

Maintaining your Personal Wellness While Job-Hunting

Searching for a job, especially when you're unemployed, is one of the most stressful and anxiety-producing experiences adults face. It can take a toll on your physical and mental wellbeing as well as your confidence. Staying balance and positive throughout your job search can be challenging, but it is essential to your success. If you're not feeling good about yourself, it's likely that you will have more difficulty in presenting yourself as a strong candidate to an employer during an interview.

Here are some Dos and Don'ts for maintaining your personal wellness during your search.

DON'T

- **Don't obsess over one particular job.** If you tend to agonize about particular jobs—did they like you? When will you hear something back?—Stop it! The best thing for your state of mind is to move on mentally after sending off your application or having an interview. There's nothing to be gained by obsessing and waiting and wondering. Instead, move on. Pretend you were already rejected, or that you never applied. If the employer calls you, great. If they don't, you've already moved on anyway. And there's nothing to be gained from stressing yourself out waiting.
- **Don't try to read "signals" into what interviewers do and don't say.** Job seekers often try to read between the lines of all sorts of things: If the interviewer didn't say they'd be in touch, does it mean you didn't get the job? They sent back a nice response to your thank-you note; does that mean your chances are good? Most of these "signals" don't mean anything at all, and looking for meaning in them can drive you crazy.
- **Don't feel you have to give perfect interviews.** If you play over every interview in your head and kick yourself for not giving better answers—or if you're terrified before interviews because you might mess up—know that interviewers don't expect you to be perfect. In fact, there's no such thing as a "perfect" interviewee, and your competition isn't giving perfect interviews either. You're not a professional job interviewee, and employers don't expect you to be. They know you're human. And they are too.
- **Don't agonize over why you didn't get a job.** There's generally no way to know from the outside why you didn't get hired. Sure, maybe they hated your interview answers, but more likely, someone else was simply a better candidate. Or they hired the CEO's niece, or promoted someone internally, or canceled the position altogether. There's no way to know, and you'll drive yourself crazy trying to figure it out.

DO

- **Do schedule your calendar** so that you reserve blocks of time for job seeking, some time for reflection and relaxation, and to also make sure you have time for fun and socialization. Do the things that feel good to you and keep up with your hobbies and fitness activities.
- **Do surround yourself with positive energy and people who help you feel like your best self.** If you're having trouble maintaining your confidence, be sure to spend time with people who naturally have a positive view of themselves. Observe their behavior and model yours after what you see working for them. This isn't about being something that you are not, but rather employing strategies that will make it easier for you to tap into your own self-confidence.
- **Do use pep talks and recovery strategies from your past.** Try recalling specific moments where you simply had to rally and, when you did, you ultimately prevailed (or progressed). Did you play sports? Were you in a competition that challenged you physically and mentally? Did you recover from a terrible breakup? We all have something. Flash back to the specific strategies and mental pep talks you used through these times, and apply similar ones to this very situation. When you realize you've done it before, it will help you to remind yourself that you can—and will—weather this one, too.
- **Do put your energy towards things you can control.** You can't will your resumé to pass through a prospective employer's resumé scanning software. You can't influence how many other qualified candidates apply for a job. Don't waste time dwelling on them. Focus your energy instead on what you can control. Literally, make a list of the aspects of your job search that you can influence or impact. Maybe you decide to call that person at your dream company who your friend knows. Maybe you take a course to shore up a required skill. By thoughtfully considering what you can control—and then acting on these things—you can shift from dwelling on your worries to making moves that may actually be helpful.
- **Do get help.** We are humans, not machines. And when things don't go as planned, we sometimes begin feeling very sad, mad, or hopeless. A job search almost always requires stamina, sometimes tons of it. If you're feeling upset to the point that it's disabling you, don't go it alone. Let the closest and most supportive people around you know you need help. Tell those you trust of your struggles, and if you know how they can help, be specific so they lighten your load in a way that will be meaningful. Every one of us needs help from time to time, and there's absolutely no shame in that.

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