



1.If anything was possible, what would your dream job be, and why?

If I could turn back time and decide for myself what I wanted to be, I'd choose to serve in the military, specifically the Air Force. Who's not fascinated with aircrafts, especially combat helicopters and fighter planes? Patriotism aside, imagine defying gravity with unimaginable speed. You are up in the air, speeding through the clouds where everything seems a blur. Then, you look down and realize you are almost stationary, staring at mountains and oceans, majestic and beautiful from above. The experience of being in control of the aircraft rather than being a passenger. The thrill of approaching a runway, challenging that strong gust of wind against your wings. The satisfaction of a successful touchdown of your landing gear. Of course, how could I forget how cool I could sound, talking over the VHF radio with the control tower? I sometimes close my eyes, imagine those things and say to myself, what if?

2. Have you ever experienced a stressful situation in your past workplace (college if fresh graduate), what was it and how did you overcome it?

Stressful doesn't even begin to describe how terrifying a situation it was. I was onboard an oil tanker with a length of about 270 meters. A ship that size can only come up with a speed of 16 nautical miles per hour at most. We were transiting through the Suez Canal in Egypt bound for Singapore. After exiting the canal, we must pass through the Gulf of Aden which means there is a possibility of encountering pirates. It just so happened that the shipping company failed to hire armed guards for additional security. Lo and behold, between the coasts of Yemen and Somalia, the lookout reports a skiff (small boat with an outboard engine).

Now, skiffs can reach a speed greater than ours. I was the one steering the ship during that time. We were all overwhelmed by the fact that we had become potential victims of a hijacking. The captain was panicking, and I was awaiting his orders on how to proceed. Luckily, the chief officer kept his head and gave the orders to keep steering the ship back and forth from left to right. This maneuver is somewhat risky since it can reduce the speed of the ship, but in return, the motion creates big waves that hinder the skiff's approach. Ultimately, we overcame the ordeal. The skiff was unable to approach until we cleared the coasts of Somalia.



3. In your previous position, what task did you find most challenging and why? What task did you enjoy most and why?

Being a seafarer is very demanding. We work on irregular shifts and everyone onboard is on call. We must always be alert and make sure that we are quick to respond. The most challenging part for me is when we are approaching port during my rest hours. The captain announces a one-hour notice over the public address phone, and despite the lack of rest, everyone needs to be on standby. Handling ropes for mooring the size of your thigh without proper rest can be very taxing. Until the captain deems the ship is secure on the jetty, we must stay on our stations. This, however, only happens when we have very short voyages.

I enjoy it the most when we are underway (the ship is sailing bound for a certain destination). We have regular working hours from 8 AM to 5 PM. During this time, we mostly work on the ship's overall maintenance. My favorite part though comes after working hours. I go up the ships' bridge and help with the voyage planning. The second officer in charge of planning gave me the task of plotting the waypoint coordinates on the map. A single island, for example, has different map scales, and I find it enjoyable locating those coordinates.

4. How would your previous managers/coworkers describe you?

The only thing I keep in mind when working is to keep out of trouble. The nature of work doesn't matter at all. I conduct myself in a way that anyone can approach me. I don't mind being criticized and instead welcome it as it provides me with insight on how to improve myself. Having worked with different nationalities, I think they would describe me as easygoing. It doesn't mean that I don't care about anything at all, it's just that I am very open-minded. I once read a phrase in a book - "Kill them with your kindness" it says. I found this very helpful indeed. I mean who would scowl at a smiling face, right? What helped me the most in developing this kind of approach is making sure I don't bring my problems to work. I'm not saying that I never had horrible officers during my tenure as a seafarer, it's just that I never let them affect me emotionally and mentally. All I must do is make sure I complete my tasks satisfactorily. If complimented, then I'm thankful and if not, I'd still be thankful since his silence may mean he was satisfied. A half-full glass is always better than a half-empty one.



5. What personal or professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

There is one personal accomplishment I will always be proud of, and that is circling the world not just once, but multiple times! A lot of people might think that this is nothing but from the perspective of a person coming from a country that some would call "third world", it is something. Some people dream of traveling but are held up by their financial capacity. I did it for free. Well, you can say that it's a given due to the nature of my previous work, but still, F-R-E-E. Did you know that draining water from a sink in the northern hemisphere will result in a clockwise direction? It's not that amazing, I know. But then you try it in the southern hemisphere and find out it goes counterclockwise; your mind is blown. Well, my mind may, I'm just easily awed. Simple and irrelevant trivia as it may seem, but the point is, I tried it myself. And that, for me, is an accomplishment.