

No one likes to feel rejected. Whether that rejection comes from the last person you dated or the company you last interviewed with, rejection stings regardless of the circumstances.

For job seekers in today's challenging employment market, the pain of rejection is often only heightened when you realize you're missing out on what seems like a golden opportunity. If it's any comfort, you're not the only one who feels that way.

Lindsay Olson, a recruiter with Paradigm Staffing in Antioch, Calif., says it's important for anyone who's been turned down for a job to realize how fierce the current competition is for open positions. In other words, don't take things too personally.

"Being rejected from a job doesn't mean you are an unworthy candidate," says Olson. "Many times, internal needs within a company change upon meeting a few candidates. And although your background may have been an excellent fit with the original job description, the initial interview process allowed the company to tighten up their specifications based on the diversity of the candidates seen."

Common cures

Frances Altman, a public relations specialist for the School of Business at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., says there are things you can do to soothe the pain of rejection.

"If this was a company you had your heart set on, you can watch and apply for other positions there," she says. "After a couple of weeks, you can call the HR person that interviewed you and inquire if there will be similar openings in the near future."

Olson agrees, adding that you should always make sure you keep all your doors open.

"Today's rejection can be tomorrow's offer letter," she says. "If you keep the lines of communication open and handle the rejection professionally, another need within the company may arise in the near future and your candidacy remains intact."

Don't let
job rejection
set back
your search

Get over it



"You met people doing the work you want to do," he says. "What is it about them that appealed to you? Focusing on that may help open your eyes to appealing options that you hadn't given much consideration to before."

You also shouldn't shy away from taking a break to recharge.

"Take a vacation from your job search," says Bennett. "If your job search is being conducted in a healthy way, you should have ongoing projects in your life that aren't related to the job search, such as hobbies or exercise routines. Devote some extra time to those activities for a few days until you recover."

Steve Morris, author of "Glorious Leadership" (Lombloom, \$23.95) says jobseekers who've felt the sting of rejection should do their best to live in the present, not the past.

"Reset your time clock — breathe in, breathe out — no past, no future," he says.

"Find satisfaction from doing simple tasks and chores well. Master the mundane. Give yourself as a present to others who would like to share your time."

Advice on bouncing back from rejection

"I like to go back and recreate the interview, so I can find out where I might have slipped up or what I might have done differently. I think it's important to retrace your steps, so to speak, to make sure you didn't make any major mistakes. And if you did, you have to figure out how to correct them."

—Suzanne Walsh, Point Pleasant, N.J.

Rob Bennett, Purcellville, Va.-based author of "Passion Saving" (The Freedom Store, \$24), says that the job rejections that hurt most are the ones where you came closest to getting the job. Bennett says that, in this case, the best thing to do is turn the loss into a positive.

"Do this by writing a brief note to the person who rejected you saying that you enjoyed the process and learned from it," he says. "That person may be sufficiently impressed to reconsider you if the person who was chosen over you does not work out."

Learning experience

A great way to turn a rejection into a positive is by trying to learn from your mistakes. If you've been turned down for a job, try using the rejection as an opportunity to analyze your interviewing skills. Bennett says another thing you can do is to make a list of the things you've learned about yourself and about the job market.