

About Being Unemployed and Searching...It's Awful

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This past week, after being unemployed for about 10 months, I started a new job at the American Heart Association. Words cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunity. It truly is my dream job and I'm so excited to embark on this new journey!

I'm not usually one to share my thoughts and feelings with the masses, but I learned a lot during my time searching for a job and I feel compelled to share some of my experience in the hopes of helping someone else who is experiencing the pain of being unemployed.

First, a little background

Despite a layoff due to a company move about 10 years into my career, I've been blessed to have held steady employment at stable companies most of my adult life. I've been successful in my positions and have had positive reviews, which, of course, led me to believe I was a good employee, person, colleague, etc. The last 3 years have been a trial unlike anything I have ever before experienced and pray that I will never have to again.

In the fall of 2014, I was laid off from Samsung because my position was moving to New Jersey and I did not wish to move. I immediately began looking for a new job, and though I was diligent in my search, it took nearly 9 months to land a position with a new company. I was there for about 6 months when the company then ran into cash flow challenges that caused the layoff of a significant number of employees. I was one of them. I went back on the job hunt and landed an exciting position about 6 months later, only to be laid off 9 weeks into it due to a change in company direction. I felt like I was cursed.

Back on the hunt I went. As I had done during my previous times of unemployment, I looked to job boards, family, friends and my professional network for help. I scoured LinkedIn Jobs, signed up on The Ladders (and about 4 other job boards), talked to recruiters and headhunters and applied online for 100s of jobs - literally 100s. I reached out to my network when I came across positions that I was interested in at companies where they either worked or had contacts. I followed up with recruiters as frequently as I felt comfortable - I didn't want to become a pest. I modified my resume and posted it in many different places and I prayed and prayed and prayed. In short, I did everything I could think of to find a job - every day.

Being unemployed is one of the most depressing, demoralizing, exhausting and painful experiences a person can go through.

Finding a job is not easy. You frequently question your worth and your value. You wonder if all those positive performance appraisals, kudos from superiors and colleagues and awards you received over the years were lies and you wonder why your network is failing you. Every day of silence reinforces your growing belief that you must just suck. You take every rejection personally, even those stupid auto-generated emails from HR departments in response to one of your online applications - "Thank you so much for your interest in our company. While we think your background is amazing, it's not amazing

enough..." Not only are you worried about finding a job, but depending on your circumstances, you may also wonder how much longer you'll be able to pay your mortgage or put food on your family's table. It's an awful time. I'm not alone in these feelings, by the way. I know several people that were going through the same thing at the same time I was. The bonus there was that we could commiserate. Though our nation's unemployment rate is low, I have to wonder how many of us are no longer being counted in the tally because we've been looking for so long and no longer qualify for Unemployment.

Why am I telling you all of this? A couple of reasons.

ONE: If you know someone that is unemployed and looking, I **IMPLORE YOU**, help them in any way you can! Here are a few ways you can help:

- If you say you will help, **HELP!** Don't say you'll help and then do nothing, or worse ignore the person when they contact you!
- If you are good with resumes, offer to review theirs.
- If you know a good recruiter or headhunter, pass along the info.
- If you know of a job that would be a great fit for them, refer them.
- Post a recommendation on their LinkedIn profile.
- Forward job postings you receive that you think could possibly be a good fit for them.
- If someone reaches out to you for assistance with a referral, follow through! (If you don't like the person, just tell them you can't help. Don't give them false hope!)
- Send them a note/an email/a text of encouragement, letting them know that you haven't forgotten them.

This list is by no means exhaustive, just a few things that came to mind.

TWO: If you are unemployed and looking for a job, I want to tell you that **YOU DO NOT SUCK!** You are awesome and you will find the right position. Don't give up!! Keep working your network. Great things are yet to be. Have faith!

Also, if there is anything I can do to help you land your next job, please ask! I would be happy to help in any way that I can.

And Finally...

To those of you that worked to help me in my search - you know who you are. **THANK YOU SO MUCH!** Please don't ever hesitate to reach out to me if I can assist you in the future.