



# Dealing with Disappointment and Rejection in the Job Search

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**Define tomorrow.**

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# Context...



- The COVID-19 pandemic had many people losing their jobs.
- Unemployment is at its highest level since 2008.
- Competitive job market.
- The struggles of job hunting can leave you feeling rejected, stressed, anxious, and pessimistic about your outlook. In a way, a job is seen by some as a part of our identity. The career path we choose to follow can be seen as a part of who we are as people.
- Being rejected can affect one's self-esteem. A lack of confidence in your abilities can prevent you from nailing that interview.
- The longer you're unemployed, the more disheartened you can become about your prospects for finding a job that you're excited about or know you will enjoy and that you will be able to earn from.

# Context...



- From applications and rejection letters or no rejection letters to interviews, finding a job is stressful. It can be overwhelming and discouraging.
- No one enjoys getting turned down for a job, and if you've done a lot of preparation for a role that you wanted, it can be harder still to accept rejection.
- Job rejection can be hard, especially if you are trying to break into the job market. It can make you feel deflated and cause you to lose your motivation.
- Being turned down for a job sucks, especially when you don't know why your application was rejected, or when you will finally secure one.
- It's important not to let a job rejection keep you from applying for other opportunities and you have to keep on trying! The good news is that if you're wondering how to get over rejection from a job, there are steps you can take to stay positive while you continue to look for a position that's right for you.

# Tips for dealing with job rejection



# Ask for feedback

- If the situation allows, asking for and listening to feedback is a valuable thing you can do when faced with a job rejection.
- Self-analysis alone won't paint the whole picture of why you weren't the right person for the role.
- Getting feedback on your CV, interview technique or experience can help you to land the next job. You could try calling or emailing the hiring manager and asking, "Are you able to give me any feedback about my application/interview?"
- Use that feedback to make changes to your CV, or try to do some courses/workshops that might help fill any gaps in your skillset.
- If the employer isn't able to give you feedback, ask a friend or family member to comment on your CV or to do a practice interview with you. Stay open to constructive feedback – it will make you more likely to succeed in the future.





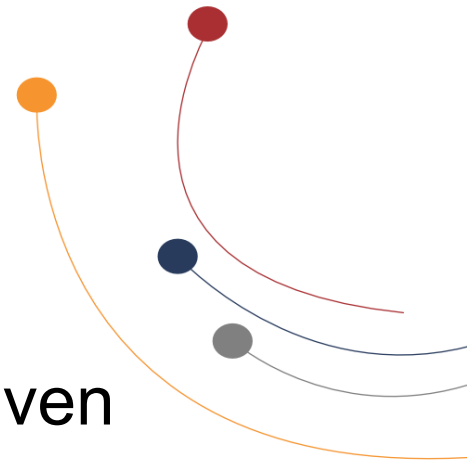
# Review and reflect

- Once you've had a chance to come to terms with the employer's decision, it can be tempting to brush the experience aside and never think of it again. But that would be to pass up on a significant learning opportunity.
- Go through everything that happened, from the way you prepared and researched, to your CV and application form and interactions in the interview.
- Rate your performance for each part and determine where there is room for improvement. Ask yourself: *What did I sense went well? What could I have done differently? Were there any questions you feel you could have answered better?*
- There is sometimes room to improve, so use any setbacks to shine a light on these areas.
- Working harder on some of your answers, and finding someone to practise them with.



# Be philosophical

- Sometimes rejection is simply out of your hands – and can even ultimately be in your interest. Some things can't be changed overnight – if the interviewer prefers someone with extensive management experience (which you don't have). The key to your plan is to focus on the things you can realistically change.
- Even if you felt your interview went perfectly, it doesn't necessarily mean that the role within that specific company was perfect for you.
- The company you're applying for has many factors to consider. An organisation needs to make sure you have the right behaviour and attitude for their company culture. Try not to take it personally if you're not the right fit.



# Refine your search

- Sometimes the interview and/or feedback process can make you realise that, although it's disappointing to be rejected, the role didn't, on reflection, feel like quite the right fit for you either.
- Look back over the job specification and ask yourself if you could truly see yourself in that role on a day-to-day basis.
- Use your experience to help you refine future job searches. Are you perhaps looking at keywords that don't quite match your ambitions and aspirations? Did the role that went with the job title not quite match your expectations? Did the interview make you realise that this is not quite the right sort of job for you? And if not, then what is?





