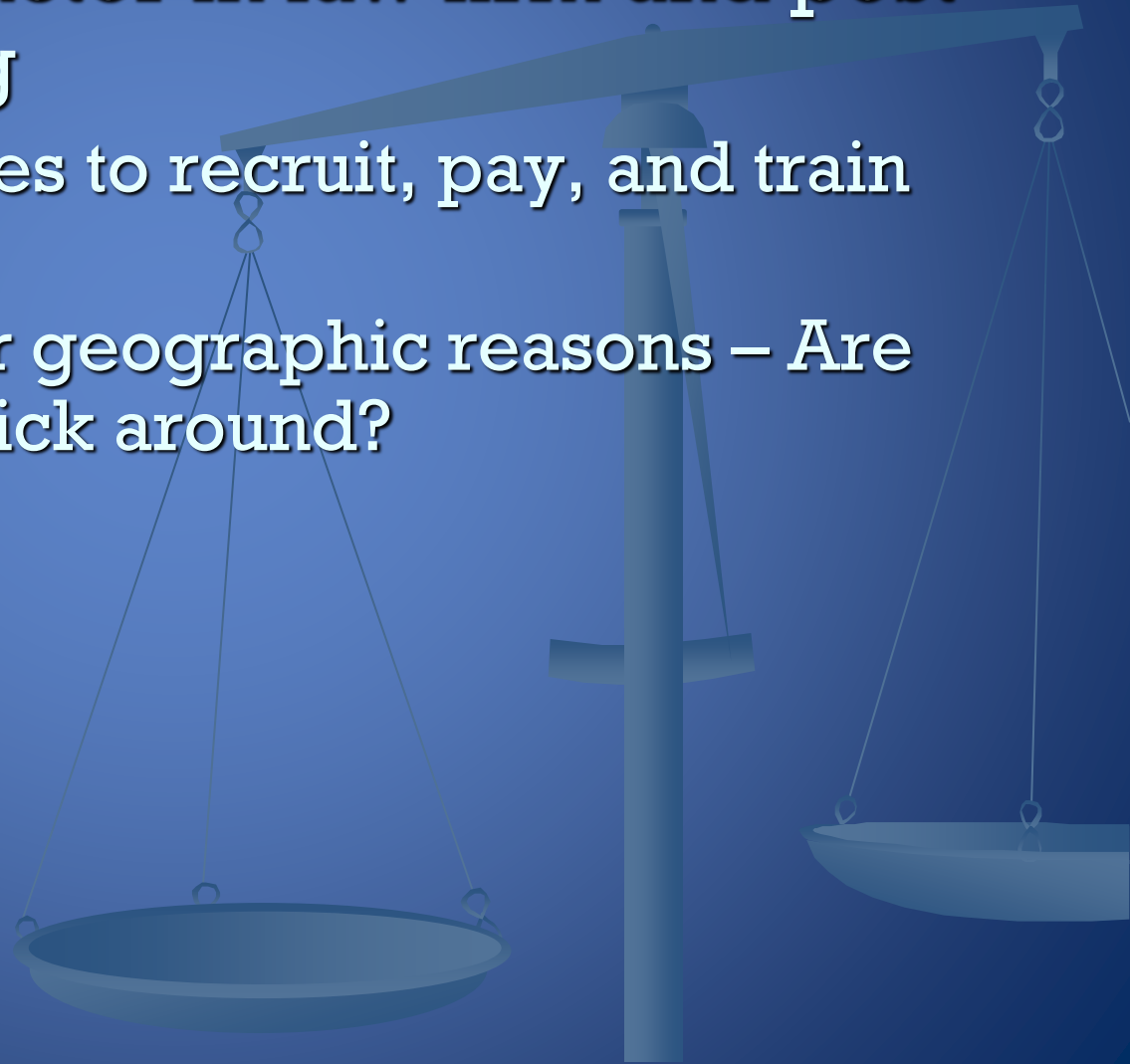


# Will you fit into our workplace? (Do I want to work with you?)

- 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?

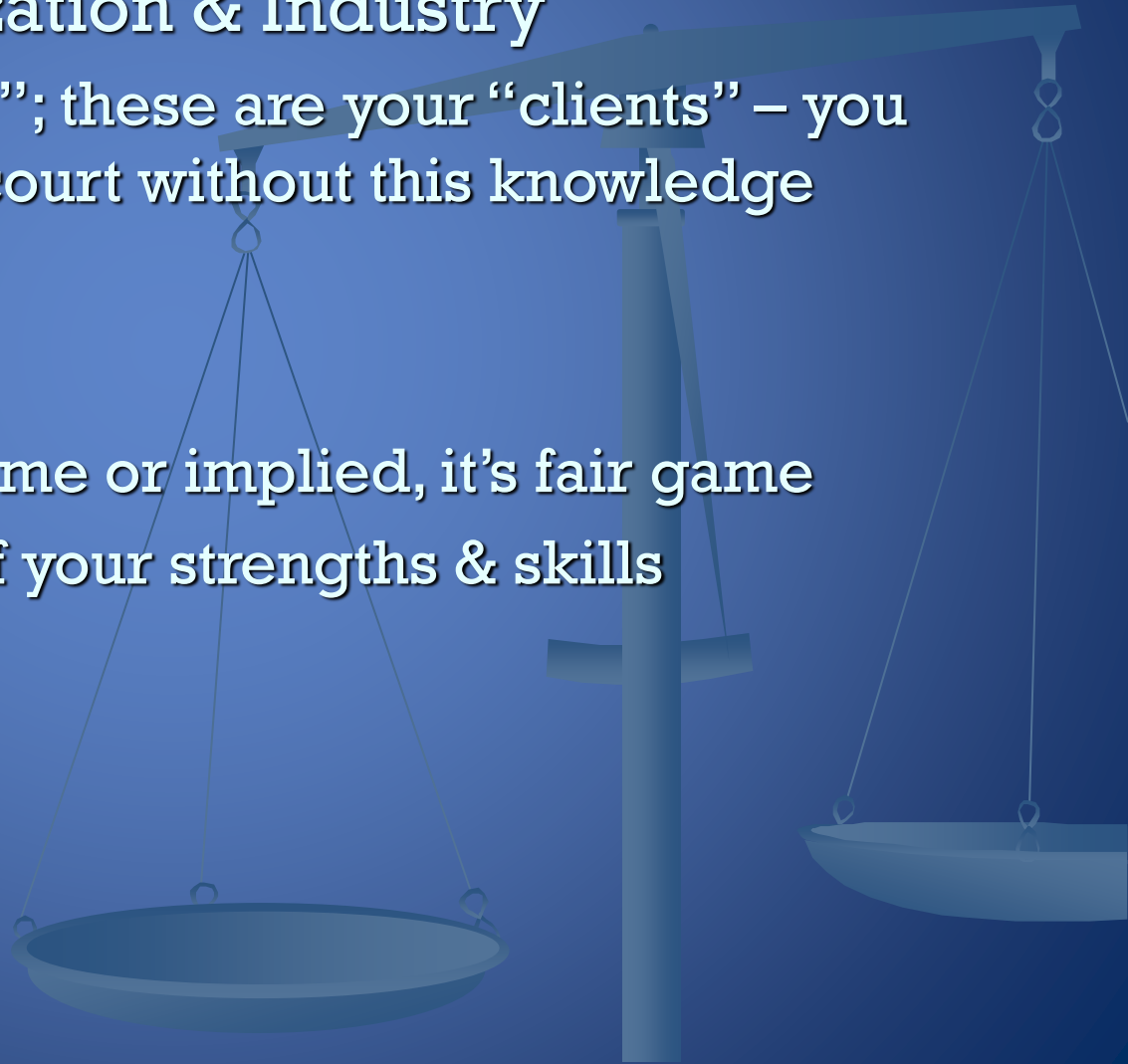
- Particularly a factor in law firm and post-graduate hiring
  - Lots of resources to recruit, pay, and train new hires
  - Flight factor for geographic reasons – Are you going to stick around?





