
Rejection Again

In this section, the author describes her struggles with rejection as they impacted her self-esteem. Volunteers are encouraged to read this piece aloud. Alternatively, play Week 4 of the corresponding CD on which you will hear this section as read by the author.

Rejection! How many times can a person face rejection without losing self confidence? When I was working as a human resources director, a co-worker told me an anecdote that she had just read. It was apparently written by a man that was tired of the numerous, seemingly endless, rejection letters that he had received as he looked for work. Most rejection letters say something like this: “Thank you for applying for employment with our company. Although your skills and past work experiences are very strong, we have chosen to give the position to another applicant. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.”

Tired of the constant rejection, this person mused about rejecting the next rejection letter. So he wrote something like this,

Dear Company. Thank you for your careful consideration of my skills and past experiences for potential employment with your company. I have received your rejection letter in response to my application. Although it is well-written and clear, I’m afraid that I will have to reject your rejection. Your company clearly has a need for someone with my skills and background. Thus, please prepare for my arrival on Monday for my

first day on the job. I'm sure that you will find my work to be a great benefit for your company.

I wish I could give proper credit to the person that first came up with this idea. I think that it would be great fun to send such a letter. I would love to reject my rejections.

There are so many ways to say it:

- I'm sorry but the rejection that you have sent is unacceptable; therefore, I am returning it to you, postage due.
- As I said in the interview, I never accept "no" as the answer; so I'll be there on Monday.
- Please exchange the enclosed rejection letter with an offer letter. I have also enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope to facilitate this exchange.
- Because I have exceeded all of the minimum application criteria for your school, I assume that the rejection from the college of engineering was sent to me in error. I will plan to start school at the university this fall. Please send information on campus living.

Rejection is not only in response to an application. It hits us in other situations as well. Sometimes we feel rejected as the result of a job loss, regardless of fault.

Sometimes the sense of rejection is created internally, when we search for a new work-life opportunity but are unable to identify any possibilities. In all cases, rejection creates a loss: the loss of a dream, loss of a new opportunity, loss of an income, or the loss of a job.

If one's sense of pride or identity is wrapped around or depends upon his or her work-life, then rejection related to the work-life might also damage his or her pride or sense of identity.

I struggled with rejection and the resultant sense of loss when I faced my employer's announced plans to merge with another company and then close our offices.

The merger required extensive government approvals, so the actual job changes were not going to occur for several months. Ultimately, the merger was cancelled. However, during the entire period of transition, I looked for other employment which was not an easy task. We were physically located in an area which had limited employment opportunities for my type of work. In fact, there were no employment openings in the area for my type of work during the ensuing two year period. The rejection letters came in, not due to my knowledge and experience, but because there were no jobs available. No one was hiring locally and they did not foresee a need to hire in the near future.

Moving again was the only answer that offered similar employment possibilities. I didn't want to move our daughters again. For the stability of our family life, I wanted to be a settler. Instead, I felt forced to accept a change that only a pioneer could love. Moving meant, for me, another loss and another failure, a failure to my family regarding the stability of their home.

I found myself repeatedly questioning why I chose to leave my previous job. I found myself arguing with God in prayer, questioning why he would allow this to happen when I had tried to do the right thing by making more time for our daughters. I pleaded with God for new doors to open. I prayed and prayed and prayed. The longer it took to find a comparable position, the worse I felt. My self-esteem plummeted. I had placed most of my personal value into my job, my career and my money. The feelings of loss subsided only upon finding new employment.

These same feelings of loss of value and identity arose again when I left regular, paid, employment to begin writing, working from my home, and volunteering. Although I believed that this was God's call on my life, it took me a very long time to accept that God really wanted me to stay on this path. So from time to time, I'd apply for regular paid employment when a position opened that interested me. Because I wanted only to do what God intended for my life, with each application, with each interview, I would pray, "God if this is not consistent with your plan for my life, please do not let me get a job offer." Without fail, I got exactly what I asked for, a rejection letter, a rejection e-mail, or a rejection phone call.

God answers prayers, but sometimes the answers are hard on one's ego. While I know that God was telling me to stay the course, keep writing and speaking, keep serving him as I had been doing, rejections create feelings of failure and a perception that no one wants you. However, God's path is never a path of failure, even if it includes an occasional rejection. He wants our hearts far more than he wants our works.

CALL OUT

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Hebrews 10:36

1. It is common for people to ask a new acquaintance, "What do you do?" Some people incorrectly feel that the answer defines who they are and their social status. Instead, what aspects of ourselves actually define who we are and our value?

2. At the time of the announced merger, what was the source of the author's self-esteem and identity?

3. One's sense of identity and self-esteem is capricious at best, if its foundation is in his or her job, career or paycheck. These things, which are commonly controlled or influenced by other people or circumstances, have a tendency to change suddenly and unpredictably. List stronger foundations upon which to build one's personal identity or feelings of self-esteem.

4. Our self-confidence and self-esteem can be harmed in many ways in addition to repeated rejections or through a job loss. List at least five such ways.

5. Repeated rejection is often demoralizing. Identify five things a person could do to keep their spirits up when facing rejection or failure.

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