



Secrets to Successful Interviews for Your Travel Articles

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop table. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to
talk about...

1. How to prepare for your interviews

2. How to formulate the right questions for the setting

3. How to maintain rapport to get the best quotes

4. How to get the best quote of all with one simple question





Before we get this train moving...

Let's start by addressing the fear here...how many of you are intimidated by the idea of doing an interview for an article?



Let's take a look at my
very first interview

From your experience and observations, has the growing farmers' market culture caused people to take more interest in cooking at home?

There has been a growing interest in cooking at home over the past three years because of the economy. And also, a rise of fascination with food, particularly cooking TV. People have traveled and realized there is amazing food out there, and they want to recreate it at home.

There is also a hip factor. Green is one of the great movements. Not only is it healthier to eat, it's worth the money. People realize it's their responsibility.

What are two tips to help home cooks get the most out of the farmers' market?

Farmer's markets create community. Talk to farmers and you can get tips on how best to prepare their foods. If you aren't sure how to strike up a conversation, ask when they picked the produce or how they like to eat it. Farmers love interaction. It teaches them and helps them learn from their customers.

It's also a great way to unplug, something to do with your family. You can make a day of it and focus on each other.

For a busy home cook, is a CSA a better option for farm fresh produce?

A CSA is fantastic if you're time strapped or don't like choice. You don't have to figure out what to make. They are so decentralized though. On Epicurious we put together a seasonal map that shows everything fresh in each state every month. It would be great to have something along the same line with CSAs in every city.

I know that since you came on as chief at Epicurious, there has been more focus on entertaining content. What are some of your favorite easy appetizers with farm fresh produce?

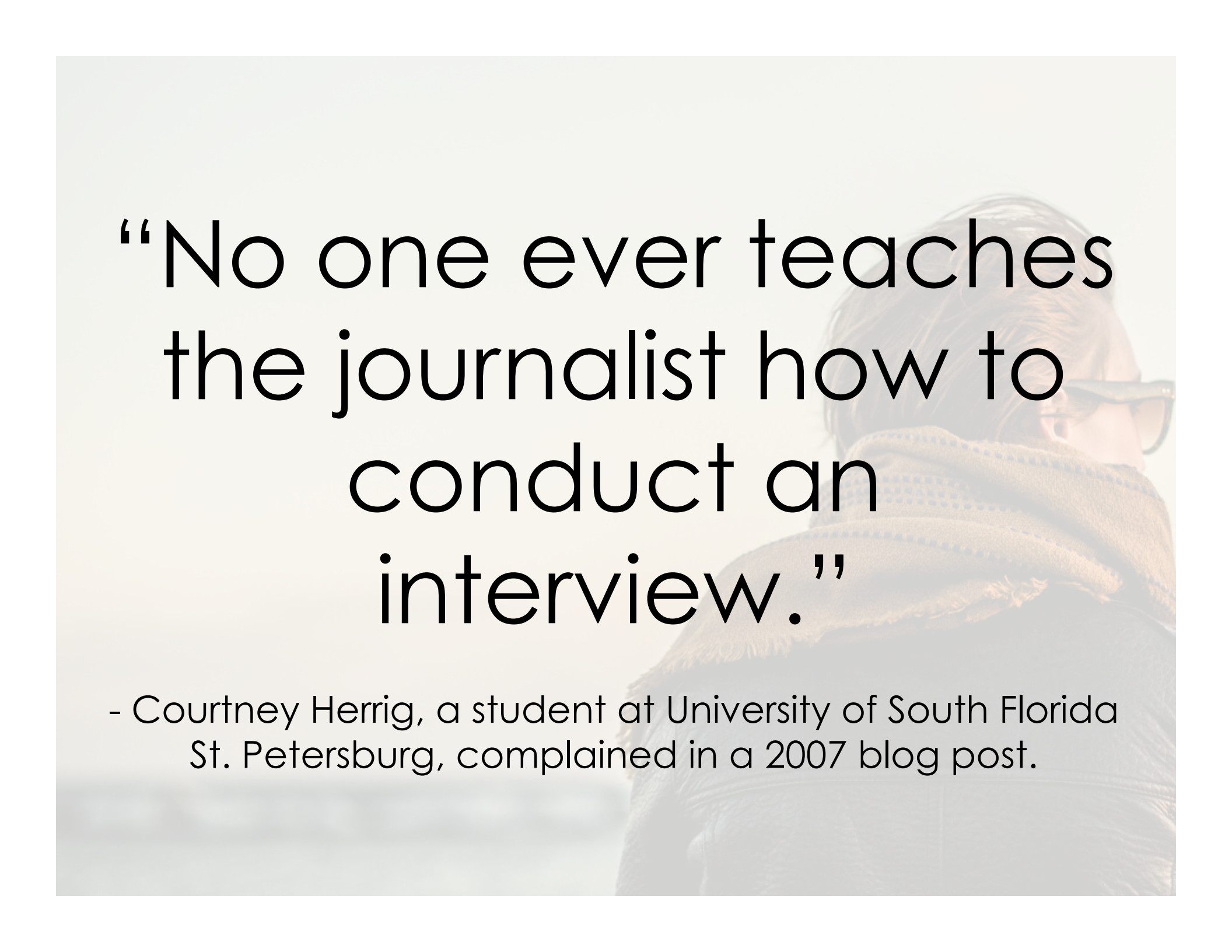
Of course it depends on the season. In summer, I love the tomatoes. Panzanella with tomatoes. And fresh pesto. There are so many peaches . . . grilled peaches with creme fraiche.

