



SSB DIGEST

INSIGHTS. PSYCHOLOGY. OFFICER MINDSET.



SSB

- OLOs
- Communication
- Confidence
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Initiative
- Social Adaptability

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INTERVIEWING OFFICER

COVER FEATURE

3 MAIN REASONS WHY CANDIDATES FAIL IN PERSONAL INTERVIEW

AND HOW TO FIX IT WITH
SIMPLE & EASILY WORKABLE SOLUTIONS

- UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BOARD REALLY LOOKS FOR
- IDENTIFY THE HIDDEN MISTAKES THAT COST YOU
- PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS YOU CAN APPLY IMMEDIATELY



PSYCHOLOGY
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PERSONALITY
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INTERVIEW
ANALYSIS



OFFICER
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SSB DIGEST

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Current Affairs • Static GK Topics • Officer Mindset



THINK DEEPLY

PREPARE WISELY

BECOME OFFICER



Editor's Note



Have you appeared for SSB multiple times and are genuinely dreaming of serving the nation in uniform, yet returned without really understanding where things went wrong? Have you written stories in TAT, sentences in WAT or responses in SRT believing that your answers were thoughtful and impressive, only to later find yourself rejected without clarity about where you went wrong? Have you walked out of the interview room feeling satisfied with your performance and still failed to make it to the final list?

If your answer to these questions is yes, then welcome. You are about to begin a journey that will help you understand the SSB process in an entirely different light.

As you go through the coming editions, you will slowly begin to understand with far greater clarity where exactly you are going wrong in your SSB interviews, whether in psychology tests, personal interview, lecturette, group discussion or preparation of current affairs and static GK.

In the next few weeks, as you continue to read every edition, the mystery behind your repeated rejection will begin to disappear. You will be able to understand the exact reason why you are getting rejected. The lack of clarity regarding why you got rejected despite what you believe was a good performance will disappear. You will get almost an assessor-level understanding about how your psychology responses are evaluated, as well as what conclusion is drawn about you based on what you say while answering the Interviewing Officer's questions. Things that once felt confusing, unpredictable and intimidating will begin to make sense with far greater clarity.

Along with that clarity, the fear and anxiety that many candidates experience every time they board the train for SSB will also slowly begin to fade away. Instead of approaching the process with nervousness and uncertainty, you will begin approaching it with curiosity, confidence and genuine excitement. In fact, my sincere hope is that one day you will look forward to sitting for

the psychology tests and personal interview with the same enthusiasm with which an athlete looks forward to stepping onto the field.

More importantly, you will also discover that many of these problems can often be corrected through small but meaningful changes in the way you think, prepare and approach the assessment process. If you just follow the simple and easily workable solutions we will be recommending in our editions, I can absolutely assure you that your performance will improve tenfold. The knowledge and understanding you will gain from our editions about the way your responses are analysed by the assessors will bring such deep clarity to you that all your fear, confusion and uncertainty will disappear and you will gain complete clarity. Next time you appear for SSB, you will no longer be carrying that fear and anxiety. Rather, you will be full of confidence and excitement and will be eagerly looking forward to sitting for the psychology tests and appearing for the personal interview and the GTO tasks.

Over the last ten years of grooming SSB candidates, especially while conducting batches in establishments such as HRDC Southern Command, HRDC Western Command and AFMC Pune, one thing has become very clear to me. A very large number of candidates appearing

for SSB possess genuine potential, sincerity and the qualities required to become fine officers. Yet many of them repeatedly fail, not because they lack capability, but because they never truly understand what the SSB is actually trying to evaluate.

Most candidates approach psychological tests through guesswork. They do not really understand why a particular word appears in WAT, why a certain situation is given in SRT, or what qualities a specific TAT image is trying to bring out. Naturally, they end up writing what they feel sounds correct or impressive, without realizing how their responses are actually being interpreted. In reality, most of their responses display negative qualities and the candidate does not even realise it. The same thing happens during the personal interview. A lot of times, candidates give answers which they think will be liked by the Interviewing Officer, whereas in reality those answers are extremely negative and result in rejection. This happens because candidates do not understand the deeper psychology behind the interview process and the way answers are evaluated.

A similar problem exists in lecturette, group discussion, current affairs and static GK preparation. Most candidates are never taught what meaningful knowledge actually means in the context of SSB. As a result,

discussions often become superficial, repetitive and lacking in depth. This is one of the major reasons why otherwise deserving candidates struggle to stand out during assessment.

The purpose behind starting SSB Digest is simple. I want to help candidates understand the real science, structure and psychology behind the SSB process in a clear, practical and deeply insightful manner. Through every edition, we will try to remove the fear, confusion and mystery surrounding the SSB process so that candidates can begin approaching the process with understanding, clarity, confidence and genuine enthusiasm instead of anxiety and uncertainty.

Keeping in line with my purpose and vision, in this first edition, I have covered in great detail the 3 main reasons why candidates fail in personal interview. I have kept the article as detailed as possible so that you gain useful insights and it will help you in your own personal interview preparation.

In the next edition we will be focussing on the studying the details of the work of arms like EME, Signals and Corps of Engineers as very little is known about the nature of their work. The information which will be provided in

the next edition will be extremely useful for every candidate in answering questions related to our Army. It will be particularly beneficial for candidates who are applying for entries like SSC-Tech and TGC.

If you wish to receive all future editions and updates regularly, I request you to join our Telegram channel and follow us on Instagram and Facebook through the links provided on the last pages of this edition. I sincerely hope that the coming editions of SSB Digest will help you see the SSB process in an entirely new light.

Regards,

Sahil S,

Editor

SSBDigest.com



3 Major Reasons Why Candidates Fail in Personal Interview

And Simple Workable Solutions to Fix Them

Rapid heartbeat... sweaty palms... anxious thoughts racing through the mind... the fear of being trapped by unexpected questions... for a large number of candidates, this is the psychological state in which they walk towards the personal interview room.

But what if I told you that the personal interview is not supposed to feel this way at all? What if, instead of fear and nervousness, you could reach a stage where you actually begin looking forward to facing the Interviewing Officer because you understand what he is truly assessing, where most candidates unknowingly make mistakes, and how to

approach the interview with clarity, confidence, and control?

It may sound difficult at this moment, especially if you have faced failures in the past, but by the time you finish understanding the principles discussed in this article, your entire perception of the personal interview is likely to change.

If you have repeatedly faced failure in the personal interview despite putting in months of sincere hard work and preparation, then you are certainly not alone. A large number of candidates walk out of the SSB Centre on the 5th day feeling confused, disappointed, and completely unable to understand where exactly they went wrong. Many begin to associate the personal interview itself with anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and self-doubt.

However, if you truly wish to break out of this cycle, then get ready because what you are about to learn in this article has the potential to completely transform the way you understand and prepare for the personal interview. Once you begin applying these principles correctly, your chances of not only clearing the interview, but genuinely standing out and performing with confidence, can increase dramatically.

The principles and insights that I am about to share in this article are not merely theoretical concepts, but the result of

nearly a decade of closely observing, analysing, and grooming candidates for personal interviews.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to mentor candidates from diverse backgrounds, including conducting batches in establishments such as AFMC Pune, HRDC Southern Command, and HRDC Western Command. One practice that I have consciously followed throughout this journey is keeping my batches intentionally small, usually limited to around 10 to 15 candidates only, so that every candidate can be observed and guided closely.

In a typical course, I conduct at least four detailed interview rounds of every candidate in a systematic manner, with each round usually lasting anywhere between one to one-and-a-half hours. Moreover, every round is designed to focus on different area of the candidate's life and personality. Such a detailed and thorough interaction has always helped me see the thinking pattern, communication style, fears, behavioural tendencies, and life experiences of every candidate very clearly. This process provided me with the opportunity to closely analyse the common mistakes, psychological barriers, and recurring patterns that repeatedly become the cause of failure in the personal interview.

While analysing the experiences, performances, and behavioural patterns of candidates over the years, one

thing gradually became very clear to me: despite different backgrounds and personalities, the reasons behind failure in the personal interview usually revolve around a few common mistakes. After carefully studying and analysing these patterns, I realised that there are 8 major reasons due to which the majority of candidates struggle in the interview and eventually get rejected. In this article we will be discussing the top 3 of them and the remaining we will cover in the future editions.

