Do you know how to conduct an interview? It could be a job interview, an information-seeking interview, a journalistic interview, or perhaps for entertainment purposes – like an interview that’s presented as a written article, a live interview onstage, or a podcast interview! Improviser, host and podcaster host David Shore shares his advice, including how to prepare for an interview and specific tips for during the interview.

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SUMMARY:
HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

How to hone your interviewing skills

- There’s no magic bullet. It takes **time and practice**.
- If you take the time to **critically watch or listen to recordings of yourself** (or of others) conducting interviews, you can probably accelerate your interviewing skill development.

![David Shore interviewing Dr. Andrea Wojnicki on stage for Monkey Toast](image.png)

How to prepare for an interview

- **Research** about your interviewee – read their book, do online research
- **Pre-interviews** are a good idea
  - Ideally over the phone, if not then via email
  - Ask three things:
    1. What do you want me to ask you?
    2. What topics are off limits?
    3. Do you have any stories you want to tell? Don’t tell me the story, but tell me what it’s about, so I can queue you up!
- Write an interview **script** or a list of questions
Tips for during the interview

- Your **focus** needs to be on the interviewee. **Listen and engage.**
- It needs to be **about the interviewee** (not about the interviewer!)
- Make sure the interviewee is **comfortable**. If they aren’t talkative, it’s ok to ask some leading questions.
- **Yes/No questions are ok**, as long as you also ask WHY.
- It’s OK to take a few seconds to **look down at your interview script** for reference.
- **Relax!** It’s not brain surgery!!!!

David Shore & Andrea Wojnicki
at the Hotdocs Podcast Festival
#44 HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

## REFERENCES & LINKS

### David Shore

- **Monkey Toast** - [https://monkeytoast.com/](https://monkeytoast.com/)
- **The Panel Show podcast** - [https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/the-panel-show/id1495709255](https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/the-panel-show/id1495709255)
- **Twitter** - [https://twitter.com/thedavidshore?lang=en](https://twitter.com/thedavidshore?lang=en)
- **Facebook** - [https://www.facebook.com/david.shore.376](https://www.facebook.com/david.shore.376)
- **Podcasts recommended:**
  - Marc Maron’s podcast WTF - [http://www.wtfpod.com/podcast](http://www.wtfpod.com/podcast)
  - Canadaland - [https://www.canadalandshow.com/](https://www.canadalandshow.com/)
  - The Secret Life of Canada - [https://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada)
- **Interviewers mentioned:**
  - Marc Maron - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Maron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Maron)
  - Tavis Smiley - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tavis_Smiley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tavis_Smiley)

### Talk About Talk & Dr. Andrea Wojnicki

- **Andrea’s email** - Andrea@TalkAboutTalk.com
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Dr. ANDREA’S INTRODUCTION

Well, hello there, Talk About Talk listeners. I’m your communication coach, Dr. Andrea Wojnicki. Please call me Andrea. Thanks for listening. Talk About Talk is where you can learn to communicate more effectively, so you can do better at work and improve your relationships with everyone around you.

If you go to TalkAboutTalk.com, you can see the full archive of all the communication skills topics that we’ve covered in the podcasts and email blogs.

Today’s episode’s focused on the skill of CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS - as in you being the one who’s asking the Qs. It could be a job interview, an information-seeking interview, a journalistic interview, or perhaps for entertainment purposes – like an interview that’s presented as a written article, a live interview onstage, or - a podcast interview!

In the future we’ll also have an episode about being on the other side of the desk – how to rock it in a job interview – being the one who’s interviewed. Today we focus on conducting interviews.

The guest expert today is David Shore. For those of your who subscribe to the Talk About Talk email blog, you may recall that last year I was interviewed onstage for a live improv show here in Toronto called MONKEY TOAST. Not something you do everyday, right? But thanks in large part to David, it was an incredibly positive experience. So – I asked David if I could interview HIM about how to successfully conduct an interview, and here we are!

