

Interviewing tips from Bethany Chafin, Assistant News Director at WFDD

Big Takeaways:

- do your homework
- be curious
- be a good listener

Before the interview:

- if they've written a book or articles, done videos, etc., watch them if you have time, they might not relate directly to the topic of your interview, but something could provide nice insight that allows you to ask a richer, deeper question
- they'll respect that you've done this, they'll feel heard
- up to you whether you listen to other interviews with this person as this could spark new knowledge that helps you, it also could make you hesitate about asking a good question that someone else has also asked, but recently I interviewed a guy who was dealing with grief and he said that grief changes and that as he's talked about his late wife, the answers about his grief are different, so don't be afraid to ask a question that maybe they've gotten before

In the interview:

- make sure they're comfortable
- some chit chat, they might be nervous especially if they're in the studio
- if they're not in the studio, still important to begin to establish rapport
- make sure expectations are understood, we're not really the model of gotcha journalism
- have your notes, but don't be married to them
- if something they say takes you further down in your list, go there
- if they say something that peaks your curiosity, ask about it, if you're curious about it, your listener might be too
- your next question is often prompted by the answer that comes before
- nod, show them they're being heard, you'll have to check levels and things like this but it's important to be maintaining eye contact when possible
- if something catches your attention, jot down
- at the end ask them what you haven't covered in your conversation that they'd like to

Other notes:

- When possible, the character needs to be a good talker, be able to relate details, capable of reflection
- the audio leads you, no ego
- it's all about the listener experience
- don't only use who, what, when, where, why words
- make them paint a picture for you, get them to tell you how it felt