The surprising part, however, is that these problems are neither as complicated nor as difficult to overcome as candidates often assume. In fact, with the right guidance and a focused investment of just a little time every day, even an average candidate can begin transforming his interview performance within a matter of weeks.

In this article, I will not only discuss these 3 main reasons in detail, but will also share simple, practical, and easily workable solutions through which these problems can be corrected in a relatively short span of time.

If you sincerely apply the principles discussed in this article by investing just 30 to 45 minutes a day for the next few weeks, then I can say with complete confidence that your entire outlook towards the personal interview will begin to transform. The fear, nervousness, hesitation, and confusion which once used to dominate your mind before

facing the Interviewing Officer will slowly start giving way to clarity, confidence, composure, and control.

You will no longer enter the interview room worrying about hidden traps or fearing what might go wrong. Instead, you will begin approaching the interview with an entirely different mindset because this time, you will understand what the Interviewing Officer is actually looking for, where most candidates unknowingly commit mistakes, and how to present yourself naturally without appearing artificial or rehearsed. And once a candidate truly understands how the interview is meant to be approached, the personal interview stops feeling like a fearful obstacle and starts becoming an opportunity to genuinely shine.

So get ready, because what you are about to discover may completely change the way you look at the personal interview forever. Let us now begin analysing the 3 major reasons that repeatedly push otherwise deserving candidates towards failure.

Reason #1: Weak Understanding of the Armed Forces

This is the biggest barrier in the personal interview for nearly 95% of candidates. It is specially more problematic for service entry candidates, candidates who are wards of serving/retired personnel, NCC entry candidates and candidates who come from towns or cities which has a major presence of defence establishments.

One of the biggest mistakes committed by a large number of candidates is that they possess only an outer or surface level understanding of the Armed Forces. Their entire perception of Army, Navy, or Air Force is often limited to the visible and attractive aspects: beautiful cantonments, lush green surroundings, impressive uniforms, disciplined lifestyle, officers' mess, canteens, adventure, social respect, and the overall fascination associated with military life. However, very few candidates genuinely try to understand the deeper reality of life inside the organisation.

Most candidates have little understanding about the actual day-to-day life of officers and soldiers, the work culture inside units, the level of responsibility they are expected to shoulder at a young age, the physical and mental pressures involved, the challenges faced in difficult field areas, or the sacrifices demanded by the profession. The problem becomes even more serious because we are living in an age where an enormous amount of information is easily available through the internet, documentaries, interviews, books, podcasts, and interactions with serving personnel, yet a majority of candidates make very little effort to truly understand the organisation they wish to join.

Why this is a problem during the personal interview?

Let us analyse and understand why this is a problem when it comes to the personal interview. If the candidate doesn't have a good understanding about our Armed Forces, it creates a major concern in the mind of the Interviewing Officer. The Armed Forces are not merely looking for candidates who are fascinated by the glamour or outer image of military life. They are looking for individuals who understand both the attractive as well as the difficult aspects of the profession and are still willing to accept that life wholeheartedly. In reality, life in the Armed Forces can at times become extremely demanding, especially in fighting arms such as Infantry, Armoured Corps, and Artillery. In certain units and circumstances, shortages of officers and manpower can significantly increase the workload and responsibility on available officers. Operational areas, field postings, harsh weather conditions, prolonged separation from family, pressure of responsibilities, and shortage of time for personal life can make the profession mentally and physically exhausting at times.

For instance, one of my students who recently got commissioned in the Army was unable to obtain more than a few days of leave even shortly before his own wedding because of operational and administrative commitments within his unit. Similarly, many candidates from high-altitude or difficult field areas initially describe those

postings as adventurous and exciting from the outside, but later admit that the reality becomes far more demanding once one actually begins living that life continuously. This does not mean that life in the Armed Forces is having only negative aspects. It has an extremely positive side too. In fact, for many individuals, it is one of the most meaningful, respectable, and fulfilling professions possible. However, it is important to understand that military life is built upon sacrifice, discipline, responsibility, and hardship as much as it is upon honour, adventure, and pride.

And this is precisely why the Interviewing Officer carefully evaluates how deeply a candidate understands the organisation. If a candidate appears to possess only a romanticised or “pink-and-green” understanding of military life, it creates a natural concern in the mind of the board. The fear is that once such a candidate joins the organisation and eventually encounters the realities and hardships of service life, he may become disappointed, mentally disillusioned, demotivated, or eager to leave the organisation at the earliest opportunity. Naturally, no organisation wishes to invest years of training, effort, resources, and responsibility into an individual who may later become psychologically disconnected from the profession itself.

On the other hand, when a candidate demonstrates that he understands not only the attractive aspects of military life but also the sacrifices, challenges, hardships, pressures, and responsibilities involved and still expresses a sincere desire to join then it leaves a very positive impression on the Interviewing Officer. In fact, during interview preparation, I often advise candidates to speak honestly not only about the attractive side of the Armed Forces, but also about the demanding aspects of the profession. Surprisingly, this often strengthens the candidate's image because it reflects maturity, realism, awareness, and genuine motivation rather than blind fascination.

I strongly advise candidates in my class that if the Interviewing Officer asks them what they know about our Armed Forces apart from ranks and commands, they should begin their answer in the following manner:

“Sir, apart from the fact that life in our Armed Forces is extremely tough and filled with challenges, a serving officer has to face numerous difficulties on a daily basis, ranging from handling the responsibilities of multiple officers due to shortage of manpower in units, to prolonged separation from family, to constant constraints of resources...”

This way the very start of the answer is with the acknowledgement that the candidate is completely aware of the challenging aspect of the life in our Armed Forces.

This instantly removes the concern in the mind of the Interviewing Officer regarding whether the candidate is a fascinated youngster who has come for the SSB with a pink and green image of the Armed Forces in mind or whether he is an informed individual who is fully aware of the tough life he will face ahead and is mentally prepared for it.

Common sense says that if a candidate has come for SSB fully aware of the challenges this career will bring forth then the possibility that he will get frustrated, demotivated and disillusioned and thereby become a useless liability for the unit is very low.

Another important point which candidates fail to understand is that knowledge about the organisation itself reflects seriousness of intent. In almost every profession, organisations expect candidates to possess at least a reasonable understanding about the institution they wish to join. Even in the private sector, companies frequently ask candidates what they know about the organisation, its projects, its work profile, and its functioning. However, in the Armed Forces, the importance of this understanding becomes even greater because the profession involves far greater responsibility, commitment, sacrifice, and psychological resilience compared to most civilian jobs.

This issue becomes even more noticeable in the case of candidates who already possess some level of exposure to

the Armed Forces, such as wards of serving or retired personnel, NCC candidates, or serving soldiers appearing through entries such as ACC, SCO, PC(SL), or other service entries. During my interactions and interview sessions with such candidates over the years, I was often surprised to observe that many of them were unable to speak confidently even about the very arms, regiments, or environments to which they had already been exposed. In several cases, wards of serving personnel were unable to explain even basic details regarding the arm or nature of service of their own father. Similarly, many NCC candidates who had attended attachment camps with various regiments still lacked genuine understanding regarding the functioning, culture, challenges, and role of those units.

One of my most disappointing and shocking experiences was when I was invited to conduct a batch at HRDC-Southern command in December of 2023. In that batch there were candidates from different arms who had already spent a few weeks together by the time I reached there and started my sessions. It was very disappointing for me to see that in spite of having spent weeks together they had not bothered to gain knowledge and understanding about each other's arms or day-to-day life and work culture. I had to take a proper additional session in that batch to help them understand why knowledge of other arms and nearby units is extremely important from the interview aspect of service

entry candidates. Just imagine what impression gets generated in front of the IO when a serving candidate who has already spent years in our Armed Forces has no knowledge even about the work and daily life of the very units which he sees every single day in his own area of posting. It practically makes the Interviewing officer feel that the person is extremely dull from inside and has absolutely no interest whatsoever in the very organisation which has given him an identity, a source of livelihood as well as respect in society. Do you think this kind of a lifeless and dull candidate can ever be entrusted with the responsibility of an entire company having 100 men? Think about it!

This becomes psychologically significant because genuine interest naturally creates curiosity. Whenever human beings are truly interested in something, they automatically begin asking questions, observing details, seeking experiences, and trying to understand that environment more deeply. Therefore, when candidates fail to demonstrate even basic curiosity regarding an organisation they claim to be deeply motivated to join or like, it unconsciously creates doubts regarding the depth and authenticity of their motivation.

