

Getting Motivated for Job Searching

Excerpt from Buy Me, I'm Worth It, by Brian Geery and Sally Sweeney

The Emotions of Job Search

Job loss, for any reason, comes with a series of common emotions. Shock, disbelief, betrayal, fear, anger, guilt, and despair are among them. The majority of job seekers feel most of these negative emotions at some point in their job search. It comes with the territory. It may be small comfort, but you are not alone.

The first step in finding your new job is to learn to deal with your inevitable negative emotions. When feeling these emotions, it is extremely difficult to get motivated and present the image of a positive, can do, personable employee. Have you seen any employment advertisements that say, "We are looking for downtrodden, despondent people to work for our growing company"? Of course not! Yet, you may be feeling these emotions because of your lack of employment.

Because of these feelings, it is very important to give yourself what Zig Ziglar, a famous motivational speaker, calls a *check up from the neck up*. We will begin your job search by identifying and determining ways to limit the impact of your negative emotions. This chapter is about getting motivated and recognizing there are jobs in existence, today, right now, for you. Once you have moved into a motivated mind set, you will be ready to follow the remaining seven chapters to employment. Until then, read on!

Removing Your 'Built In Objections'

When speaking to audiences of job seekers about applying sales and marketing principles to their job search, I often talk about *built-in objections*. These are the reasons people believe they will have a hard time getting a job. I ask everyone in the audience to stand up. When they hear a built-in objection that applies to them, they can be seated. Then I read this list:

- I do not have enough education, so I am under qualified.
- I have too much education, so I am over qualified.
- I have worked at too many companies, so people think I am a job hopper.
- I have only worked at one company for 10 years, so people think I don't have well-rounded experience.
- I was fired from last job, so no one will want to hire me.
- I quit my last job, so no one will want to hire me.
- I am too old; no one wants to hire an old person.
- I am too young; no one wants to hire someone without experience.
- My industry is declining, so there are no jobs.
- My industry is new so there are not many companies that are hiring.

The list of built-in objections goes on, but when I finish reading it, even when I am speaking to hundreds of job seekers, the entire audience is seated.

When seeking employment, expect to have your own built-in objections. But keep in mind, these objections are *your own* perceptions, not necessarily that of a hiring manager. I have met hiring managers who want to interview candidates who have only worked at one or two

companies because they believe these candidates will be more loyal. I have met hiring managers who want to interview candidates who have worked at numerous companies for relatively short durations because they believe these candidates will possess more valuable experiences. I have also witnessed these hiring managers completely change their criteria as they interview various candidates.

Here are the facts. Your built-in objection may be the reason a hiring manager would *prefer* to hire you; your built-in objection may be outweighed by what you can accomplish for the hiring manager, or your built-in objection might be a reason he/she will not hire you... so what! There are lots of hiring managers out there who will not be close minded. Besides, who would want to work for a close-minded manager anyway?

Don't Fight Your Feelings

Your negative self-speak is something that can be hard to fight. When I was a child, if I was feeling down and out, my mother always told me, "Brian, you cannot fight a feeling. It is OK to *feel* your feelings." Then, she would say, "Let's think about other things," and we would talk about positive things like going to the beach next weekend or meeting my friends for ice cream. Sure enough, my negative feelings would be pushed to the side as the positive feelings moved in. I am not going to suggest you try to fight your feelings about your built-in objections. I am, however, going to give you new information, so soon, your negative feelings will be pushed into a corner of your mind as you start to realize why you can and will get a new job.

In "Chapter Two: Speak So Hiring Manager's Will Listen," you will learn to turn your built-in objections into reasons a company should hire you. You may feel you are too old, too young, have too much education or not enough – whatever your built-in objections may be, I promise you this, *you can get motivated and you can get a new job.*

Developing a Positive Attitude and Expanding Beliefs

If ever there is a time you need a positive attitude, it is when you are searching for your new job. It's a bit ironic that positive attitude is usually the most difficult to maintain during the time you need it the most – the duration of your job search. Let's face it; job searching comes with its fair share of rejection. You are trying to sell yourself and no one is buying. It is time for you to develop your positive attitude. Old adages are valid. You need to learn to view your glass as half full, not half empty; view your sky as partly sunny, not partly cloudy; and when life serves you lemons, make lemonade.