In this episode, you’ll learn:
- How to hone your interviewing skills,
  - There’s no magic bullet. It takes time and practice. Even the most skilled and famous interviewers, like say the expert HR manager in your firm who conducts job interviews, or podcaster Tim Ferriss, or the late night tv show hosts. They weren’t born instantly skilled at interviewing. In fact, in Tim Ferriss’ podcast, he frequently talks about how he thinks his early interviews make him cringe, and how the successful people he interviews - all put their pants on one leg at a time and they all experienced multiple failures prior to their success. Including himself.
  - That reminds me, we also talk about how some of the best interviewers aren’t the best humans. While all great interviewers are charming when they’re interviewing (think Oprah Winfrey. Think Marc Maron, Think Matt Lauer, think Jian Ghomeshi. I could go on.) They’re all charming during the interviews, aren’t they? But clearly not all of them are good humans. Think Me Too.
  - Back to honing your interview skills. It takes time. It takes practice. There are no short cuts. Except for this one thing that our guest expert David Shore suggests. If
you take the time to critically watch tape of yourself - or even others - conducting interviews, you can probably accelerate your interviewing skill development.

- **how to prepare for an interview**, including
  - The importance of doing research about your interviewee,
  - Tips on how and why to conduct pre-interviews
  - And of course, writing your interview script
- **how to make the interviewee comfortable** before and during the interview
- **tips for during the interview**, including:
  - Listening and engaging, but also, not hesitating to take a few seconds to look down to reference your interview script
  - Making sure that the focus is on the interviewee, and What to do when your interviewee is nervous or they aren’t talkative
  - And the types of Qs that work well. (David’s advice about the Y/N Q might surprise you!)
- David also provides me with some **advice in terms of my interviewing skills**. You’ll hear that in a few minutes, but basically his advice is that we should all (me included) just relax. It’s just an interview. It’s not brain surgery, right? No one’s going to die!

So there’s lots of valuable learnings here for us in this interview. As always, you can easily access the summary or any details of this podcast by going to talkabouttalk.com, clicking on podcasts, and then shownotes.

Here’s the thing. I was listening to a podcast this week hosted by one of my favourite podcasters and he actually said “there’s lots of detail in this episode. So you might want to get a pen and paper ready!”. I thought, “no! how about you summarize it for me?” And that is exactly why I create shownotes for you. I’ve heard from several listeners that they appreciate the shownotes.

So keep doing whatever you’re doing – driving, walking, housework, whatever. You can listen and learn. And then later you can go to the shownotes on the [TalkAboutTalk.com website](http://talkabouttalk.com) to reference whatever you need.

Now let me introduce our guest expert **David Shore**. David is an improviser, a comedy writer, an improv instructor, a celebrity interviewer, a podcaster, and an actor.

- He’s the Artistic Director and Executive Director of a Canadian Comedy Award-winning show called [Monkey Toast: The Improvised Talk Show](http://monkeytoast.com). This is the show where he interviewed me onstage. If you’re curious, you can check out the show at Monkeytoast.com.
- David’s also the Producer and Host of [The Panel Show](http://thepanelshow.com), where they bring together two real journalists and two improvisers to talk about politics and real world issues. The [Panel Show](http://thepanelshow.com) is recorded in front of a live studio audience and then also released as a podcast.
• David is also an alumni of the Second City Mainstage in Toronto, and he served as a player/coach at the IO West, as a Program Consultant for BBC Comedy in the UK, and as a writer for Reader’s Digest.
• He’s also been a teacher. He taught Improv in London, UK, at the Second City Training Center, and at The Bad Dog Theatre in Toronto.

As you can see, David’s interviewing experience is extensive. He’s conducted interviews that appeared in print, he’s conducted live interviews onstage, and he’s conducted interviews that are edited for podcasts.

So here I am, interviewing the interviewer.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Dr. Andrea Wojnicki: Thank you, David, so much for joining us to talk about interviewing.