For all these reasons, weak understanding of the Armed Forces becomes one of the most common and most

damaging mistakes committed by candidates during the personal interview.

In fact, pause for a moment and honestly ask yourself a simple question: if somebody suddenly asked you to speak about the Army, Navy, or Air Force for two or three minutes continuously, how confidently and how deeply would you actually be able to speak?

In a majority of cases, most candidates are unable to speak meaningfully for even 30 to 40 seconds. And whatever they do say is usually limited to very generic and surface-level information such as “the Indian Army is one of the largest armies in the world,” “it has different arms like Infantry, Artillery, and Armoured Corps,” or “there are supporting arms like ASC and EME.” In other words, the candidate often ends up sounding less like a genuinely motivated aspirant and more like someone simply repeating information collected from Wikipedia or YouTube videos without any real depth of understanding. What adds to the problem is that the information available on Wikipedia and YouTube is almost always very generic, basic and superficial and hardly the kind which will help you produce a major positive impact in the personal interview.

*****gudda*****

What Kind of Knowledge Actually Impresses the Interviewing Officer?

Between 2016 and the period before the COVID pandemic, whenever I personally used to conduct sessions related to the Army and Air Force, one reaction which I repeatedly observed among candidates, especially serving candidates, was a sense of surprise regarding the depth and practical nature of the information being discussed during the sessions. Many candidates would often express amazement at how certain finer concepts, realities, traditions, technical aspects, and behavioural dimensions of military life were explained with such clarity and simplicity, despite the fact that much of this understanding is rarely discussed openly on the internet or in conventional coaching material.

The reason behind this is very simple. Genuine understanding about the Armed Forces cannot develop merely by memorising facts, ranks, commands, or current affairs from Google, Wikipedia, or YouTube. It develops only when a person possesses genuine curiosity, deep observation, continuous interaction with serving personnel, and a sincere interest in understanding the organisation beyond its outer image.

Perhaps one of the reasons why I gradually developed such deep interest and understanding regarding the Armed Forces was because life, by coincidence, always placed a large number of serving and retired officers among my close

friends and acquaintances. Over the years, whenever I got opportunities to spend time with them during weekends, outings, lunch, dinner, or casual conversations, I found myself naturally asking questions about their life, experiences, work culture, responsibilities, operational realities, technology, equipment, and the finer practical aspects of military life.

At the same time, reading newspapers, magazines, and current affairs had already become a deeply ingrained habit since childhood. My father himself was an avid reader and regularly brought home magazines such as Frontline, India Today, Outlook, and The Week, because of which discussions related to national affairs, defence matters, geopolitics, and major military developments gradually became a natural area of curiosity and interest for me from an early age itself. Over time, these experiences collectively helped me develop a much deeper and more practical understanding regarding the Armed Forces; An understanding which I have consistently tried to pass on to my students during interview preparation over the years.

In fact, many candidates later admitted that the real challenge was not understanding these concepts, but finding sufficient time to absorb and retain so much information before their interviews. And that is precisely why I always advise serious aspirants to begin their

preparation at least three to six months in advance rather than waiting for the last few weeks before SSB.

It is precisely this deeper understanding which I wish to gradually share with you through these editions. In the upcoming editions, I will give you a detailed understanding about various aspects of our Armed Forces ranging from what are the day-to-day activities, work and duties to the kind of equipment and technology they use. Our upcoming editions will contain deeply informative articles about Armed Forces which will not be easy for you to find elsewhere and which will genuinely help you during the personal interview and significantly improve the depth and quality of your responses before the Interviewing Officer. More importantly, this is the kind of understanding which is difficult to find in ordinary preparation material because it goes beyond superficial information and focuses on developing genuine insight and awareness about the organisation.

Questions such as:

“Which arm would you like to join and why?”

“What do you know about the Army apart from ranks and commands?”

“What are the recent acquisitions or developments in the Armed Forces?”

“What attracts you towards a particular arm or regiment?”

are not asked merely to test memory. In reality, such questions are often asked to judge the depth of your interest, your seriousness towards the organisation, your observational ability, and the authenticity of your motivation. And the kind of knowledge and understanding which will be shared with you through the upcoming future editions can play a major role in helping you stand out from the majority of candidates who usually prepare only at a surface level.

Therefore, I would strongly encourage you to join our Telegram community so that you can continue receiving future editions and benefit from the insights, concepts, observations, and interview-oriented discussions which will be shared there regularly. In the future, I am also planning to conduct occasional free live sessions covering important aspects of SSB preparation, psychology, personal interview, and understanding of the Armed Forces in greater depth. Notifications regarding such sessions, along with future editions and important updates, will also be shared through the Telegram community. Therefore, it would be in your best interest to join the group so that you do not miss these important discussions and learning opportunities in the coming months. The QR code and link for joining the Telegram community has been provided

towards the end of this edition. It is our sincere endeavour to provide you with practical, meaningful, and high-impact knowledge which can genuinely help you create a strong positive impression before the Interviewing Officer and significantly elevate the overall quality of your interview performance.

In case you do not use Telegram, you may alternatively stay connected with us through our Instagram page, Facebook page, where notifications regarding future editions, important updates, and upcoming live sessions will also be shared regularly. Links for all the platforms have been provided towards the end of this edition.

What do you know about Army?

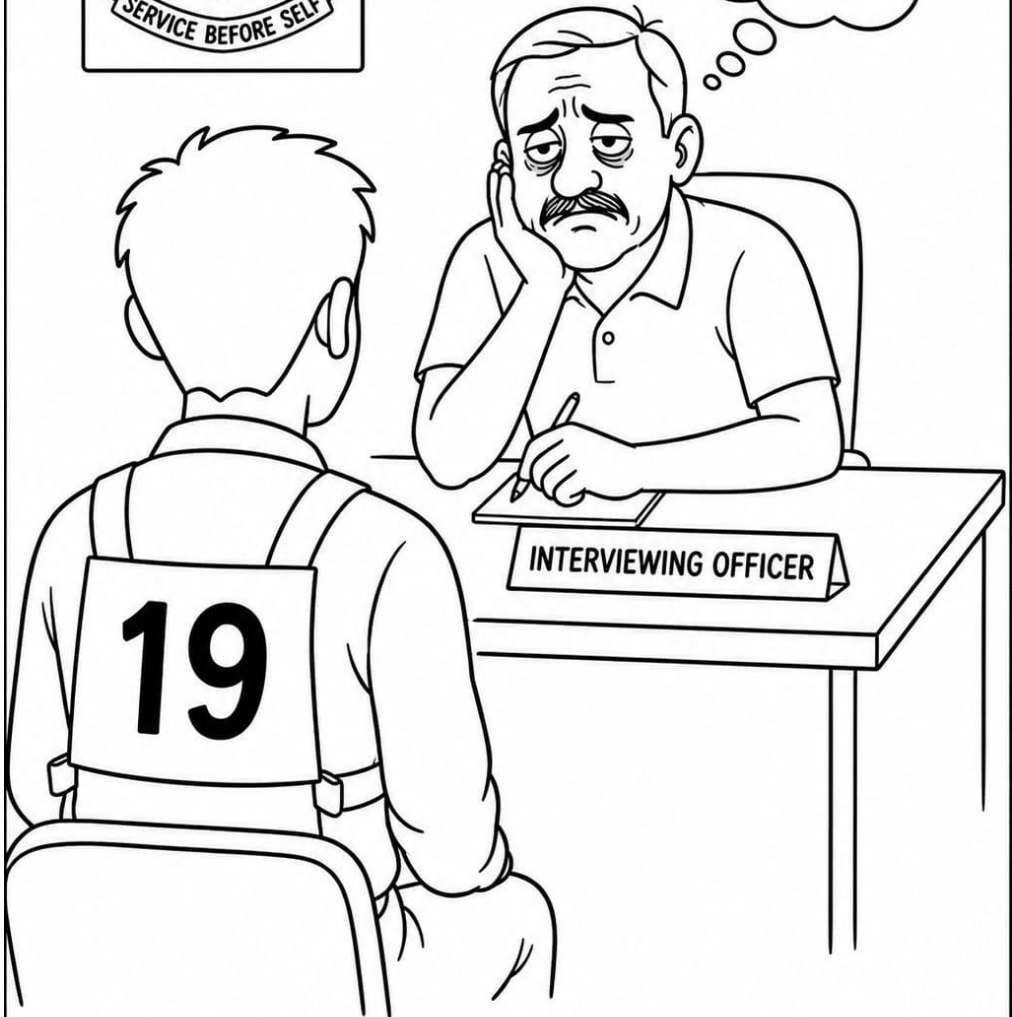


Fourth largest army,
fighting arms, artillery,
infantry, armored, support
arms, ASC and EME.