Developing a positive attitude means understanding the difference between limiting beliefs and expanding beliefs. A limiting belief is a way of thinking negatively about your situation and an expanding belief is a way of thinking positively about your situation. Consider the table below and determine if you possess limiting or expanding beliefs.

Limiting Belief	Expanding Belief
I will never get a job.	I am getting closer to getting a job every day.
I am not qualified for any jobs I want.	I can develop my qualifications so I will get multiple offers.
I hate job searching.	I am learning so many valuable lessons during my job search.
There are no jobs out there.	Every day some companies will post new job opportunities; I know I can find them.
I'll never make what I used to make.	I can turn this into an opportunity to make more money than ever before.
I keep finding companies that say they are not interested in me.	Every company I find that is not interested in me means I am that much closer to finding a company that is interested in me.

Your future is not something you enter; your future is something you create. Learn to develop your positive attitude by expanding your beliefs and you will find searching for your new job can become a constructive and self-affirming, learning experience. Soon, you will have created your new future.

There Are Jobs Out There

Built-in objections, negative attitudes, and limiting beliefs lead many job seekers to think there are simply no jobs out there. After looking at job boards and newspaper ads for months, you may get very discouraged and begin to feel that no one is hiring anybody. You must realize, however, there *are* jobs out there. In fact, at this very moment, there exists a hiring manager who is desperately looking for an employee with your qualifications – and, he/she does not know you exist! (We'll fix that in 'Chapter Six: Securing Interviews'.)

Imagine you randomly opened the Yellow Pages and called the first company listing that you see. You ask the receptionist about job opportunities and she says, "Our company is not hiring anybody now." From the moment you hang up the phone, how much time has to pass before that company is hiring. A year? A quarter? A month? A day? Do we know the answer to the question? No. Is it possible that tomorrow an employee may quit? Get fired? Get sick? Opt for relocation? Die? Quit? Get promoted? Retire? Is it possible that a board meeting may take place and a decision made to add employees? Is it possible that the company wins a large contract and needs to hire employees? Think of all the reasons companies may need to hire employees. Isn't it true that a company that is not planning to hire new employees this morning could have some event take place and plan to hire new employees this afternoon? Isn't it also true that the events that cause a company to hire can happen whether or not the economy is growing or sluggish?

When you are looking for work, it often seems like no companies are hiring. This perception is compounded if the economy is sluggish. News reports may abound regarding rising unemployment, lays-offs, and the decline of corporate profits. However, even when companies

are laying off employees, they are very often simultaneously hiring. Lay-offs can signal a shift in the company's human capital needs. A company may be laying off employees because a particular contract came to its conclusion. At the same time, the company may have won a new contract which requires different employee skill sets. A company may have upgraded their technology and been compelled to lay off employees that had no expertise in the new technology. At the same time that company may hire new employees with new skill sets who can manage the technology. A company may be closing disparate offices so layoffs are inevitable. Simultaneously, that company may need to hire new employees at the newly consolidated corporate headquarters. Regardless, you must remember that there will always be companies that need to hire employees.

In addition to natural attrition, there are always growth sectors, unaffected by the sluggish economy. For example, due to the age wave (baby boomers getting older), many segments of the healthcare industry are growing. At the time of this writing, even though the economy is still considered sluggish, there is general agreement that the following industries are growth industries:

- Biotech
- Pharmaceutical
- Software development
- Security
- Networking
- Telecom
- Wireless
- Mortgage
- Military

In September 2003, *Business 2.0* magazine published an article that named the ten fastest growing occupations:

1. Medical assistant
2. Systems analyst
3. Personal and home care aide
4. Database administrator
5. Desktop publisher
6. Network systems and data communication analyst
7. Network and systems administrator
8. Systems software engineer
9. Support specialist
10. Software engineer, applications

The same article stated that the fastest job growth of the decade will be in southern and western metropolitan areas, which are fed by expanding service industries and the resurgence of tech and defense sectors.

