

November 2023

Rejected

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None

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Recommended Citation

McElroy, Dylan B. (2023) "Rejected," *South Carolina Libraries*: Vol. 7: Iss. 2, Article 8.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51221/sc.scl.2023.7.2.8>

Available at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/scl_journal/vol7/iss2/8

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Rejected

Abstract

My name is Dylan McElroy, a 30 year old man on the autism spectrum. I am writing this article in hopes of sharing my own experiences on what it means to be endlessly rejected, despite having the qualifications for the career/job field I wish to enter. It is my hope that those experiences will also help others on the path to success as constant rejection is painful, makes one question their self-worth, and various other horrible feelings. The sections of this article will be divided into history, feelings, and eventual solutions to the problem of job rejection.

Keywords

Job Rejection, emotions, solutions, perseverance, honesty

Cover Page Footnote

Rejected by Dylan McElroy

Rejected

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History

December 2015, my love of history and hard work that I attribute to my abilities to focus as well as loving family paid off! I had graduated from the College of Charleston with a Bachelors in History after 4 and a half years of striving forward. In the Summer of 2016, The Army Corp of Engineers in Charleston, South Carolina hired me as an Office Automated Clerk for an internship which involved filing and organization. I fulfilled my duties to a degree that they decided to hang on to me for a couple extra months into March 2017! It was at this moment where I was excited about my future and my life. Unfortunately, there was something in the way, getting hired in the field of history.

The field of History is treacherous and difficult to get into. In that time I had created resumes, cover letters, and various applications to places where I felt I would fit. In the end it was all the same: rejection. At first, I attributed this rejection to luck of the draw, but then I met with a History professional at the Clemson University in Charleston who outlined the road to getting into that career would be a rocky one. He had suggested gaining experience in an adjoining field to help on this difficult path. I never shied away from a challenge, so I decided to become a graduate student at the University of South Carolina-Columbia in the field of Library and Information Science. While I waited for acceptance, I worked as maintenance for The Edisto Serpentarium where I learned to appreciate the ability to work outside and with kind people. I would in fact come back to work there seasonally the next couple of years. I got accepted into The University of South Carolina-Columbia in the year of 2018, and it was remote so I was actually able to continue working while doing my course load. It was not easy, but I learned valuable lessons about information, writing, and a greater degree of interaction with others! After 2 and half years, I graduated with a Masters in Library and Information Science. What should have been a

happy moment in my life, however, turned to ash as it was at this precise moment where the Coronavirus had become a horrific pandemic in the US. I was proud that I graduated, but there would be no ceremony, and it dawned on me that the Library and Information Science field as well as History would not be hiring for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, I continued applying, improving my resume and cover letters, as well as continuing searching. This went on for a year, then a second, and then a third. Still the only thing I was ever met with was rejection, no matter my accomplishments, part time work reviewing, research, and writing in those years. I could only feel through those years that I was cursed.

Feelings

Rejection creates complicated feelings, with most of them being negative. The first feeling is one that I ask myself frequently, “Am I doing something wrong?”. This is not a harmful feeling in and of itself as it is important to improve yourself when possible.

The problem is that after many rejections, that question of “Am I doing something wrong?” becomes self-loathing and self-doubt leading into a vicious downward spiral. I indicate this because it can lead to feelings of depression and seeing the world in an oppressively cynical viewpoint. This viewpoint is essentially summed up in a couple

phrases such as “Nobody wants me.”, “Everyone is better and more qualified than me.”, and the worst one “I am useless and will never make something of myself.”. These feelings are wretched and sometimes it has kept me up all night with anxiety being the only companion. All of these emotions can be absolutely paralyzing or at times there is a feeling that there is no incentive to try. It does not help that sometimes or at least in my case, the University's career centers have been unhelpful when it comes to getting a job in the field I prepared for. There are times where these emotions lead me into states of frustration as the pressure to succeed and not be rejected is stressful. Every application, resume, and cover letter seem to become a daily slap in the face when rejection is all it leads to. In a word rejection, when it comes to entering the field you want, is pain. Now I made this section not to be maudlin or wallow in self-pity. This section is about the feelings that I and I am certain many others in the world have felt as well as continue to feel about rejection. In that spirit, I wish to move on to what can be done about this situation of non-stop rejection, and how to go forward because giving up or wallowing is not an option!

Eventual Solutions

I am going to be honest that as of this writing, I am still being rejected. There has,

however, been significant progress for me in terms of being accepted. I will share what I have found helpful.

The first step is to resolve yourself and acknowledge that no matter what is applied for, you must never give up. That is easier said than done, but I find that as long as you are doing something you enjoy in life, the slog of doing applications is not too bad. It will still be annoying though. I also found that it is important to reach out to people and professionals, not only for opportunities, but also for helping developing interviewing skills as well as updating your resume. Believe it or not, some colleges and universities will say to keep a resume short as well as only one page. This saying is a myth. Doing what is said is a fallacy as hiring professionals want to see and know of your exploits in detail, up to two to three pages long. In terms of interviews, I find that knowing who is interested and their

background is an important step, as well as being able to answer and give questions to the interviewer. That shows you are putting in the effort needed. Interviews can be difficult still, but I find that being your honest self and being open to letting interviewers know you are key.

Getting over the feelings and emotions of rejection, even when all of these steps are done, will not make them go away. There are, however, ways that I have fought back against those emotions which I believe can help those reading this. Self-affirmation that you have value and that you are a unique individual will get you through those feelings. If you can find something in the meantime, do what makes you feel fulfilled. An example is this writing, because it is an honest dialogue from me to you about something that does not get discussed enough. Find something like that, and just keep going.