I have got one more Wikipedia reader...



Reason #2: Lack of Vision for the Future

Another major reason due to which candidates perform poorly in the personal interview is the absence of a clear vision for their future life. A large number of candidates unknowingly come across as individuals who are simply drifting through life without any clear direction, long-term purpose, or deeper goals and therefore appear almost like a ship moving in the ocean without a rudder.

This is precisely why Interviewing Officers frequently ask questions such as:

“Why did you choose this particular stream after Class 10th or 12th?”

“Why did you opt for this graduation subject?”

“Where do you see yourself five years from now?”

“Where do you see yourself twenty or twenty-five years from now?”

“What kind of person do you want to become in life?”

“What kind of person you would like to marry and why?”

Most candidates mistakenly assume that these questions are being asked merely for the sake of conversation. In reality, such questions are often aimed at understanding something much deeper: whether the candidate

possesses clarity, direction, ambition, purpose, emotional energy, and psychological maturity in life.

A person who has goals, dreams, desires, and a vision for his future naturally comes across as more alive, energetic, driven, enthusiastic, and mentally mature. Such individuals usually have something internally pushing them forward every day. They possess a certain spark, curiosity, hunger, and emotional involvement towards life. On the other hand, when a candidate appears to have no meaningful vision beyond merely “getting selected somehow,” he often starts appearing dull, passive, confused, or directionless before the Interviewing Officer.

In fact, pause for a moment and honestly think about this. If somebody were to ask you right now, “Where do you see yourself five years from now?”, how long would you actually be able to speak meaningfully? In most cases, candidates simply reply by saying that they want to become an officer in the Armed Forces, and after one or two additional lines, their answer usually comes to an end. The same thing happens when they are asked about their vision for the next twenty or twenty-five years. Beyond a few generic statements, they often have very little clarity regarding the kind of life they wish to build, the type of person they wish to become, the experiences they wish to have, the

contributions they wish to make, or the larger purpose driving them in life.

And this creates a disappointing impression because it unconsciously signals that the candidate lacks inner drive, emotional depth, and long-term seriousness towards life itself. Human beings who are genuinely alive from within are usually full of dreams, aspirations, ideas, desires, plans, and curiosity regarding the future. There is a famous line by Mirza Ghalib:

“Hazaaron khwahishen aisi ke har khwahish pe dam nikle,
Bahut nikle mere armaan, lekin phir bhi kam nikle.”

The deeper essence behind these lines is extremely important from a psychological point of view. A truly lively and emotionally energetic individual often possesses so many aspirations, desires, and ambitions that even one lifetime appears too short to fulfil them all. And it is precisely this sense of inner energy, aspiration, and emotional involvement with life which Interviewing Officers unconsciously look for while interacting with candidates.

Why the Armed Forces Value Such People So Highly?

From a psychological perspective, people who possess a strong vision for life are often highly energetic, self-driven, internally motivated, and emotionally alive individuals by nature. They usually do not require constant motivational

lectures, external pressure, or repeated encouragement from others to keep moving forward. Instead, they carry an internal drive within themselves which naturally pushes them towards growth, excellence, responsibility, and meaningful achievement.

In almost every walk of life, you will come across such individuals. The moment they enter an office, workplace, unit, or social environment, their very presence begins radiating positivity, enthusiasm, confidence, and energy around them. People working with them automatically feel more motivated, optimistic, and productive in their company. And the Armed Forces too have many such officers whose personality itself becomes a source of inspiration for the people serving around them.

Another interesting thing about such individuals is that they are usually able to maintain a very high overall quality of life despite handling enormous responsibilities. They often give extraordinary dedication and efficiency towards their work, while simultaneously maintaining healthy relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and society. They make time for their parents, spouse, children, friends, and social responsibilities. They participate wholeheartedly in important moments of life. Whether it is supporting someone going through a rough phase, attending social gatherings, spending quality time with family, or helping

people around them whenever required. In other words, they do not merely become efficient officers or professionals; they gradually evolve into well-rounded and emotionally balanced human beings.

And this is precisely why such personalities are considered extremely valuable in the Armed Forces. Military life involves pressures, hardships, responsibilities, uncertainties, operational demands, and emotional challenges which are significantly different from most other professions. Therefore, organisations like the Army, Navy, and Air Force naturally value individuals who possess emotional strength, inner energy, optimism, purpose, maturity, and the ability to inspire confidence in others even during difficult situations.

An officer in the Armed Forces is not expected to merely complete tasks mechanically. His personality itself should be capable of motivating and energising the people serving under him, especially the soldiers, JCOs, and subordinate officers working with him. In difficult circumstances, the emotional energy and positivity of an officer often directly influences the morale, confidence, and effectiveness of the entire team around him. That is why individuals who possess vision, purpose, enthusiasm, emotional depth, and inner drive are considered such valuable assets in military life.

Why Lack of Vision Can Become Dangerous in Military Life?

Now it is equally important to understand the negative side of this issue as well. When a candidate appears to possess no vision, no long-term goals, no deeper ambitions, and no emotional drive towards life, he unconsciously starts appearing psychologically dull, passive, and lifeless from within. Such individuals often come across as people who are merely existing day by day without any strong inner force pushing them forward.

And this becomes a matter of concern because people who naturally possess low enthusiasm, low inner motivation, and a weak emotional drive are generally far more vulnerable to pressure, negativity, frustration, stress, and disappointment when life becomes difficult. In peaceful and comfortable situations, almost anybody can appear normal and positive. However, the real test of personality begins when responsibilities increase, pressure builds up, timelines become demanding, and life starts throwing difficult situations repeatedly.

Perhaps the simplest way to understand this psychologically is through a small example. Imagine one glass of water in which ten spoons of sugar have already been mixed. Even if you now add two tablespoons of bitter karela juice into it, the water may become slightly less

sweet, but it will still largely remain sweet. On the other hand, imagine another glass containing barely half a spoon of sugar. The moment the same quantity of karela juice is added, the entire glass quickly becomes bitter.

Human psychology often works in a very similar manner. Individuals who naturally possess high levels of positivity, enthusiasm, emotional energy, ambition, purpose, and inner drive usually have a much stronger psychological ability to absorb pressure, negativity, setbacks, criticism, disappointment, and difficult phases of life without collapsing mentally. Challenging situations may affect them temporarily, but they usually recover, adapt, and continue moving forward.

However, individuals whose natural threshold of positivity is already very low often begin getting mentally exhausted, frustrated, negative, or emotionally disturbed even under moderate pressure. And this becomes particularly important in professions like the Armed Forces, where life can at times become physically demanding, emotionally exhausting, mentally stressful, and highly responsibility-oriented. Operational pressures, administrative responsibilities, deadlines, difficult postings, family responsibilities, social commitments, welfare of subordinates, expectations of seniors, and personal challenges often arrive simultaneously in military life.

In such an environment, a psychologically dull, low-energy, and directionless individual may gradually start feeling mentally overwhelmed, emotionally drained, negative, or deeply dissatisfied with life itself. Such a person may eventually become unproductive not only for the organisation, but also unhappy within his own personal life. And the unfortunate reality is that negativity rarely remains limited to one individual alone. Human beings unconsciously radiate their emotional state into the environment around them. Their family, colleagues, subordinates, friends, and society are the first ones to feel the effect of their negative emotional state.

This is precisely why the Armed Forces place such high value on individuals who naturally possess enthusiasm, emotional strength, optimism, purpose, motivation, clarity, and a strong inner drive towards life. The organisation needs officers whose very presence can fill the people around them with confidence, positivity, energy, hope, and motivation even during difficult circumstances. And that is exactly why qualities like vision, ambition, liveliness, emotional energy, and long-term purpose become psychologically so important in the personal interview.

