

## Karen's Top 10 Media Interview Techniques

1. **Develop and Focus on 3 Messages.** Prepare key messages that are applicable to the reporter's story and look for ways to insert/bridge YOUR points into the conversation. Interviews are not ONLY about answering questions. But, don't simply deliver messages. Use examples, analogies and visual images to make the message relevant to the reporter's audience.
2. **Start off Strong.** Think of a sentence or two to get you into the interview and use a phrase such as: "First, I'd like to say..." to get you on track. Provide the 35,000 foot view or umbrella to focus the interview and guide them toward the conversation you want to have.
3. **Own the Story.** They can do the story with you or without you, but they can't say what only you can say based on your expertise and personal experience. If you feel you are getting stuck or off track, go back to your insight – how it affects the reader, listener or viewer and why it's important. The audience may not remember all of the facts, but they will remember the examples that drove the message home.
4. **Remember Your Audience.** Every interview is an opportunity to share, inform, and educate, but remember your audience to keep it simple. Talk to the reader/viewer and use simple language that they can understand. If you were listening, what would you care about?
5. **Explain the Problem so the Solution is Important.** Help them understand the scope of the problem and how it affects people to evoke emotion. When you make someone feel, they'll care. If they care, they'll listen.
6. **Acknowledge and Bridge** from the question to your message. You may say something like, "That's a question we face often" or, "That's a common misperception" or even, "That's a unique take on the issue." The acknowledgement should sound natural and help you provide information instead of simply answering questions that may be limited. The transition phrase helps you provide important information.
7. **Less is More.** Keep your answers concise and relevant. Less is more because the more you say; the easier it is for your message to become diluted. By keeping your answers to a few focused sentences, you will reduce the risk of interpretation. Remember, interviews last longer than one or two questions,

so you will have opportunities to say more. You don't have to deliver it all in one breath.

8. **Be Engaging.** Remember to smile and look people in the eye. To help you come across as energetic and engaged, speak a bit louder. Let your excitement and enthusiasm come through. After all, if you are not excited about what you're saying, why would they be?
9. **Pause.** Don't rush. Allow yourself time to consider the answer. The pause gives you time to think, especially when a difficult question is asked. But it also helps people digest what you are saying. When you talk quickly, it's harder for people to follow your thoughts.
10. **Practice Aloud.** Develop two lists of questions. List one is everything you expect to be asked. List two is everything you hope they won't ask or don't want them to ask. Ask someone to interview you and practice delivering your answers out loud.

**BONUS:** Interviews are about people, with people and for people. Personalize your answers if you really want people to hear what you have to say!

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