



How to Handle Rejection

Rejection is hard. Rejection is also something we will all experience many times throughout our lives. Rejection can take many forms—perhaps that looks like being rejected in a relationship, for a job application, a sports team or club, or rejected from a social circle. When we've been rejected, our whole world can feel like it's collapsed. We can start to doubt our sense of self and our abilities, and our self-esteem and confidence can take a hit. It's not fun!

Living in a society that places a lot of importance on success, good grades, and external validation, we're not always taught how to deal with rejection in a healthy way. Especially when the world of social media often makes us feel like everyone's life is perfect and golden, while we're left feeling like there's something wrong with us.

Here are some tips for learning to overcome rejection:

- **Don't Let Rejection Impact Your Self-Worth:** One of the most important aspects of rejection is learning to separate what you've been rejected from and defining this from your own self-worth. Not getting a job or internship, being in a relationship that doesn't work out, not getting on the soccer team or school play can feel terrible, unfair and difficult, but it's not a reflection on who you are as a person and shouldn't determine how you value yourself. Sometimes there's something we could have done better - maybe tried harder on that application or practiced more for the audition or try-out. This is a great opportunity to learn and grow. But most of the time, rejection has very little to do with us personally. There can be a thousand reasons why something didn't work out that have absolutely nothing to do with us.

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- **Allow Yourself Time to Process Difficult Emotions:** Rejection can lead to feeling excluded and disapproved of. When we really want something to work out, and it doesn't, there can also be a deep sense of loss and disappointment. It's important to let yourself fully feel and process these difficult emotions, rather than trying to ignore them or numb them out. Be kind to yourself and take time to tend to your needs. Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself and remind you of all your strengths.
- **Grow Then Let Go:** When we experience rejection, it's common to want to protect ourselves from more rejection. It feels terrible, and we don't want more of it! When we let the fear of rejection take over and control our behaviour, we block opportunities for experiencing and receiving good things too. Learn what you can from the rejection, and then let it go. Remember it's not a reflection on your worth as a person. We all experience rejection throughout our lives, and more opportunities will come your way.
- **Avoid "All-Or-Nothing" Thinking:** Learning to cope with rejection in a healthy way takes practice. We can develop better resiliency in dealing with rejection by learning from the experience, remembering all our strengths, developing a sense of humor, and seeing rejection as a necessary step to achieving our goals. Sometimes when we experience rejection, we can get into a pattern of "all-or-nothing thinking." If we don't get that scholarship, we start thinking, we're not smart enough to get into any college. If we don't make the team, we feel like absolutely everything about ourselves isn't good enough and we will never succeed at anything again. Challenge this thinking and remind yourself that this is only one experience and opportunity out of so many others. The most successful people have failed, been excluded, and faced rejection hundreds of times.

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Rejection is never fun, and it's natural to want to protect ourselves from the negative feelings it brings up. Let yourself express and process the sense of loss and disappointment in not getting what you wanted or feeling excluded. Learn what you can from the experience, but remember that it has nothing to do with your worth as a person. We all get rejected, and we will all get rejected again as it is a part of life! Learning to separate your self-worth and confidence from your external achievements and successes is so important for fostering good mental health. And with that knowledge, keep putting yourself out there and be open to new opportunities.