

Keep on with Job Hunting

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Karen was feeling defeated with her job search. Her resilient reserve was wearing thin. She asked, “What do you do when you apply for many jobs and everyone says, ‘You’ve got wonderful qualifications but you’re not experienced,’ or they say, ‘We’re not hiring?’”

Of course it can feel frustrating and discouraging to be in the double bind of not having a job because of not enough experience and not getting the experience without having a job. Here are some job search ideas:

- The next time you are told, “You’ve got wonderful qualifications but you’re not experienced,” ask the interviewer, “Will you help me get that experience? I am so determined to do this work that I will do whatever is necessary. Do you have any volunteer positions in this company? Do you have any contacts that might help me gain more experience?”
- When an interviewer offers you encouragement or acknowledges your potential, ask if you can stay in touch. Phone them briefly once a month to let them know how your search is going. People typically like to help.
- Volunteer to go on a committee or executive of the association of your industry or profession. For example, I served on the executive of the Canadian Association for Professional Speakers, Calgary. You will be perceived as a significant person in your field when you accept a leadership role and fill it well.
- Find someone who has the kind of job you want and interview them. People love to talk about their work. Ask them for contacts. Ask them the fastest way to get to a similar position. Ask to shadow them for a day. Pay attention to the names, companies and contacts that you hear during the day.
- If you feel genuinely liked and connected to a leader in your desired field, ask if he or she will mentor you. Most of us like to make a difference. It is an honour to be asked.
- Write down exactly what kind of employment you are seeking, the title, the responsibilities, the education required and the type of desired setting. Forward it to everyone you know.
- Make sure you treat finding a job like a job. Promise yourself to do at least five actions a day from Monday to Friday—go to a networking event, make three phone calls and get out there.
- Avoid feeling frustrated and discouraged. Circle yourself with supportive family and friends.

The world needs your gifts. Keep offering and searching for the workplace where those strengths will be appreciated and rewarded.

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