# 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 the Organization & Industry

## ORGANIZATION & INTERVIEWERS

- ✓ Websites
- ✓ Recruiting Materials
- ✓ NALP Directory
- ✓ [navforward.com](http://navforward.com)
- ✓ Lexis and Westlaw
- ✓ Attorney bios

## INDUSTRY

- ✓ Trade Journals & Current Trends
- ✓ Informational Interviews
- ✓ [Martindale.com](http://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”



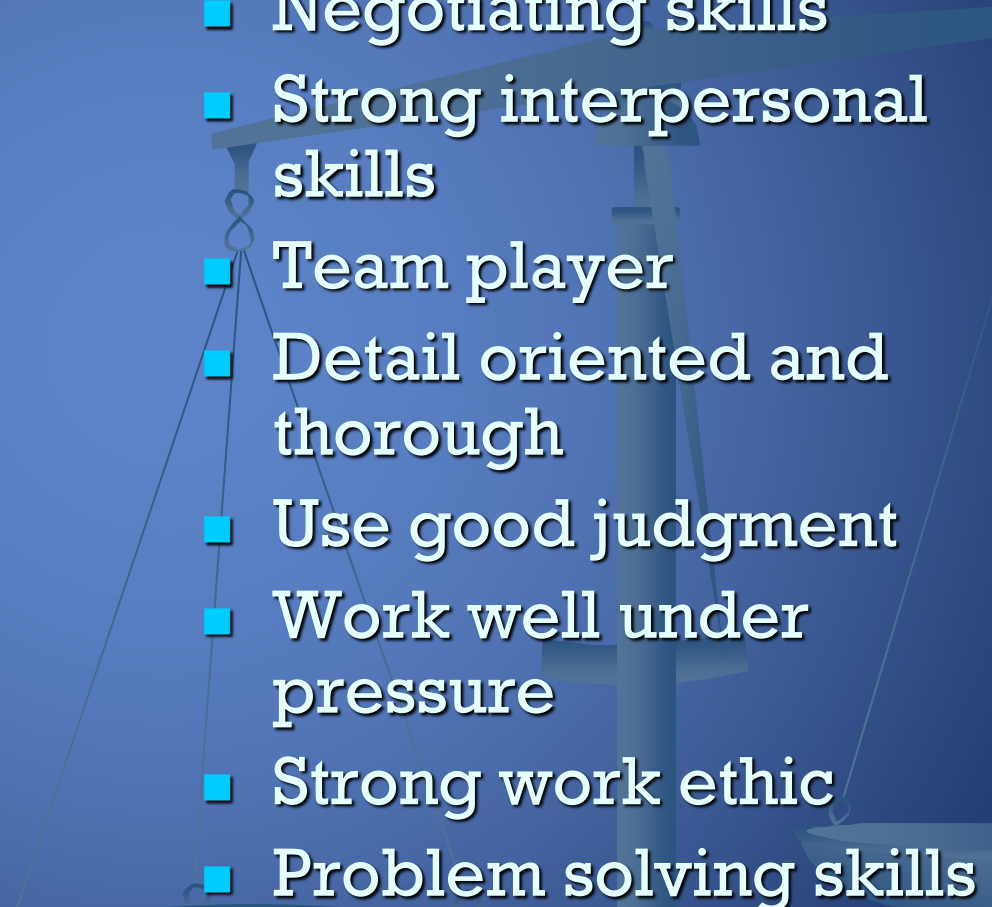


# Use Your “Cheat Sheet” To:

- 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

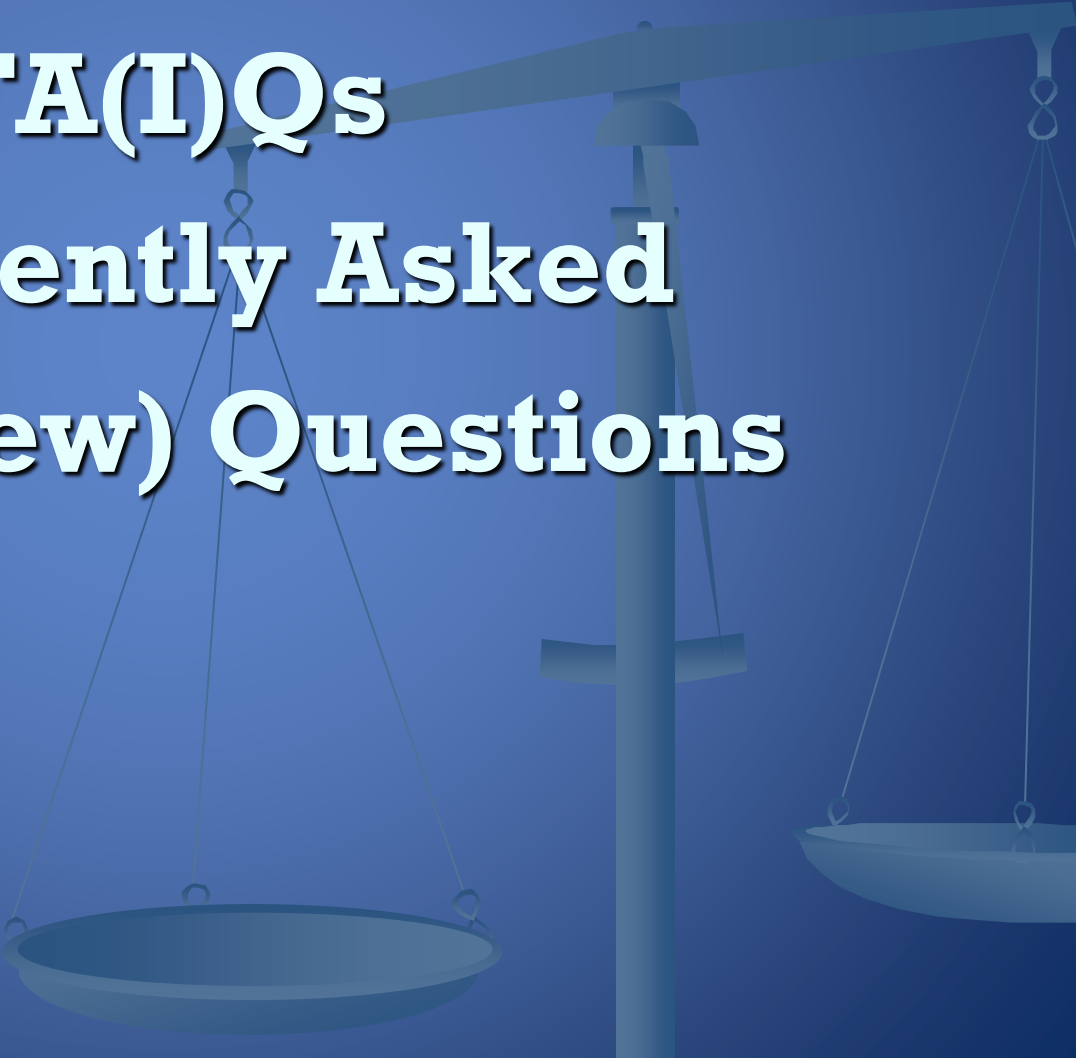
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- Writing ability
  - Analytical skills
  - Research skills
  - Effective oral presentation skills
  - Organization/time management
  - Quick learner
  - Self starter with demonstrated initiative
  - Negotiating skills
  - Strong interpersonal skills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



