

# Tales from the interview: Anticipating your own incompetence is not a good interview strategy

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Some years ago, there was a candidate who was interviewing for a programming position in my group. The first interviewer asked the candidate about career plans with that old standby, “Where do you see yourself in five years?”

— *In five years, I see myself in program management.*

This is a fair answer. Many people see programming as a stepping stone to management. It doesn't have to be, but it's certainly a career path more than one person has taken.

My colleague decided to probe further. “What is it about program management that appeals to you?”

— *Well, after five years, all the kids graduating from college will be so much smarter than me, and they'll know all about the latest technologies, so I won't be able to cut it as a programmer any more. I'd have to go into management.*

It's bad enough that your career plan includes never developing any new skills and “failing upward” into management. It's another thing to *anticipate it in your interview*.

Raymond Chen

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