David Shore: Yeah, I'm happy to be here. I love your artwork.

AW: Oh, that's nice. Especially after you've been so gracious and patient with me as I'm trying to set up my audio equipment. The listeners don't know this because my audio equipment wasn't working. But I was having major problems recording and David was incredibly patient. And he told me that it wasn't bothering him at all.

DS: I've been on your end of it. You were on my show, Monkey Toast. And we were recording it for podcasts, which we decided not to do. It's very difficult to record a live comedy show, particularly if it has live music. And we had nights where some of the equipment wasn't working. And we have to open the door because we have a big crowd. It was a nightmare. And some nights we decided not to record. Eventually I decided to kill the podcast because it's just too difficult. Even with my other podcast The Panel Show, subjects we had radio interference from cell phones.

AW: So this is a new one that I hadn't heard of - radio interference from cell phones?

DS: Yeah. Apparently it's not uncommon, depending on the venue, depending on the equipment.

AW: so why don't you share with the audience some of the types of interviews that you've done? and then if we want we could get into equipment malfunctions.

DS: Sure. I'm an improviser by trade, which people are like, what's that? I guess people would say I'm a comedian, but I don't do stand up. I did back when I was in high school. I, you know, trained as an improviser out in LA at the Improv Olympic and then came back to Toronto where I was at the Second City on the main stage there for about 18 months. And then when I left, I started my own show: Monkey Toast, which is an improv show. And it morphed into a talk show when CBC Radio got involved. And so they trained me - taught me how to interview people. And we worked with them for about a year. We kept that as a talk show. Through that I've got to meet … that's how I met you. You were a guest on the show.
We're always looking for interesting people. And through that as well, for awhile I did celebrity interviews for Reader's Digest Canada. We did a corporate show for them and they loved it.  

**AW:** So you were interviewing celebrities?  

**DS:** I did. I interviewed William Shatner. They called me one day, and she goes, we'd love for you to interview Dave Thomas from SCTV for our comedy issue, I'm like, okay. She's like, we'll pay you. Okay! I was good. Everything I kept saying was like, “okay.” Because you want to pay me to interview one of the people I idolized growing up? We had to do it over the phone, it was great. And they loved the interview and said, Hey, do you want to do more of these? And I was like, Yeah, why wouldn't I want to be published in a magazine that pays well and is read by 9 million people in Canada? So I gave them a list of people with Don Rickles, I think he was at the top. And then Bobby Orr.  

**AW:** that's hilarious.  

**DS:** But they were like - it had to Canadians. They said, We like the idea of you interviewing William Shatner. If we send you to LA to interview him, who else can you interview there? If we send you there, you can’t just do one interview. So at a time, some of you may have heard of David Shore. That name sounds familiar. And that's because there's a very famous David Shore. He created the TV show HOUSE.  

**AW:** Right.  

**DS:** And I know him. Yeah, we know each other. He's from London, Ontario. He's a nice Canadian as well. I had a Seder once with him in Los Angeles. So I said, What about David Shore? He just won the Emmy for HOUSE and they liked the idea of David Shore interviewing David Shore. I had a phone number and email address and I contacted his wife. They're like Of course we remember you! How could we not remember the other David Shore? Why would you say no to be interviewed by Reader's Digest? 9 million people are going to read what you said!  

**AW:** especially when it's someone that has your name.  

**DS:** Yeah, it was a really good interview actually. It was pretty funny.  

**AW:** So you're interviewing people for magazines, and then now you're interviewing people on stage, and it's live. And then you’re also interviewing people for podcasts, which can be edited. So I have so many questions about this. Let's start at a basic level. How are those different?  

**DS:** Well, you know, I haven't done a print one in a long time. I mean, the Reader's Digest, you know, I do an hour interview, and then I would have to transcribe it and then that would give me about 20 pages and they will cut it down to maybe a page or three quarters of a page. William Shatner's was titled “space cowboy” or something like that, because he has a ranch and it is related to horses and I think he had some charities involved with kids and getting them onto horses and stuff. And with David Shore, we talked about his background and the fact that now that he has a successful show. I get some emails directed at him. I got fan mail sent to my agents, you know, because I'm an actor as well. And so I, one of the things I asked him was like, have you ever been mistaken for me?
AW: That's a great question to ask him.

