

Keeping Spirits Up When the Job Search Gets Long

By Jeanne Knight
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Few things can wreak havoc on your self-esteem more than a job search that doesn't result in immediate success. No matter what's caused you to seek a new position - whether you're a new college graduate, a casualty of downsizing, or a dissatisfied employee looking for a change - a prolonged job search can erode your self-confidence and cause you to question your marketability and self-worth.

As frustrating as a job search can be, it's vital that you work to maintain high spirits throughout the process, not only for your own well-being, but also to prevent the negative impact your discouragement and doubts may have on your ultimate success.

Fortunately, it's doable! Here are some things you can do to maintain high levels of energy and confidence throughout your job search:

WOW THEM WITH A KILLER RESUME AND COVER LETTER

If your resume and cover letter are "so-so," or make you cringe when you send them out, then it's time to do a serious revision. After all, if these documents don't impress you, they won't impress a prospective employer either. You've worked too hard in your career to allow your materials to sell you short. So take the time to ensure that your resume and cover letter represent the absolute best of who you are and what you can offer a potential employer. A resume crafted with pride will convey pride.

WOW YOURSELF WITH YOUR SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It's often said that finding a job is a job in and of itself. As such, if the process draws on longer than anticipated, you can easily become disheartened. This can translate into corrosive levels of doubt in your own skills and credentials. So, it's essential to consistently remind yourself of all the positive attributes, experiences and accomplishments you have to offer a potential employer.

Give your confidence a "work out" by regularly asking yourself the following questions: What are you most proud of in your career? What tasks or projects did you most enjoy doing? What skills did you use to accomplish those tasks? What have managers, coworkers, customers, vendors, and other colleagues consistently complimented you on? Your answers will help you remain focused and sustain you through any disappointments you may encounter.

REMEMBER THAT PRACTICE MAKES POWERFUL

Few things in life are more intimidating than a job interview, particularly if you've already had a few and have received no job offers. Worse still, if you allow feelings of apprehension and dismay to grow with each rejection, your performance in future interviews may suffer.

The best way to quell interview anxiety is to practice communicating your accomplishments and experiences effectively. Prepare to share your success stories with the enthusiasm they merit. And prime yourself for meeting tougher interview situations, like being asked to share one of your weaknesses, with assurance. Practice out loud to a friend or to yourself until you can promote yourself with certainty. Armed with a cache of positive language you can easily and enthusiastically articulate, you'll be freed to approach each interview as an opportunity to showcase your gifts as opposed to an ordeal to be endured.

BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION OF SUPPORT

Too many people try to go through a job search alone, which means they are dealing with any associated disappointment alone. Unfortunately, lacking the perspective that one or more people can provide can amplify your dismay and, in turn, impede your progress. So, be sure to have a minimum of one person in your corner who will listen to you, boost your confidence and propel you forward when the going gets tough.

DON'T ALLOW YOUR JOB SEARCH TO CONSUME YOUR LIFE

We all know the importance of striking a healthful balance between our work and personal lives. This same wisdom applies when we're conducting a job search.

Combat job search blues by periodically turning your attention away from your search and toward activities that ground you, make you laugh, and get you "outside" of yourself, whether it's reading a great book, heading out for a long walk, or enjoying a night out with friends. And be sure to take care of your physical needs. Eat healthy, exercise, and get plenty of rest. Looking for a job is challenging enough without having to tackle fatigue or illness on top of it.

NEVER EQUATE REJECTION WITH FAILURE

As a job search wears on, rejections can mount. Interviews may fail to generate offers or even follow-up interviews. Some of your resume submissions may receive no response at all. When this happens, it's easy to become bogged down in a web of self-blame and low spirits. Don't allow yourself to travel this destructive path. The truth is, rejection is part of success. After all, even Abraham Lincoln lost a senatorial election before becoming arguably the greatest president in the history of the United States!

Far from being a reflection of any failure on your part, rejections are simply signals that you have not yet found the right opportunity. And, when you finally find that right opportunity (and, you will!), all the rejections that preceded its arrival will fade into insignificance.

FINALLY ... KEEP YOUR EYE ON THAT PROVERBIAL LIGHT

No matter how endless the job search feels, know that much like a train ride through a long, dark tunnel, it will end. Just as the train must exit the tunnel and once again enter the light, you too will find a new job. As long as you are taking consistent action on your job search, a positive outcome is assured. Regularly reminding yourself of this will help you to remain focused and sustain your momentum until you achieve inevitable success.

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