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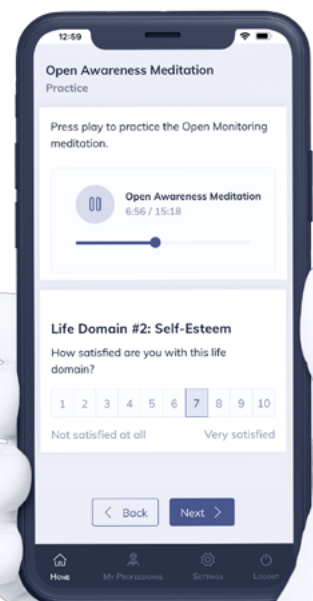
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Warm regards,



Hugo Alberts, Ph.D.
Co-Founder of Quenza





Learning From Job Rejection

Topic: Career • Type: Exercise • Duration: 10 mins



Background

Job rejection can be a significant emotional setback for clients, often leading to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. However, cognitive-behavioral theories suggest that reframing negative experiences as learning opportunities can mitigate these effects and foster resilience. Research indicates that job seekers who adopt a growth mindset, viewing skills and abilities as improvable through effort, are more likely to cope effectively with job rejection (Dweck, 2006). Moreover, the feedback-seeking behavior has been associated with improved job search outcomes and enhanced learning from experiences (Anseel et al., 2015).

Reflecting on rejections and seeking constructive feedback are crucial strategies supported by psychological research. For example, studies have shown that feedback seeking is positively related to job search success because it helps individuals adjust their strategies and improve performance (Wanberg et al., 2010). Additionally, understanding that rejection often involves factors beyond personal control, such as organizational fit or internal hiring preferences, can reduce the tendency to internalize failure (Boswell, Zimmerman, & Swider, 2012).

By integrating these strategies into their job search process, clients can develop a more resilient and proactive approach. Cognitive restructuring, a key component of cognitive-behavioral therapy, encourages clients to challenge negative thoughts and replace them with more constructive ones (Beck, 2011). This exercise leverages these principles to help clients navigate job rejections more effectively, ultimately leading to better job search outcomes.



Goal

The goal of this exercise is for clients to reframe job rejections as opportunities for learning and growth, thereby enhancing their resilience and improving their future job applications.



Advice

- This exercise is suitable for clients who are actively seeking employment and have faced job rejections. It is particularly beneficial for those who may be struggling with feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt following rejections.
- Clients might find it challenging to confront their negative emotions associated with rejection. Encourage them to be honest but compassionate with themselves during this process.
- Some clients may not receive feedback from employers. Guide them on how to politely request feedback, and help them focus on self-reflection in the absence of external feedback.
- If clients are hesitant to reach out for feedback, role-play the conversation with them to build their confidence.
- For clients who struggle with identifying their strengths and weaknesses, use previous performance reviews, recommendations, or ask them to reflect on past successes in different contexts.
- Encourage clients to complete the exercise soon after receiving a rejection while the experience is still fresh but emotions have somewhat settled.
- Reinforce the idea that rejection is a common part of the job search process and does not reflect their overall worth or potential.



References

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Learning From Job Rejection

Introduction

Job rejection can be disheartening, especially when you've been following all the advice and putting in your best efforts.

When job rejection happens, it's easy to think, "I'm not what employers want." You might believe that a "good" candidate should get a job offer quickly if they're using the right strategies. When this doesn't happen, you might think you're not a "good" candidate and start blaming yourself, saying things like "I'm too old," "I'm too inexperienced," or "I'm too shy."

It's important to remember that job hunting is a challenging process, and not every method works every time. Rejection does not mean you are not a good candidate. Many factors, including biases, play a role in hiring decisions. This exercise will help you learn from rejection, seek constructive feedback, and maintain a positive outlook.

Step 1: Reflect on the Experience

Take a few minutes to jot down the details of your most recent job rejection. Include the job title, the company, and the stage where you were rejected (e.g., application, interview, final round).

Job title:	
Company:	
Stage of rejection:	

Describe how you felt when you received the rejection. What were your initial reactions? How did these feelings change over time?

How did you perform during the application process?

Step 2: Identify Key Learnings

Feedback Analysis

If you received specific feedback from the employer, write it down below.

If you didn't get any feedback, consider reaching out to the employer to ask for constructive comments.

Use the following script to ask for advice from interviewers:

"I'd appreciate some advice. I've been in several interviews at different places. From what you've seen, is there something about me in an interview that might be causing me not to get hired? I'd really appreciate any pointers so I can do better in future interviews."

This approach can turn a rejection into an opportunity for improvement and networking.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Based on the feedback or your own reflections, identify your strengths and areas for improvement. What did you do well?

Where could you improve?

Common Themes

Look for any recurring themes in the feedback or your reflections. Are there particular skills or aspects of your application that are consistently highlighted as needing improvement?

Step 3: Focus on Learning

Try to see the rejection as a learning opportunity rather than a failure. Remember, job rejections are common and often happen for reasons beyond your control (e.g., cultural fit, internal candidates, company changes).

What have you learned from your latest rejection, and how can this learning help you in the next interview?

Set specific, actionable steps to improve your future job applications. This might include practicing interview skills, gaining additional experience, or better preparing for certain types of interview questions.

End of Exercise

Great job on completing this exercise!

Job rejections are a normal part of the job search process and can actually be valuable learning experiences. By taking the time to reflect on your experiences, seek feedback, and reframe your thoughts, you're already on the path to improvement and growth.

Think of each rejection as a stepping stone towards your ultimate career goals. Every piece of feedback you receive, every emotion you process, and every lesson you learn brings you one step closer to finding the right fit for you.

Keep this journal handy and revisit it whenever you face another rejection. It's a great way to remind yourself of your strengths, track your progress, and stay motivated.