**12 Ways To Conduct A Great Interview:**

1. **Don't conduct an interview, have a conversation.** One of the biggest mistake people make in the interview setting is to conduct it like it appears in a magazine (question and answer). Don't make that mistake. Forget about the questions and just have a comfortable conversation. Keyword: comfortable.
2. **Do your homework.** The only way to avoid getting stuck asking questions is to do so much research that you don't need them. Know your subject, know the issues and know what the public would want to know if they could sit down with the subject matter.
3. **Don't stick to your agenda.** To make matters worse, most interviewers follow the questions that they have lined up in the order they wrote them, instead of letting it flow based on what the subject is saying. I've seen many great follow-up conversations and side-tracks lost because the interviewer was following their flow instead of the flow of the conversation.
4. **Have notes, not questions.** It's ok to have some notes about concepts you would like to discuss, but don't hold it in your hand and look down at it - that will break the conversation and turn it into an interview.
5. **Ask open ended questions.** Always start your questions or commentary with words like "how" and "why". Those two words can never be responded to with the words, "yes" or "no". If you want something more than one or two word answers, use words like "how" and "why".
6. **Open arms.** Do your best to have nothing blocking you from your subject matter. This includes objects like recorders, pens, coffee tables, etc... In an ideal world, keep your arms open and your heart aimed at the subject matter's heart. I do not know why this works, but it does create a much more human connection - let nothing get in the way.
7. **If you're going to record it...** start training yourself now to not say things like, "ummm" and "ahhhh." While it sounds natural in everyday chitter chatter, those little vocal stumbles sound extra annoying if you plan on publishing the audio file, and it's even more frustrating if you have to transcribe the audio to text. It's one of the hardest things to do, but be conscious of it.
8. **Don't say anything.** This is an old journalism trick, but it works wonders. Many people have been interviewed many times and they know the questions they are most likely to be asked, so their answers are practiced and canned. If you want to get a little bit more out of them or something original, wait for five seconds after they finish their last sentence and do not say anything. More often than not, that moment of silence will get them thinking and they'll start speaking from their heart (and with a whole other perspective than their standard canned answers).
9. **Watch the clock.** Try not to go over thirty minutes. You should be able to capture everything you need in fifteen minutes or less.
10. **Be the ambassador for your audience.** Don't forget that your role as the interviewer is to ask the questions that your mass public would want the answer to if they could be in that room. They can't be there. You are. Be their ambassador. Ask the questions they want answered.
11. **Don't just take notes.** Old school journalists don't record anything, they just take notes. Personally, I find it very distracting, and the act of taking notes separates you from the subject matter. You wind up focusing way too much on the note-taking or the typing instead of what matters most: the person in front of you. Invest in a good recorder and have a conversation. Worry about the transcription later. There's nothing more annoying than when a journalists says, *"hold on, can you please slow down so that I can get this all written down."* If that doesn't kill the flow, I don't know what does.
12. **Have fun.** If you're stressed or focused on your notebook and the questions in it, your subject will "feel it" and will pick up on your nerves or apprehension. Remember that the best conversations are the fun conversations. Have fun.