



“We Have Selected Another Candidate.”

Ouch! How to handle a rejection letter.

Rejection: thanks, but no thanks

“We wish you good luck with your job search...”

And with that, your stomach sinks and you:

- think of yourself as a total loser and vow to give up job searching all together;
- give the company a piece of your mind online;
- find comfort in a pint of Häagen-Dazs, then regroup, review, and renew your search efforts.

Here’s why “c” is the best answer.

Dejection: system crash

A rejection letter hurts. It taps into our psyche and creates a response similar to being jilted. The brain seems to bend in on itself, making reason and clarity of thought difficult. Some people retreat internally. Others lash out in anger, believing they *deserved* the position and that the company made a HUGE mistake by not picking them for the team.

Rule #1: No matter how mistreated you may feel, don’t vituperate online. You not only risk sounding like a sore loser, but, depending on who sees your vitriolic post, can undermine yourself professionally.

Rule #2: Tomorrow is another day.

Reflection: regain perspective

First, be glad you actually *received* a letter. Some organizations do not even notify applicants due to company policy or fear of litigious backlash. Hopeful candidates can find themselves being “ghosted,” meaning left waiting indefinitely in the dark with no formal response or closure, and frustrated.

Next, give yourself permission to grieve and nurture your bruised ego—but just for a short time. Then, move on. Realize that you are not alone and that rejection letters are part of the job search process. They are not a measure of your self-worth, so don’t take things personally or overanalyze what you think you *may* have done wrong. You may have done everything *right*; the interviewer simply preferred someone else. However, if you did encounter some bumps during the interview, work on those areas for next time.

Redirection: regroup and refocus

Ask for feedback: Take time to evaluate your options; don’t bank everything on one rejection. Put on your professional hat, put aside your pride and pain, and send a short, gracious thank-you letter to the company. Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration and politely request feedback. If provided, the information could help you improve your skills for your next interview or application. Don’t burn bridges. Inquire if you can stay in touch should the organization have a future opening. Remember, the fact that you were called in for an interview shows that they saw something in your credentials worth pursuing, if not for this time, then perhaps for the next.

Focus on your strengths: Multiple rejection letters can whittle away at your confidence. You’ll need to dig deep and be resilient. To rebuild your self-confidence or boost your self-esteem, focus on your strengths—you know, the same ones that got you an interview in the first place, and the ones that will eventually help get you the job.

Exercise/seek support: Working out helps relieve stress and releases endorphins. You’ll literally put your mind more at ease and relax. And seek support from family and friends. Job searches can be marathons, so take advantage of these rest stops.

In the end, if you know that you did your best, you should have no regrets. Job search outcomes are subject to many factors, some out of your control. Ultimately, it’s up to the recruiter to select the candidate whom *they* feel will be the best fit for their needs.



i n a nutshell:

A rejection letter is one lost battle in a larger campaign, and not a defeat:

- **Rejection letters are generally standardized replies and not a measure of your self-worth**
- **Don’t vent your anger online**
- **Don’t take it personally**
- **Avoid analysis paralysis; it will keep you from moving forward**
- **Don’t burn bridges**
- **Thank the recruiter and request constructive feedback**
- **Focus on your strengths, work on your weaknesses**
- **It’s about meeting the employer’s needs, not yours**

Soldier on. You can’t escape the pain of rejection, but you can grow from it.