# Build grit and resilience



- Developing a mindset of grit and resilience is essential for long-term success.
- See each setback as a challenge to grow both your self-understanding and your ability to bounce back and deal with disappointment.
- Overcoming obstacles on your career path will increase your chances of landing the right role. Make it a point of staying positive, and do all you can to learn from the experience to help you get ready for the next opportunity.
- Getting turned down from a job happens to everyone, the most important thing is what you learn from the experience.
- Resilient people keep a positive, adaptable attitude when thrown curveballs. Resilience involves meeting challenges or setbacks with a constructive approach and focusing on the opportunities created when things don't go as planned.

Ways to  
cope when  
your job  
application  
is not  
successful



# Ways to cope



## Positive self talk

- Challenge negative thinking – is there evidence of what I am thinking?
- E.g., I'll never be able to do this – Is there anything I can do that will help me with this?
- What would I say to friends in a similar situation?
- List positive things about yourself

## Quit overanalysing

- You can drive yourself crazy replaying the scene repeatedly in your head, ruminating about the reasons you received a rejection. This can keep you stuck.

# Ways to cope



## Focus on your strengths

- When you get rejected, it's very easy for your mind to go to a negative, self-critical place.
- Focusing your attention on what you're good at can give you a self-confidence boost.
- Try saying something like, "I'm a valuable person with lots of strengths, such as [your strengths]".

## Try and focus on your strengths and identify opportunities that you are passionate about

- It's understandable to feel a bit down when you get rejected for a job. Help lift your spirits by doing things you enjoy, such as meeting with friends, spending time on your hobbies or doing some exercise.
- Work on strategies to help you cope if your mood is affected. These could include talking to someone you trust, writing a list of what you're grateful for etc
- Turn each rejection into a learning opportunity and stay focused on your goal. The day will come when you and a good job are finally matched.

# Ways to cope



## Keep your options open

- Keep your job search in motion until you've accepted a position. It can be tempting to get your heart set on a certain job, but by keeping your options open, you're more likely to land a job. While you're waiting to hear back from an employer, keep sending out other applications.
- If you've been rejected from a job that you liked the look of, analyse what it was about the role that interested you and look for similar qualities in other job listings.

## Know that it's not just you

- Looking for jobs can be tough, especially in the current job market. So many factors are out of our control – for example, a company might be looking for someone to fill a specific gap in their team, or there might be heaps of competition for certain jobs.
- Even someone with all the experience in the world may find it hard to get a job. Try to focus on what you can control and let go of what you can't. Keep going, and pat yourself on the back for putting yourself out there.

# Ways to cope



## The state of the job market

- You could also have the qualifications and the experience and the confidence. Yet, no one is hiring you. Remember that even if you're doing the right things, finding a job can be a struggle. Depending on what your experience level is and what your career and salary needs, finding the right position can take time. The job market is competitive, and the global coronavirus pandemic has made finding jobs even more difficult for some. It's not all about you. External factors outside your control can contribute.

## Keep in mind that while your job search may take some time, it won't last forever.

- Finding a job doesn't often happen overnight. You might feel discouraged when things don't progress in the job search. Focus on what you can control. Trying to change what isn't within your control will only drain your energy and leave you more stressed and anxious.



# Ways to cope



## You Aren't Alone

- Every day, countless others face job rejection.
- You can also reach out to others who are currently or have previously been in similar situations. Share your experience and emotions and get mutual support that can be beneficial. They can tell you how to deal with job rejection, and you can ask them what they did to overcome this phase.
- Hearing how others were able to bounce back from a job rejection can help you feel less alone and more confident when you are ready to start reapplying again.

## Ask for help

- Having someone to talk to during your job search gives you much-needed emotional support.
- Reach out to a friend or family member about how you're feeling and why you're struggling.
- Reach out to a counsellor – they can also help normalize what you are experiencing.
- They'll be your sounding board to help guide you when you're unsure of yourself or what to do next.

# Contact us



**We are available by e-mail:**

Send an e-mail to [counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za](mailto:counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za) or [counselling@unisa.ac.za](mailto:counselling@unisa.ac.za) should you need to discuss any needs you may have in terms of further support

**For more resources like these, visit our website:**

<http://ww.unisa.ac.za/counselling>

**DCCD YouTube Channel:**

<http://www.youtube.com/unisacareers>

**Book an online counselling session:**

<https://tinyurl.com/mtr3xyks>



**Thank you**

**Define tomorrow.**

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