

# ***So You Want To Be An Interpreter? (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)***

## **Chapter 14**

### **Transcript**

#### **1. Business Practices**

##### **SPEAKER #1**

Tips for interpreters to do with business practices...hmmm...probably, um, my accountant would love this but, keep all your receipts. Your system doesn't need to be complicated, I mean I still...I don't even use, um, a computerized tax program. I have a fairly basic, um, system. Something that, um, works for me...it doesn't....you know, I, I eventually found something that I think works for me. I...try to keep up on my invoicing so that, I mean, I heard employers say we don't really want the last three months of invoices all at once...<laughter> makes it very difficult for them to do their record keeping. So I try to keep...I try to keep up. I try not to let it pile up too much. Um, I keep my receipts. I try to keep up on my book work. My system is really pretty simple and that's, uh, I think, probably for starting out that's ...that's a...good tips for anybody, really. You know, maybe find somebody that you think, uh, has a similar organizational style as yours and find out what they do as far as billing is concerned and, and business practices and, uh, see what they do, you know, and see if you can kind of match that...or suit...suit that to the needs you have.

##### **SPEAKER #2**

I think what I would suggest to people would be to respond to, uh, requests for work, uh, and respond promptly. If people are calling about an assignment or making inquiries, to make sure that you get back to them and especially with email nowadays people are more and more anxious about hearing back from people right away. Uh...so I've tried to kind of move up the timeline that I respond to people in and I've found that that's successful. Um, I get frustrated myself now when people don't respond to me promptly, so that's what I would suggest.

##### **SPEAKER #3**

I think, um, you have to take initiative because, um, this is not the kind of work where, um...yes, if you're known out in the field, you're known and so they'll call you but when you're the first year out, it's, it's difficult. So, you're calling agencies to let them know your availability...um, and if they request for your resume, what kind of experiences you've had, especially what kind of post secondary...especially if you're doing post secondary...what post secondary, um, education you've had. I, I find that my first year I was, I was constantly phoning and, and letting them know this is...and, and every week almost, you know, to let them know your schedule just so that you could get work. Um, so that's one thing is you have to take initiative. Um, another thing too is, uh, to..uh...it's often...it's funny that sometimes the...um, placement that you go to, uh, they give feedback to the agency that hires you...so it's very important to carry yourself, um, professionally...um, and to not just to be there as a machine but be there as a human being and be personable and be, um, and, and, and nice <laughter>...you know, cause, uh, you're not just in and out. It's...uh...it's important to have that rapport with everyone, the Deaf, the hearing, and, um, to make the...and to make the communication go more smoothly. So, and that's another thing, is to just step in there professionally, to set boundaries but also to still be nice and, and, and friendly.

#### **2. I Wish I Had Known**

##### **SPEAKER #1**

I wish I had known that there's no possible way that I could be all things to all people and I have to remind myself constantly that sometimes my doctor isn't a match for me and I go find

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another doctor. It doesn't mean that that doctor's not a really good doctor or my hairstylist or anyone else that I come into contact with in a professional capacity. That I think that...that this field is almost all to do with confidence and being reminded that maybe if an appointment didn't go really well it's just because I wasn't particularly a match for the Deaf consumer, the hearing consumer, or both...or that something just wasn't right and it doesn't mean that I'm not a good interpreter. It just means that that situation didn't, didn't turn out the way that it should've.

SPEAKER #2

All about the business sense...like what you had said about filing, um, all my receipts and, and which receipts to keep because sometimes they're, they're unnecessary and...um, because our field is so unique, a lot of accountants out there, I find, don't really know what you can and can't keep so they kind of make it up as you go along, and the more you're with them...they're figuring it out, what they can and can't keep but I, um...there's some things...I wish I was more organized about that kind of stuff...how to file ready and...just cause I didn't realize how it was all gonna pile up in a year and then at the end of the year you're stuck with all of these receipts and you're, you're trying to get everything organized...okay, this is my car, this is my office stuff, this is...and it, it was a pain in the butt. So, now I've, I've got a system down where I, I have, um, a filing system set up for, for the different parts that you can write off for interpreting.

