

How to Handle the Stress of Searching for a Job

It's no secret that finding a job can be stressful. Yet doing so is a task we all face many times in our lives. Below is some advice to keep in mind as you apply for internships or jobs.

Acknowledge the reality of situation. Looking for a job is one of the most difficult and stressful tasks we undertake, and money concerns are just one reason—it's also troubling to have little control over the hiring process. Everything from unanswered applications to not receiving feedback on interviews to uncontrollable events that affect the hiring process contribute to the anxiety-provoking experience. For these reasons, experts suggest that job seekers go into the process being aware that everyone faces these hurdles and that eventually you will find work.

Be realistic. It doesn't make sense to apply for jobs that ask for specific requirements you do not possess. Likewise, understand your own personal deal breakers when it comes to who you will work for and what you will do. On the other hand, experts suggest remaining open to situations that may be less than your ideal position. Remember your first job is just that—your *first* job. It may not be perfect, but you can learn something from every position you hold.

Keep focused. Have a goal and move toward it. Chart out your primary objective and then create specific steps to achieving it. Commit your proposed actions to paper—they will become more real. Hold yourself accountable by putting in time and adhering to a schedule for your job search. Learn to enjoy the rewarding feeling of finishing tasks on the path toward your goal.

Know yourself. A career takes careful consideration and planning, so it makes sense to think about what you want out of yours. Do you enjoy working alone or in groups? Are you willing to move to take a job or travel regularly once you have one? What kind of people do you want to surround yourself with? Are you attracted to small or large firms? Then conduct a self-analysis: What are you good at? Not so good at? Define your hard and soft skills, your values, and other strengths and weaknesses. Understanding yourself and what you can bring to an organization is the first step to finding the right fit.

Learn to handle rejection. There's no getting around the fact that you will face rejection, and it's normal to feel down sometimes. Remember that failure is temporary. Face the emotion, process it, and then move on: Do not let setbacks put you in the doldrums. Use positive thinking, reach out to family and friends for support, and develop grit and resilience. Job hunting is a part of life, so take the long view.

Reassess. If you are feeling hopeless because nothing is panning out, reassess your strategy. Perhaps you can talk to a career counselor or mentor. Perhaps you need to rethink your tactics or goals. Don't let too much time go by before you take action to change what is holding you back.

Take care of yourself. A job search can be overwhelming, so it's important to keep yourself fit, mentally and physically. Eat well, get enough sleep, and don't forget to exercise. Make sure to keep up social relationships and stay busy with activities unrelated to hunting for a job.