

We've boiled the informational interview down to a simple two-step—or, if you like, two-question—process that anyone can follow, whether you're the most charismatic go-getter or the shyest person you know. In a nutshell, the two-step process is: 1) learning vicariously from your connector's own career journeys, and 2) soliciting their direct advice about how you can better clarify and advance your career goals.

Step one: "Can you tell me about your professional journey?"

End the Job Hunt's two-step informational interview model begins with you asking the connector to share their story and tell you about their professional background. Any number of similar opening questions will get you started here:

- Can you tell me about your professional path and background?
- How did you get into this field/into your current position?
- What was your professional journey like?
- I really admire your work on _____. What made you decide to do this work?
- I'm especially curious about _____. What path did you take to get where you are today?
- How did you decide on the training or education you pursued?
- As you were trying to figure out what work to do, how did you overcome apprehension and confusion?

Your aim is to ask an open-ended question that will get your connector talking—and ideally get them excited to share story with you. Asking about the connector's path is an ideal way to find a window into their experience, wisdom, past mistakes, and thought process. With any luck, your connector will leave you with knowledge (or at least clues!) about the landscape of your field, its players, and its politics.

As your connector is starting to wrap up their story or if they turn the conversation over to you—asking, for instance, what else you'd like to know—you'll have a chance to share your reflections on their story, ask any questions that came up for you while listening, and then launch into step two.

Step two: "What would you do if you were me?"

After you've heard and discussed their story, it's your turn to get more hands on. The second step to every informational interview is to tell the connector a bit about where you are and where you're trying to go, and ask them how they would get there if they were in your shoes. You have to succinctly and accurately give them a picture of where you are and what's important to you, so that 1) they're able to share advice that's relevant to you, 2) they'll be able to help you get the information and contacts you need—and 3) help you course correct if you're not quite heading in the right direction yet.