

How to Handle a Job Rejection: Turning Setbacks Into Growth

By Jaci

It's tough when you put in the effort, write a stellar application, nail the interview, and then... you don't get the job. You might be feeling discouraged, frustrated, or even questioning your abilities. But know this; *A rejection is not a reflection of your worth or potential.* It's simply a part of the journey—one that nearly every professional, at every level, has faced.

Whether you're just starting your job search or trying to figure out your next move after an opportunity didn't work out. Let's take a look at how to cope with rejection, stay motivated, and continue moving forward with confidence.

1. Acknowledge your feelings

It's okay to feel disappointed. Job rejections can sting, especially when you've invested time, energy, and hope into a role that seemed like the perfect fit. Allow yourself to feel what you're feeling. Whether you're sad, frustrated, or confused, your emotions are valid. Try not to rush to move past them. Take a moment to reflect on how you feel before you take the next step.

Remember, it's normal to have a period of emotional processing after any setback. You've been working toward something, and it's okay to give yourself the time you need to recalibrate.

2. Don't take it personally

A job rejection doesn't define you or your abilities. While you're a great candidate, sometimes companies have a certain criteria or experience they're looking for.

Think of rejection as an opportunity for growth—not a judgment on your potential. Every “no” is a step closer to a “yes” in the right place. Take comfort in knowing that the right opportunity for you is out there.

3. Ask for Feedback (if you can)

If possible, consider reaching out to the employer for constructive feedback. While not all employers can provide this, many are willing to offer insight into what they were looking for or how you could improve. Constructive feedback helps you better understand how you can make your next application or interview even stronger.

Feedback is a valuable tool, and it can help you refine your approach for future applications.

4. Refocus and Keep Moving Forward

After a job rejection, it's easy to get stuck in a negative cycle of overthinking or doubting yourself. But remember: *resilience is about getting back up after a setback and continuing to move forward*. Take some time to reset, refocus, and remind yourself why you're looking for work in the first place.

Tips to help you regain momentum:

- **Revisit your goals:** What kind of work excites you? What skills are you looking to grow? Reaffirm your “why” so that you can continue your job search with clarity and energy.
- **Update your resume and Handshake profile:** Is there something you could refine or update? Small adjustments can help you stand out more in your next application. *To learn more about updating your Handshake profile, refer to [Completing your Profile in Handshake](#).*
- **Reach out to your network:** You might be feeling isolated right now, but you're not alone. Reach out to people who have been through the process or who can offer advice and encouragement.
- **Keep applying:** The job search process is often about persistence. Don't let one rejection discourage you. Continue applying to new opportunities that align with your passions and goals. *To learn more about searching for jobs on Handshake, check out [Searching for Jobs and Internships](#).*

5. Remember: Rejection isn't forever

One of the most empowering things to remember is that *rejection is temporary*. It's part of your journey toward finding the right fit, and with every rejection, you're learning, growing, and becoming even more prepared for the opportunity that's waiting for you.

The right employer is out there, one that will recognize your strengths and the potential you bring to the table. Sometimes, all it takes is one “yes” to turn everything around.

Stay Positive, Keep Going

Job searching can be a long and winding road, but every step, even the rejections, are shaping you into a stronger, more capable professional. You have a community of people rooting for you—and we at Handshake are here to help you stay motivated and equipped for success!