



Handling Rejection on a Job Search

Like the journey through life, finding the right job is a journey, and you often need to handle rejection. The first strategy to tackle rejection is to never, ever, take it personally. It is perfectly normal to feel dejected if rejected, and that is true in every sphere of life. However, to allow the dejection to develop into a full-blown depression is impractical and extremely harmful to your career.

Fresh graduates and newcomers to the job market are primarily prone to this syndrome as the culture shock of leaving a sheltered college life and entering a dog-eat-dog world is acutely heightened by rejection. In extreme cases, people lose self-esteem and confidence and accept an inferior career track from where it becomes difficult to extricate one's self with time. So, facing rejection and bounding back is a normal part of your **job search**, and something which you need to handle normally without any overreaction. It is hard and disconcerting, but learning how to tackle rejection is a skill that needs to be honed, for you never know when an employer would go through the list of candidates interviewed at his or her company.

Signs and expressions of dejection or begging for jobs (people are known to go to extreme lengths to survive and break down when they feel hope is lost) never leaves a good impression and destroys your standing as a potential candidate. The employer is doing a cost-benefit analysis, and your rejection is no indication of rejection of you as a person, but that there is another candidate who seems to be better at the moment. For all you know, one third of the new recruits may leave a company within a short period of joining it, and if the period is short enough, HR professionals usually take a look at the list of recently interviewed candidates.

Each interview counts. Whether you get the job or not does matter, but it also matters that you leave the interview session with grace and with a good impression. It consolidates your reputation in the market and eases your entry to the same employer at a later point of your career. So, to help you along, here are some tips to handle rejection during your job search, or in any situation where your hopes are dashed and you suspect in the back of your mind, that your failure, somehow, demonstrates that you are less than what you are, to others.

- **Hope for the best, prepare for the worst:** This old adage has never been out of date, and never will be. When you prepare for any interview or session of social interaction, be prepared for the worst outcome and be ready to handle it. Aspire for the best, and if it happens nothing like it. However, be ready to accept job rejection at an interview as a normal part of your job search, and as something, that should be handled skillfully.
- **Never seek explanation for the rejection directly:** Never ask directly why you were rejected. It is



a much better strategy to ask for guidance. Whether directly or through a letter, inform the interviewer that you intend to appear for any next interview that comes up, and it would awfully help you in your career if he or she would spare a few moments to advice on the areas where you should improve. That is as much as you can go. Be professional.

- **Never take rejection personally and let your emotions get the better of you:** This point has been discussed in detail already, but it doesn't hurt to repeat that rejection by external entities are no reason to lose self-esteem
- **Turn your rejection into a session for developing contacts:** Each moment in your life as well as that of others is precious. If you are spending time across the table with other humans, make the best of it, and rejection or no rejection, use the appearance at the table as an opportunity for networking
- **In worst cases seek the help of career advice professionals:** If in spite of all the warnings, you find yourself going under and being overwhelmed by rejection, seek professional help quickly and get back into shape

A job search is a process and it will continue throughout your career in an active or passive form. A good employee is always on the lookout of **better opportunities**, always making cost-benefit analyses against present and potential jobs, and always trying to achieve long-term career goals. Rejection as well as acceptance is a daily affair and while acceptance is a reason for joy, rejection is not a reason for sorrow.

In worst cases, look for and get another job while you still have a job.