

# Keys to Successfully winning the Title

## Commitment

Winning a pageant takes commitment to becoming the best you can while not losing touch with who you are.

Just because you signed up for a pageant does not mean the rest of your life should change. It is important to remain balanced with everything in your life during your preparation; balanced with school, friends, nutrition, and work. You will find this balance will help you as you prepare for the pageant.

Preparing for a pageant though may require you sacrifice some social time to polish up your interview skills, practicing your speech and to study to be prepared for the interview.

## Focus

You may find that focus is one of the hardest skills to deal with, especially in today's world. Whether it is Facebook, Tic Toc, Instagram, Twitter, your cell phone or hanging out with friends, focusing on preparing for a pageant may be hard. It's always easy to say "I'll practice tonight" but other distractions may keep you from doing it. You may need to sit down and assess how much time you really have to prepare for your pageant. List out the things you may need to accomplish prior to the pageant and then schedule time in your day to complete them. You may need to schedule time for things like:

- ❖ Shopping for wardrobe
- ❖ Practicing interview questions
- ❖ Writing and practicing your speech
- ❖ Practicing walking in your shoes

## Know yourself and the World around You

You may be very articulate and able to do great speeches. If so, great, you are well on your way but even some of the best speakers stumble when they have to talk about themselves. Make sure you know what you wrote on your application. It is quite okay to have your own opinion; in fact, you should be able to communicate your beliefs about key topics, events and ideas. You should become very aware of how you feel about all parts of your life. Winning titleholders also are aware of key events and topics that might impact you, your school, or your town. If you are competing for the Jr. or Miss titles, you may be asked about local events, people, and places. You may not be asked these questions but it is always better to be prepared. Always acquaint yourself with the pageant's activities and community service organizations it may be associated with.

## Grace and Composure

"Grace in Women has more effect than Beauty".

Poise is the ability to maintain your presence through any situation in a graceful and elegant manner. This is something that you can, and should, practice in everyday life.

## Be Prepared

It's not just the Boy Scout motto; it's one of the keys to become winning the title. Once you've decided to participate the next step is to start your preparation and that means PRACTICE, PRACTICE, and PRACTICE. With practice comes confidence and consistency. These are both key to winning the title. Confidence comes from knowing that you will be able to handle any question that is presented to you in a calm fashion.

## **Interview**

Practice questions on all different topics and areas. Make 3 X 5 cards for each item on your application and write 2-3 notes on that card that relate to the topic. Say your hobby is skating, you may add to the card that you learned patience when you were learning to skate backwards the first time, you may have found that you love to teach after you started teaching younger kids to skate, etc. These little notes will help you form more complete answers. Try to answer the same question with 2-3 different answers. You cannot know every question that will be asked but if you have practiced you will have the confidence to know that you can formulate and articulate a solid answer to any question they ask you. When asked any question, make sure you listen carefully to the question, think of a quick answer and answer with the end of the answer in mind. Many times contestants will ramble on, lose their train of thought or not even truly answer the question. The best answer is specific with a good conclusion. Don't ever leave them wondering if you are finished answering the question.

Practice how you will enter the room, how will you sit, how will you use your arms and eyes to engage with the judges. The interview is your job interview for the title that you are competing for. The poise and composure you show through your body language will tell the judges much about how you will handle yourself in public situations. It is important that you be confident but not so confident that you come off as "cocky".

**REMEMBER – PRACTICE MAKES CONFIDENCE!**

Practice does not stop with interview. You should practice your walk in the shoes you will be wearing on stage until you feel confident in your walk. Not sure what a pageant walk should look like? Google Miss America or any Red-Carpet event. Watch the stars at the Emmy's, Oscars or Grammy's. A pageant walk means walking poised, graceful and like a lady. Don't forget to make eye contact with the judges and audience, even when practicing. The same goes for speech. The way you practice will be the way you do it on stage. Take advantage of any opportunity to perform your speech in front of others. It will improve your speech but also your confidence. Winning the title means not only having a great interview but having strong scores in all areas of the competition.

## **Keys to Successful Interview**

Interview is a huge part of the overall score for most pageants, and unfortunately it is usually the most problematic area for contestants. Whether it is nerves or shyness that has you stumbling over your words and holding you back from being you here are some tips that will help you leap over these obstacles and connect with the hearts of your **pageant judges!**

### **1. Eye Contact**

When answering be sure not to focus just on the judge who asked the question. By including all the judges in your answer, you will keep everyone in the conversation, because that's really what you're having, a conversation. Maintain eye contact while you answer the question but don't be afraid to look off if you are thinking about the question. But once you've formulated your answer begin looking at the first judge who asked the question and then spend equal amounts of "eye contact" time on each of the remaining judges.