# PRACTICE

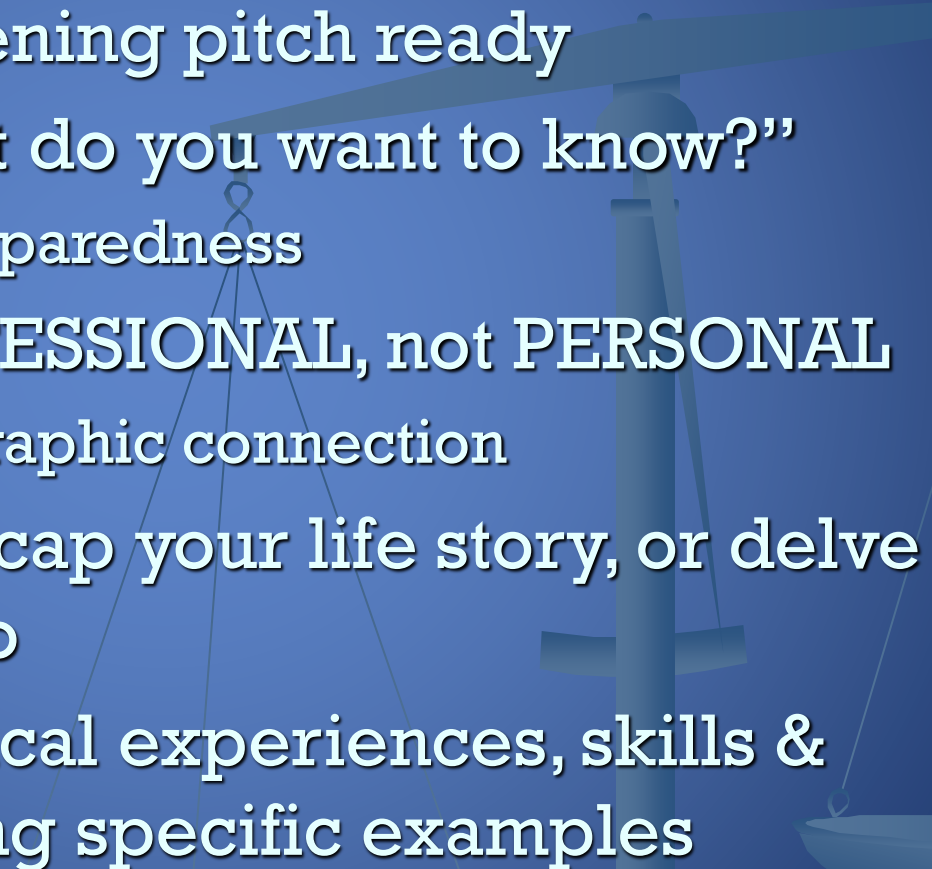


- Review sample questions:
  - [http://law.wisc.edu/career/students/application\\_resources.html](http://law.wisc.edu/career/students/application_resources.html)
- Prepare responses to sample questions
- Do a mock interview

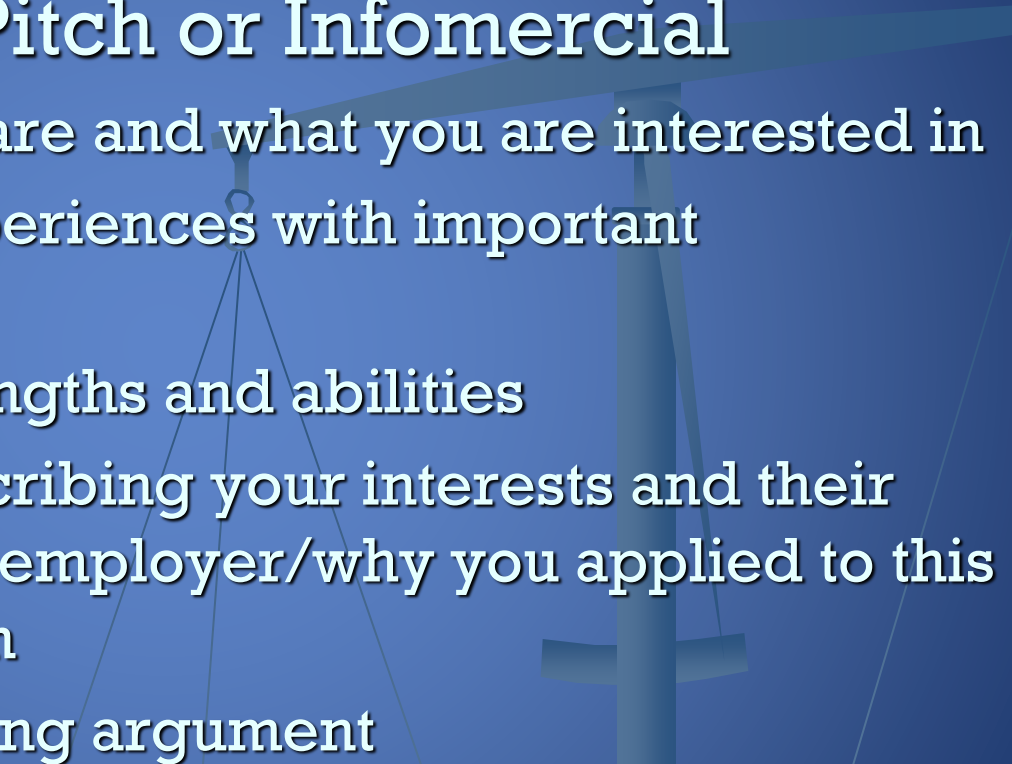


**FA(I)Qs**  
**Frequently Asked**  
**(Interview) Questions**

# 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
- 

# 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
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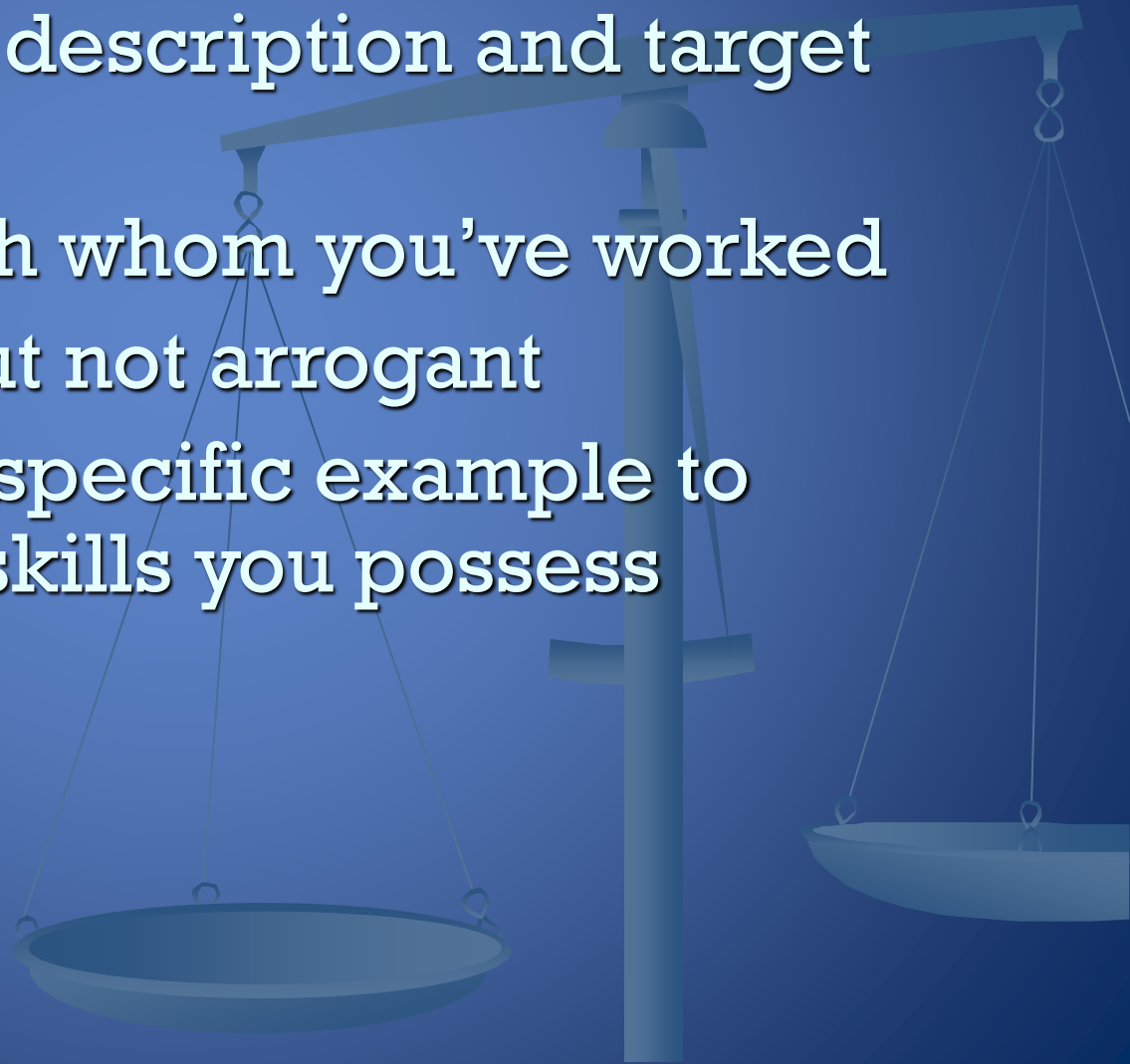


# So, tell me about yourself...

- “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.”

