

## TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

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Almost every job interview begins with this question, and, contrary to how it sounds, it's not one you want to answer "off the cuff." This exchange can set the tone for the interview that follows, so you want to make the most out of this opportunity to talk about yourself.

The ideal two-minute response is like a very condensed personal statement, and should include:

1. A brief introduction that summarizes your current position and goals
2. Your key accomplishments, credentials, education, and career start
3. The key strengths demonstrated by your accomplishments, career progress, and growth
4. The importance of these strengths and accomplishments to your prospective employer
5. Where and how you see yourself developing the position for which you're applying, and what you want (tempered with the right amount of modesty)

By working on this statement, you will ensure that your interviewer gets a clear picture of the relevant skills you have and what you would like to do with them. You can also use this exercise to improve your own understanding of your career goals. The better you know it, the better you will be able to articulate it to others, and the more confident you will sound! Once you are able to deliver this statement quickly, compellingly, and clearly, you can use it at interviews, when you meet people at workshops and conferences, and career fairs.

### SAMPLE

I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, where I earned a bachelor's degree in psychology. Following graduation, I worked in a social service agency for homeless individuals. I became very interested in client advocacy when I was unable to find accessible local resources available to the homeless. As a matter of fact, I created an electronic resource guide for our clients which is being maintained and utilized by that agency. After two years of working directly with clients, I realized that I wanted to further my education in social work and learn more about client advocacy. While in school, I had my first field placement at Caritas, which furthered my knowledge about the connection between homelessness, mental health, substance abuse, and poverty. My second field placement was with the Salvation Army, working with the Executive Director on projects related to community engagement and job development. I have specialized in Community and Administrative Leadership courses to prepare me for a position in which I can make a difference on a macro level through program development, community organizing, and policy. I also continue to be very committed to working with the homeless. With my MSW, I am interested in a position in management with New Beginnings Agency.