DS: And he said, Yeah, I once got a call from a guy and he's called, we're talking and he's like, (this is the way my friend John talked), he was like, “Yeah, you're not you're not the David Shore I know.” And it was a friend of mine, John Wolk, who actually works on Jimmy Kimmel, (Named drop!) And he called the wrong David Shore.

AW: So I want to go back a little bit to interviewing skills. Earlier on here, you said that CBC taught you to interview. Can you share with the listeners a few of the things that maybe you remember from back then that they thought you?

DS: It was a long time ago. I forget the name of the gentleman I met with. He played tapes for me of interviews. And he would say, can you see why that was bad? and a big thing was, you know, “do you think this will bring down the government?” Yes? Then that's a bad question. Anything that gives you a yes or no answer is a bad question right? That is, unless you follow it up with why?

AW: so open ended questions is kind of like I don't know, the low hanging fruit for the types of questions to ask, right?

DS: You don't want to ask yes or no questions, because that's what you will typically get: a yes or no answer. Particularly if the person you're interviewing is nervous. The most important thing when you're interviewing someone is to have them relax. I'm not a journalist. I'm not. I told you before the show, if I asked you a question, and you realize, “oh, I don't want to talk about this,” then you just say, “I don't want to talk about it,” and I'm going to move on. It's a comedy and I want them to be comfortable. I kept telling you, I just want you to be comfortable. You're just talking to me.

AW: Yep. That remember, we spoke on the phone the day before the interview, and you said, I just want you to be comfortable. Just talk and I'll guide you and...

DS: but that to me is the most important thing. You have to make the person comfortable. And then it's a conversation. You want to be engaged. I need to listen to you. I always over prepare, no matter what. For Reader's Digest as well. I think when I interviewed William Shatner I read two of his books. And I'd seen all of Star Trek. Because I'd seen all the Star Treks.

AW: You're a trekkie. I get it.

DS: Yeah, but not like - I don't wear the costumes or anything. But I also got some videos or DVDs from the library before I interviewed him. There was one of him and Leonard Nimoy interviewing each other. And so there's valuable information in that, because I went in well-prepared, knowing everything. A lot of the time I know the answer before I ask the question. But at the same time, you have to be able to go off the cuff.

AW: So I was just going to say - in almost any context of interviewing: could be for journalist trying to get information for a story, it could be for entertainment purposes. It could be for a job interview. I heard you say a couple times. The most important thing is to make the interviewee relax, and to feel comfortable. So let's talk about when the interviewee is not relaxed or they don't appear to be comfortable. Do you have any stories or advice about that?
DS: Well, I've had a few guests, I think over the years, I could think of, I've been doing Monkey Toast for 17 years. I can think of three guests who were horrible. I'm not gonna name any names.

AW: No, don't do that.

DS: But they were people who just didn't want to talk, One of them I said, so you've got a new book coming out about hockey? Why don't you tell us about us about it? It's just a book.

AW: Wow.

DS: And I'm thinking, you're literally killing me.

AW: Also themselves, how is that serving their own interest to sell more books?

DS: I don't know. But you know…

AW: what was going on? Was he nervous?

DS: No, I don't know. But after the show, there was a reviewer there. like a journalist, you know, and said, Wow, that was hard. I said, tell me about it. Because I had to answer all the questions. Every question I asked him, I had to answer.

AW: So it probably depends on the person's personality, in terms of getting them to talk, but I like the idea. Generally, we would advise against leading questions or helping answer the question, but sometimes people just need a little prop up, right.

DS: Yeah, I mean, and that's rare. There's three people I could think of in 17 years. Typically, if I know someone is quiet, I don't want to book them as a guest interview.