Each year the lists of growth industries, hot occupations, and booming geographic areas change. A quick search on the Internet will give you the most current information and lists of the most in demand jobs. My father-in-law was an avid fisherman. When asked the reason for his

success, he said, “I fish where the fish are.” Find the industries, occupations, and geographic areas that are growing, and if possible, search where the jobs are.

If you fear you lack the correct experience or are unable to search in a different geographic area other than where you live, read on. In ‘Chapter Two: Speak So Hiring Manager’s Listen,’ you will discover you have transferable skills that can be used by employers regardless of industry or geography.

Remember, it does not matter whether you are seeking employment in a growth industry, a new occupation, or a different geographic area. People get sick, get promoted, die, quit, get fired, relocate and retire. When they do, their company often needs to hire replacements.

Your Future is Bright

As frustrating and un-motivating as some days will be when you are job searching, you must always remember that, in the overall scheme of life, the job search is a small moment of time. At some point in the future, you will look back at this time and realize it was a period of change and growth.

I have met so many job seekers who, when they are happily reemployed, reflect on their job search experience and are thankful that many of the opportunities they once thought would be terrific, never materialized. The reason? They love their new job! They say, ‘If I had gotten an offer from XYZ Company, I never would have landed here.’

Your future *is* bright. You *will* get a terrific new job.

Your Number’s Game

Job searching by nature comes with plenty of rejection. Some of your experiences will be distressing and make you feel miserable. You may be completely convinced you are going to get an offer... and it will fall through. You will find a recruitment ad written like it was describing you... only to find the position has been filled. You will get a call after an interview feeling positive you will be invited back for another interview... only to be told “thanks, but no thanks.” The job search is sales and marketing; you are selling yourself and not everyone wants to buy.

Selling is a numbers game. Top performing sales organizations always track their sales activity as well as their sales revenue because there is a direct correlation between the two. Only a certain number of prospective customers will become customers. Direct mail marketers know this as well. In fact, many direct mail marketers are happy with a one or two percent response to their mailings. Think about that for a minute. They send 100 pieces of mail and are happy if two people respond! Remember these principles also apply to your job search. You will have to sell yourself numerous times before you are offered the position you want, so do not get discouraged when job opportunities don’t materialize. Every rejection means you are one step closer to getting a job offer.

Be Cautious What You Read

It is important to fill your mind with positive information throughout your job search. Type ‘positive thinking’, ‘attitude’, or ‘inspiration’ into the search engine of any on-line book seller and order a book to get help get you motivated. Avoid anything but the help wanted ads and business sections of the newspaper for now. Reading about global problems, car accidents,

political scandals and other bad news does not help you feel good! In the business section of the newspaper, look for people who were promoted, companies that are going through mergers or acquisitions, and companies that received funding or won large contracts. These are reasons job opportunities surface.

How to Think About Rejection

You will have your fair share of unsuccessful job pursuits. You will be considered for a job, and then told the company has no interest in you. Sometimes you will be given a reason, other times you will not. Regardless, do not dwell on what you hear. The reasons you are told the company is not interested will vary and are not necessarily the whole truth. Hiring managers find it difficult to tell you they are not going to hire you; who wouldn't? No one wants to tell someone bad news. Usually you hear some version of *you do not have the qualifications we need*. OK. Move on. Do not take it personally. The real reason could be they are hiring their brother-in-law, they are told to put a hold on recruiting, their boss liked another candidate better, you have never sold widgets to the military or you do not know how to program in some crazy language...so what! Some feedback is useful; if it is, use it. Most feedback is meaningless. There is a reason you did not get an offer; it may or may not be valid. Consider the experience great practice for when you get your next interview. Take a walk, cry, or go boxing at the gym... whatever helps you get through being bummed out. Just get through it expeditiously so you can move on to the next opportunity.

Things Could Always Be Worse

Who would you rather be: yourself, Jim Leavy, Susan Harris or Tom Ehrseman?

