

# How To Read Minds

Demystifying the Interview Process

# Don't Panic

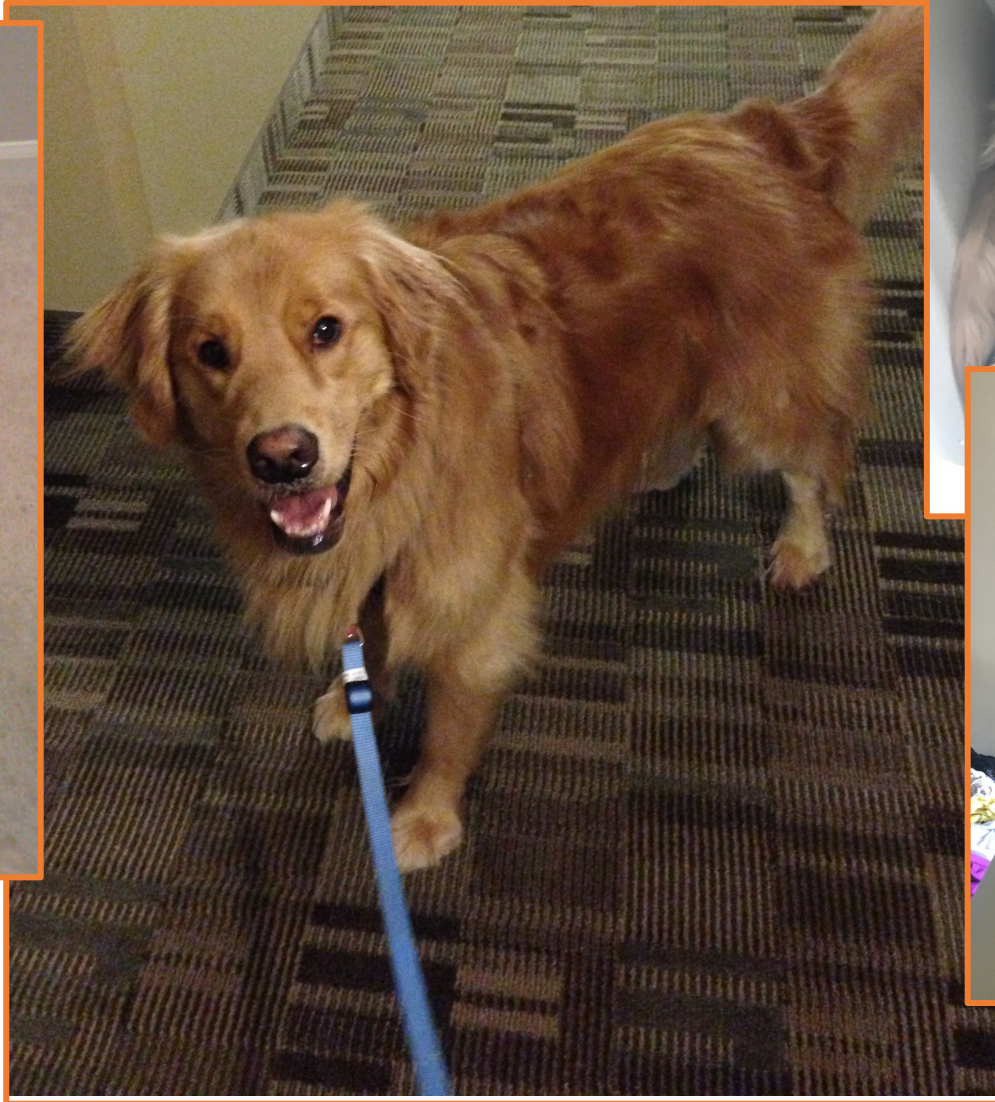
**You are not there to get a job. You're there to see if it's a good fit.**

# Truth

1. You are not there to get a job. You're there to see if it's a good fit.
2. You have one day to make a decision that will impact the rest of your life. You owe it to yourself to spend that entire time gathering data.
3. You will get rejected.
4. You will reject.
5. Sometimes, you may get rejected for something that doesn't feel "fair". Sometimes, it may actually not be fair. Decide how you're going to deal with that.
6. See (1).

Me

# ~~Me~~ My Dog



(my dog is way more photogenic than I am)

# Who's Who

- Sourcer
- Recruiter
- Recruiting Coordinator
- Interviewers
- Hiring Manager
- Company Specific: Bar Raiser / Bar Tender / As-Appropriate / etc

# Prepare

- Use University resume services
- Practice
- Pick a language
- Review:
  - Data structures
  - Calculating O-notation
  - Recursion
  - Dynamic programming
  - Testing
- Code something longhand
- Create questions

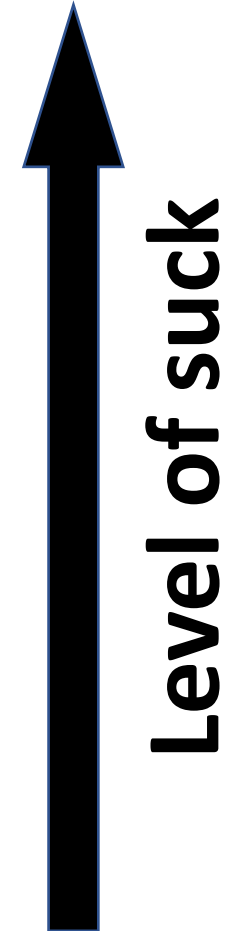
# Interview Questions

Hypothetical (AWFUL)

Functional (just Google that)

Example (“Tell me about a time when...”)