AW: Right.

DS: So I did do that. I had an old neighbor. He was a musician in a band that was fairly well known at the time and I remember the lead singer came in and he said, I can't believe he talked, because he's really quiet! I hadn't realized that because we would hang out in the backyard and have beers and he was quite talkative. But then he known as being a quiet stoic guy. And when I interviewed him, oh, yeah, you're really quiet. He would give short answers.

AW: some people are good with one on one right? And then yeah, they're in a room or in front of a mic microphone. It's a completely different story.

DS: No, for sure. And that's it's just learning and you're going to make mistakes. You're gonna make mistakes. We were talking about that before we start recording. You know, it took me years to get good at doing interviews. It's a skill. Part of the problem in Western society is, when you watch, you know, film or TV, and instantly something good happens. It takes 10 seconds. It's like… Jimmy Fallon started on The Tonight Show and I thought - he's terrible at interviewing. But that's because he'd probably never done it before. Yeah, but now he's quite good at it.

AW: Now you know, I don't want to name names, but there are some people on TV on Late Night that I think are horrible interviewers.

DS: Well, it's a different skill. It is funny. And it's and you know, if you're asking me, who were my favorite interviewers? I love Seth Meyers and Colbert. And I watch most of the comedy clips from their shows. And I will watch - there's certain guests I want to see. But I
watched **Letterman** every day. I taped Letterman every day. But it was it wasn't for the interview. It was for the comedy.

**AW:** It's a different skill. Totally.

**DS:** Yeah, totally different skill. Yeah. And you can do both. That's the thing. Look, if I'm if I'm interviewing someone, it's not about me. It's about them. The show is about you. The show is not about me. And since my show's comedy show, I'll interject and I know there's certain times where if I say this right now, I'm gonna get a huge laugh. And sometimes I'm feeling particularly funny. And that's what you want it to be. You want it to be a conversation, but at the same time, I don't want to overpower them. I don't want to dominate it unless somebody is super shy and doesn't want to talk.

**AW:** So in the, in the context of a live improv comedy show. You're thinking, well, the audience just wants to be entertained, right? If you're an investigative journalists and you're they're being paid to get information from someone and they refuse. That's tough. Yeah, I keep thinking that third context is a job interview. The person is not talking. Well, they're not getting the job.

**DS:** No, they're not getting a job. And it's funny because, you know, when you ask people to do the show, I said, Sure. And then you were talking about job interviews. I can't remember the last time I was on a job interview. But I do auditions for things, which is, I think, worse.

**AW:** that's tough.

**DS:** It's tough, but I haven't been in a job interview in a long time. And I think, you know, the older you get, the more it's like, whatever. You know what I mean? Like dating. It's a job interview.

**AW:** True, right?

**DS:** And when I moved back to Toronto, I started dating again, and I thought, I'm just me. I'm not going to pretend anything, because if you don't like me, and I don't like you, what is the point?

**AW:** Exactly.

**DS:** You know, I'm wasting your time. I've been in a bad marriage. I've been in bad relationships. I've been in good relationships. And it's like the good relationships are where people who loved me for who I was. Not trying to change me. I'm going to be me. I don't want to go three months and you find out Oh, this is really you.

**AW:** and I've heard that exact advice. Which is tough to do for a job interview. One of my recent guests suggested creating a 60 second infomercial about yourself that is totally honest about your capabilities and your goals.

**DS:** Yeah.

**AW:** And making sure that if you're in a job interview that you're holding true to your personal values. The 60 second infomercial is kind of the same thing when you're dating.

**DS:** Yeah.

**AW:** Who do you think are the best interviewers that you listen to? or read or observed?
DS: Yeah, you know, it's funny because you sent me an email saying, Oh, this one question. Someone asked you, I thought, oh, who are the best interviewers and, unfortunately, to the people that I used to really love watching interviews, they were exposed during #MeToo.

AW: really?

DS: yeah, Charlie Rose.

AW: Okay.