Jim Leavy had been out of work for six months. He was fired from his job. He redeemed his entire \$75,000 IRA in order to keep paying his mortgage and keep food on the table for his wife and three elementary aged children. He had one interview. He was told he was not qualified for the position. His wife took a job as a waitress at a local restaurant to provide the family with some income. Jim's elderly mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. His only car had 185,000 miles on it.

Susan Harris was out of work for 18 months. Her house was repossessed, and she, her wheelchair-bound husband, and 16 year old daughter had to move in with a friend. Her daughter was getting straight F's and Susan found pot hidden under her mattress.

Tom Ehrseman was diagnosed with cancer the same week he was laid off from his \$150,000 a year job. He was already strapped with credit card debt. His wife had left him six months earlier. Tom was so busy with his bankruptcy attorney, divorce attorney, and oncologist he hardly had time to look for work.

I have met many job seekers who think they have it bad until they hear about Jim, Susan, and Tom. When you sit back and realize how things could be much worse, sometimes the status quo begins to feel pretty good. Strive to focus on what you have, not what you don't have. As the saying goes, "Count your blessings!"

Three years have passed and Jim is now happily employed at the greatest job he ever had. His mom passed away, and he has been through the grief associated with the loss. His wife is able to take care of the children full time, and he is driving a new company car. Susan's husband

is able to walk thanks to surgery and physical therapy; they are living in a terrific new apartment; their daughter is doing fabulously in a new school, and Susan loves her new job. Tom's oncologist pronounced him cancer free. He has reestablished enough credit to buy a new home. He is dating a terrific women and he loves his new job.

Remember things could always be worse and, no matter what, things will always get better! Try not to let job searching be one of the lows in the highs and lows of your life, but if it is, look to the future...your highs will come again.

Job Search Buddy

Many job seekers have found that teaming up with another person who is looking for work keeps them motivated. Meet with a fellow job seeker once or twice a week. Plan an agenda in advance or simply have coffee. Share your successes and challenges. Should you decide to team up with a job search buddy, your only rule should be a commitment to keep your discussions positive in nature; the last thing you need to do is bring each other down!

Job Search Support Groups

Watch your newspaper for job search support group meetings. Typically these groups have speakers present job related topics like resume writing or interviewing skills. The group meetings also provide an opportunity to share ideas with fellow job seekers. Attend at least two meetings before you decide if a job search support group is right for you. Your measure of a successful meeting is simple; when you leave you should feel motivated and have a few ideas for improving your job search. If you do not achieve these simple goals, that particular meeting may not be right for you.

The Irony of Job Search

For many of us, the job search experience is new. I have worked with numerous job seekers in their fifties and sixties who say they never had to look for work because they were always recruited or promoted to their next position. In every pursuit I can think of, except job searching, experience increases skill and know-how. Be it writing, playing sports or music, building houses, sewing, public speaking...you name it, the more people have done it, the better they are at it. The irony of the job pursuit is that if you have a lot of experience at it, you are probably not good at it. If you were good at it, you would get a job relatively quickly and not have much experience at it! No need to worry. *Buy Me, I'm Worth It* will enable you to be superb at your job search and prevent you from getting too much experience doing it.

Looking for Work is a Full Time Job

As a job seeker, you have a full time job. In fact, many job seekers feel like it is harder looking for work than working! Every day you need to wake up and take action. If you are shopping for groceries, watching television, or working in your yard between 8:30am and 5:30pm, you are limiting the success of your job search. There is a direct correlation between your job-hunting activities and obtaining job offers.

Many job hunters find they need more hours of sleep. This is OK. Take breaks and rest when necessary, but strive to keep a 40 hour work week. Keep your non-job search activities to evenings and weekends. Looking for work is a full time job; treat it as such.

Looking for Work While You are Working is not Easier

Somewhere, way back when, somebody must have written, "It is harder to find work when you are not working." Many people believe this faulty bit of advice, and for this reason, it has been perpetuated over the years. Perhaps there are some hiring managers who believe if you are not working, you are not worth hiring, but my contention is that you would not want to work for any manager who holds that belief anyway! Perhaps in the old *job for life* economy this perception would hold some truth, although I'd still be arguing against it. We are now, however, in a new economy. It is not uncommon for people to work at a company for only one to three years and move on.