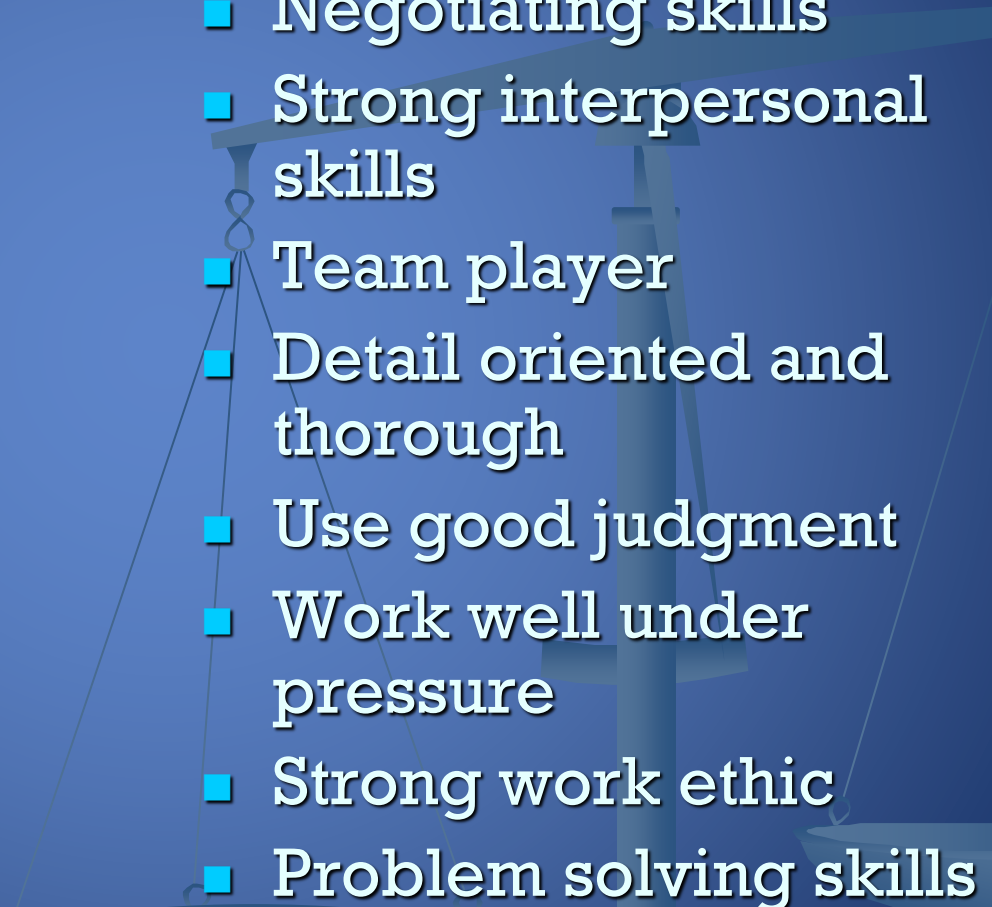
# What are your Strengths?

- 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

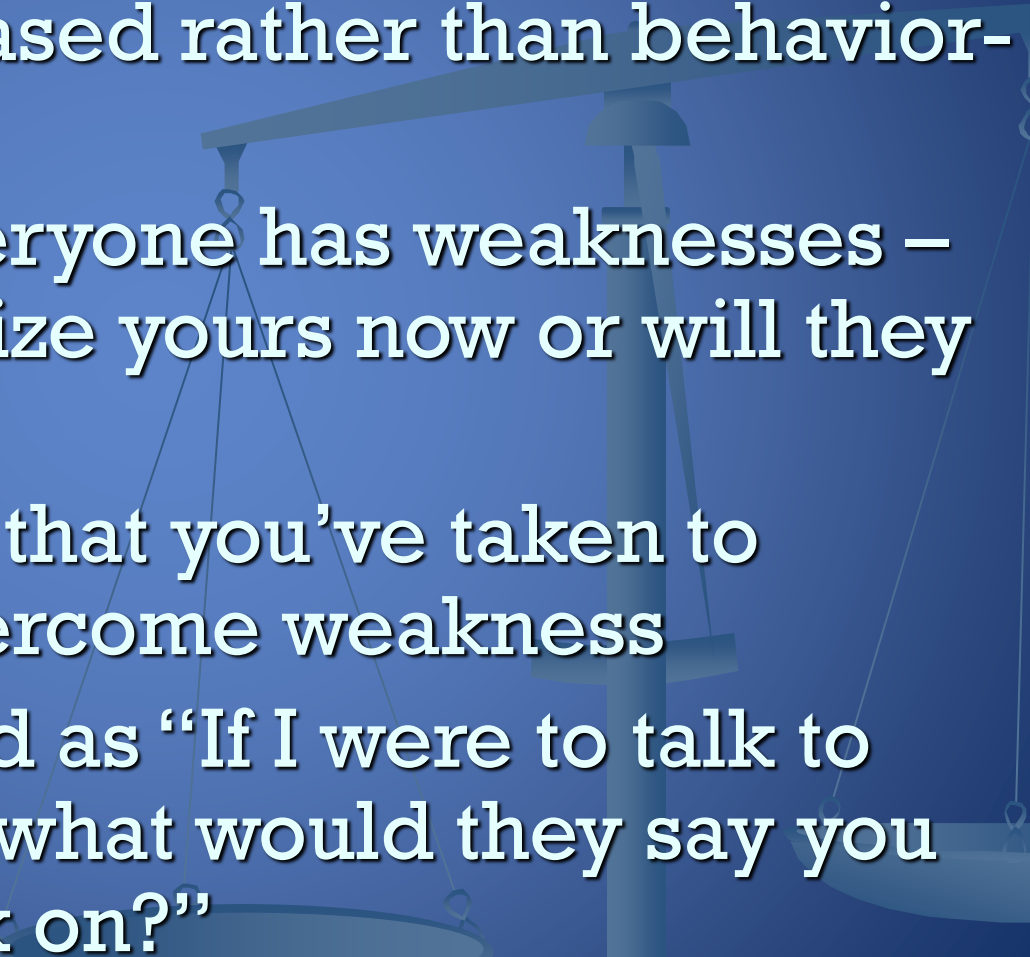




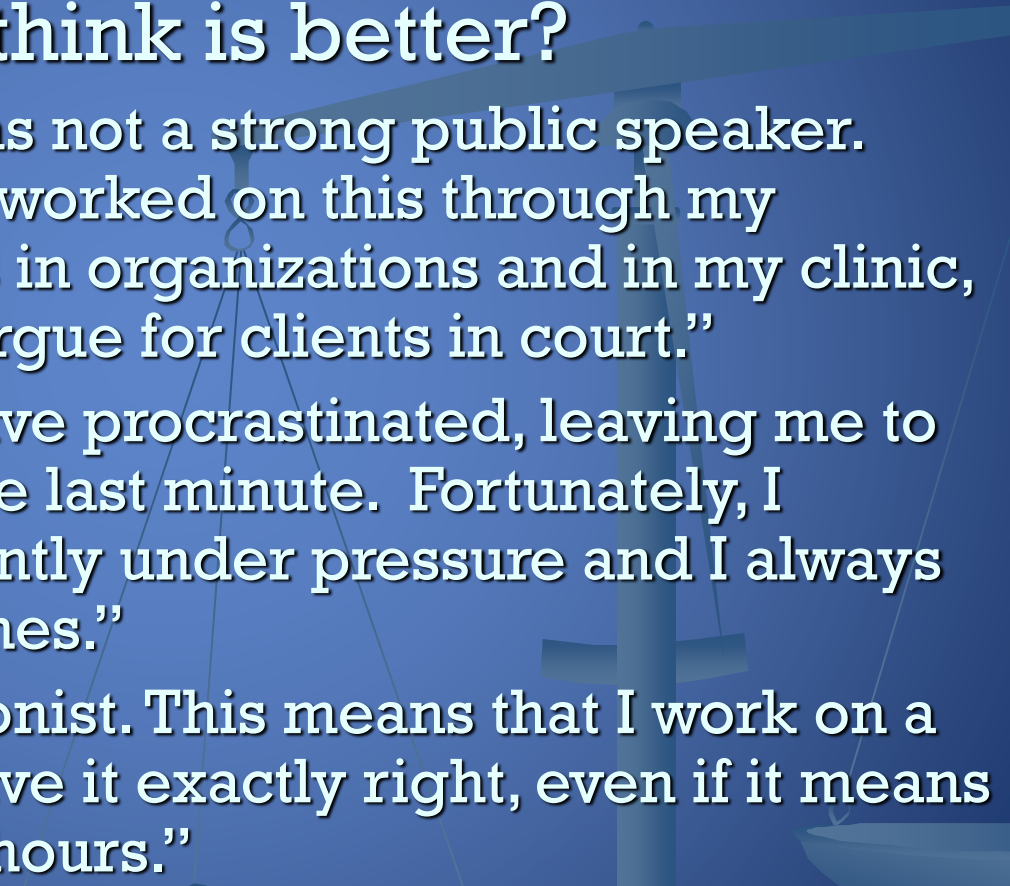
# Experiences and Skills to Illustrate

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- Writing ability
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  - Use good judgment
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  - Strong work ethic
  - Problem solving skills

