

## **NPR's Amanda Aronczyk Presentation: Interview Tips**

- Keeping people comfortable is part of the trick
- List all the questions you can think of, then prioritize them
- Leave uncomfortable questions near the end, when they've relaxed more
- Consider the location you're in: where will trigger memories?
- You set the tone in an interview: If you want it to be funny / silly, you gotta do that. If you want it to be intimate, then tell one of your own stories at the start.
- Start with small talk, and set up the expectations: we'll talk for an hour or 2. Ask them to turn off phones, ask for their personal information—I'm so-and-so, and I know I'm going to be recorded.
- Try to get specific stories: tell me about the first/worst/most/best time you \_\_\_\_ / you went into \_\_\_\_ / etc.
- Once they're telling this story: Ask who the people were, what did it look like, set the scene etc. Then after the story: well how did that make you feel, did it change your experience of the story?
- If people say things you don't understand, ask them to explain it like you're a fifth grader. You're an advocate for the listener too. Ask stupid questions! It's not about being smart—it's about being open, curious, listening well. Most people are open to a bit of silliness, playful questions, etc.
- At the end: Is there anything I should've asked you that I didn't? Anything you want to ask me?

### Don't Do This:

- Dont ask yes/no questions--something open ended
- Dont let them hold microphones or gear, you hold the mic if you have to
- Before recording: Turn off / take music out of the background, it's super hard to edit out!

### Good questions:

- Tell me about the time when: you moved here, you realized the neighbourhood was changing and you didn't want to live here, tell me a story?.
- Then follow up so they can reflect: how did that make them feel? If they're not sure/conflicted, ask them what they're thinking, what the conflict is, or if they have two conflicting voices, what are they saying?
- Was there a point when you weren't so sure?
- You seem confident now, was that always the case?
- "What do you make of that?" —Lets them answer anyway they interpret the question.
- If the old you could see the new you: what would you tell yourself back then?

Why should people want to interview? Appeal: You're contributing to this community, to this library, to history.

See Alex Blumberg's Tips: <http://www.radiostoryschool.com/blog/tips-from-alex-blumberg>