The good part, however, is that this problem is far easier to overcome than most candidates imagine. The moment you begin thinking seriously about your future life, your values,

your ambitions, your desired lifestyle, your contribution towards society, your family responsibilities, your dreams, and the kind of human being you genuinely wish to become, your personality automatically starts gaining more depth, maturity, clarity, and emotional strength. And once this clarity begins reflecting in your answers, your entire personality starts appearing far more confident, purposeful, energetic, and impressive before the Interviewing Officer.

So What Is the Solution? How Should You Actually Prepare for Such Questions?

Now I want to help you understand something extremely important. Preparing for such interview questions is actually far easier and far more natural than most candidates imagine. In fact, once you understand the correct approach, interview preparation slowly starts becoming an enjoyable process of understanding your own personality and life rather than a burden of memorising artificial answers.

As we discussed earlier, if somebody asks you right now:

“Where do you see yourself five years from now?”

your first answer will probably be:

“I want to become an officer in the Armed Forces.”

And after that, in most cases, your mind will either become blank or you will somehow manage one or two more generic lines before the answer comes to an end.

Now I want to show you how easily this problem can be solved. And for that, I want you to do a very small exercise with me.

Take a pen and paper in your hand. Yes, seriously. Don't just read this casually. Actually sit down and do this exercise sincerely.

Now ask yourself this simple question: Over the last few months or years, how many times did you see somebody doing something, achieving something, possessing something, learning something, or living a certain kind of life and deep down you felt:

“I wish I could also do this someday.”

“I wish I could also experience this.”

“How beautiful life would feel if I could achieve this.”

“I really admire this quality, skill, lifestyle, or experience.”

Now start writing down every such desire, dream, curiosity, ambition, aspiration, or emotional wish honestly on that paper without judging yourself.

To help you understand this process better, let me use my own example. Suppose I were a 22-year-old candidate being asked:

“Where do you see yourself five years from now?”

Now instead of giving a short and lifeless answer, imagine how naturally and interestingly the conversation could progress if I genuinely started talking about the things which deeply interested and excited me in life.

In order to help you understand things more clearly regarding how I would have framed this answer, I will need to tell you few important things about myself and the important events of my life. Otherwise, you will not understand how I am connecting the realities of my life to my answer.

For instance, to tell you briefly about myself, I was born in 1981 in the beautiful small town of Nasik, Maharashtra. I grew up in a middle-class family. My father was a govt employee in the state govt of Maharashtra and passed away in 2024. Mother was always a housewife and passed away in 2018. I am the youngest amongst 4 siblings. Eldest is my sister Seema, 54, who is married and is leading a happy married life taking care of her 2 wonderful kids and husband. Then I have an elder brother Sameer, 50, who is a success story movies are made of. He was always very weak in studies and had started working in a pen factory in

Nasik at a very young age of 20 in 1992 at just ₹4500 per month and from there has gone on to start a real estate company which is doing fabulously well today with projects in Nasik, Shirdi as well as Pune. He is happily married and blessed with 3 wonderful children. Then, I had a brother Samar who passed away in 1998 due to brain tumour at the young age of 20 (this was the tragedy that changed the course of my life. . . we will keep this story for a future edition).

Since childhood my father was extremely fond of reading. You can sit and talk to him whole day about books and never get bored. Our home was always filled with books, newspapers, magazines, and discussions related to literature, history, current affairs, and society. He had read almost every major author one could think of. Right from Sidney Sheldon, Jeffrey Archer, Arthur Hailey, and Ayn Rand to great Indian writers such as Premchand, Shivaji Sawant, and Ranjit Desai, there was hardly any respectable name he wasn't familiar with and whose works he had not read. Naturally, because of that environment, reading slowly became one of the deepest interests of my own life as well.

Whenever I used to go to bookstores with my father during my childhood, I really used to get fascinated seeing all the history related books (my favourite subject in school was history!). However, most of these good books used to be

very expensive for our standards and thereby unaffordable. Those moments used to be very frustrating for me. The hunger to read good books was very strong. During those moments I always used to feel that the day I start earning I will save money to buy all these books and have a good collection at home. Very true to that, when I started earning, one of the first things I did within the first few months was buy the books which I was unable to afford during my childhood.

For instance, one of my all-time favourite books even today happens to be *Lost Victories* by Erich Von Manstein who was the most brilliant military strategists of Germany during the second world war. That book even today is priced at approximately ₹2200 on amazon. It is the most gripping account of the eastern front during the second world war. It was the first book I had bought after I started earning.

Now since this was a desire which I was unable to fulfil during my childhood, I can talk about it while answering the question. I can give a whole list of books I would like to finish reading within the next 5 years. (Even today I finish a 400–500-page book within 3-4 days). Though *O Jerusalem* written by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins happens to be number one on my favourite list, William Dalrymple happens to be my favourite author and his book *Return Of a King* is one of my all-time favourites. Anyways, returning

to our discussion, if I give specific names of books I would like to read in the near future, it will make the answer all the more impressive. Nothing impresses an Interviewing Officer more than absolutely clarity and specific details.

Similarly, during childhood, whenever I used to see people playing musical instruments beautifully, it used to be a very fascinating experience for me. I genuinely admired their skill. Watching somebody confidently play a guitar or keyboard always made me feel that learning music must be such an incredibly satisfying and beautiful experience. However, again, growing up in a middle-class family in the late 80s and 90s, things like guitar and keyboard were simply beyond our financial means. Even thinking about guitar was equivalent to a sin.

I can use this reality of my childhood, and my life in general, to add an important thing I would like to do within the next 5 years: I would love to learn at least one musical instrument properly. If I specify the musical instrument, it will make my vision for the future all the more clear. Hence, rather than saying 'one musical instrument' I will specifically say guitar/keyboard to make my answer impressive.

The same applies to travelling. During childhood, I frequently visited Alibaug where one of my relatives was posted, and those experiences created a deep fascination within me towards beaches, travelling, nature, and

exploring different places. Therefore, I could naturally speak about wanting to travel across beautiful beaches of our country. Here again, if I mention the names of specific beaches like Radhanagar, Palolem, Varkala, Kaup and Tarkali then it will simply raise the quality of my answer to a different level altogether.

Similarly, I was very good in terms of academic performance in my school. My scores always used to be above 80% and in the 80s and 90s, scoring 80% was equivalent to today's 99% in CBSE. My relatives were all very rich and my cousins used to go the finest schools in Nasik which had students mainly from the richest families of Nasik. One of my cousins had studied at St. Barnes in Nasik. It is said (and I don't know how true this is) that late actor Vinod Khanna and actor Arshad Warsi have studied at St. Barnes. My other cousins had studied at Nirmala Convent which was considered the number one school in Nasik in the 80s and 90s and only kids from rich families went to that school. I, on the other hand, went to Guru Gobind Singh Public School, which was not only a relatively new school in Nasik at that point of time but was mainly catering to middle class section of the society.

In schools like St. Barnes and Nirmala Convent there were lot of opportunities to learn additional subjects/skills which was not an option available in our school. For instance, the

one thing that really used to attract me about those schools was the option of learning foreign languages like French. I really wished I had the opportunity to learn a foreign language. That desire also did not get fulfilled during childhood due to financial constraints. As such, I can bring up this point in the interview and talk about how I would like to attend an institute like Alliance Francaise and learn French.

Similarly, I could also speak about the importance of maintaining good health and fitness throughout life. One thing which deeply influenced me since childhood was the disciplined lifestyle followed by my father. He always ensured that his diet remained simple and healthy, maintained his weight within a disciplined range, and regularly went for long evening walks irrespective of how busy life became. Watching that consistency naturally created a strong desire within me to maintain a healthy and disciplined lifestyle myself as I grow older. Therefore, one of my goals for the coming years would definitely include improving and achieving high standards of fitness, health, discipline, and work-life balance.

At the same time, many of our dreams in life are not connected only with ourselves, but also with the happiness and well-being of the people we love. For example, I still remember how whenever my mother used to see the

beautiful snow-covered mountains of Kashmir or Uttarakhand on television, she would often say how much she wished to visit such places one day. However, because we belonged to a middle-class family, such trips always remained financially difficult for us. Therefore, one of the things I would genuinely like to do once I become financially independent is to take my parents to beautiful hill stations like Gulmarg, Srinagar and Dalhousie amongst others so that they can finally experience those moments which they could never enjoy during their younger years.

