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Marcia Merrill, The Transition Chick

**Is There Such A Thing As
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Is There Such A Thing As Age Discrimination?

I'm not going to lie to you! Of course, there is--an interviewer has prejudgments, like every other human. He/she may see someone bald and recall a bad incident with a bald, former friend. Or a perfume might arouse memories of his late wife/sister, and he will feel kindly towards that job-seeker. Or, she/he may look at a person's ethnicity, skin color or a mention of a church committee and, unfortunately make judgments or link them to others he/she has known or read about. Some see a gray-haired candidate, and think they're "too old" to learn new things--and the interviewer makes/creates judgments around that--But, some job candidates may use their age as the ONLY reason the job wasn't landed--But, that may just be an excuse.

What is your point? I do have one and it's not intended to discourage anyone! You cannot be held responsible for any interviewer's thoughts PRIOR to your interview! There just are some variables you cannot control!

Focus on what is in your control. Have a positive, can-do attitude--don't think you're too old to get a job! That kind of thinking and negative vibration will get you what you don't want! Be 100% prepared--know the info on the company, their products or service and show you've done your research! I often tell my clients during Interview Coaching sessions to ask a question showing your knowledge about the industry or company. For example, I was reading in your In the News section of your site that you're launching a new software program on. I'm wondering what will be the projected marketing strategy. Now, your questions should be appropriate to the interviewer. My example might be if the interviewer were an executive or in marketing, not the HR representative.

You've shown you're interested enough to do the research, ask intelligent questions, are technology savvy, and are a strategic thinker! All of this



information gathered from one question. Not having up-to-date skills, particularly in information technology, is always a concern of all interviewers--whether it's a computer company or not. Computers are a part of most people's lives.

Do older, mature-looking job seekers land jobs? Yes. Here are a few examples.

A friend (63) got a position as a Recruiter for Microsoft with steel gray hair! She'd never worked in IT, but was up-to-date and had skills that were transferable.

One of my clients (59), was desperately unhappy in her accounting job. After we did some tests to look at her current and ideal work environments--It was clear that she wanted more responsibility and more than just accounting. She landed an interview through a networking contact, and with her whitish hair--was hired in strategic planning.

Interviewers also want stability, experience, and demonstrated know-how to get the job done. Mature workers have less time out, tend to have ties to the location, aren't as likely to relocate, bring expertise and loyalty.

There are some things to watch out for when putting your resume together--You only have to go back ten years. And, I'd not put down your high school. And you might put dates in a less noticeable place. Not having dates at all might serve as a red flag. Each circumstance of the job search differs from client-to-client. I'm giving you general tips. To address your individual concerns, be happy to talk!

Putting the focus back on the interview, your resume has passed inspection, you're asked to come in. Now what--it's obvious you're not in your 30's--I always use humor and suggest to my Interview Coaching clients that, if age is an issue, you might as well bring it out in the open--like the proverbial pink elephant everyone pretends not to notice! If you're gray, have age in your face, white hair, whatever--a recent, mature Interview coachee actually said this in an interview (she gave me permission to quote her), "I'll bet you might be wondering if I'm too old to do this job--as you can see--I've kept my skills up-to-date, I'm a fast learner, and I assure you--you CAN teach this old dog some new tricks!" :)

She got the job! Being prepared, feeling confident, and having kept up in your field, that's why interviewers hire candidates. Does age discrimination exist? Certainly. Is it fair? Of course not. But, mature people 40+-60s and more do get hired. Don't let age be an excuse for not doing the other things needed.



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