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PO Box 950-788
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publications @ili.cc

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CAREERS

Patience and a Positive Attitude

by Sara Tusek

One precious asset in the job search is **patience**. By patience, I mean the ability to work steadily toward a goal in spite of an unreasonable emotional desire for immediate results. Sometimes the most valuable things in life come about only after a long period of sustained work, sacrifice and humility. Getting a university education, building a marriage, raising children and developing a career all call for tremendous, ongoing patience.

Nothing is more harmful to a job seeker than displaying impatience. No one is interested in working with a person who can't control his or her personal feelings, unless that person is immensely talented, or pays his or her employees very handsomely indeed!

Closely related to cultivating patience is the use of good manners. In any culture, good manners are based on putting the consideration of the needs, feelings and responsibilities of another person above one's own needs, feelings and responsibilities. The Copy Center of a university where I once worked had a sign that illustrates this principle:

"Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part."

For the job-seeker to be able to act with good manners (rather than harassing people to do what he or she wants them to do IMMEDIATELY) requires patience. And patience requires developing the ability to stand back from one's own situation and consider the pressing needs of others.

Patience also require faith that all will work well for the job seeker. Religious faith is quite helpful in this case, but other kinds of faith could work as well; faith in one's own capabilities, gifts and talents, faith that good manners and courtesy will be rewarded, and faith that the current "crisis" is not so important in the overall scheme of life.



Another helpful word for patience might be "perspective." By removing oneself from the center of the universe, a more balanced perspective is gained, one in which it's apparent that personal desires are just that: personal. Such desires are not the responsibility of others, and should not be insisted upon, if one is to be taken seriously as a potential employee.

If patience in social situations is not possible, then the job seeker is best served by scheduling some quiet time alone. Taking the time to consider one's problems and opportunities in a peaceful, serene setting is very healing, and helps one develop patience and faith. Patience and good manners are ancient virtues, but never more up-to-date than in the job search. Practicing patience is good practice for successful living! and good manners are just plain good sense.



Garden at Zell am See, Austria



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Patience and a Positive Attitude (from p. 1)

Keeping a positive attitude is the key to finding a job you can like and do best. This morning, Jarda and I were talking about some of our friends who've had their fair share of job-hunting challenges. We identified one basic problem:

"Lack of fit between the dreams, values, skills, goals, and experiences of the job-seeker and the identified needs of the organization."

Organizations must be careful to hire people who will perform the functions and duties that the organization has earmarked as most crucial. The job interview is the venue for finding out if various candidates, who may "look good on paper," really have the qualifications and skills needed for the job in question, as it is envisioned by the organization.

Due to this narrow focus on finding the candidate who is best qualified for a particular job, the interviewer has no time or interest in finding out the candidate's full range of abilities and skills. The successful candidate must severely tailor his or her "job profile" to fit the job description as it is written.

Of course, this presents a significant problem. No human being is made for one job, and one job only. Every job-seeker has a multitude of job-related ideas, capabilities, experiences and potential for growth. The hard part is for the interviewer to see beyond the urgent needs of the moment (as the organization has perceived them) and probe to find out about the real person whom he or she is interviewing.

For the job-seeker, there is a very delicate balance between presenting himself or herself in the precise terms of the job in question, and revealing other important assets that may be of immense value to the organization, even if not at the moment.



Then there are factors of chance, serendipity, coincidence, unconscious prejudice (on both sides) and just plain luck that usually tip the balance in any job-interview process. Even such intangibles as mood, the weather, and personal chemistry may have more influence on the hiring decision than simple facts and verifiable skills.

The lesson is not to be discouraged if you are not chosen for a particular job. So many factors are in play that no one can predict the outcome of an interview. The best procedure is to review the interview with a trusted friend, to see if any glaring mistakes were made, in order to gain insights on how to avoid making the same mistake twice.

If you believe you did your best, but were not selected, let go of that job and move on. Time spent in self-recrimination, bitterness, anger and envy of the person who was selected is time that is much better spent in refocusing of your job campaign and moving ahead with vigor and determination. Good luck!