DS: so I loved Charlie Rose. And Tavis Smiley who I literally did a Google search. oh, Tavis Smiley. He did some stuff too.

AW: Okay, so I have to tell you this then. One of the best interviews I ever saw in my life. In fact, I got my kids to watch it - was Jian Ghomeshi interviewing Carrie Fisher. Phenomenal.

DS: Yeah.

AW: And what a guy?

DS: Yeah.

AW: So I told you, I wanted to ask you, what are some of the things that you do in advance of an interview? And we've talked about it a little bit, right? You'd like to talk to the person you're going to interview to see if there's anything …

DS: It's usually through email. Back in the early days of the show, somebody would do a pre interview.

AW: Yeah. What do you think about pre interviews?

DS: It makes sense. I mean, well, if you do if you take a late night TV show, you have something to talk, you're trying to make people laugh and engage them. And you know, if someone's coming on to promote something, you to talk about that, but you just can't talk about that. You need some stories. I'll email people saying, Is there anything you'd particularly want to talk about or don't want to talk about? Because there might be something I want to talk about? I don't want to talk about - Jen Whalen. She said just don't ask me about how we all met. Because I've been asked that to death. So I'd so I asked her on the show, When you do press in the States, what's the one question that you're sick of?

AW: Good question.

DS: So I thought I'd put it that way. You know, because as she goes, it’s her origin story. We've told it so many times, and I get that. Dave Thomas. When I interviewed him, he had no issue telling me about how Bob & Doug McKenzie came about. Yeah, I could hear the joy in his voice. It had to be a phone interview, but he had no issue retelling that old story.

AW: So it's: what do you want to talk about? What do you not want to talk about? What's off limits? And then I love your also your point about: Do you have any great stories? Don't tell me the story …

DS: Sometimes people are like, how did you know this? And I'm like, a lot of its on Wikipedia. I'll do research depending on the person, there might be a lot of information online. If they're an author, I'll probably get the book, Linda McQuaid. I bought her last book. We talked about that.
**AW:** You know, I've been reading a lot of books recently from people that I'm interviewing and I love it. I'm reading more... I don't, I wouldn't say I'm reading it more intensely, because I generally do read to learn. But it's it's a totally different angle to reading something when you know you're going to be talking to the author later.

**DS:** Yeah, because things will come up. You'll definitely find lots of questions and things to talk about and it could be, how did you think about this? Yeah. So you have to do research. Some people are more off the cuff, but I like to be prepared. And by that, I mean, I try and write a flow to the questions.

**AW:** What about during the interview?

**DS:** So, try to ask open ended questions, try to make the guest comfortable and relaxed. Is there anything in your head that you're thinking, to make this the best it can be? I need to try to focus on that. And I'll try and engage if there's something I like, because there might be a follow up question or might lead to something else or it might lead into a question I have.

**AW:** So focus and listening.

**DS:** You really have to listen, you know, everything is about listening. Yes. And you can't get distracted. I got distracted. I told you when I was interviewing you. I got distracted because there was a band playing downstairs, because we're recording the show for podcast and there's band music and I got really upset. But I could you know, I knew enough of what you were saying. And as well I have my script of questions. And that's the other thing. Don't be afraid. It's not uncommon where you get caught in a flow of conversation. You look at your paper and you just ask that question or where's the next question that makes sense. So flip a page, It's not a big deal. Right?

**AW:** You know, it takes some confidence to do that, though.

**DS:** And knowing that, you know, this will take three seconds, the audience isn't gonna care if I take three seconds to find a good question or looking at my page. And like you said on a podcast, you can edit that out. Or for a TV show. They can do another take. They might retake something. I do want to come back to the good interviewers, though, because there's so much to talk about.

