



## Media Skills - Handling Tough Questions

- **Loaded Question**

A loaded question is confusing or convoluted. It may contain false or confusing context. Restate, and then answer the question, correcting misinformation and framing it in your favor.

- **Extreme Choices**

This question tries to box you into only a few answers. “Well, what is it Becky? Is the Senator a traitor or a hero?” Resist the temptation to fall into this trap. Restate the question and respond with what you want to say.

- **“What If” Questions**

Hypothetical questions are a trap. They rarely serve you well. The reporter may be looking for predictions or even drama. Only respond to real situations. Say this, “Regardless of how the election goes, we are fighting for families and our time is coming.” “I am not in the business of predictions, but I can say...”

- **Unverified Third-Party Statements**

Do not respond to hearsay, quotes you haven’t verified, or documents you haven’t seen. Ask to see the quote, hopefully from some news outlet. If the reporter says, “The Pope today said XYZ about immigrants. What will that mean for your organization?” If you haven’t verified the quote, say “If that is true, we stand in agreement that...” Or even better, “We are always happy to get religious support for our cause. This means we...”

- **Rapid Fire Questions**

This is when a reporter is aggressive or trying to get through a lot of questions quickly. These can happen because of deadlines, intense scrutiny or just plain rudeness. It is hard to respond to these questions so don’t feel like you need to match their energy. Relax and refocus. Those are all great questions, Steve, but it all comes down to our mission...”

- **Confusing Questions**

Sometimes the reporter isn’t even clear or well-read on the topic they are covering, so they may ask uninformed questions. Reframe the question and then address it.

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