The background is a soft-focus photograph of a desert landscape. In the foreground, there are numerous small, yellowish-brown shrubs. In the middle ground, a person is riding a horse across a flat, sandy area. The background features a range of mountains under a pale, overcast sky.

Let's break it down.

What is an interview
at its core?

A question. And listening
to the answer.

A person with long dark hair, wearing glasses and a brown patterned scarf, is shown from the chest up, looking out over a body of water. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with a light sky and a dark horizon line. The overall tone is contemplative and serene.

“No one ever teaches
the journalist how to
conduct an
interview.”

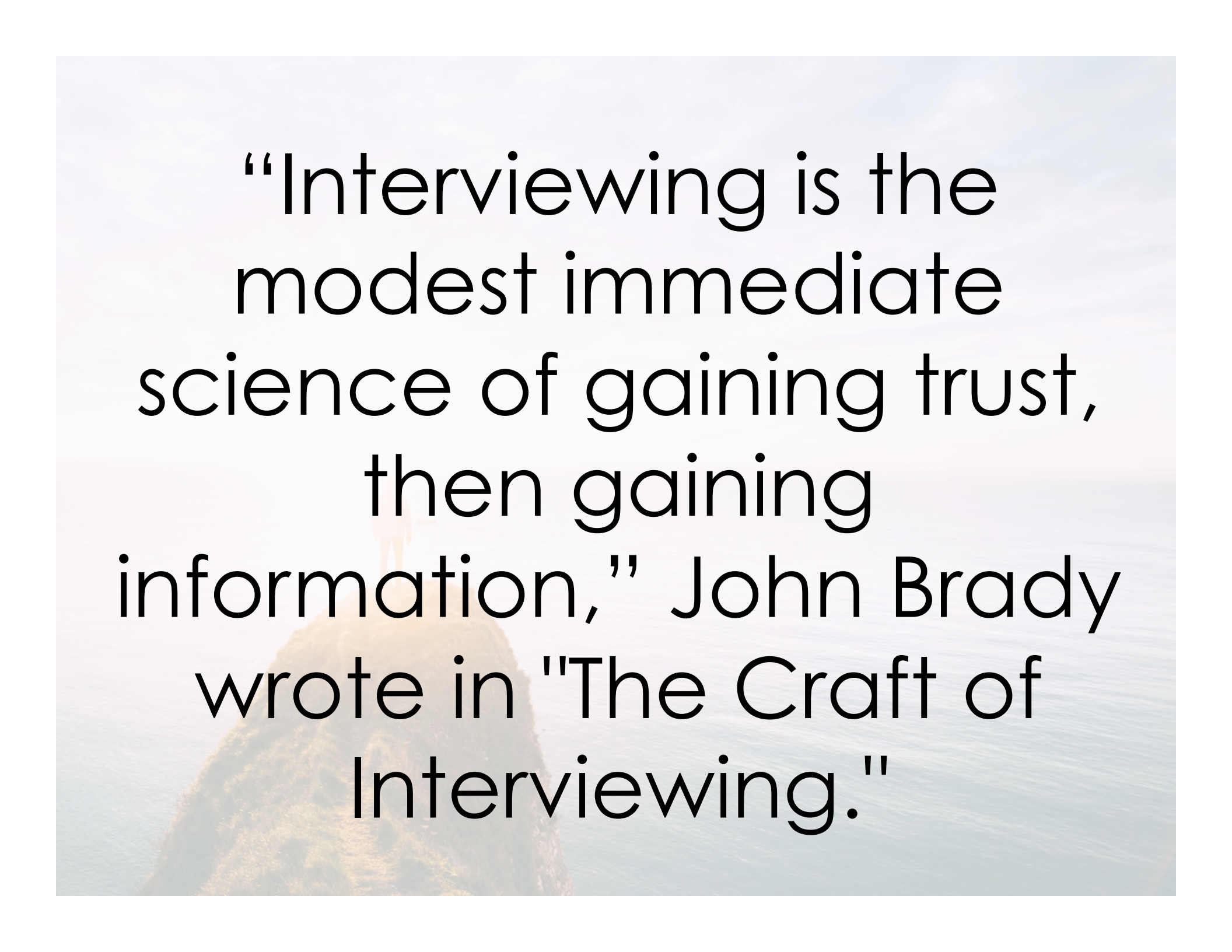
- Courtney Herrig, a student at University of South Florida
St. Petersburg, complained in a 2007 blog post.

The Three Roadblocks of Making Any Interview a Success:

- How do you get someone to talk to you? (the topic of next week, but easier than you think!)
- How do you get information that is actually useful?
- What do you do with it when you have it? (live demo two weeks from now)

What is Useful Information?