Similarly, I also strongly feel that once I become financially capable, I should support deserving people around me whenever possible. One of my cousins, for instance, has always been extremely sincere and talented in studies, but her family has faced financial difficulties for many years. Therefore, one of my genuine long-term goals would be to contribute towards ensuring that her education never suffers because of lack of financial support.

At the same time, there are also many simple but meaningful comforts of life which people from middle-class families often dream about for years. For example, during summers, because our house is located on the top floor, the heat becomes extremely uncomfortable at times. Therefore, one of my priorities after becoming financially stable would naturally be to improve the quality of life and

comfort of my parents by investing in better household facilities and creating a more comfortable environment for them by getting things like air conditioner and a full-time maid.

Apart from this, planning savings was a major part of my father's way of life. I can talk about how I would like to invest in stock market or some similar option every month and have a decent investment portfolio within the next 5 years.

Likewise, there are also certain personal interests and experiences which have always fascinated me deeply. For instance, since childhood, activities like horse riding always appeared extremely graceful and fascinating to me whenever I happened to see them during visits to cities like Mumbai or Pune. Therefore, if life and circumstances permit in the future, I would genuinely love to learn horse riding properly under a good instructor someday.

One additional important thing for me is the influence Sikhism has had on my life. I studied in a Sikh Trust's School. Going to gurudwara daily became a habit since childhood. Seeing how people from all religions, castes and creed were welcome in our schools and all other gurudwaras and served food without any kind of discrimination always made me feel so good. I always wanted to study about the life of Guru Gobind Singhji and Guru Nanak Devji in a proper manner and for that purpose I

would really like to go for a degree course which is offered by Guru Nanak Dev University.

An additional interesting point I can bring to the discussion is of my love for cooking. My elder sister got married in 1990 when I was just 10. There was no girl/woman in our house who could help my mother with kitchen and household work. As such, it was always me who was helping my mother in cooking and cleaning the house. Starting with doing basic things like peeling garlic and ginger to chopping tomatoes, by the time I was in 10th I was able to make everything from basic dal, chawal, roti subzi to complex things like pav bhaji, palak paneer and sambar. All my friends, relatives as well as students love my cooking and are ever ready to visit home when invited for lunch or dinner. I can use this fact of my life to add weight to the answer by talking about how I would like to learn new recipes from YouTube and become a master at Italian and French cuisine.

Another element I can bring to the table is my desire to learn camera work professionally. My father was extremely fond of watching good movies. He used to read every single edition of Bollywood related magazines like Filmfare, Stardust, Movie and Cineblitz without fail. His deep interest in the world of cinema had given him a very deep understanding about all the different aspects of film

making, specially writing screenplay and camera work(cinematography). Due to this, knowledge about cameras came to me naturally. Even today, I can talk to you in detail about all the latest Sony high end cameras like M4, M5 and FX3. However, these cameras are very expensive and if at all I will buy any of them, it will only be after I have learnt photography and videography at a professional level. I can use this also as one of the things I would like to do in the next 5 years.

I have deep interest even in alternate healing modalities like Reiki and Pranic Healing. I have completed 5 levels in pranic healing and 3 levels in Reiki. The work of Dr Joe Dispenza particularly fascinates me. I can talk about increasing my knowledge about this field by pursuing higher courses.

Likewise, I could also speak about: pursuing additional professional courses, learning modern technologies like AI, building long-term financial investments, starting a YouTube channel for teaching history, or even something as personal as wanting to raise pets properly once financially stable.

Now pause for a moment and observe something very carefully.

Did you notice how naturally the answer started becoming deeper, more lively, more energetic, and more interesting the moment we stopped trying to “manufacture” an

interview answer and instead started talking about genuine desires, interests, dreams, ambitions, curiosities, responsibilities, emotional connections, and aspirations towards life?

Without memorising anything artificially, the answer itself automatically started revealing: personal values, emotional depth, family attachment, sense of responsibility, discipline, curiosity, hobbies, ambitions, financial awareness, compassion, long-term planning, desire for self-improvement, love for learning, and emotional maturity.

And most importantly, the answer no longer sounded like the response of a dull candidate who is merely trying to somehow “clear SSB.” Instead, it started sounding like the thoughts of a psychologically alive, emotionally energetic, and purposeful human being who genuinely has dreams, plans, desires, responsibilities, and enthusiasm towards life.

Now honestly ask yourself one simple question: Were any of the things discussed above unrealistic, extraordinary, or from some imaginary world? Absolutely not. These are all simple human desires, ambitions, emotions, responsibilities, and aspirations which already exist naturally inside most people. The real problem is that candidates never sit down quietly and seriously analyse

their own life deeply enough before appearing for the interview.

One thing I have personally observed over the years is that interview preparation starts becoming surprisingly easy once the candidate is understood properly at a deeper level. Unfortunately, most candidates are never guided in that manner. They are simply given ready-made answers, memorized templates, and artificial “smart” responses without anyone genuinely trying to understand who they really are as individuals.

In our offline batches, I deliberately keep the batch size very small (usually less than fifteen candidates). This allows me to interact with every candidate repeatedly across multiple rounds of personal interview, followed by a detailed discussion and personal interaction. Slowly, I begin to understand their life history, personality traits, behavioural patterns, strengths, weaknesses, fears, habits, emotional tendencies, and even the small experiences that have shaped their thinking over the years. I list down areas and points which can become a hurdle during their interview and work in a very careful & detailed manner with them to guide them regarding how they should handle that particular area of interview. It is certainly a very time-consuming process, but it changes the entire nature of interview preparation.

In fact, it is precisely this deeply personal, one-on-one style of preparation, where I sit with the candidate, guide him directly, handhold him through his thought process, and continuously refine his understanding of himself, that makes the process both time-intensive and extremely effective. Many candidates initially feel that paying ₹9000 purely for personal interview preparation is expensive. But once they actually go through the preparation process and experience the depth of personal attention, clarity, and transformation involved, most of them eventually feel that the fee was not expensive at all, but rather extremely reasonable for the value they received.

Once a candidate starts understanding himself properly, interview questions suddenly stop feeling frightening. Questions like “Where do you see yourself five years from now?” no longer appear difficult because the candidate is no longer trying to manufacture artificial answers. He is simply learning how to express his own personality, ambitions, experiences, and thought process in a clear and structured manner. And the moment this clarity develops, a large portion of nervousness, fear, confusion, and anxiety automatically begins to disappear.

And this is exactly what I repeatedly observe during my offline classes and interview sessions as well. The moment candidates begin understanding personality psychology in

this practical manner, they suddenly realise: “Oh... preparation was actually much easier and much more natural than I had imagined.”

That moment of clarity itself immediately increases their confidence, improves their self-understanding, and gradually removes the fear associated with the personal interview.

The same transformation can happen with you as well if you continue approaching preparation in this thoughtful and practical manner and remain connected through the future editions and discussions which will follow.

Reason #3: Extremely poor expression

What is expression? In simple words it can be described as the way a person expresses and conveys what is in his heart and mind through the use of words and body language. Here, I would like to add that body language mainly includes facial expression, eye movement, hand movement as well as voice modulation and intonation.

It is a very commonly known fact that when you are speaking from your heart, your body language, facial expression, eye movement, intonation and voice modulation naturally and automatically become beautiful. Together all these elements form what can be called expression: the way a candidate expresses what is in

his/her heart and mind through the use of words and body language.

When we are talking to our close friends in our mother tongue during our casual meets, our body language, facial expression, eye movement, intonation and voice modulation are all completely perfect! Reason? A complete absence of fear and anxiety!

When we are with our near and dear ones, we have no fear. There is no anxiety. We do not have any fear that we are going to be judged, liked or disliked, evaluated, accepted or rejected based on how our behaviour and conduct is. We are completely familiar with everyone and everyone present is completely familiar with us. There is nothing to lose. There is nothing at stake.

However, the same is not true when it comes to personal interview. There is a lot at stake when it comes to Personal Interview. In fact, our entire future, and thereby literally everything, is at stake. Whether our life will take the positive direction of financial stability, prosperity, status and respect in society, a safe and secure future or whether it will take the negative direction of taking us back to the railway station on the 5th day of conference depends a great deal on how the personal interview goes. Hence, there is a fear that if this interview will not go well then we will lose all the good things that a career in our Armed Forces offers. And it is

precisely this fear which takes away our natural beautiful way of talking and the natural flow and rhythm of our body language.

