

THREE TACTICS TO OVERCOME JOB SEARCH DEPRESSION

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A positive attitude leaves no room for depression. Let's set the stage for understanding why attitude is so important. Job search attitude results from achieving your job and career goals. To set and then achieve your goals, you must first understand what is happening around you. Competition is what is happening around you and it is a daily factor in your life.

Why you are looking for a job or career change is unimportant. It's old news so forget about it. The fact is, you are. Did you know that over 6% of America is looking for jobs right now? This means that millions of people are competing with you in the job search arena.

The rules for this contest are exactly the same as for those facing the gladiators in the days of the Roman Empire. The last person standing wins! Your competitors' main objective and yours are exactly the same – to avoid being eliminated. They don't hire two people for the same job, do they?

Therefore, to win in the contest arena, you must have a plan, goals, rules and attitude. Every action you take, or fail to take, will either keep you in the running or eliminate you from consideration.

The bad news is that there are always better candidates than you in the contest. However, many are eliminated because they don't have a plan, the focus, the determination, discipline or "attitude" required to win.

So, you work your plan, are diligent and disciplined and are rejected for a position for which you applied. These efforts, when followed by rejection as a possible candidate, can become a difficult and grueling strain over time.

This leads many job seekers to fall victim to various forms and degrees of depression. No matter how focused, determined, positive or jovial you are there will come a time in this search when depression will raise its ugly head. Depression can creep in during that period of "dead" time between getting ready for your search and the first interview. It can also arise between interviews and, certainly, at the time you are told that you didn't get a position for which you applied.

Whether you are rejected from the interview selection process and really know you are the best-qualified applicant, or for dozens of reasons, legitimate or otherwise, perceived or real, rejection still hurts and the pain exists. Don't give in!!! Acknowledge the feeling, but take the steps to move on!!

What makes the difference between winners and losers is how you handle this natural phenomenon. To head off and ultimately beat the potential for depression, you must make a commitment to yourself that, for the duration of this effort, most of your time will be spent working your plan. You must act deliberately, steadily, ceaselessly and, at times, swiftly. Under no circumstances do you sit still.

So much for setting the stage. Here is where "attitude" comes in to play and three tactics you can use to build and maintain a great attitude. An old boss of mine, Howard Tullman, always said, "Good enough never is." How true. There is always something you can do or re-do to improve your situation!

Depression-Defeating Tactic #1: Get Busy! This is the first tactical secret I share with my clients to help them ward off depression. I tell them to get busy! Get Busy? Doing what? Why occupying yourself with meaningful tasks based upon a well thought out plan. When you successfully execute that plan, you will feel you have accomplished something.

It is a human characteristic that we feel better when we accomplish something, no matter how small that task. If you reinforce this "achieving" behavior daily, you will feel you are contributing positively to your

search success. Enough reinforced positives and negatives soon dissipate.

Depression-Defeating Tactic #2: Accept responsibility for your actions. I will tell you what I tell my clients. After you develop the plan. Find a search partner. A search partner will be the most significant move you make in your search process. Why? They serve two roles. First, they act as a sounding board for your ideas, plans and frustrations. Second, they establish the basis for accountability in your search.

Why accountability? In your job you were accountable for performance standards. The company or organization that employed you expected you to achieve certain milestones and goals. These were accomplished by performing tasks, each day, leading to departmental, corporate or organizational success.

They didn't turn you loose on your own and say pick up your paycheck and don't worry about anything, did they? The job search is the same. Tasks and goals that are measurable and reportable. Reportable to whom? A search partner, of course. They become your surrogate boss during the search. Accountability is critical to your search success.

Go find a search partner. Don't pick someone that you can BS or over whom you can run roughshod. Mutually agree that you two will meet at least weekly. If not weekly, then at least every two weeks.

Depression-Defeating Tactic # 3: Reading and posting Fred's rules. Now comes the really, really hard part. You must read the following rules out loud to your search partner at the close of each meeting with them.

1. I will only see a half-full glass and have no "stinkin' thinkin'."
2. I will not waste time, but will design a weekly search schedule.
3. I will not complain.
4. I will be disciplined.
5. I will not accept rejection as personal, just business.
6. I will exercise and maintain a balanced diet.
7. I will concern myself with those things over which I have direct control, and not those things over which I have no control.
8. I will develop or maintain my sense of humor.
9. I will involve my family and friends and keep them involved.
10. I will respect myself and be kind to my family and friends.
11. I will not expect the next job to fall into my lap. I will find it!
12. I will not daydream my way into my next job.
13. I will take consistent and meaningful actions every day.
14. I will not place blame on others, only on myself.
15. I will control my job change.
16. I will complete a minimum of 50-150 job-hunting activities weekly.
17. I will read everything I can to improve my position in this search.
18. I will give myself permission to try.
19. I will give myself permission to fail.
20. I will give myself permission to ask for help.
21. I will give myself permission to make mistakes.
22. I will give myself permission to succeed!
23. I will do my best at whatever task I attempt
24. I will repeat to myself each morning and each evening: "Starting today, I am in control of
 - my goals
 - my activity level
 - my effectiveness
 - my schedule
 - my own research
 - my job change strategy
 - MY FUTURE

By now you are saying, "The rules sound great but I can't do that, it's embarrassing!" "Saying those out loud? That's the silliest thing I've ever heard of." WRONG! Go back to the accountability issue and think about reporting to your boss and giving him your numbers and performance accomplishments. Was that silly? Well then, this isn't either.

You are telling yourself and your search partner that you are responsible for your life. Reinforcing this out loud, often is not only self-motivating, but builds a sense of pride in you and your goals. This too will help defeat job search depression and help you turn a bad situation into a more positive one.

Here's another heads-up! Print these rules and post them in conspicuous places. Put one on your bathroom mirror. What else are you doing when you brush your teeth? Put one on the refrigerator door, the back of front door, your computer monitor, in your briefcase and anywhere else you want.

Whether you are sitting down in front of your computer, going to the refrigerator to get a healthy snack, or leaving the house, you are constantly reminded of your ability and responsibility to take charge of your life and your career.

Implementing these three tactics, setting goals and establishing a path to follow to accomplish those goals is the world's best remedy for warding off depression. Here's my parting shot. Do meaningful things each and every day and you will find that both your attitude and career will improve.

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