

# How to Talk About Your Felony Conviction in a Job Interview

## ~ A Guide for How to Discuss the Big Question ~

Be clear. Speak up. Don't make excuses or blame anyone.

Do not use prison lingo.

Keep it short --- Keep it very, very positive.

- **Take responsibility no matter what the circumstances.**
- **Tell them what has changed in your life, why and how.**
- **State what you accomplished while you were incarcerated: education, courses, jobs, outlook on life**

Use "Life Skills Classes" rather than specific course names like Stress, Anger Management or Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT). These may raise unspoken red flags in the employer's mind that may stop you from getting the job.

- **Talk about future goals.**
- **Close the deal:** I am bondable at no cost to you (Know what this means, be able to discuss). I am eligible for tax credits (Make sure you are eligible).
- Research the company you hope to work for (Match your skills to the job)

Look at this from the potential employer's point of view. Why should you be hired? What will you bring to the company? How can the supervisor be comfortable with the decision to give you a chance?

~HINT~ If you start this speech go through all steps. Sometimes people blurt out the first and forget the rest. End positive. You are not your felony.

**Remember you have something to offer an employer or you would not have been asked for an interview.**

~ Relax and Show Your Skills ~

### **EXAMPLES FOR REVEALING FELONY OFFENSE TO AN EMPLOYER**

- I had a drug related offense
- I was involved in a situation where someone lost their life
- I took some things that didn't belong to me
- I had inappropriate contact with a minor
- I got into a fight and hurt someone

### **TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS**

- I was involved with drugs and/or alcohol
- At the time my judgment was clouded
- I thought I didn't have any solutions to my problems
- I put myself into a situation and chose the wrong way out

### **EXAMPLES FOR EMPLOYER HOW YOU HAVE CHANGED**

- I got my GED and increased my job skills
- I completed Chemical Dependency Treatment
- My life is different now and I like how it is going
- I learned my lesson and want to get on with my life

### **EXAMPLES FOR DISCUSSING WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

- When I worked in maintenance (more appropriate than porter) I learned how to operate a buffer and mixed different cleaning chemical while maintaining a safe work environment
- When I worked in the kitchen I learned how to work at a fast pace, kept my work area clean and organized, and prepared several different types of meals (Consider how many people you cooked for or served on a daily basis)
- I have worked with a variety of different types of people in a team setting and got along well with co-workers and supervisors.
- Give yourself credit for time well spent while incarcerated – Life skills classes, worked on mind as well as body, Jobs: Did you work for Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fighting fires?

### **Incarceration Speech**

I want to be up front and honest with you. I've made some mistakes in the past. I'm currently at EC Work Release. I've been clean and sober for 3 years now and I have tools to stay that way once I'm released.

While I was incarcerated I completed my GED, I've built up my computer skills, and worked as a landscaper. My path is different now and I like how it's going. My future goals are to keep working on my computer skills and possibly become a web designer one day.

I am bondable through the State of Washington at no cost to you and I and if you hire me you can receive tax credits for up to 2,400 dollars. I have the paperwork with me today.