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## Questions for fundraisers to ask during the interview process to help evaluate organizational culture and receptivity to authenticity

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Your interview is a critical opportunity to ascertain an organization's commitment to creating environments where employees can exist authentically. The inherent power dynamic present in an interview positions the interviewee as the sole party responsible for proving their qualifications and readiness. When you engage from a place of liberation, you understand that you are also responsible for assessing work environments to ensure that their culture can meet your professional desires and nurture your authentic self.

A few strategic questions can deliver insight as to whether or not an organization is prepared to do so. Because it can be challenging to identify which questions will get to the heart of an organization's positioning, here are a few to get you started.

Let us know how they work for you!

- **What cultural lessons have you learned from past staff departures (especially those who hold traditionally marginalized identities)?**
  - *This begins to illustrate this organization's commitment to learning and willingness to be honest about those lessons.*
- **Which are you more in need of at this juncture - an innovator or someone to implement what already exists?**
  - *This compels your interviewer to articulate what role they envision you will play.*

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- **Where does this organization intentionally invite creative ideas from all levels of leadership? Could you share an example of a time when someone from outside of the C-suite/Executive Team shared an idea that was implemented organization-wide?**
  - *This begins to illuminate how amenable the organization is to new ideas.*
- **Which aspect of this organization's culture needs most urgently to shift? What steps have already been taken to make that shift?**
  - *This gives insight into how honest an organization is willing to be/how aware they are of their cultural challenges.*
- **What key skill and knowledge assets and gaps exist at this organization?**
  - *This will tell you what the organization understands to be a true skill and what it considers valuable knowledge.*

**Pro Tip:**

- Use the word "lead" and "leader" - whether or not you are interviewing for a traditional leadership position - when referring to yourself (e.g. What professional development supports are available for a leader in this position?). Observe the verbal (e.g. correction of your language) or non-verbal (e.g. appearing alarmed or put off) response that you get from the interviewer. This can be an indicator of the organization's intention in encouraging leadership and influence at all levels of positional power. This does not have to be a deal-breaker but it presents an opportunity to ask about the organization's perspective.

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