

Overcoming Rejection - - - Quick Guide

Ten Strategies to Highlight Successes and Regain Composure on the Job Search

After a termination of employment, the job search process can produce a myriad of emotions from excitement at the anticipation of potential opportunities, through apprehension about the challenges to be faced, to either elation at receiving an offer of employment or dissatisfaction at having to initiate the process all over again.

You have painstakingly planned the stages of your job search, designed an accurate and complete resume, focussed your efforts and communicated with the hiring companies that are advertizing jobs well-suited to your experience, knowledge and skills. After preparing fully for the interview (behavioural, targeted, telephone, even a panel type) you FINALLY meet with one prospective employer only to receive a thanks-but-no-thanks "regrets" letter some days down the road.

Who or what do you blame? Some of the more common targets are: age (too young, too old), experience (too much, too little), dress (too good, out of place), size (too big, too little), the interviewer (too inexperienced, too stupid, too unknowledgeable, too unconcerned, too unfeeling, . . . you get the picture). After running through all the possible excuses, and still feeling rejected, what can you do to recapture a positive outlook?

1. TAKE STOCK OF RESOURCES.

Reflect on successes – business and personal. Recall the times when you have shown initiative, determination and discipline and create "Power Stories" for each trait to increase feelings of worth while preparing for interviews. Ask for help when you reach a roadblock. Advance your ability to keep at a job until it is finished, to do one thing through to the end before taking on something else. Even though it may appear to you that no progress is being made, stick to the issue at hand and strive to develop a quiet determination that cannot be defeated.

Once you decide on the steps to take, your achievement will depend on how you discipline yourself, how you distribute your time and talents, and how you focus your energies. **Rather than relying on luck to achieve your goals, concentrate your follow-through on ideas, methods and goals.**

2. MANAGE CRITICISM

One of the important lessons to learn is to discard what is obstructive and not desired. More importantly, one must learn to accept rejection from others. This is often a concern so remember, it is not the rejection itself (which in any form is still a simple "no") but the way it's interpreted and the significance put on it. **It is not YOU that is rejected - - - it is your candidacy for only this one job that is declined.** Be on guard because, at times like these the significance of a

"No" tends to be exaggerated. Don't judge yourself unreasonably harshly. There is no place for "Should have's", "But's" and "Why's" - - - only "I will's".

3. DEAL WITH STRESS

To be successful on the job search, one must be able to deal with stress, yet be sensitive to it. In any stress situation, intelligence, skills, knowledge and experience have to be used. There are after all, things that cannot be altered (time limits, environment, others' decisions, insensitivity of others). Some people may repress the resulting anger, get fouled up in self-imposed "should's," or become restless and tense. **One doesn't need to work harder, merely to work "smarter."** This is not the only job – just one of many possibilities that will come to the fore in the weeks ahead.

Not getting a particular job offer may be disappointing in the short run. It was after all, only a possibility – not a sure thing. Come to terms with this thought and calmly focus on moving on rather than giving in to impulsive self-judgements. Accept a small amount of anxiety or stress as a motivator and part of life in order to move toward greater freedom of movement and thought. **Reenergize your efforts and channel them toward new potential prospects.**



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4. UNDERSTAND THE SELECTION PROCESS

Interviews that are conducted with you by the hiring authority are the result of a positive marketing effort on your part - - - the resumes and cover letters that you sent, the contacts made and the e-mails, faxes and telephone calls completed. For the most part, your technical competence, education, and background are more easily assessed than are the personal attributes you will bring to the organization, and whether you will fit into the organization.

During the interview, company representatives get the opportunity to explore your attitudes, behaviours, qualities, skills, aptitude, strengths, weaknesses and interests - - - then to form judgements about your candidacy. You get the chance to decide whether or not to pursue the opening. Your goal is to get additional interviews that will move you towards a hiring decision. It is unusual for hiring to take place after only one interview. "Closing the sale" by either party in one meeting could be both unlikely and unwise. **These are business decisions, not personal ones.** The interviewer must make a decision based on corporate needs and wants and from a large number of applicants of which you are only one. **In their mind, they are not rejecting your candidacy; they are selecting the one employee in a thousand that they think will do well.**

5. MAKE FUN

Maintain your sense of humour. Ally with happy people for social interaction. Entertain and be entertained. Go out to a good film or the theatre for a laugh. Your sense of humour will carry you over many hurdles. Others are apt to find your laughter and wit liberating. **This is a good quality, because humour and laughter, whether at home or work, enable people to be momentarily free of their inhibitions.** Your capacity to focus appropriately on the comic elements of a pressure situation brings perspective to what might otherwise seem an overwhelming problem. Being able to laugh at yourself, you come to see the humour in life. Humour brings people closer together and reduces tension for everyone – at work and at home. Remember also to maintain associations outside the search process; reach out to friends who may need your help and friendship.

6. FOCUS ON WHAT IS "REAL"

Self-fulfilling prophesy is a prediction which when stated, has the effect of bringing about what it asserts and thereby making it appear to be "true". Therefore, overrating worries and dangers can cause anxiety or panic, while failure to fully appreciate your successes can lead to feelings of disappointment and defeat. **Rather than using up valuable time and energy by rehashing negative past events, emphasize your achievements, strengths, and goals.** Concentrate on these so that you are better able to meet the challenges ahead with determination –, as you know you can.

7. UNDERSTAND CONVENTIONS OF THE JOB SEARCH

It's not that you "want" to search for a job; usually, it's that you "have" to. There are several aspects and rules to be acknowledged to every job search just as there are to being in your own business. Marketing, sales, meetings, interviews, networking, Internet searches and administration all play a part in reaching your goals. There is often anger expressed by job seekers and this is normal and can also be turned into a motivator. Like every other difficult situation, there is a time to acknowledge that certain tasks are required (like it or not) and moving on them is best. One valuable method is to ensure that you develop and maintain a constant supply of potential employers. **When you get that "diamond of the search" – an interview, redouble your efforts at adding new possibilities to your list.** In this way, you reinforce that you are not "putting all your eggs in one basket".

8. FOCUS ON SUCCESS

Don't focus on you; focus on what you can do. Read relevant business information for up-to-date information in your field. **Highlight your attributes, your skills and your knowledge.** Concentrate on why you want a particular job; focus on relevant issues faced by the interviewer; and indicate how you can take "the monkeys off the boss's back" through serving as a valued resource.

9. TAKE A MENTAL SNAPSHOT

Envision yourself in the position that you apply for. Highlight all the positive attributes that you bring to the job and list transferable skills. This does not mean that you invest all your hopes in securing this one job, just that you "play the part" in your mind while this opportunity is "alive". If you are not selected after the interview, and even if you are sorely disappointed, send a thank you letter to the interviewer and suggest that if a position suitable to your qualifications arises in the future, you would be pleased to meet with the employer again. **This is indicative of business maturity and has the effect of reframing your thoughts.**

10. RELAX

Keep calm and make sure you are healthy. Try something new. Take calculated risks. Be patient with yourself. Relieve tension through exercise and relaxation. Make a special effort to seek out the pleasures derived from the things you enjoy in life. Since much of the meaning found in life comes from what you do in your leisure time, develop a capacity for getting involved in the world around you and **take advantage of opportunities to celebrate the "good things in life". Keep the weight of a job interview in perspective.** Your resume is but one out of the hundreds sent by other job seekers for one offered position. While ten or even fifty people might be fully qualified for a job, the employer must select only one based on their required criteria. Keep at it. Your turn will come.

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