## **2. Smile**

Have you ever seen a spokeswoman NOT smiling? Me either. So while you are getting in the “zone”, make sure not to show the determination on your face. You want to have a confident, yet light-hearted energy about you from the moment you walk into the interview room. You need a sparkling personality that will want to make the judges intrigued and want to find out more! All this starts with a Smile!

## **3. Tell a Story**

By telling a story you are able to connect with the judges in a way that will give them a vision of what you are about and this story will stick in their head. Keep it short and sweet, but connect the story back to yourself and what you are truly about! Stories sell, facts tell.

## **4. Humor**

Combine this tip with “Tell a Story” because you can easily use humor while you tell your story. You can even use humor when you answer a question, but use your best judgment. If being funny is awkward for you then don’t force this strategy.

Remember this, humor puts people (you included) at ease and if there is one thing you need that is your judges to be at ease.

## **5. No Unnecessary Gestures**

This includes everything from crazy arms during a story, to the over-usage of the word “Um” and “Like”. The judges will not only become very distracted from what you are “um” trying to “um” tell them, but they will start “um” tallying on their score sheet how many times you do your nervous tick or say, “Um”!!

Lastly, show your personality. Show your true colors. No one has ever accomplished great things by playing small.

The best way for a judge to see if you are the right fit to be their Title Holder, is if you are someone they can relate to. All these techniques together will give you that “WOW” factor the judges will be looking to connect with! Lastly, don’t over think your interview. The questions they ask will be about you, and who knows you better than you?!

## **Journal Your Way to a Winning Interview**

Have you ever been stumped in the interview room? For some reason, you just lost your words? I have a solution that will help you. Journaling!

Journaling helps you document your life experiences, make memories, and keep those memories at the forefront of your brain. It will help you to better access personal information to talk about in your pageant interview. Those contestants who are good at interview are able to relate many of their

answers back to personal experience. Any time you speak from personal experience, your answers are stronger, and you will feel more at ease.

So, what should you journal about? I recommend journaling about the day-to-day happenings of your life, current events, and pageant related events and topics. Reflect on your community service projects and how your platform is impacting you and the lives of others. Take note of your growth thus far in your lifetime and really get to know yourself.

Here is a list of questions to help you get started. Journal about one question per night. I also suggest that you choose a current events topic to journal about daily. This is not meant for you to formulate an answer and memorize it. It is meant to get your brain working, to stimulate your memories and to develop your opinions.

Make this a part of your daily routine, and journal your way to a winning interview!

**Suggested Topics:**

What is your favorite childhood memory?

Tell me about your favorite/last vacation.

What makes you happy?

What motivates you?

What makes you angry?

Tell me about your favorite teacher/ school subject?

Tell me about your greatest accomplishment.

What is your biggest fear and why?

What is your favorite holiday tradition?

Why do you want to be Miss \_\_\_?

What have you learned from competing in pageants?

What is your favorite kind of music/singer/dancer?

Why did you choose your speech topic?

Who is your role model?

What is your motto?

If you could visit anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?

What is your favorite poem? (Be able to recite a line from the poem)

What is your favorite quote?

Tell me about a book you would recommend.

Other than your parents, who has impacted your life the most?

What is your dream job?

What do you love best about your town?

Where would you take me if I visited your town?

What do you think is the biggest problem for your generation?

Do you think social media is good or bad?

How do you define success? Integrity?

How would your friends describe you?

What's your favorite thing to do if you have a free hour?

What would you do to better the world?

Tell us something about you and your family?

Now that you've filled your journal with memories, facts, and opinions, take this journal with you to your pageant. Read through it before your interview and use it as a tool to help you focus and calm your nerves. Remind yourself that no one knows YOU better than YOU.

### **Pageant Interview is More than Questions**

Self-confidence always shines through and will win those judges over. Judges absolutely love girls who have self-confidence and are able to answer pageant interview questions with poise.

Lastly, don't you worry. Judges are real people so treat the pageant interview just like a conversation. But, study hard up front and ask yourself the tough pageant interview questions so you will be ready for them when they come out during your interview with the judges.