



Cathy Alfandre's E-Letter

Create greater joy and fulfillment in your working life.

September 2007

Greetings!

"I learned so much, so very much about myself in defeat. I've learned very little to nothing in victory."

--Floyd Patterson

"Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm."

--Sir Winston Churchill

Handling Rejection

In a job search (and, I suppose, in life generally), "rejection" has a big impact. Not only does the experience of being turned down create all kinds of emotional turmoil, but even the *anticipation* of rejection can provoke a variety of feelings and behaviors. Most of these responses are totally reasonable and there are lots of different life experiences that contribute to them. But what I'd like to focus on are some ideas for dealing with rejection and putting it in its rightful place.

1. **There is important information to learn.** A rejection is an opportunity to learn something about yourself as a candidate. You could learn more about where you fit/don't fit, and why. You might learn that you need additional experience to make yourself more appealing for a particular type of position. You might learn that you need more interview practice, to polish your stories and prepare for challenging questions. You may find that your salary expectations are off. But you won't get this information unless you get out there and get turned down.

2. **It's an essential part of the process of finding good work.** If you never get any rejections, then I believe you never stretched yourself out of your comfort zone. You will always have a "safe" job but not likely a fulfilling path. You *have* to test the waters, and you will discover that some of them are not right for you. I can't tell you how often I talk with folks and they tell me how, in retrospect, those rejections turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to them - either preventing them from going down the wrong path or helping them steer in the right direction.

3. **We all need to build up our resilience.** Unless we're really, really lucky, or overly cautious, we will "fail" again and again. We will make mistakes on the job. We will mess things up in our personal lives. Our ultimate success depends to a great extent on the strength and speed of our rebound from these failures. An author I know racked up 40 rejections before she had her first children's book published. Talk about resilience!

4. **Remember that, much of the time, it's not about you.** If an employer turns you down, the reason may have nothing to do with you. There may have been an internal candidate that they really wanted to hire. You may have applied too early in the process, and a later candidate benefited from the "recency effect." They may have been looking for someone with a very specific degree, or an alum from a

particular college, or someone with experience at a particular company. Frankly, there are a myriad of reasons why you may not get the job; don't assume it's because you aren't good enough. As I tell the folks in my interviewing seminars, *rejection is not a reflection of your self-worth*. Step back and realize that you don't have to take it personally.

I think it's useful to try not to reject rejection. Let's *not* do everything we can to avoid it and push it out of our lives. It has a role to play, but as part of the supporting cast, not the lead actor.

As always, if you thoughts, reactions, questions, or a story to share, please contact me. Until next time, all my best,

Cathy

How Are People Finding Jobs?

A recent "source of employment" survey polled 11,500 job seekers who landed jobs to find out the methods they used to find work. The data, collected between January 1, 2007 and July 31, 2007 at the WEDDLE's website, showed the following*:

- The #1 source of employment: answering ads and posting a resume on job boards, reported by 13.22% of respondents;
- The #2 source of employment: a call from a headhunter or staffing firm, reported by 11.3% of respondents;
- The #3 source of employment: a tip from a friend or family member, reported by 11.1% of respondents;
- The #4 source of employment: networking at work or at a business event, reported by 10.5% of respondents;
- The #5 source of employment: a virtual tie between career fairs and answering an ad in a newspaper, reported by 5.8% of respondents.

These five sources accounted for almost six out of ten (57.7%) of the positions that people took during their last job search.

What were the least helpful sources of employment, as reported by survey respondents? Beginning with the least effective, they were:

- Networking at a social event;
- Answering an ad in a publication of their professional association;
- Using a social networking site;
- Sending a resume directly to an employer.

These data suggest that there is no silver bullet. The most productive strategy for finding a new or better job is to undertake an array of activities that will expose you to the largest possible number of people and prospective employment opportunities.

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publisher of print guides to job boards.

This bi-monthly e-letter is intended to offer ideas, tips, resources, and questions to ponder on careers, fulfilling work, and career-life decisions. I welcome your reactions and your suggestions for future topics.

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