Scenario (show me, don't tell me)





# Hypothetical Questions Suck, And Are Usually A Sign Of Inexperienced Interviewer... Or It's A Trap

- **Hypothetical**

- How do you drive consensus?
- How do you prioritize tasks?
- How do you herp a derp?

- If you can append “In general...” to their question, it’s hypothetical

- **ANSWERS:**

[a] “I had to prioritize three different class projects once. Here’s how I did it...”

[b] “...and this is what I learned from it...”

[c] “...and here’s how I would use that knowledge in the future.”

**Pretend they asked you an example question.**

# Functional Questions Are Popular In Tech, But Contribute More To Failure Than Good Decisions

- **Functional**

- “In Outlook, how do you add a signature?”
- “What is the difference between a hashmap and a hashtable in Java?”
- “Compare *final*, *finally*, and *finalize*.”

- Google-ready book fact does not help make a good decision

- **ANSWERS:**

[a] “I haven’t used that since freshman year, but here’s what I remember...”

[b] “I would do X and Y to learn more about this.”

**Answer as best as you can and be honest about the parts you aren’t sure of. “I would Google that”.**

# Examples Are Part Of That Behavioral Interviewing Thing Everyone Seems To Like These Days

- **Example**

- “Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your manager.”
- “What is the worst technical decision you’ve ever made?”
- “Tell me about the most interesting code you’ve ever written.”

- **Dangerous...**

- Remember, some of us can lie really well.
- Not all questions work on all candidates

- **ANSWERS:**

[a] “Here’s an example of something similar...”

[b] “...and here’s what I learned from it...”

[c] “...and here’s what I would have done differently if I’d had that knowledge.”

**Think like a politician.**

# Scenario Questions Are The Epitome Of “Show Me” And Represent The Best Possible Interview

- **Scenario**

- “As your manager, I’d like you to figure out how to move all of our code over to Java and use git as our source control. Right now, we use PHP and dev desktops. What do you do with this?”
- “Company has decided to get into the business of matchmaking. Design Lovelily, our new online dating service.”

- **ANSWERS:**

- [a] “Let me start by asking...”
- [b] “...Okay, the first answer that pops to my mind is...”
- [c] “...but I should also consider...”
- [d] “...here is how I would test this.”

**Have a dialogue with the interviewer. This is the fun part! Interview them.**

# These Are Bad To Hear

- Tricks: “...the doctor is HIS MOTHER!”
- Puzzle questions (AKA “stupid XOR tricks): “...oh, that’s how it’s  $O(1)$ .”
- Logic puzzles: “...and that’s why manhole covers are round.”
- Language-specific questions: “...so it’s only one line in LISP.))))))))))”
- Glassdoor: “...and that’s how you find the integers that sum to  $k$ .”
  - (these change over time... nobody’s asking atoi anymore)
- Software-specific questions: “...this is easier in Taleo.”
- Fillers: “...see, my top three weaknesses are really strengths!”

**You will hear at least one of these. They’re stupid. Treat them like Functional questions.**

# These Are Bad To Say



The next slide is the  
complete list of reasons I  
teach interviewers to give a  
candidate a No-Hire

1. Getting stuck... and not knowing how to get themselves un-stuck.
2. Thinking silently... and getting annoyed when interrupted.
3. Not knowing an API... and not being able to come up with one.
4. Being wrong... and being aggressive about their position when challenged.
5. Not knowing an answer... and handwaving instead of admitting that.
6. Making assumptions... and not vetting them.
7. Not finishing... and not being able to explain their algorithm.



That's It.

# Here Are Some Examples Of Stuff I Don't Care About, But *Your Interviewer May*, So Ask Them

- Language-specific syntax
  - `mystack.extract()` //meh
  - `hm[i]++` (in java) //I'm going to question this
  - ...remember it's a whiteboard
- Off-by-one
- Handling *certain* edge cases
  - `if( mystr == null )` //good
  - `register void* value = malloc (x)...` //too much!
- Coding practices
  - getters, setters, constructors //bonus if they ask
  - `public v private` //same as the above
- Naming
- Stuff caught by compiler

# Sometimes Things Fall Apart

- Interviewer is a no-show
- Room isn't reserved
- “Can you come back tomorrow?”
- Whiff an easy question
- Sudden inspiration... for a question you already answered
- You have NO IDEA how to answer a question



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# ...And Sometimes, It Was Just Never Meant To Be

- Interviewer is unprepared
- Interviewer is bad
- Interviewer is a jerk
- It's going horribly, and you can tell



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# Questions

- Why did you decide to work here versus anywhere else?
- What's the most interesting project YOU'VE worked on while here?
- What's one thing you wish you could change about this company?
- What advice do you have for me as I look for a job?
- If you had to describe the culture here in just one word, what would it be?

**Avoid cliché questions, or asking a question “just because it’s expected”.  
You are interviewing them.**

# Afterwards



# Internship To Offer

Make your manager happy.

# Truth: Redux

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