# Staying Motivated

You have the tools, you have the techniques, and one day you will have the job. Staying motivated during the job hunt may be the hardest part of the entire employment process. You can stay motivated, but it will take a lot of hard work and energy, and there will be times you want to give up.

# **Staying positive**

You can’t stay positive all the time as job hunting can really take a toll on your emotions, confidence and general well-being. Try to see this process as a journey rather than a destination.

Negativity and positivity are opposites. If you have a bad interview, aren’t getting interviews, aren’t finding jobs, or there are no jobs out there at the moment, give yourself an hour or even an afternoon to do something you like and take time to recalibrate; read a book, watch some trashy telly, eat some comfort food, go for a walk, listen to your favourite music or debrief with someone you trust. You have to let the stress out and then move on, don’t let it envelop you or define your future – the power is in your hands.

If you let the negativity take hold, it will show in interviews and further hamper your job quest. Employers know that the job market is tough and frustrating, but they don’t want someone who is a Negative Nelly. You might not even realize you are coming across negatively, but it will show in body language—slumped shoulders, no smile, weak handshake, and no enthusiasm.

# Self-care

It is so easy when we become focused on a goal to forget to take care of ourselves. Your mental health is important but so is your physical wellbeing. Stress and frustration can do a number on the body—weakening the immune system and letting in things that are much worse than the negative thoughts. This does not mean that you need to go out and buy every vitamin or supplement in the health food store, join a gym, or hire a personal trainer. There are simple steps you can take right in your own home.

# Exercise

Just simple yoga stretches or a brisk walk around the block will do wonders. Getting up and moving—cleaning the house, going out for a cup of coffee, or indulging in a little window shopping clears the mind and often gives a fresh perspective on things. Fresh air equals fresh thoughts! Studies show that any movement or physical exercise releases chemicals that may combat depression and will enhance feelings of wellbeing. However, try not to fall into the tricky trap of using these methods to distract yourself from the job hunt.

# Eat right

When you are looking at your computer screen or listening to JAWS all day, it is so easy to slurp down soda after soda and grab a quick bite in the form of a chocolate bar. It may make you feel better at the time, but it doesn’t help your mood or attitude any, and think of the calories. You still want to fit into that fabulous interview outfit you bought, right? Stay hydrated with lots of water and try to eat three balanced meals a day. They don’t have to be gourmet six course affairs, just something to keep your energy up.

If you have finished your set job hunting goals for the week, treat yourself to that pizza or chocolate bar.

# Maintain a schedule

Treat your job hunt like an actual job. Maintain a routine. Get up at a normal hour and devote a certain number of hours in the day to the job search. Be consistent. If you know you have more energy and motivation in the morning, work then and use afternoons for your other daily tasks.

You may be a night owl-- up at all hours of the night, and when you don’t have anything to do or anywhere to be during the day, it is very easy and tempting to fall into the habit of staying up late and sleeping all day. But unless you want a job as a night watchman, try keeping to a daytime schedule for sending out emails and making phone calls. A potential employer may think it odd that someone is writing them or leaving voice mails at 3am.

# Change your strategy

Throughout your job hunt, it is a good idea to occasionally take stock of your progress. Are you getting feedback from the interviews?

Are there things you can work on from this feedback?

Are you even asking for feedback?

Are there skills you need to improve on?

Do you need to widen your job search to other areas of the region? Do you need to lower your expectations and settle for a job with less salary or qualifications just to get a foot in the door?

Do you need to beef up your resume? Sometimes changing a buzz word may make some difference.

# Time off

With any job, you get a certain amount of sick and vacation days. You can certainly take time off from the job hunt if you are feeling too overwhelmed, but like with many workers who can’t seem to completely separate themselves from the office email or phone, check your usual job searching sites at least once every couple of days.

# Believe in yourself

You can do it. You will do it. This is your mantra. Write it down in Braille, post it in large print on your wall, tattoo it on your forehead, and whisper these words every time you apply for a job or go on an interview. You just never know when the job will come. The day you give up and don’t go to that job site is the day yours will be waiting. Reading stories, articles, and blogs about people or companies in your chosen vocation will often add a little spark to your motivational fire, and you never know what info you might pick up.

If you find you are really getting depressed and unmotivated, please reach out for help. There is no shame in this. Mental health professionals have sadly become all too familiar with unemployment and the roller coaster of emotions surrounding it.