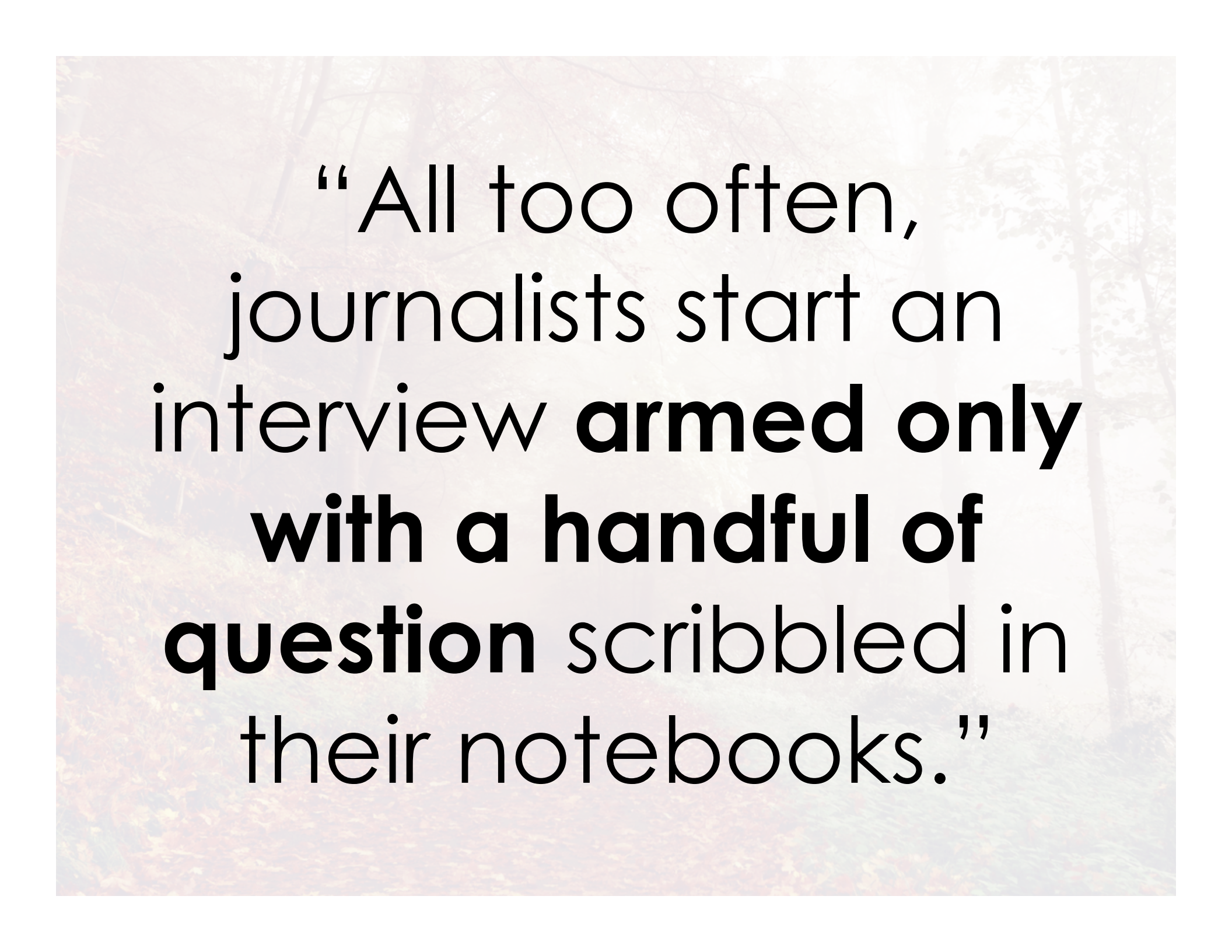
- Why will you use it?
 - Robert Reid + the “journalists”
- How will you use it?
 - background
 - quotes
 - anecdotes/illustrating examples
 - connecting you to other resources
- Defining “useful” for your needs
 - details
 - color
 - character



“Interviewing is the modest immediate science of gaining trust, then gaining information,” John Brady wrote in “The Craft of Interviewing.”

Options for Setting the Scene

- Chitchat?
 - Compliments?
 - Thanks?
 - Admiration?
- Getting to the point?
 - Is it rude?
 - Tell them what you're going to tell them?
 - On the record?/Recording?
 - Setting ground rules?