I have yet to come across a single candidate whose body language and voice modulation is not naturally perfect when having a normal conversation or interaction with friends, relatives, neighbours or even in our offline class. However, the moment the candidate is made to sit for the interview round, his natural behaviour simply disappears. The candidate becomes extremely conscious, full of fear and at least in the first 1 or 2 rounds commits a number of silly mistakes (This is one of the reasons why I am very particular about taking at least 4 rounds of interview of each candidate who comes to me). The first and second round mostly go in a horribly negative manner. However, as the feedback sessions get more thorough and detailed and the candidate becomes clear about how easy it is in reality to prepare for personal interview, by the end of the 4th round he is much more confident and totally clear about how he will prepare for interview after the batch ends.

However, most of the candidates, who are otherwise extremely deserving and full of potential, fail repeatedly in personal interview because nobody ever sits down with them on a pure one-on-one basis and helps them understand and analyse their own life, personality,

mentality, behaviour traits, good and bad points and accordingly develop a workable strategy for their own personal interview.

The fear and anxiety in the candidate get clearly visible to the Interviewing Officer in the following 4 ways:

Candidate fumbling a lot while answering.

Candidate totally silent when asked certain specific questions.

Candidate doesn't smile even while talking about the positive events and moments of life.

The candidate appears emotionally unaffected and totally neutral while discussing painful or emotionally disturbing incidents from life.

Now let us study and analyse how this kind of a behaviour impacts the evaluation and assessment negatively during the personal interview resulting in rejection. Let us study the consequences.

What is the consequence of poor expression?

Due to poor expression a candidate ends up generating a negative impression in multiple ways. The first and foremost negative impression is that he is not at all confident and is nervous even while having a very basic conversation about his own life with a person in a perfectly

safe and peaceful environment. If a person is experiencing fear and anxiety while simply talking to an army officer sitting in a peaceful and safe place, can such a person ever be entrusted to have the courage of fighting against the Pakistanis, the Chinese, or the militants in an insurgency area? Can this kind of a person ever be entrusted with the responsibility of our Other Ranks and JCOs? The answer is a big NO!

The second negative impression it generates is that it makes the Interviewing Officer feel that there is something seriously wrong with the value system or the mental health of the candidate. Let me explain.

Whenever I have interviewed married candidates appearing for entries like SCO and SEC and asked them about their wife, they almost always answer with a very flat face and a flat tone of voice which is devoid of any emotion. In most cases the candidate is even having at least one child.

Now think about it deeply. You have a woman in your life who has stayed with you through thick and thin and even gone through the extremely difficult and challenging phase called pregnancy and then undergone one of the most painful processes called labour to give you a child. Ask any doctor and you will know that every single delivery is like a second lease of life to the woman. A woman gives so much in a marriage. A husband's heart should be so full of

gratitude, love and care for the woman who has done so much for him! Won't you agree? I bet you would! The mere thought of her should generate a smile on your face and a sparkle in your eyes.

Yet, when married candidates talk about their wives, they are so dull and flat that it literally looks like they are least interested in talking about her or it is some sort of a torture for them to talk about her. In reality, they are so fearful and nervous that they simply forget they are talking about, perhaps, the most important person in their life. The impression which ends up getting generated in front of the Interviewing Officer is as if the candidate does not value his wife. It makes it look like the candidate is not really having a deep, affectionate and healthy bond with his wife. This brings the candidate's value system in question and that is the worst possible thing that can happen in an interview!

Now for a moment turn the situation around and imagine how the Interviewing Officer will feel if the candidate will perform in an exactly opposite manner. Imagine the candidate speaking about his wife with a very healthy positive smile on his face and with his eyes glittering like gold. Imagine how the Interviewing Officer will feel if the candidate's way of talking and choice of words will show that he feels deeply indebted and thankful to his wife for all that she has done for him and given to him. Just imagine

how powerful and positive the impact will be on the evaluation and assessment of the candidate! A person who is thankful and grateful to his wife and in his heart realises that he will never be able to return what his wife has done for him and given him! Doesn't it speak volumes about the value system, and more importantly, about the personal nature and the character of that person?

Think about it for a moment! Do you think a person who has such a deep sense of value for his wife will ever be doing anything wrong to anyone else? Do you think he will ever be disrespectful towards other women? Do you think he will ever indulge in acts of corruption and bribery for petty gains at the expense of the good of others? You bet he won't! These traits are contradictory and do not go together. As such, if a person speaks from his heart and is his natural self while talking about important things and aspects of his life, it will significantly increase the chances of success in the interview. It will have a positive impact in multiple ways. Candidates rob themselves of this wonderful opportunity by not preparing correctly and adequately. It is this incorrect and inadequate preparation that is the root cause of this anxiety and fear which results in negative outcome.

I would also like to add here that the situation with unmarried male and female candidates is no better and no different. Even they behave in the same manner when

asked about the person they love or about parents. At times, I have seen male candidates give such a horrible performance in interview when asked about girlfriend that it practically made me feel like their girlfriend is some sort of a horrible curse which has befallen them due to sins committed in the previous births. “I love her a lot” is also said in such a way that it feels like somebody has put a gun on their head and is forcing them to say it. The thought and the tone of voice just don’t go together.

...y wife is a
very good human being.
I love my wife a lot...

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INTERVIEWING OFFICER

The next thing to understand is that all of us have faced some situations in our life which are not pleasant and the very memory of which produces an immediate thought of at least some degree of sadness in our hearts. I have had candidates who had to leave studies and join army due to financial difficulties. I have had candidates who have lost parents at a very young age in front of their own eyes. I have had candidates who worked since a young age just to be able to eat every day. A few candidates I have trained have had such painful and tragic events happen in their life that merely listening to their stories had completely shaken me from inside.

These kinds of candidates, if not guided properly in a detailed manner, end up reacting in one of the two ways. Either they end up losing their mental composure in front of the Interviewing Officer and end up crying and shedding tears (Yes! Its true). Or they end up being extremely clinical and devoid of any emotion while talking about it. This clinical behaviour is a direct result of nervousness and fear of interview. It is this fear that makes the candidate completely forget how painful and tragic the event was which they are talking about. The impression generated in front of the Interviewing Officer is as of the candidate has ended up becoming extremely cold from inside.

It is common knowledge in psychology that many people who go through painful episodes in childhood, after experiencing initial pain, end up become totally insensitive, devoid of any emotion and full of deep silent hatred and anger. This anger and hatred is towards those who were the main reasons why that tragedy happened. However, these negative emotions eventually take over their entire mental personality and in time they become antisocial and develop other negative traits like temper and violent behaviour.

If we talk about negative events of our life and do not reflect the appropriate associated emotional depth and maturity, we end up creating a very massive negative misunderstanding in the Interviewing Officer's mind. A person who is living with negative traits like anger, hatred, and resentment can never have a positive outlook towards life and society. If you study the biography of some of the most evil people in history, you will generally find that their childhood was either full of tragedies and painful events or had at least one deeply tragic event which completely changed their personality in a very negative way.

In the movie Dhoom-3, Aamir Khan witnesses his father's death due to the wrongdoing of others and as a result ends up making the destruction of those people the sole purpose of his life. It is said that even Adolf Hitler's childhood had

episodes which were exceptionally tragic and painful and we all know what that resulted in: killing of 6 million Jews!

Hence, it is extremely important to ensure in the interview that when we talk about negative events of our life, we are able to show in a balanced and measured manner that we do realise it was painful but then it is past and we are no longer holding on to the negative memories. Our choice of words and body language while talking about that event should be such that it should convey clearly that we do realise it was a very painful episode but then at the same time it should also convey that we have now put it behind us and moved on in life and thereby show emotional maturity and depth.

Rather than ensuring this fine balance in performance, candidates who end up being flat and clinical end up conveying something extremely negative about their mental personality. Most of the times it is not even accurate but then that is what happens when you don't prepare for interview in the correct manner. It is precisely for these reasons that whenever I get a candidate in my batch who has had such tragic episodes, I pay extra attention towards him/her and put in more effort in helping that candidate prepare. Such candidates need extra care and guidance.

