

One common characteristic found in most tough interview questions is that they are often centered on something negative. In other words something you would not mention in an interview unless asked. Listed below are a few tough interview questions job seekers have encountered.

- ***What would you consider to be your biggest weakness?***
- ***What would you consider to be your biggest disappointment?***

## **WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR BIGGEST WEAKNESS?**

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First, we will take a look at how you should respond to the weakness questions.

- Cliché answers are not always well received – “I spread myself too thin” or “I’m a perfectionist”
- Possible interviewer response to cliché answers – Tell me about a time when you spread yourself too thin and something didn’t get done. If you can’t provide the interviewer with an example then it is not a weakness.
- Cliché answers also come off as arrogant and lacking self-awareness. Nobody is perfect. We all have weaknesses. The failure to admit to a weakness can send the wrong message to employers. You may also be perceived as someone who is not open to constructive feedback.
- The biggest fear when answering this question is that you will provide the interviewer with a reason not to hire you for the position.
- Therefore you want to be very selective and strategic about which weakness you provide. First, the weakness you provide should not be one of the critical skills required for the job. Check the job description to see what the employer is looking for before identifying your weakness. Second there are no “good” weaknesses so stop trying to think of one. You will minimize the damage caused by admitting your weakness in the way you communicate it during an interview.
- Identify the weakness and admit that you have acknowledged it as a weakness (self awareness). In addition, think of “weakness” as “area for growth.” You want your weakness to be something you can improve and not an irreparable character flaw.
- Next discuss the steps you take to minimize the impact the weakness.
- You need to show that you are working on your weakness, but it is still a challenge.

## **WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT?**

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Your approach in responding to the question about your biggest disappointment or failure is similar:

- Describe the situation
- Accept full responsibility for the situation and outcome
- Describe how the situation was a valuable learning experience
- Explain how you changed your outlook/approach as a result of the situation
- Highlight any positive results that came out of this change in outlook/approach

Avoid these pitfalls

- Blaming a third party for the outcome.
- Stating personal circumstances as an excuse (i.e., breakup/divorce, illness, family pressures, etc.) Employers want to know that you will be able to produce quality work regardless of what may be going on in your personal life. There are instances where you may offer up challenges in your personal life (i.e., death of family member) as a reason for your poor performance. However, you still want the focus of your response to highlight the situation as a learning experience.