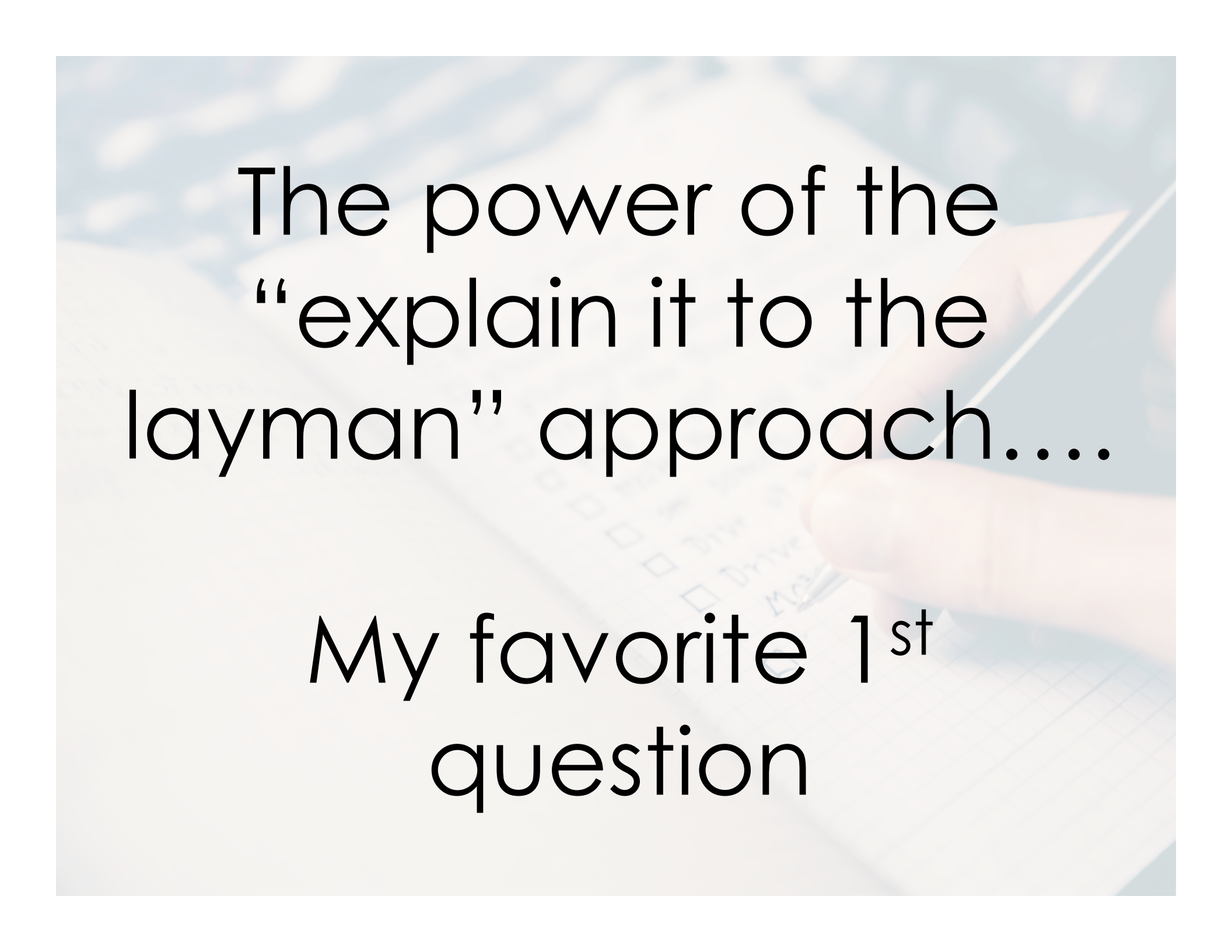


“All too often,
journalists start an
interview **armed only**
with a handful of
question scribbled in
their notebooks.”



Background is much
more important than
questions.

Know the topic
generally; ask about
specifics.

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a person's hand holding a pencil, positioned over a laptop keyboard. The lighting is soft, and the colors are muted, creating a professional and focused atmosphere.

The power of the
“explain it to the
layman” approach....