# What about your weaknesses?

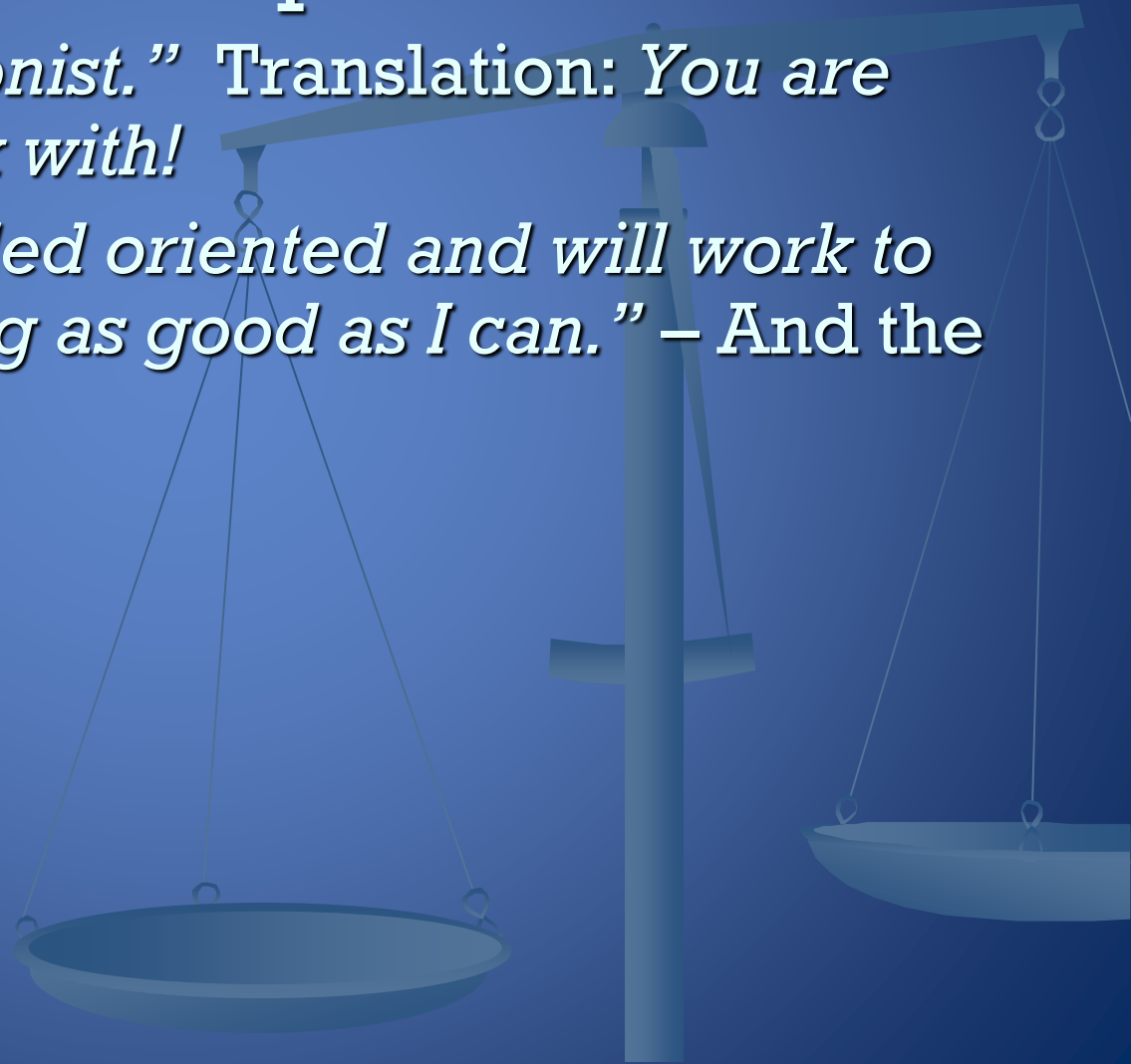
- Make it skill-based rather than behavior-based
  - Be honest! Everyone has weaknesses – Do you recognize yours now or will they surface later?
  - Focus on steps that you've taken to proactively overcome weakness
  - Could be asked as “If I were to talk to your last boss, what would they say you could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

# Weaknesses Continued

- 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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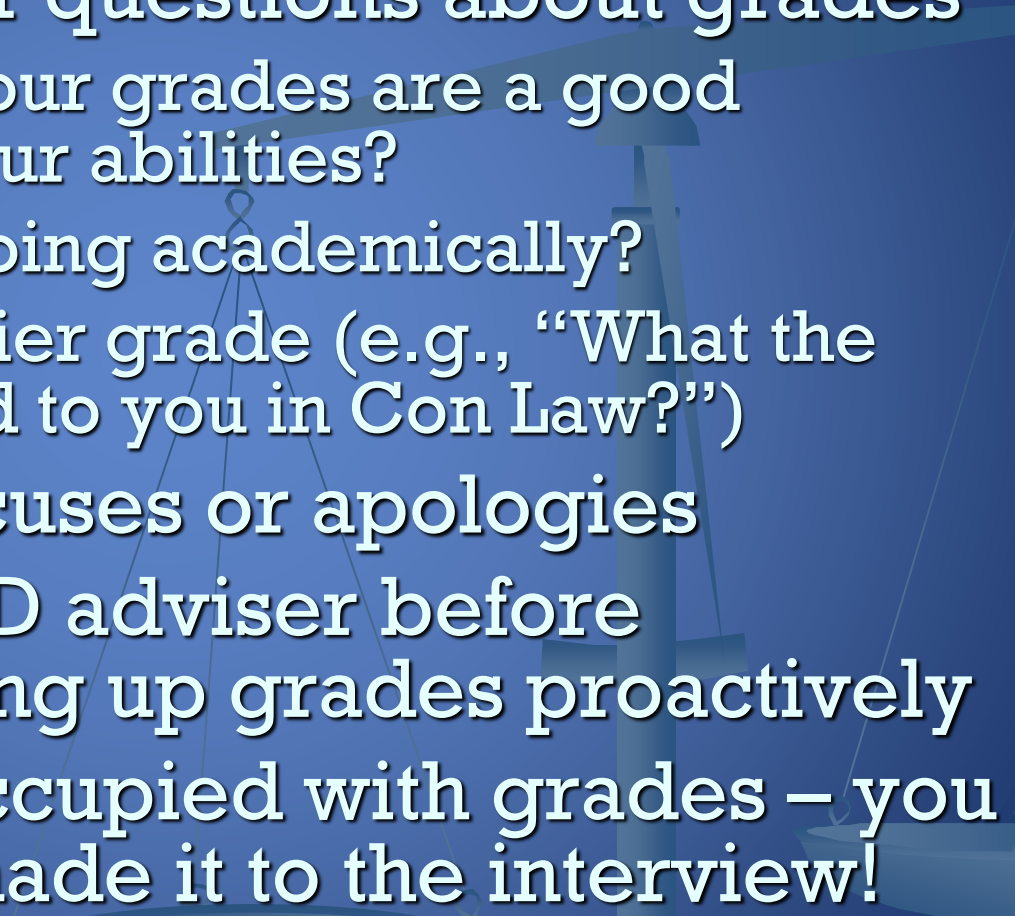
# Weaknesses (cont)

