

## How To Recover From These Three Unavoidable Job Search Setbacks

Few things in life will test your patience more than a job search. As the weeks and months pass by, you may grow fatigued by what can feel like endless waiting for the right opportunity.

Unfortunately, many people are shaken by disappointments and quit their job search too early, resigning themselves to staying in a bad work situation or accepting a role they are overqualified for.

It's not enough to enter your job search with momentum—you have to sustain it. To do this, you'll need a plan to build resilience so you can bounce back after these three inevitable setbacks.

**Setback #1: Being ignored or rejected for a position you're clearly qualified for**

Maybe you found a great job online and applied or maybe you were referred to it directly by someone in your network, but either way you haven't heard anything from the company in response. It's baffling because you know that you check all of their job requirements and then some.

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Never having the chance to interview for a job you're clearly qualified for is a shared experience among job seekers. It in no way reflects your market value or predicts how other companies will react to your candidacy. Still, it's hard not to take the silence personally.

Your best strategy to prepare for these kind of setbacks is to understand that you will not experience predictable outcomes throughout your search. Sometimes the job you think you're least qualified for will be the one most interested in you. Job searches are filled with ups and downs.

When you get ignored or rejected without any explanation, remember that there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes with hiring. Many jobs are already earmarked for someone else long before you hear about the roles.

Make a compelling case with your résumé and do your best to leverage your network, but once you've done all you can, don't spend any extra time wondering why you didn't make it to the interview stage. You will never know the true reason why, and focusing on this setback too much is likely to drain your energy.

Follow up with recruiters or hiring managers if you can, but do so no more than twice, ideally spaced a week to ten days apart. If you haven't received a response after that, move on and don't let it undermine your confidence.

**Setback #2: Finding a great job that won't pay you enough**

You're interested in the job and the company is interested in you. Everything seems perfect until they explain that they won't be able to meet your salary expectations.

While you may have some flexibility in your salary requirements, be aware that jobs that are looking to pay you significantly less than you want are probably also misaligned with the level of seniority and autonomy that you hope for in your new role. This isn't always the case as you may be shifting to a

lower-paying industry or breaking into a new field, but make an extra effort to vet any role that requires a pay cut.

More often than not, it's best to end things early and not waste either party's time. Many job seekers are so eager to advance their search that they hold on to hope that the company will adjust the salary target after the interview.

However, if you would not accept the job within the company's original target range, you should make that known immediately. This gives the company an opportunity to discuss at the beginning of their hiring process if they want to consider making this a more senior job and adjust the salary.

Otherwise, you are likely to get to the offer stage and find that while they do see the extra value you can bring, they still can't meet your salary needs. You may have then wasted considerable time preparing for a role whose outcomes were doomed from the start.

Setback #3: Becoming emotionally attached to a job you don't get

One of the hardest dilemmas during a job search is navigating how much to get emotionally invested in an opportunity.

You are expected to make personal connections with your interviewers and any good hiring process should deepen your desire for the job. If you hold back too much, you risk coming off in interviews as aloof or disinterested. But if you fall in love with the company, you may have your heart broken.

By the time a hiring decision is made, it's hard not to have pictured yourself getting the job. You may have even started making plans in your head for your new commute or things you'll do during your onboarding.

When you get that close to getting the job, but don't, it feels bad. There's just no way around that. You can try your best to remind yourself throughout the process that rejection is possible, but it won't take the sting out of the blow.

Instead of hoping to avoid disappointing days entirely, you need to anticipate their arrival and have a self-care plan in place. Decide in advance what activities help you recover best so you can turn to them immediately after receiving bad news.

Alert your support team of close friends or family about what you might need from them when you're feeling low. Do you like to be left alone or would you prefer extra attention? Be as clear as possible to avoid adding an additional letdown to an already challenging time.

While job searches almost always include setbacks, they also lead to new and exciting beginnings. Prepare to work through the inevitable obstacles, but stay committed to the process.

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