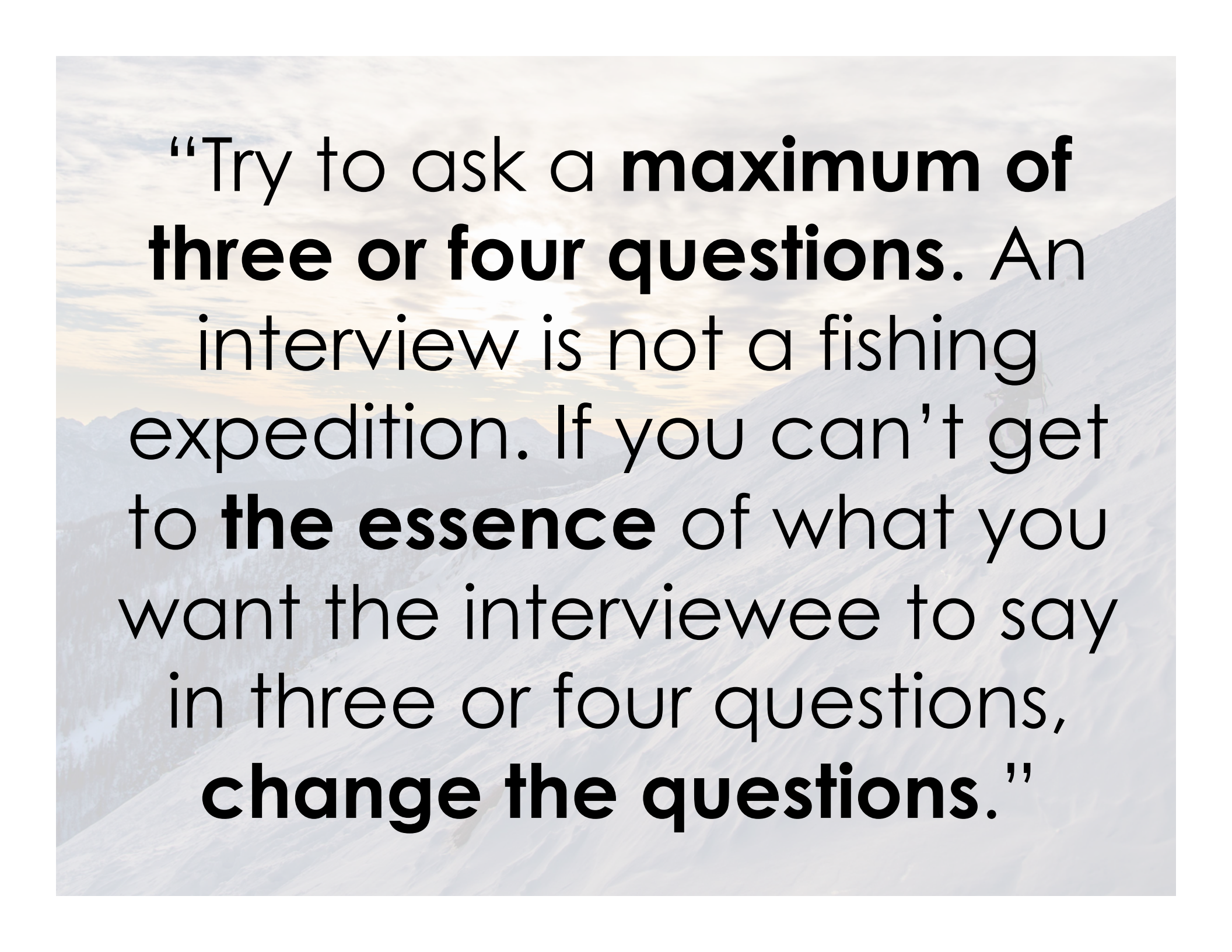
My favorite 1st
question

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the upper right, a portion of a white laptop keyboard is visible, showing keys like 'control', 'option', 'command', 'X', 'C', 'V', 'B', 'N', 'M', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'H', 'G', 'I', 'O', and '>'. In the upper left, a white circular bowl contains white pebbles with a small cluster of red succulent plants in the center. In the lower left, the back of a white iPhone is visible, showing the Apple logo and the word 'iPhone'. In the lower right, a green succulent plant is partially visible. The text 'It's not about questions; its about an interaction.' is centered over the image in a large, black, sans-serif font.

It's not about
questions; its about
an interaction.



When former new york times reporter Mirta Ojito interviews experts, "I try to know almost as much as they do about their subject, so it seems we are 'chatting,' " she said by email.

