

## 5 Completely Avoidable Podcast Interviewing Mistakes

The job of a great interviewer is to make the interviewee the star of the show. To do that, try to avoid these five mistakes:

1. **Scripting the entire conversation**– You don't need to know every question you're going to ask ahead of time. Have a conversation, don't write a screenplay. I repeat this because it's important. The world doesn't need another stiff, repetitive podcast.
2. **Previewing every question you plan to ask**– Don't tell your guest all of the questions you're going to ask ahead of time. Rehearsed answers are not raw, emotional, or interesting. They're rehearsed. Your guest knows their story. Your job is to ensure them that you're going to be a good shepherd of that story, not to tell them the entire game plan. You'll lose so much of the value of an interview if your guest comes in with scripted answers (just like you being boring if you're scripted).
3. **Talking too much**– Yes, your listeners subscribe to your podcast because they like you. But you're not the star. Your guest is. Your personality and your story can come through in your questions and *maybe* the occasional personal anecdote to complement your guest's story. Being vulnerable yourself can be a great way to get your guest to open up as well. Just know that there's a fine line between you talking too much and you helping your guest shine.
4. **Playing "gotcha!"**– If you want to trick your guest into publicly telling a lie or misstating a fact or telling their version of a story you know better than them, then go to work for a tabloid. Challenging your guest is great. One tactic Marc Maron uses is to tell his guest what he thinks about them (even if it's negative) based on their public persona and then he pushes the guest to reveal the truth in response. Maybe Marc's opinion is reality, or maybe it's completely off-base and driven by one or two bad experiences. That's great! It leads to a raw, vulnerable conversation. But don't try to trap your guest. You'll develop a negative reputation and it'll make your guest and your audience uncomfortable.
5. **Giving verbal agreements to every statement**– I stole this one [from Cliff Ravenscraft](#) because I agree. Your audience doesn't need to hear that you agree with everything your guest is saying. Hearing your mm's, ah's, and yeah's will be a distraction if you do it too much. Every noise you make is on air when you're recording a conversation. Find a way to show your guest you're engaged without making too much noise.

Avoid these mistakes and you'll be well on your way to creating a great show.