**3. Threats To Staying**

SPEAKER #1

Um...well, so far, knock on wood, I'm physically healthy. I haven't had any repetitive strain problems or anything. Um, I think for me it would probably be the, um...inconsistency of an income...is a, pretty much...I hear time and time again people say there's not enough interpreters, there's not enough interpreters, but the thing...the fact is that everybody wants you Thursday afternoon <laughter> ...there's not enough interpreter's for Thursday afternoon. Do you want me any other day of the week? You know, that sort of thing...and I think that I've gotten to the point now where I'm one of the more, uh, experienced interpreters in the community. So, I tend to have quite a bit of work but it's still difficult. Um, you know...from April or May until September it's, it's dicey as to whether I'm gonna get a lot of work or not. Um, that, I think, is probably a pretty big, big threat. The other one would be, again, confidence. Just hitting a plateau, skills-wise, feeling like, you know, am I ever gonna be any good at this, am I ever gonna get certified, and that kind of frustration. And how do I deal with it? Um, I have a study group that I meet with, I have people that I, you know, talk to about it, I have a good support system...um, I'm...I'm, I'm not the only one that has an income in my house. So, uh, try not to live beyond my means financially because you just never know what's gonna happen.

SPEAKER #2

Well, I...I can think of two. One is financial in that, um...there seems to be a ceiling on how much money I'm able to make in the field, uh...so that would be one. And the other is more, uh, a frustration that sometimes I don't feel like I'm actually getting any better and, um, even though I'll go to workshops and, and have a diagnostic done I...I kind of find that I'm stuck. I feel that I'm stuck and, uh, on some days that really gets me down. Like, I'm not getting any better so maybe I should move on to something else.

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SPEAKER #3

Well, I think one thing is to realize that the..that it's an interpretation so it's not you...to be able to separate that out but also...and to realize that it is, um...you have to have...your heart has to be in it but your heart has to be in it for you too. So, that while you give to the profession and you give to your interpretation, you need to give to yourself and...and that means taking time away from interpreting, taking time away from all of that. To have your own interests, your own hobbies, your own relaxation, your own social groups outside of that. Um, and that, in itself, gives your body a rest, gives your mind a break, gives your arms a break so that you're not having um, the overuse syndrome, you're not having any kind of physical, tendonitis, any kind of physical ramifications from just giving so much to interpreting. Um, and I think...that will steady you well in keeping you in the profession for a number of years. Both to have that mental break and that physical break, um, will keep you coming back, will keep you in it. So...

SPEAKER #4

My first year was really hard, like I said earlier...um, and wanted to quit. <laughter> Um, not so much when I was doing post secondary stuff but when I was...cause post secondary is just something that I'm comfortable with...but some of the freelance work that I um, um...was put in...was told that it, it's something a new grad can do in going out there and it's totally not what you had expected and, um, getting bawled out by the Deaf person for it. So that, that totally discouraged me...thinking, am I in the wrong field and...and I think another thing that's frustrating about this field, and I've had discussions with other interpreter's about it is that we're constantly getting feedback, every time, and, uh...and I, I don't think that there is a profession out there that has that kind of, um, daily feedback form that we get and, um...so, it sometimes it's, it's disheartening thinking that you can't just go out there and feel really good about your work because you're always getting thrown this, you know...oh this...that sign wasn't right or, you know, or interrupting the instructor and the instructor looking at you like, are you dumb <laughter>. So, that kind of stuff is disheartening, um, but, you, you...you get through it and, and you, and you talk with another interpreter...with other interpreter's and, and you...and that's how you get it off your chest and that's how you move on.

**4. Wellness Strategies**

SPEAKER #1

Um, usually I spend time thinking about the incident and just trying to figure out what, what it was that was going on that's bothering me about it. Um, and then got my own general wellness, I do yoga. So, that helps a lot.

SPEAKER #2

For myself, uh, my shoulders and, and...I think I'm, I'm getting tendonitis in my arms so I find that I, uh...so that's one thing that I know that I can't...interpreting will not be something that I do full-time for the rest of my life. For me, I don't think it'll be physically possible, um...unless I, you know, have the money to go to massage every day or...or for myself to finding the time to, to do the hot and cold baths for my arms and, and do my stretches, and stuff...and, and I do, I do my stretches pretty much religiously before I work but I find that sometimes it's not enough. I...I get...I find my arm, especially my right, fatiguing quickly. So, um, yeah, I'm looking into other avenues of what I can do with, with my skill. So, um maybe going back to school, who knows.