- 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?*

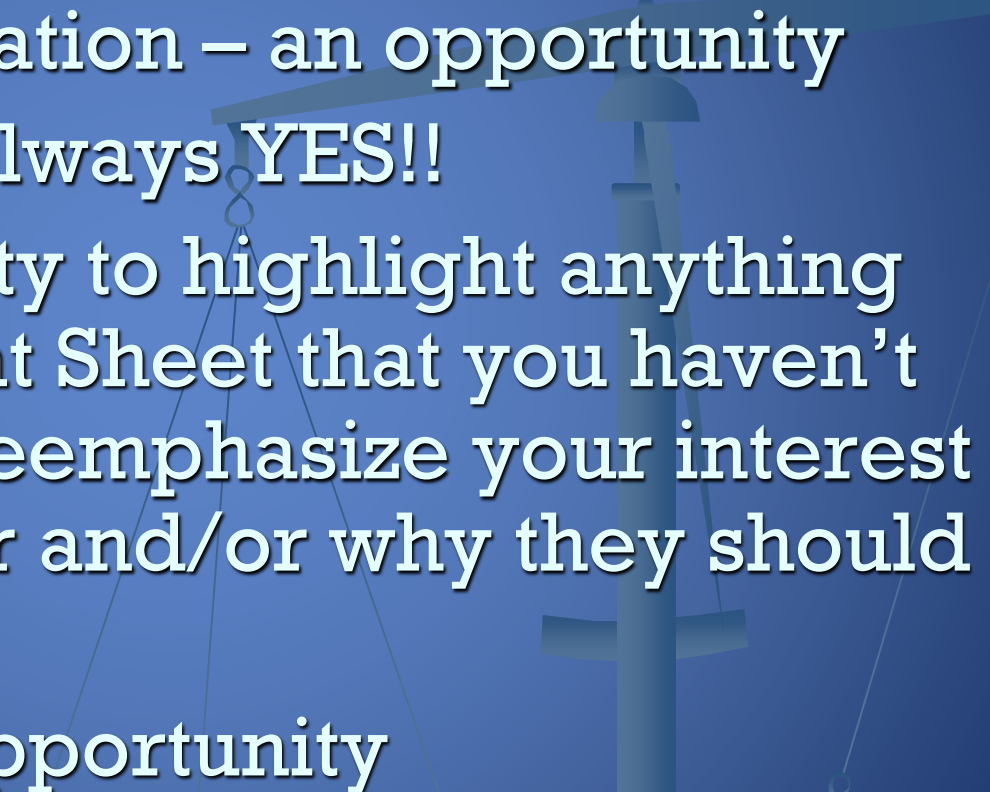




# Questions about Grades

- 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
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# Why are you interested in this opportunity?

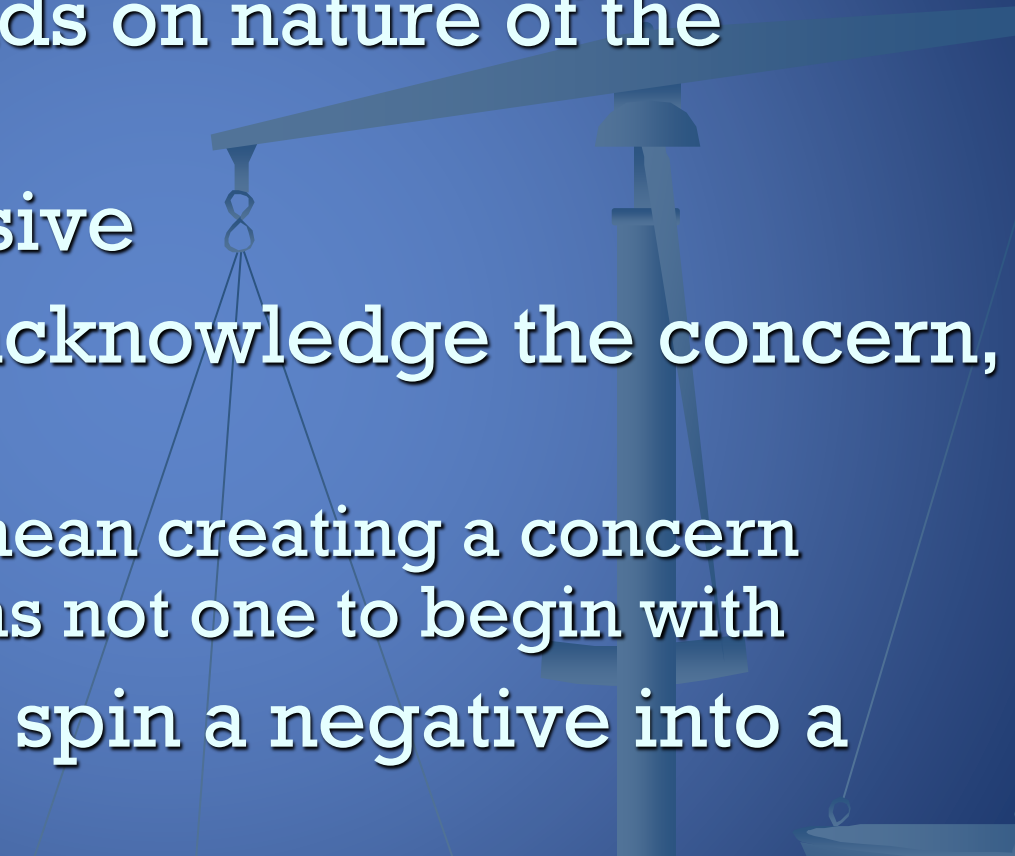
- Almost public interest organization will ask you some version of this question.
- It's okay if you don't have direct experience in the field, but have a reason why you want to work in it now.
  - A class, a presentation, a book, a volunteer experience that opened your eyes to an issue -- all good things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

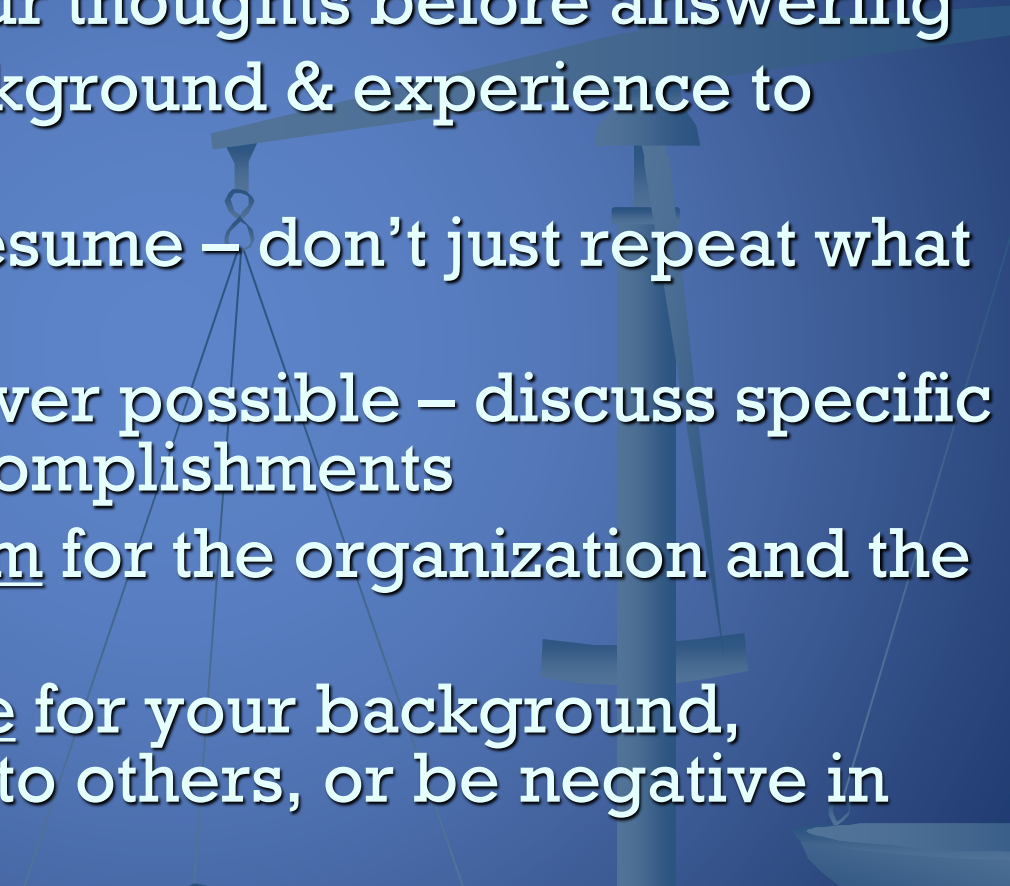
**Answer the prompt! Don't go off on a tangent!**

