

# Jane Allen

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## Staying Motivated

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After interviews that seemed promising (but turned out to be just more disappointments) and many resumes sent (without receiving any responses), a Vault career change message board poster asks, "How do I stay motivated in my job search?"

Retaining a positive outlook is both difficult and absolutely necessary. A "what's the use" attitude may keep you from sending a resume or the mood may leak out during an interview. If rejection has put you on a path of cynicism, despair and anger, you're going to find still more rejection. How would you like to interview someone who presents even a hint of defeat, depression or crankiness? Change your self-talk to, "I only need ONE job, and I can find it." Say it out loud and repeat it until you believe it.

Remove the word "failure" from your vocabulary. You haven't failed unless you're still on the floor. Pick yourself up and keep moving.

Find cheerleaders and ask for their help. A group of women in one city have formed a job search support group. They meet twice a month to cheer each other and offer feedback, resume advice and emotional support. The primary rule of the group is: no negative talk! What support group can you create? Don't be afraid (or embarrassed) to ask for help. Even *one* totally supportive friend could make a difference for you.

Be your own cheerleader. Betty has created - in her mind - a promotional video about her life and accomplishments. Prior to every interview, she replays that video and imagines herself being a superstar in her new job. The music for her video is the theme from "Rocky." Jackie, an actress, takes music with her to every audition. As she's waiting for her chance to shine, she has her headphones on, listening to music that energizes her. What visual/audio boosts can you create for yourself?

Get rid of negatives pounding on your brain. Each day, write them down to get them out of your system. Write (with pen, on paper) three pages about what is scaring you, making you angry, frustrating you, etc. If you can only write, "I'm mad as hell" over and over, that's OK. Just get started on it. When you are finished, tear the paper into little pieces and burn, trash or flush them.

You don't have control over other people or their decisions. You do have control over how you react to what happens. Remind yourself, "Let it go. I don't have any control over this one." It will take some practice, but remember that you have the choice to be stressed or not.

Do something physical each day to get rid of your anger and frustration. Work out, run, walk, sweep a sidewalk (the whole block? - your neighbors will love you), scream into a pillow, tear up a cardboard box while making "grrrr" sounds - whatever works.

If you are unemployed, staying motivated is even more challenging. Here are special tips for you:

- Establish a routine. Your full-time job is looking for work so set aside a certain number of hours each day for that and stick to it. Make a to-do list for each day. Don't fall into the black hole of playing computer games and watching daytime TV. Don't sit around in your jammies; get dressed and get out every day. Schedule some fun and relaxation time.
- Stop worrying about what other people think of you. Being out of work and low on money is not a definition of WHO you are. It's a description of what is happening to you right now. Don't be ashamed. You are not alone.
- Be honest with others about your situation. Don't pretend that you're OK if you don't feel OK. Do not say "fine" when people ask how you are. If you're not being real, you're isolating yourself from your support system. Ask for emotional support or any other help that family and friends can provide. Don't worry about whether other people can handle your telling them how bad things are. If they care about you, they really do want to know.