

Mini Assignment 3: Interview Questions

Interview subject: **Demi Lovato**

Until last spring, all I really knew about Demi Lovato was that they are a recording artist and their songs *Cool for the Summer* and *Heart Attack* sometimes played on the radio. I am of the generation that narrowly missed their height as a child star on shows like *Barney & Friends* and *Sonny with a Chance* and I just considered myself well outside of their younger fan base. But one evening last March, I was looking for new content to watch and came across their YouTube documentary series called *Dancing with the Devil*, which chronicled their near-fatal overdose in 2018. The 4-part series was released incrementally from March 23 to April 6, 2021, and upon watching the first episode, I was inextricably invested.

As I waited patiently for the next episode to drop, I began filling my free time at home during lockdown reading everything I could about them, watching old interviews, listening to podcasts that featured them as a guest, and I even found myself asking Alexa to play their music while I cleaned the kitchen and packed my son's school lunches. In addition to their tremendous vocal talent and fashion sense, I learned that the 28-year-old is an activist for mental health, addiction, body-positivity, and the LGBTQ community. They also have a unique energy and incredibly honest way about them. The transparency with which they share the devastating stories of their struggles surrounding sexual abuse, mental illness, and addiction; but also how they readily erupt into their distinctively sincere, big, and infectious laugh; I loved how they seemed open to feeling all their feelings. A few weeks after I embarked on this pandemic-fueled quest to learn everything I could about this remarkable person, when I thought that perhaps I had finally exhausted all publicly available content, Demi Lovato came out as non-binary (pronouns they/them) on May 19. The more I learned, the more I thought "they are my kind of people". Evidently, this person was even more nuanced and complex than I had imagined. I thought, how amazing it would be to sit with them and share a candid conversation someday.

If I had an opportunity to interview Demi Lovato, I would aim to encourage introspection and candidness in a safe space and make sure I do them justice in the piece that I produced. I would ask them the following questions:

Q1. You recently came out publicly as non-binary. Can you tell me about the inner journey that unfolded which led you to this deeply personal realization?

Q2. You have always had a very sharp and iconic fashion sense, using makeup and clothing to express yourself. You mentioned in several interviews since coming out as non-binary that in the past, you often felt compelled or pressured as a celebrity to project a hyper-feminine image even though this didn't always jive with how you saw yourself as a person. Since publicly reclaiming who you are, how have your tastes and choices evolved to better suit your identity?

Q3. With the personal and creative freedom that undoubtedly comes with finally living your truth, how do you see this shaping your music and your career going forward?

Q4. You dated Max Ehrich for 5 months and got engaged, only to call off the engagement two months later while you quarantined together. You have talked about how the pandemic provided the quiet isolation you needed to cultivate greater self-reflection and healing. You have also said that it inspired

you to trade out social constructs of what you thought security and stability looked like, in favour of “fluidity”. Can you explain what fluidity means to you?

Q5. You started out as a child star on *Barney & Friends* and have been growing into your Self as an adult, all the while living as a celebrity under the public eye. What has been your greatest challenge?

Q6. From being a survivor of child sexual abuse and assault as an adult, your struggles with addiction, eating disorders, and mental illness, you have clearly experienced a lot of darkness condensed into your 28 years. Yet you have this fiery light that emanates from you, your infectious laugh and ability to live loud and be true to yourself is beautiful. To what do you attribute your ability to uphold this part of yourself despite everything you have experienced?

Q7. In recent years, you have become a passionate and outspoken advocate, fueled by your own life experiences. What is your earliest memory where you realized your voice had power?

Q8. What do you hope to accomplish by sharing your personal experiences and inner workings with the world?

Q9. What would you say are your three core values, the things you try and live by, and what are concrete ways in which these show up?

Q10. After an interview, a live performance, or other situations that require you to give so much of yourself, how do you rest and recentre yourself?

To conclude, I love heavier emotional and/or intellectual interviews that end on a series of light and fun rapid-fire questions. Brené Brown’s podcast, *Unlocking Us*, is my favourite example of this. Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor who has spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. Her rapid-fire questions contribute to a well-rounded experience, changing the pace of the interview and leaving listeners with a lighter psyche to continue about their day. The ten rapid-fire questions that Brené Brown consistently asks all her guests are so perfectly formulated and always generate such simple yet revealing answers. I decided to formulate my own and created five. My version of Rapid-Fire in the context of Demi Lovato would be the following:

Q11. Fill-in the blank: Authenticity is _____.

Q12. If we walked into your home right now, what about it would have us scream “this is so Demi!”?

Q13. You have a hot date, where are you taking them?

Q14. What word or expression do you overuse?

Q15. What are you most excited about these days?

Information about Demi Lovato was mainly extracted from memory over the last 7 months I spent casually researching, as well as the following articles and YouTube videos. The last link below lists the rapid-fire questions formulated by Brené Brown, referenced above.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qLf_ecCuw4&list=PLy4Kg0J0TkearxiMrCsHih5xJztUe8JC

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demi_Lovato

<https://people.com/music/demi-lovato-afraid-what-career-would-look-like-if-not-hyper-feminine/>

<https://www.insider.com/demi-lovato-max-ehrich-engagement-prove-she-was-ok-2021-3>

<https://www.writespike.com/story/UyWJ2Z8aC5yz/answering-brene-browns-rapid-fire-questions/>