

How to Interview with a Conviction

Introduction statement:

- Thank you for the chance/opportunity to let me explain.
- I am not proud of what I did.
- I am nervous talking about it, but I want to be honest.
- I am embarrassed to talk about something I did in my past.
- I am embarrassed to talk about a mistake I made in my past.

But I wanted to let you know that I have a felony conviction.

Indicate the situation around the crime:

- I was young and stupid.
- I thought hanging out with some neighborhood kids was cool.
- I was hanging out with the wrong people.
- Growing up I didn't have any positive role models.

Bring up the last conviction:

- I stole something from a store.
- I got into a disagreement that escalated into a fight.
- I took a car that didn't belong to me, for a joy ride.
- I used drugs thinking I was being cool.
- I got into an altercation where someone got hurt.
- I took something that didn't belong to me.

(key for this section is not to use hostile words, or "Parole/Probation conviction terms such as: assault, robbery, terrorist threat, etc.)

Accept responsibility:

- I know it was a foolish thing to do, but I did it and I take full responsibility for my actions.
- I made a poor choice.
- I made a mistake.
- I was wrong.
- I can't blame anyone else for what I did other than myself.

Show remorse:

- I regret what I did every day and feel sorry for the grief I caused to people.
- I'm embarrassed about having committed a crime.



- I'm so embarrassed about breaking the law.
- It was stupid, but I did it and I've been sorry for what I did to the victim ever since.

State your losses:

- By committing the crime, I lost the trust of my family.
- I lost the trust of my kids.
- I lost much of my self-respect.
- I lost my job/my home.
- I lost the respect of my children.

What did you learn?

- If there is any good from this situation, it was that I gained respect for other people's rights.
- I learned how to follow directions.
- I finally grew up and learned to respect authority.
- I learned how to follow rules.
- I developed more self-control than I had before.
- I learned that you have to work hard for a decent living.

What did you do to improve yourself?

- I took classes and got my GED.
- I took classes and became a carpenter / electrician / cook / plumber, and I am ready to return to the world of work.
- I was made the team leader of the crew that did most of the inside maintenance work.

"So, when I saw your job opening and read the job description, I knew I could do this job, and that's why I wanted a chance to meet you in person, explain some things from my past, and ask you to give me a chance to prove myself..."

What did you gain from the experience?

- Improved education which will help in your job.
- Respect authority and rules.
- A respect for other people's rights.
- More patience in handling problems.



- Job-related skills training.
- Counseling that helped you change your behavior.
- A desire to do what's right so you don't return to prison.
- Improved/developed self-discipline.
- Respect for the value of hard work.

What were the losses as a result of your mistake?

- Access to and respect from your children: didn't get to see them grow up, missed their high school graduation, etc.
- Trust from family and friends.
- Your personal dignity and self-respect.
- Loss of personal property (car, home, etc.)
- Opportunity to enter certain types of careers.
- Money you could have made working.
- Your freedom, and ability to go and do what others take for granted.

Sample Responses:

I am glad you asked me, because I want to be up front with you. When I was younger, I got involved with some people who were transporting drugs. I made some bad decisions and did some time. During my incarceration, I was chosen to work in the optical department where I got my Optician Assistant Certificate, and I found that I really enjoyed my job. Now I am ready and excited about getting back to work. So, when I saw your job openings, I knew I could do it, and I wanted a chance to meet you in person. I am eligible to be bonded by the Employment Development Department for up to \$10,000 and hope this will allow you to give me a chance to prove myself to you. You will also qualify for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit for giving me a chance.

I'm so nervous and embarrassed to talk about it, but I want to be honest with you. A few years ago, I was in a disagreement that escalated, and the other person was hurt. I was incarcerated and looking back I think it made me grow up and take responsibility for my actions. I attended anger management classes, got my GED, and learned carpentry skills. When I saw your job posting, I wanted a chance to meet you in person and let you know how my skills and knowledge in (state skills related to the job) will assist you in your business. I also will be bonded for \$10,000 by the Employment Development Department for the first 6 months of my employment.