Most people find that it is very hard to look for work while you are working. Looking for work while working means living in constant conflict. When you are job searching you will be feeling like you should be working and when you are working you will be feeling like you should be job searching. It is very hard to hold a full time job and look for work at the same time. The Internet has made it a little easier, but it is still difficult. Your heart will not be in your work, which will make your work harder to perform and you will not have the time necessary to perform your job search activities.

There are two redeeming things about looking for work when you are working. One, of course, is your paycheck. Two, is knowing you will eventually be leaving the job you obviously do not want. If you absolutely positively need a paycheck, then you must look for work while you are working.

If you are truly unhappy where you are working, I recommend you do whatever it takes to save up nine to twelve months of living expenses, reduce your discretionary spending, and quit your job. You will be able to devote yourself to full-time job seeking. Soon, you will be reemployed at your terrific new job.

The Power of Affirmations

An affirmation is described in the dictionary as "something declared to be true; a positive statement or judgment." You can use affirmations to keep motivated in your job search. To use affirmations, simply write down your vision for a successful job search and read it at least twice a day.

Here is an example of an affirmation:

"I wake up each day with a positive attitude towards my job search. I set my goals for job search activity and perform the tasks necessary to achieve them. I am able to do the less enjoyable tasks because I know I am constantly moving forward towards getting a job offer. I balance my job search activities so I am always well rested and energized. I look at the rejection associated with my job search as a learning experience. I am meeting new people and developing my skills as I progress towards my new job."

Only So Much Can Be Said

Job searching is challenging, and it can be filled with rejection and low emotions. Job Seekers, there is only so much that can be said about motivating yourself to get out there and get your new job. Sometimes you have to *just get over it*; put your negative emotions aside; reach inside and pull out your positive attitude and energy, and get to work!

About the Authors

Sally Sweeney

Sally Sweeney, Managing Partner of Quota, Inc., knows what it takes for a job seeker to stand out from the rest.

For over 15 years Sally has been a professional recruiter. She is in the business of helping companies attract and retain top employees. Sally spends every day discussing hiring decisions with managers; she is a first hand witness to their decision making process. Sally has interviewed thousands of candidates and talked with hundreds of managers after they interview candidates. *Buy Me, I'm Worth It* is filled with Sally's unique insights as to why candidates get job offers or why they do not.

Sally began her career selling technology and rapidly advanced to a top revenue producer. Sally has earned innumerable top sales performer awards, continuous President's club trips and achieved yearly performances well above quota.

Leveraging her experience selling technology, Sally transitioned her career to the profession of recruiting. Sally's boutique technology sales recruiting firm, Quota, Inc., serves elite technology companies interested in hiring the best of the best sales professionals.

Brian Geery

Brian Geery knows what it takes to teach people to sell; he has been doing it for over 20 years.

As coauthor of *Buy Me, I'm Worth It*, Brian has contributed strategies from his blockbuster course, the Eight Steps to Employment. The course has helped hundreds of job seekers apply sales and marketing principles to their job search and enabled them to secure offers and negotiate a raise before they start.

Brian's strategies for sales success have appeared in numerous publications, including the *Wall Street Journal Career Guide* and regular appearances in *Sales and Marketing Management Magazine*. Brian has appeared on radio and television and he has been a featured speaker at business conferences throughout the country including Inc. World, The International Quality and Productivity Conference and MIT.

As Senior Partner at Quota, Inc., a sales consulting and recruiting firm, Brian is responsible for helping clients structure and develop their sales organizations. He has worked with over 100 companies, partnering with senior management to identify and build on sales strengths and prioritize and remove issues negatively impacting sales. The result is always the same, sales increase – often dramatically.

Brian is former Founder and President of the Sales and Marketing Toastmasters Association and former Vice President of the Sales and Marketing Executives Association.