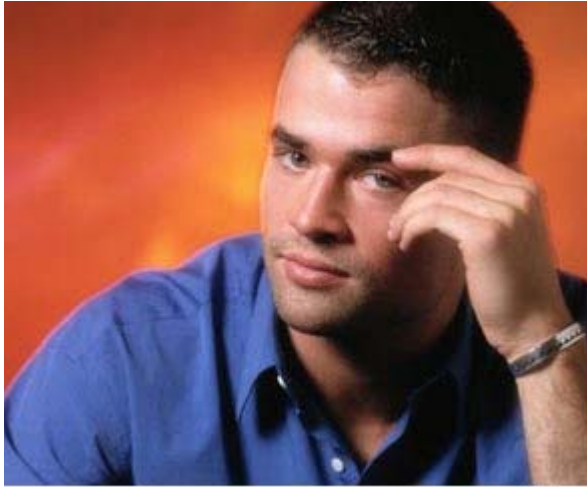




I'm Experiencing Job-Search Burnout!

By Anthony Balderrama, Posted Nov 15th 2010 @ 7:10AM



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If life were a movie and you had just been laid off, you would buy a one-way ticket to some serene location and spend weeks or even months relaxing. You would unwind and examine your personal goals and return when you want. You might spend your days eating, praying and loving.

For most of us, getting laid off or quitting a job is immediately followed by a fast-paced job hunt. Even workers who are fortunate enough to have savings accounts to live off of for a while don't have enough money to pretend like unemployment is a vacation. Instead, most job seekers attack their job searches aggressively and don't relent until they hear the words, "We'd like to offer you the position."

The problem with such a steadfast approach is that you can grow frustrated quickly. After a few weeks of constantly browsing job postings, writing cover letters, sending them off, and repeating, your don't have the energy to keep going. You can't stop, however, because you do need a job. So how do you avoid getting burnt out? And if you realize you're in the midst of a job-search burnout, how should you get over it?

We asked people who have been there themselves or who have helped others get through it. Here's how they suggest job seekers handle burnout:

"Rejection is humbling and much of our self-worth has been defined by our income. To avoid burnout:

Date your next job application and interview. See it as distinct and different from all the rest, a new opportunity. You only need one job success.

Keep up energy levels with exercise. You will shed stress and release endorphins. Your focus will improve.

Socialize with friends and talk about other things. Have fun and laugh!

Learn from failed interviews to tweak your resume, presentation and skills. Hone up on what you are lacking."

-- Debbie Mandel, author of 'Addicted to Stress'

"Burnout is subtle, and can strike at lots of stages of the job hunt. Here are a few ways I advise my clients to avoid that low-down burnout experience:

1. Regard your job hunt as a job and organize your job hunt day like any other business. Set a goal of the number of calls you'll make, and resumes you'll send out each day, and be sure to reach that.
2. Create a job hunt team or group with whom you keep in contact on a regular basis. This can help in many

ways to give encouragement, and even job leads.

3. Make sure to network through alumni, colleagues, professional associations, online groups, and even relatives and friends.
4. Be sure to maintain a routine of physical fitness and exercise. At least a brisk walk every day can supply exercise and sunshine necessary to keep your mood elevated.
5. Get up, get dressed and go to your office every day, just like you would if you were employed."

-- Sandra Lamb, career, lifestyle and etiquette expert

"I always say you get more than you give with volunteering, and job seekers definitely do. This is a great way to keep your skills sharp (think teamwork, client relations, fund-raising, etc) and your mind energized. I have to remind all job seekers that volunteering is a fun and easy way to network, which makes it a win-win-win. You're networking, helping out an organization and avoiding burn-out."

-- Adriana Llamas, author of 'Career Sudoku: 9 Ways to Win the Job Search Game'

"I've been looking for a job since about February or March. I just landed a part-time, telecommuting job, and as busy as I've been I know I'm not as fast or productive as I once was because of how long it took me to find a job. I was sending out résumés, interviewing, networking, applying online to the high heavens. Sitting at home while everyone else was finding a job, I started feeling unproductive, and, frankly, like a loser. But things are looking up, and to anyone who starts to feel the same way I did, I'd tell them to just pull through it. Sometimes just taking a walk or a day at the park can help your mood a lot."

-- Akua Harris

"There are several things we suggest when a person has stayed active in a job search, and nothing seems to be happening:

1. Take a few days off. Think of something you enjoy doing that doesn't cost any money and go and enjoy. Sometimes just a few days off is enough to refresh a person.
2. Get physical: When a person exercises for at least 20 minutes, endorphins are released that make the person feel good. Exercise several times in a day if possible. If [you are] a runner, then run for 30 minutes longer than usual. Do something physical -- paint a room, wash the car, clean the garage. Then energy can return.
3. Our experience is people get burned out when all they are doing is answering want ads or Internet listings. We project a 2-4 percent response on mailing out résumés or following up on Internet postings -- that's not a very good response. Instead, we ask our job-seeking clients to take a more pro-active approach: Contact the decision-maker (usually the person who supervises the position, not HR) and ask what the job involves and be ready to talk about one's experiences and accomplishment, [and] research the organization to see if it's one a person would like to work in. Continue researching the position; if you want the job, contact the decision-maker again and say, "I've thought a lot about what we've talked about, and what you need doing involves some of the things I do best -- and I want to be your top candidate." (You don't want to be anything other than their top candidate, do you?) Ask the decision-maker what you can bring to her or him to help the person make a decision. And then do it."

-- Richard S. Deems, co-author of 'Make Job Loss Work For You,' with Terri A. Deems

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