



## **Interview Tips for Those with Less Than Perfect Backgrounds**

Research studies indicate that close to two-thirds of all job hunters intentionally or unintentionally list inaccurate information on their employment applications and resumes. Yet, employers today look for truthfulness, character, and value when making hiring decisions. So, how do you honestly discuss your work history if there's one or more potential 'red flags' in your background?

### **Just What Exactly is a 'Red Flag'?**

Well, to begin, it's important to understand what is meant by the term 'red flag'. A red flag is a clue or a negative sign that tells an employer someone is a potential 'problem employee'. Red flags come in all shapes and sizes. A small sample list of common red flags includes:

- poor grades and/or lack of a degree or diploma
- job hopping and/or lack of focus in work history
- drug or alcohol abuse
- over or under qualification
- poor references
- being fired
- poor attendance or tardy record
- criminal record
- lack of honesty and integrity
- chronic physical and/or emotional health problems

### **How to Turn a Potential 'Red Flag' into a Positive**

Most job seekers have items in their background that could prove challenging during job interview discussions. So, how do you remain truthful as well as employable? A great place to start is by identifying your own personal red flags...that is, reasons why an employer might not hire you. Next, focus on what has changed or what you did or can do to change this situation so that it's no longer a red flag. It's important not to point fingers and blame others (like a current or former boss) for red flags in your background. Take responsibility by admitting a red flag, describing the situation that involved the red flag, and then describing what has been done to overcome this issue. For example: *"I was in*

*fact fired from my position with XYZ Inc. I would like to offer you an overview of the situation along with what I've done since then to ensure that this never happens again."*

If you're having difficulty figuring out how to address red flags, you might try checking out the book [Job Interview Tips for People with Not-So-Hot Backgrounds](#) by Caryl and Ron Krannich, Ph.D.s. This book covers a wide variety of red flags and offers numerous case study examples regarding how to address red flags during interviews. I highly recommend it for learning how to address potential red flags as you hone your job interview skills. You can learn more about this book by going to <http://astore.amazon.com/o001-20> . This link will take you to an Amazon.com portal located at my website where I list career resources that I recommend to my private practice clients on a regular basis.

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