

In most interview settings, employers will stick to basic interview protocol. Basic interview protocol is simply asking career-based questions and receiving professional career related answers. Occasionally, an interviewer may stray off course and ask some personal questions that are sometimes either off limits or downright illegal. Since the questions that may be asked are of a personal nature, you have every right to decline answering such questions. But sometimes, applicants are afraid of offending the interviewer when these personal questions are asked so they go ahead and answer.

How can you avoid answering personal questions? Knowing which questions are thought of as illegal is the first step to understanding how to answer them. Usually, an employer doesn't intend to offend an applicant by asking personal questions. They more than likely are just curious.

Questions about your marital status, your age, religion, or handicap are completely illegal. When employers ask questions like, "Are you married?" he or she may be asking this to evaluate if you would be readily available on days and hours otherwise dedicated to family life. The key to answering personal questions effectively without offending your interviewer is to be tactful and observant. You may be tactful and counter his or her question with a question like, "Do you mean will I be available on the weekends?" By doing this, you show yourself to be an insightful person who is able to discern thoughts and words.

You also have the right to completely decline to answer the question. But remember to do so tactfully, because in most cases the interviewer means no harm. You could answer something like this: "I believe that we should remain concentrated on job related questions, if you don't mind." This approach is tactful and suitable for most situations.

Of course it is up to you when it comes to answering personal questions. If you choose to answer one or two, make sure it is one or two. Anymore and this will give the interviewer more freedom to "pry" into your personal business. During an interview situation, it is best to stick with job related questions.