# Hypothetical Questions

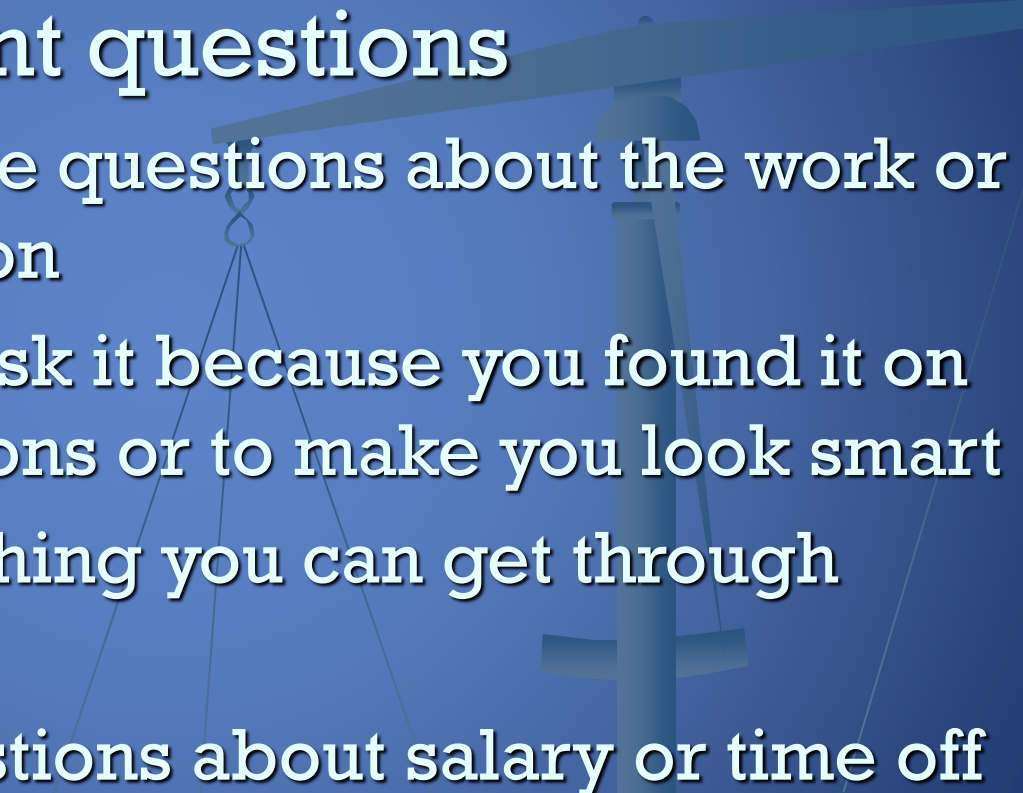


- Most common in government and non-profit hiring
- Public Defender and Prosecution interviewers like to ask ethical “what ifs...”
- As much about your thought process as a “right” answer
- If you’re applying for Public Defense, be prepared for the question: “Are there any cases that you wouldn’t take?”

# 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
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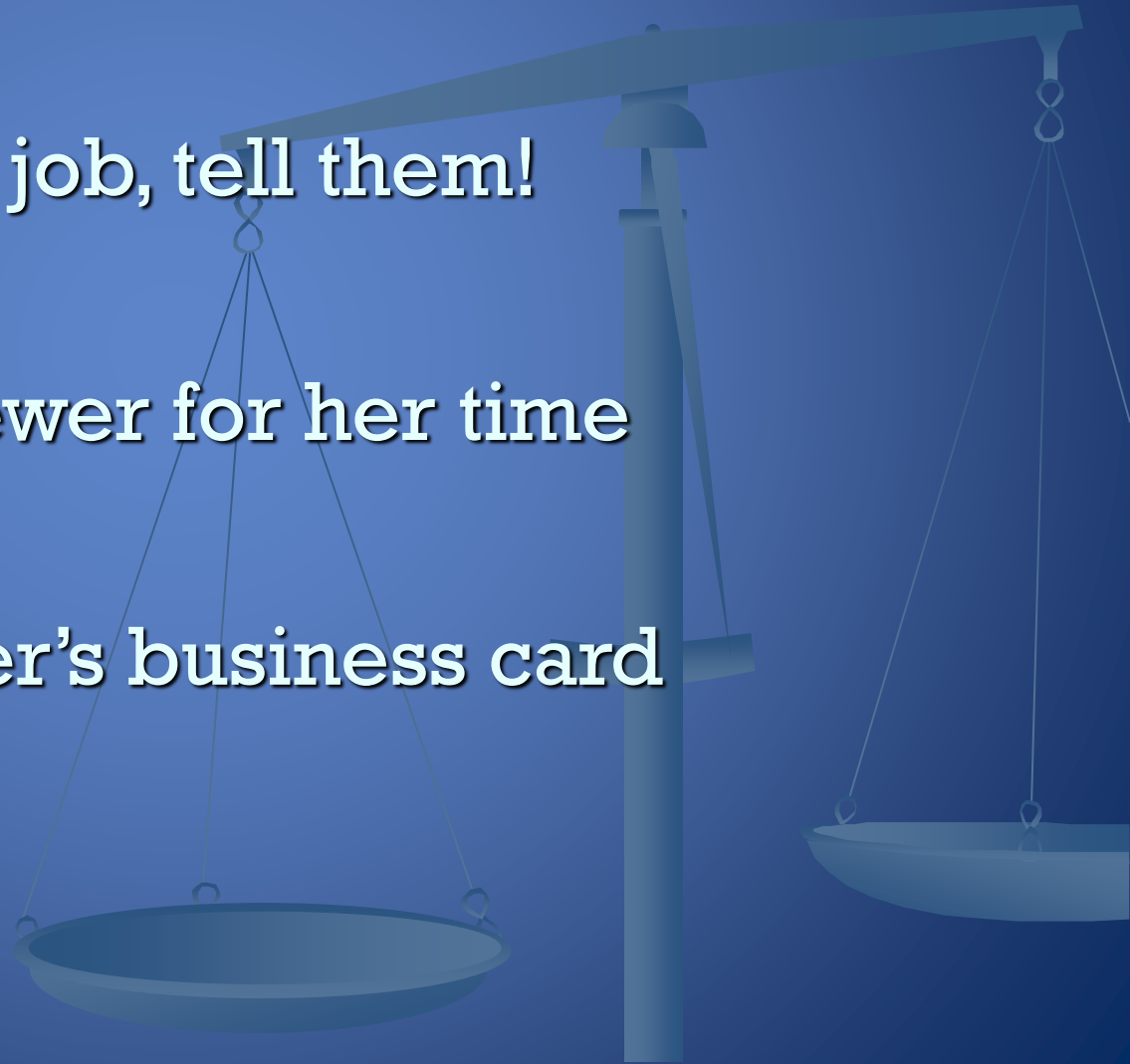
# Closing the Interview