**AW:** Yeah, tell me who... So you said the two that you were gonna ...

**DS:** well, Charlie Rose, and Tavis Smiley, were two of my favorite interviewers. And the reason being that people are always being just themselves. Their guard is down. But on Charlie Rose, everyone let the guard down. It seemed so with Tavis Smiley. And I remember particularly Howard Stern, years ago being on on Charlie Rose, and just here's the real guy, not the guy you hear on the radio. This is really him just letting his guard down. I think today, Howard Stern is one of the best interviewers. And it's interesting because you look at Tavis Smiley and Charlie Rose, who you find all these things about that... These guys are a disgrace. Howard Stern for years was considered by lots to be a pig. But he's gone through all this therapy. And he really just engages people in interviews. His interviews are excellent. I don't know if you saw his interview with Hillary Clinton?

**AW:** No.
DS: He wanted to have her on before the election because he said, I really think I could have humanized her to a lot of voters. He was all for her. Trump asked Stern into introduce him at the convention, and he's like, I'm for Hillary. Yeah. And what does it feel so you're there on the day is when he's getting sworn in and she's just very, she let her guard down? Well, when celebrities come on as well, they all let their guard down. He just he really - he cares. He cares. And he's interested. He's not necessarily keeping to his script, but I'm sure there's some people doing some research.

AW: Oh, yeah, he's prepared, but he's also really smart. But you know what? It sounds... I keep thinking of the word charming. Yeah, these other two guys right? Jian Ghomeshi and Howard Stern. They're all charming.

DS: Yeah, I never thought of those terms for any of those people. But I guess it does apply.

AW: So charming in the sense that it's almost like wow, he's paying attention to me and he's really interested in what I have to say.

DS: Well, that's the thing is the interview should be about you, right? They should do less of the talking and let you ask you a question that you can just talk about, and get you to feel comfortable.

AW: Maybe to be a good interviewer you want to you want to charm the person, not even not a nice, smarmy way.

DS: I'm sure there's some people who've been out there have been good at it. I mean, obviously, Charlie Rose, and he did things that were very questionable. And I do listen to Marc Maron's podcast WTF. If there's someone I'm interested in, if there's someone who I like to hear what they have to say. His interviews are quite good.

AW: Yeah, I've heard a few of those.

DS: You know, you should listen to the Will Ferrell interview with Marc Maron. It's talking about failure, a lot of Conan too. A lot of them talk about failure. So I think people like to see that other people have the same anxieties. These famous people are nervous about the same things. I think Marc Maron's podcast is good. So is Howard Stern.

AW: Conan O'Brien does that - kind of divulging the inadequacies that he may feel? I've heard him..

DS: yeah and Howard Stern said that that was his best interview ever. He named Conan as the best interview ever. They felt, he felt they really connected. It was a big deal. And I bought his book, but I haven't read it yet. It's his latest book, which is all interviews. He says this is my legacy – it's my greatest achievement. The thing is, it's the tone of the interviews, but and that's the thing ... everybody. Everybody lets their guard down with him. You know, and I think it's because they trust him. We like Charlie Rose. People trusted him.

AW: So I don't mind making myself vulnerable here. Before we move on to the five rapid fire questions. I have a question for you that I did not pre issue.

DS: That's okay. I'm fine.

AW: But I want you to know that I am comfortable in you being completely honest. Do you have any advice for me on interviewing?
DS: just be yourself. Don't worry if you flub something and don't worry. Don't worry about it. If you have a bad episode, who cares? If you … it's like, I can't bear this. Who cares? Then don't didn't release it! When I was in broadcasting school there they were like, it's not … they kept saying *it's not brain surgery.*

AW: So we're going to move on now to the five rapid fire questions. All right, ready?

DS: Oh yeah, that's good.

AW: First question. What are your pet peeves?

DS: slow moving people on the subway. In London, you have to move quickly. If you're like walking up Oxford Street or you're getting in the tube, and the tourists are just kind of standing there and it's like, you've got to get out of get out of the way. Because the tube is horrible. And everyone just wants to get off the tube. When I'm on the subway here. People are like, Oh, the train is full. Like that's not full. In London. You haven't seen full there. It's almost like London is maybe one half step away from Japan where there's a guy forcing you on with a stick. Yeah, like you're that close to people and wow, you know, so yeah, people need to move.

