

# Everything I Wanted to Know About Job-Hunting I Learned While Dating

David Kaiser, Ph.D.

You may think that job-hunting is a rational process, in which the human resources department and the hiring manager review your abilities and experience and compare them to the job requirements and a simple, straightforward decision is made. After all, business is meant to be, you know, "business," all about numbers and facts and there's "no crying in baseball." If you get the job, that means that you were the best candidate and if you didn't get it, then you were not. Nothing could be further from the truth. Job-hunting is more like dating, where both parties are evaluating the other's attractiveness and compatibility, and the decisions are often emotional and unconscious.

"No way, that's ridiculous," you say. Consider the following statement, one which I hear fairly regularly in my capacity as a Business Coach who works with job-seekers:

*"I just lost my job and I need another one ASAP. I don't really care what it is, as long as I'm making money. Are you hiring? Do you know anyone who is?"*

Doesn't sound that unreasonable, does it? Let's tweak the words a bit, now imagine a man saying this to a woman:

*"My girlfriend just dumped me and I need another one ASAP. I don't really care what she's like, as long as she's pretty. Are you interested? Maybe one of your friends?"*

Think about this for a minute. Is this guy going to get a date? No. It doesn't matter if he has a good job, fast car, six-pack abs, whatever, with this kind of attitude, the only woman who will date him is equally desperate, or worse, willing to take advantage of his desperation. So, how does our hapless job-seeker go about finding the right 9-5 relationship? We're glad you asked.

First, you need to convince the decision-makers they are special. Imagine a girl walking up to each guy at a bar, one after the other, asking "buy me a drink?" Would her would-be suitors feel special? Not so much, and the smart ones would turn her away without buying her a Cosmopolitan. This is what it's like when you tell everybody you know, including potential hiring managers, that you want a job, any job, but you need it RIGHT NOW. It is a serious turn-off. Better to first think about what you really want in a job and focus on that. What industry do you like? What kind of company? Big? Small? Start-up? What will your new job be like? What are your co-workers like? Then, find companies that match that description and pursue those. Your interest and commitment and passion will come through, because it is genuine, and this is attractive, AND you will allay any concerns about being overqualified or about switching careers or industries, because you have convinced them that they are special.

Next, treat informational and preliminary interviews like first dates: don't make THE ASK too soon. Why not? Well, what do you think, will talking about marriage and what to name the kids on the first date freak the other person out? Of course, that's creepy. You don't start a first romantic dinner by asking if the other person is interested in sex, right? That would be making THE ASK too soon. What do you do

instead? Like a date, have fun. Take your time, build comfort and rapport, and ask a lot of questions (and listen to the answers, naturally...). Most importantly, be honest and be yourself, while still putting your best foot forward. Why lie or exaggerate? They will find out what you are like after you are hired, and if it is a bad fit, you both suffer. You want to figure out if this opportunity is a good match for your interests and ambitions, and if not...CHECK PLEASE!! Think about it, getting a job is like getting married, it's important to find a good match, otherwise you are stuck in a bad situation that is hard to get out of.

Are we having fun? Here is another thought: interviews and salary negotiations are a form of seduction, take it slow and stay in control. Enjoy the process and don't rush to the finale. Let them do some of the chasing! Ask about next steps, but then wait for them to name it. Tell them you need to discuss the offer with your spouse or lawyer, or both. Reschedule a call because you have "another commitment," ideally an interview with another company (to make them jealous, of course). Have a Plan B or, better yet, multiple offers, so that you are confident walking away. Paradoxically, this will make them want to chase you. Why? Well, if you are willing to walk away, they have to sweeten the terms, and if there are competing offers, this demonstrates value and creates urgency. Bottom line: the more comfortable you are with saying or hearing NO, the more likely you will get YES on the terms you like, and the sweeter it will be when you consummate the deal.

Lastly, confidence sells, and desperation repels. The guy dating the supermodel may not look like Brad Pitt, and he may not have Bill Gates' bank account, but he almost surely has unshakeable confidence in himself. Becoming confident is a topic unto itself. In fact, I have created an eWorkbook, entitled 60 Days to Greater Self-Confidence, that breaks this challenge down into practical components. Nonetheless, as a general guideline, I recommend 1> keeping track of achievements and victories and reviewing them when you want to feel confident; 2> routinely stepping out of your comfort zone; 3> finding positive mantras or affirmations you repeat to yourself; and 4> cultivating the friendship of supportive, positive people. As to desperation, if you find yourself experiencing it, take stock of your situation and do what you can to allay your fears. If you are worried about money, for example, you can reduce your expenses, take contract work, negotiate a payment plan with creditors, etc, so that your situation is more stable. By reducing the fear and desperation, this increases the chance you will get the job you need, and making it less likely that your fears come to pass. So do what you have to do to feel good about yourself and your situation, it will pay off.

In conclusion, job-seeking, like dating, is very much a non-rational exercise in attraction and compatibility, and like dating, it can be a lot of fun if you approach with the right frame of mind.

**David Kaiser, Ph.D.**

I work with entrepreneurs and job-seekers to define and realize ambitious and exciting goals. My mission as a coach is to evoke excellence in my clients.

To learn how I can help you create an amazing life and career, please review my website, [www.BigAndBoldCoaching.com](http://www.BigAndBoldCoaching.com), where you can request a complimentary strategy session.

Subscribe to my newsletter to get a free Special Report – *Living Larger by Healing Shame*