- 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

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

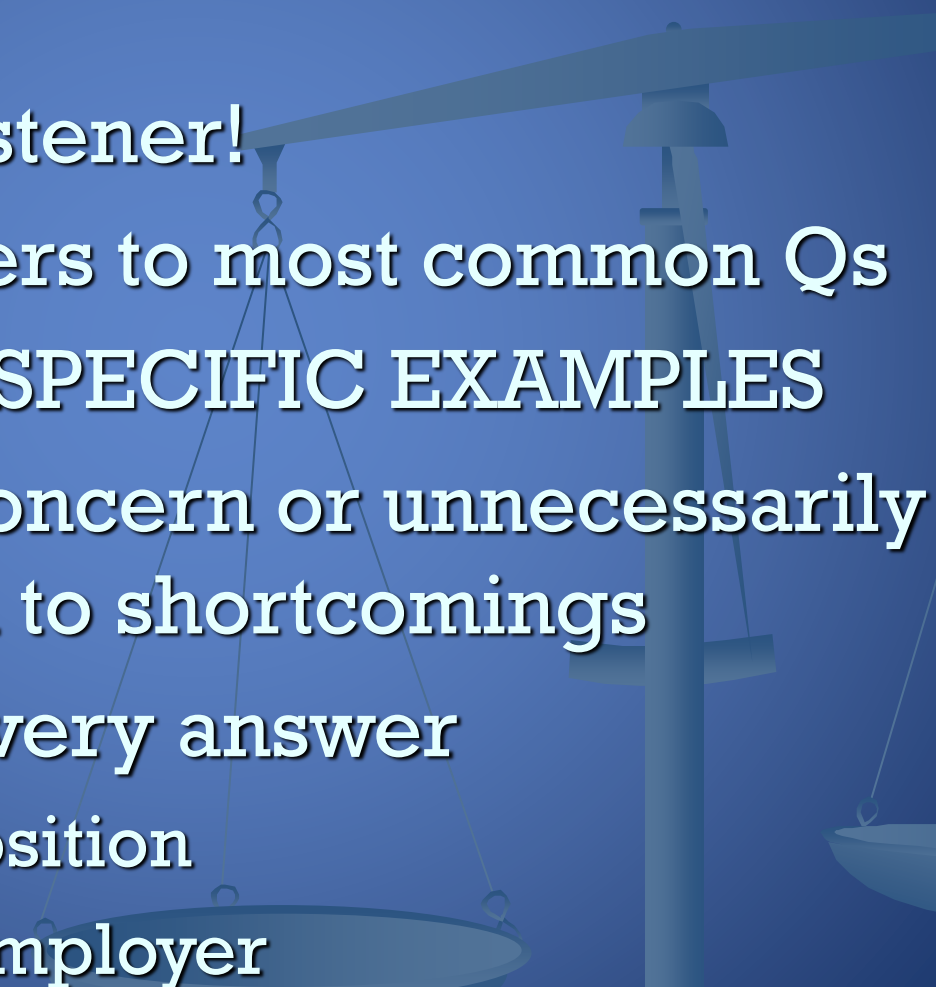


# After the Interview



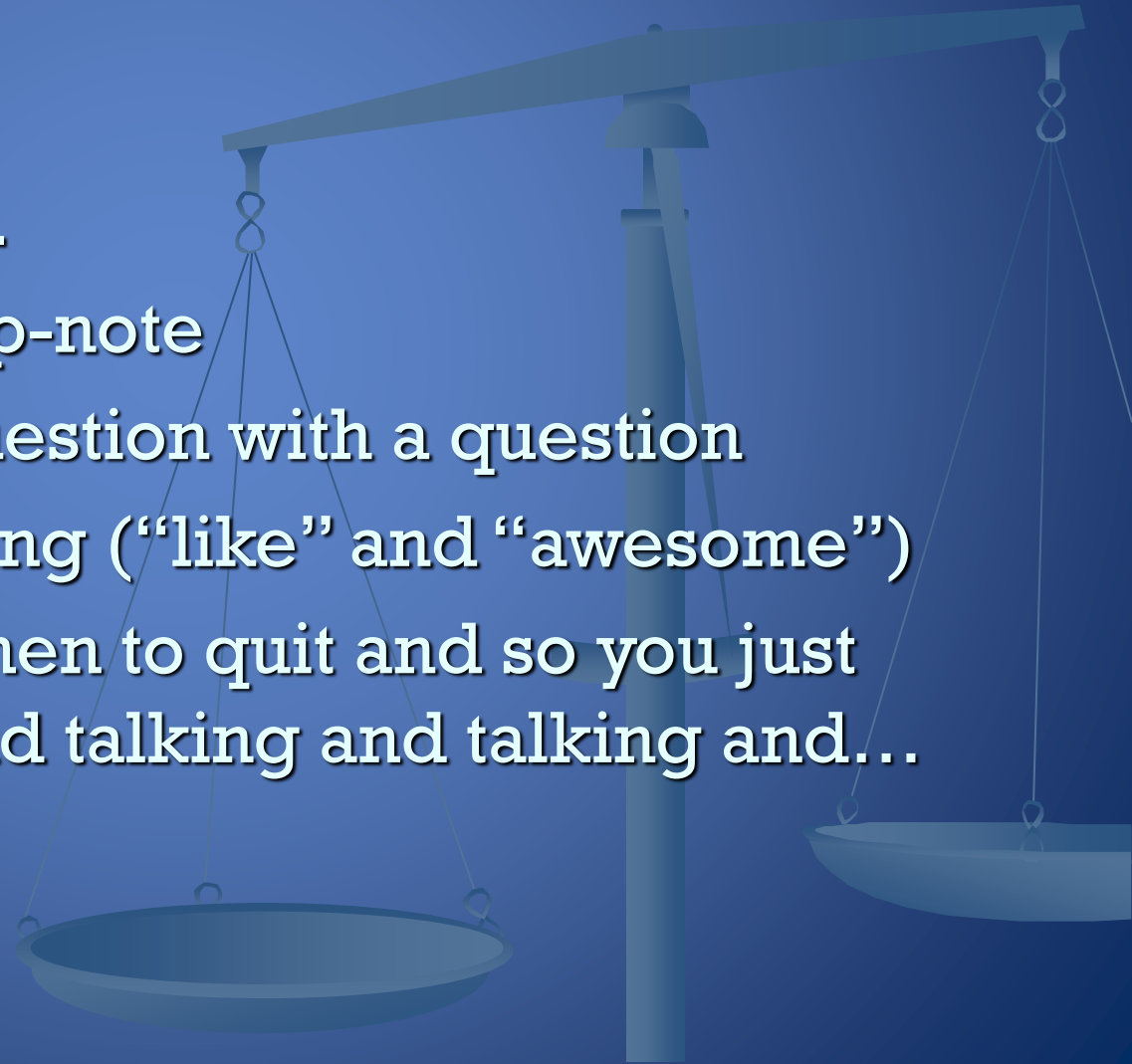
- Thank You Notes
  - Could be a hand written card or an e-mail
    - Consider timing
  - If written, this is part of your application!!
    - All REQUIRE the same level of professionalism
    - All REQUIRE the same attention to detail
  - Can hurt you just as it can help you
- Social Media
- Background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



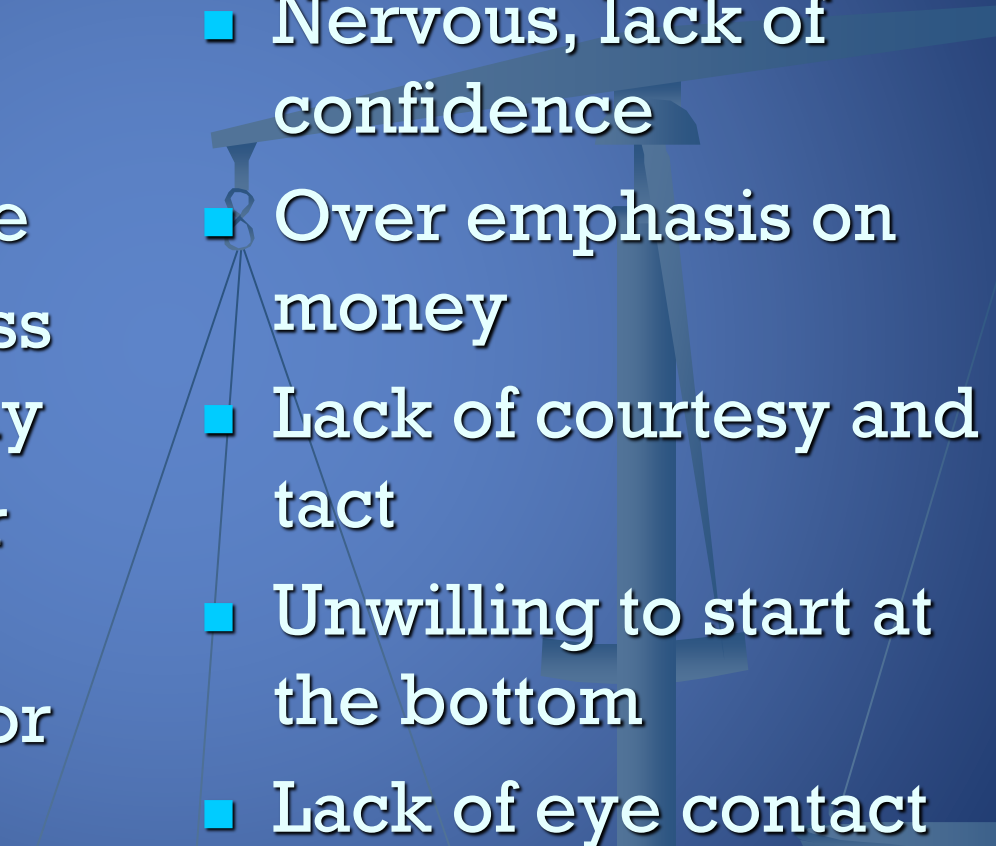
# Are you nervous?



- 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

- 
- 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!