AW: Okay, question number two. What type of learner are you visual, auditory kinesthetic, or some other kind of learner?

DS: listing and visual, like my cousin, he will talk to this whole time. He reads something in a book and retains it. Whereas if I watch a documentary, I'll retain it for decades. I'll retain that information better visually.

AW: Question number three, introvert or extrovert?

DS: Bit of both to be honest. And I don't think that's a contradiction. There'll be times where I'm just very quiet. I'm not really that comfortable at parties. Nope, I'm not great at meeting people. I don't like awkwardness.

AW: Question number four: communication preference for personal conversations?

DS: Well, now it's texting. I'd always prefer to talk to people. I never liked emailing people. Sometimes I'd email someone I'd say, Hey, listen, please don't take any tone in this. There's no tone intended, because someone could read an email and say, oh, that's really rude. Whereas on the phone, they don't hear that because they can hear your tone, right? So if I'm making plans, I'd rather talk to somebody. But given the way things are today, it's usually text. Sometimes with an emoji,

AW: right, I was just gonna say that. So you add the emoji so people know you're winky, or …

DS: that's what someone else said to me. Always add an emoji. I was like, I don't know. At the time I was thinking, I don't know how to use emojis. And now,…

AW: when we're done here, we're going to set up your bitmoji on your phone.

DS: I've got it!

AW: Okay, okay.

DS: Yeah.
AW: Good. Question number five, podcast or blog or email newsletter that you find yourself recommending the most lately?

DS: Oh, that's a good question. Like I said, if it's someone I want to listen to, like a guest, I'm interested in WTF with Marc Maron.

AW: Okay, yeah.

DS: And Greg Proops makes me laugh.

AW: What other podcasts do you subscribe to?

DS: Canadaland. I'm a Patreon member of Canadaland. I think they do some good work that otherwise gets looked over. Oh, sorry. And The Secret Life of Canada, I listen to that as well. Yeah.

AW: Thank you very, very much for sharing your insights with me about interviewing.

DS: It was a pleasure. I talked too much. Enjoy editing this!

AW: You're supposed to talk too much! That's funny.

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Dr. Andrea's CONCLUSION

Well, I did it. I interviewed the interviewer about interviewing. David is so gracious and easy to talk with, isn't he?

Thank you again, David, for sharing your expertise on conducting an interview. And for reminding me to just relax – this isn’t brain surgery is it?

So - What were your favourite insights?

Let me share with you three of my favourite learnings from this conversation.

1. First - The pre-interview – specifically three Qs to ask the person in advance: what do you want to talk about, what’s off limits, and then this one that’s my favourite. “Is there a story that you want to tell? Don’t tell me the story, but tell me what it’s about so I can queue you up.” Love that Q. I’m definitely going to use that in the future.

2. Then my second favourite point - During the interview: no matter the context, a job interview or a live interview onstage or whatever, your main job as the interviewer is to listen and engage. Bing in the moment and responsive to what they are saying is important. But also –and this is key -- don’t hesitate to take a few seconds to look at the Qs you prepared.
3. My last favourite point? Contrary to what the experts might say, the Y/N Q is not off limits. I'm thinking if you’re conducting a job interview or any kind of interview, frankly, you might want to know where the person stands on something. But then David reminds us, you of course have to follow up with asking WHY.

As I said, we'll definitely have a future episode focused on being on the other side of the desk – How to rock it in a job interview.

OK - as always, I'd love to hear what you think about this episode, any ideas you have for future episodes, or anything else. You can email me anytime at Andrea@TalkAboutTalk.com.

As I said at the beginning, I hope you’ll signup for free communication coaching through the weekly Talk About Talk email blog. Just go to the talkabouttalk.com website or email me directly and I'll add you to the list.

Alright that's it for this episode.

THANKS for listening – and READING!

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