

Interview Questions I Really Hate and Why

It happens at every pageant. I am sitting in the audience. The contestants have modeled sportswear, swimsuit, and evening gown. They have narrowed the group to the semi-finalists and now the Emcee is going to ask a few on-stage interview questions. I sit expectantly, waiting to hear some comments on current events, or perhaps an insightful answer to a cultural or philosophical question. Then it comes; one of the three interview questions I really hate. I guarantee that sometime in your pageant career you will be asked one, if not all three, of these questions.

1. **“Do you think that Brittany Spears is an appropriate role model for young women today?”** I’m tired of this question. Isn’t there a better way to ask the contestant about her values and role models? Brittany’s breakthrough video leaving behind her teenage years and moving on to more adult themes is old stuff. Should you get this question there are only three possible themes for your answer:
 - a. Yes. If this is your answer you probably want to say something about Brittany following her dreams and achieving goals that she sets for herself. Make it about goal setting, not Brittany’s morals and values.
 - b. No. If this is your answer you probably want to express your concern over young girls thinking they should look and act like Brittany. Site examples such as her highly sensational videos, over-the-top performances, and provocative costumes. Make sure you’re not wearing a similar outfit.
 - c. Mixed. If this is your answer you probably want to discuss your overall appreciation for her ability to follow her dreams yet express concern over her desire to match Madonna’s showmanship. Explain that while it’s okay to admire her drive, you think it might be directed in a more positive way such as volunteer activities (think Angelina Jolie here).

2. **“Win or lose, what is the first thing you’re going to do tonight after the pageant?”** Okay, we all know that the real answer here is “go out and eat a big pasta dinner followed by a huge hot-fudge brownie sundae”. However, most contestants are much too smart to give that answer. This is another one of the over-used values and philosophy questions. They are trying to get at what you think is important in comparison to the outcome of the pageant. Once again there are a few possible themes for you to consider:
 - a. Celebrate my achievement with my supporters. You would probably want to say something about greeting and thanking the people who have come to the pageant this evening to cheer you on. You might mention that there is someone that you want to call

who couldn't come to the pageant. Basically this is a "people are important to me" answer.

- b. Congratulate the other contestants on their success. You have no doubt made some friends during the pageant and may decide that you want to mention them in some way. This is another answer that shows you are a people-person and not just completely focused on winning the crown or pissing out if you don't make the Top Five.
- c. Say something witty and funny. This answer highlights the fact that while you are competing in a pageant you are keeping it all in perspective and realize it is not the end of the world if you do not win. This is a great answer if you are quick at thinking on your feet and are naturally funny. This answer does not work if you are overly focused on winning at all costs and have Tonya Harding's phone number on speed dial just in case you do not win.

3. **Do you think that pageants are outdated, or do you think they are still relevant for today?** Okay, let's think this one through. If you really thought pageants were outdated and no longer relevant you would not be standing there in your evening gown, right? But this question is asked at almost every pageant and you really only have a couple of good choices here:

- a. You do not believe that pageants are outdated or no longer relevant. You might wish to discuss how pageants help you to develop your public speaking and presentation skills. Enhanced speaking skills will help you to be successful in almost every area of your life. You may also wish to point out that pageants encourage volunteerism in your community and help to develop leadership skills.
- b. You disagree that pageants are old-fashioned and point out that many of today's successful women such as Oprah Winfrey, Diane Sawyer, and Halle Berry have participated in pageants on their road to success. All of these women are well regarded in their fields and are excellent role models for any women.
- c. You agree that pageants are outdated and are concerned that pageants send the wrong message to women. If this is your answer, politely excuse yourself, leave the stage, and go home. You are not going to make the Top Five.

So the next time you're participating in a pageant and you hear one of these three questions just smile politely and think of me. If I am sitting in the audience I am rolling my eyes about the question, but applauding your answer!