The biggest and most damaging aspect of this nervousness and fear is that at times the candidate goes completely

blank when spontaneously a question comes up which was not anticipated or expected. The candidate simply is not able to think clearly. To say it more accurately, the candidate's capacity to think is completely eliminated due to this nervousness and fear. As such, the candidate, at times fails to capitalise on questions which seem to be problematic but are indeed a golden opportunity to impress the Interviewing Officer. Let me help you understand with example.

Recently I was interviewing a candidate who was preparing for ACC entry. During interview he spoke about how he was habituated to reading every single edition of Frontline magazine. Since I am also reading Frontline magazine from childhood, I know it is a magazine which tends to leaning towards leftist kind of politics and comes across as severely anti-right. BJP is mostly seen as a far-right party. So I just spontaneously asked him that it is such a biased magazine. Why he reads a magazine which is extremely biased and anti-govt?

Here the candidate went completely blank and since he was not able to figure out what to say, he ended up saying that it is indeed true that it is biased. Beyond that he was not able to say anything. I repeated my question: Why he reads Frontline when he knows it is so biased. He was just silent.

Now here the candidate lost a golden opportunity to score big. Let us now see how the candidate should have answered this and converted this question into a big positive scoring point.

Ideal answer: Sir I completely agree with you. It does come across as fairly biased. However, the main reason why I read that magazine is because it gives facts and figures related to important issues in a very systematic manner. After making notes I do crosscheck and confirm the data from other sources on the internet. After this, I do crosscheck the truth about the negative points they mention and even study the websites and sources which are known to be pro-govt. I take data from there as well and verify it. This way I am able to get a truly accurate and balanced picture.

Just imagine how beautiful this answer would have looked. It would have shown that the candidate is extremely intelligent and wise. It would have shown that the candidate doesn't believe in things blindly. It would have shown that the candidate checks both sides of the story and is fairly balanced. It would have shown that the candidate has an analytical mind and that would have resulted in a very good score with regards to effective intelligence which is a very key officer-like-quality. All it needed was a little presence of mind. That's it! But then that's exactly what nervousness and fear take away from you.

I was invited by a few soldiers who were posted at AFMC, Pune, in December 2016 to conduct a batch for candidates preparing for AMC-NTS entry. After reaching Pune, when I went to meet the company commander, he was surprised to see that I wasn't carrying any kind of notes or documents to be distributed to the batch, especially the PIQ. He asked me in an extremely concerned tone, "Do you know that there is something very important called the PIQ which the candidates need to be given guidance and training for?" I immediately replied, stating, "Of course it is very important sir, and that is why I take a complete 2-to-3-hour session on it during my course, guiding and educating candidates regarding how to go about filling it out." Now that is what is called presence of mind. In Hindi, it is called *naile pe dhaila*. That's the kind of presence of mind and mental alertness candidates should have. Again, this sharpness and mental acumen take some time to develop under expert guidance. Again, one more important reason why I strongly believe in taking multiple rounds of interviews for each candidate.

The whole point is that this sharpness cannot develop till the time the fear and phobia of interview exist in the heart and the mind of the candidate. The only solution: extremely aggressive preparation in a correct manner.

So what are the solutions?

Regarding the first problem of lack of knowledge about our Armed Forces: I am extremely happy to share with you that in the upcoming editions I will be sharing with you a very thorough and detailed knowledge about various arms, daily life and technology used by our Armed Forces. It will be much more deeper in quality compared to the articles you read on the internet or the videos you watch on YouTube. If you keep reading every edition, it will make you stand out as a candidate. Absolutely no doubt about it! Just join our telegram group so that you will be able to get access to every edition without fail. Also join us on Facebook and/or Instagram to get notified every time a new edition is rolled out. This will be more than enough to help you overcome this weak point of your interview. Each and every article of our future editions will be in simple language and easy to understand and I will personally ensure that the articles are written in such a manner that even a 5th std student will be able to understand everything very easily. So have faith! I will be helping you in this in a very religious manner.

Regarding the second problem of lack of vision for the future: I will strongly recommend that you introspect about your past as well as your future. Analyse what are your future dreams and desires. Make a list of them on a paper. Talk about it in front of the Interviewing Officer in a correct

manner. Analyse your past and evaluate the reason behind each and every major decision and step that you have taken. Frame answers using words which will make the answer acceptable to the Interviewing Officer. The only risk is that at the young age of 17-25, candidates do not have the experience and maturity to understand what will be the correct way of framing answers. As such, my advice will be to constantly reevaluate the answers you frame. Be your own judge. Introspection takes lot of wisdom and deep self-analysis. Do not rush. Do not be a miser. It won't help. Give it ample time.

Regarding the third problem of weak expression: I would strongly advise everyone to watch interviews, discussions and podcasts on YouTube. However, that does not mean job interviews. That's a strict no-no. When I say watch interviews and podcasts, I mean watch interviews and podcasts of actors, sportsmen, politicians and journalists. You might be wondering why I am recommending this step and how will that help in improving body language and voice modulation? Let me explain.

We all speak and behave in a manner which reflects our immediate surroundings and culture. The people of Haryana have a certain unique way of talking and behaving. You can instantly know if a person is from Haryana within the first 20 seconds of interacting with him. Same can be

said about someone from Rajasthan, Maharashtra or any other state. Point is: we absorb what we constantly see and hear. Keeping the same principle in mind, if you will watch interviews of celebrities who are known to be very good orators and eloquent speakers (example: Amitabh Bachchan) then you too will absorb the positive qualities about their communication skills. It will not happen overnight. It will take time. However, if you continue doing it religiously every single day, within 3-6 months you should be able to see considerable difference in yourself. Be patient. The beauty about this process is that you will not be required to make any notes. Just listen. Just watch. The learning and improvement will happen automatically in a subconscious manner.

(I am currently writing a detailed article regarding how to improve English as well as communications skills. If all goes as per plan, in one of the editions in the month of June of 2026, there will be a proper full-fledged article on this. In that article I will elaborate on this in an extremely detailed manner and it will completely solve your problem regarding how to improve English and communication skills without spending a single rupee on joining any kind of spoken English classes. Please be little patient and wait for me. It will be worth the wait I assure you)

Again, all interviews and podcasts are not going to be helpful. For example, if you watch the interview of an actor like George Clooney, it will never help you improve your own communication skills. In my opinion, George Clooney's language as well as way of speaking, just like Donald Trump's, is extremely rough. It will do more harm than good. So you need to be careful about whose interviews you watch. In order to help you ensure that you watch only those interviews and podcasts which are going to help you improve, I will be sharing videos in our telegram group almost on a daily basis. You are welcome to join the group. Link has been given at the end of this edition.

I am sure this article has helped you understand the depth with which you should approach personal interview. However, this article is just a small glimpse of what the whole process of personal interview is. Trust me, once you understand the real science and mechanism behind Personal Interview you will be surprised at how simple and easy it is and how you can perform beautifully if you understand the entire process in a detailed and structured manner. In the future editions I will be sharing more insights which will further help you improve your performance in the personal interview. Please make sure you read all the future editions.

I am sure reading this article has generated a lot of curiosity in your mind regarding who I am and my background and experience in this field. I understand and appreciate that and it is precisely to help you know more about me we are working on making a website for our academy which should go live within 7-10 days. I will be happy to share the link with you in our telegram group and other social media platforms when the website goes live. Till then, I will request you to just be little patient.

In the next edition we will focus on the work of engineers in our Army. Please make sure you do read that edition. It will give deep insights into the work that engineers do in our Army and will help you a lot in your personal interview preparations.

Apart from this I will also be publishing extremely informative articles on other SSB aspects like TAT, WAT, SRT, lecturette, group discussion, current affairs and static GK. As such, reading every edition will help you raise your performance in a very drastic manner.

In the end, I have one request: This entire article has been personally typed by me on my laptop. If you have found this edition useful then please share it with all your friends who are preparing for SSB and in all the SSB related social media groups that you are a part of. It will help lot of candidates

who are working very hard for their SSB but not succeeding due to lack of correct guidance.

If you have any suggestions or feedback regarding how we can improve our future editions, please feel free to write to me at editor@ssbdigest.com.



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SSB DIGEST

INSIGHTS. PSYCHOLOGY. OFFICER MINDSET.



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**ALL ABOUT THE WORK OF ENGINEERS.
FACTS EVERY SSB CANDIDATE MUST KNOW.
BUT THEY DON'T.**



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INSIGHTS



PERSONALITY
DEVELOPMENT



INTERVIEW
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