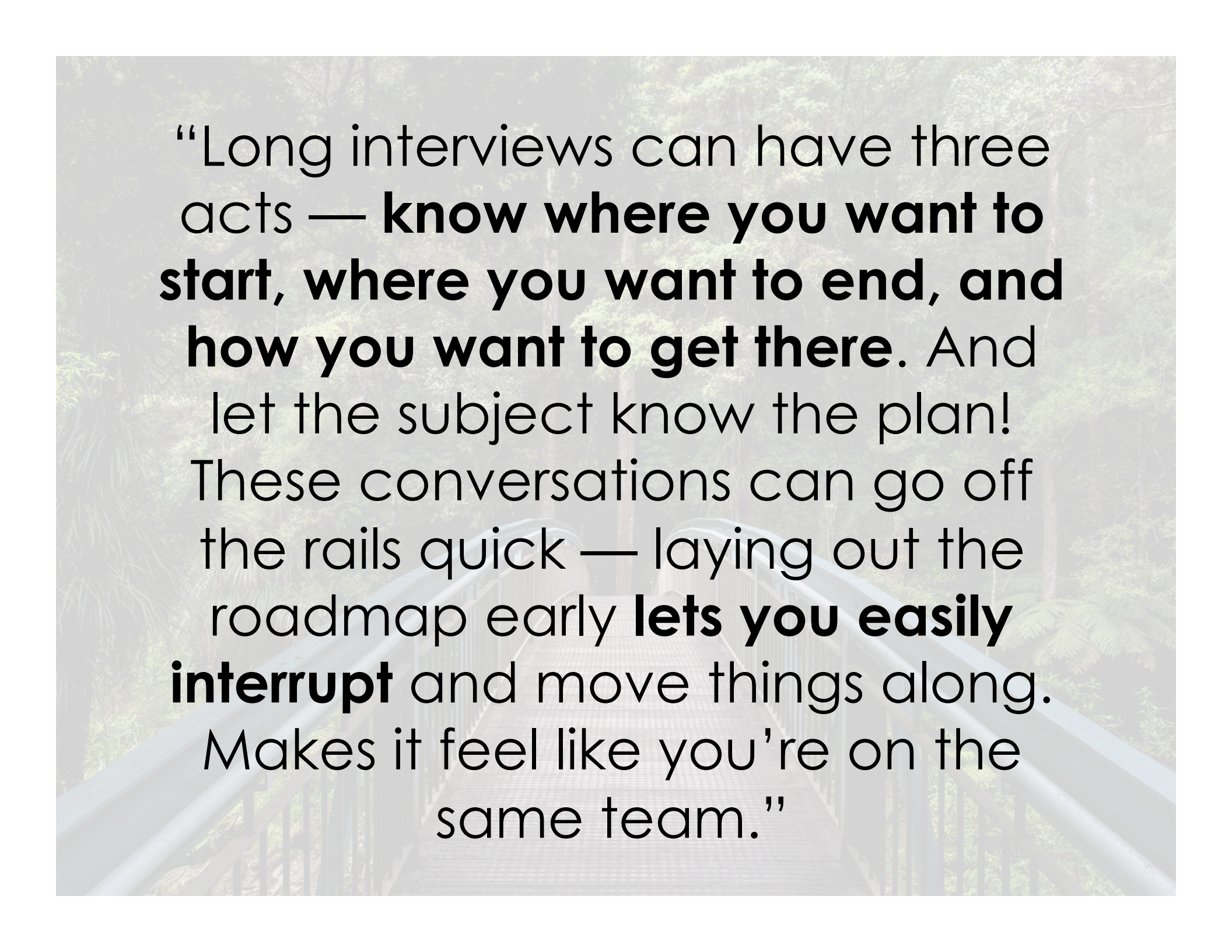


“Try to ask a **maximum of three or four questions**. An interview is not a fishing expedition. If you can't get to **the essence** of what you want the interviewee to say in three or four questions, **change the questions.**”


A person's legs in light blue jeans and dark sneakers with colorful patterns are captured mid-jump over a puddle. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with buildings. The text is overlaid on the image.

Moving things
along...

...is required—and
your job, not theirs.



“Long interviews can have three acts — **know where you want to start, where you want to end, and how you want to get there.** And let the subject know the plan! These conversations can go off the rails quick — laying out the roadmap early **lets you easily interrupt** and move things along. Makes it feel like you’re on the same team.”



Bring it home with the
one question you
should always ask in
any interview

** (make sure to say relevant to your audience!)

Thanks so much
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting
travel writing with you 😊

Whenever you need to double check an idea fit, your assumptions about editors, or your self doubt on whether your idea is good, email questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com.

