

# MINDFULNESS, MINDSET,



# MOXIE, and MOJO

JOB-SEEKER SUCCESS


MICHAEL R. FRAZIER

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**Talent Capital Solutions**

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to those who will try and to those who have tried and failed.

Never give up on your dreams. Enthusiastically pursue your purpose.

You are talented enough to achieve greatness in whatever capacity you're seeking.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This initiative would not have been possible without my team at Peak Talent Capital Solutions. Creative action is allowed only through the gift of time for mindful contemplation. Being surrounded by such an awesome team of highly capable professionals is truly a blessing.

I also wish to thank artist Emma Terry for translating my ideas into works of art; a picture is worth a thousand words.

## INTRODUCTION

If you're currently looking, or have ever had to look for a job, you know it can be a mix of frustration and negativity. Uploading countless resumes, getting bounced by robo-rejection emails, or that 50th "we hired someone else" of the week.

Looking for a job, according to psychologists, is in the top 5 of life's most stressful events, and yet decision makers wonder why people aren't doing cartwheels in their lobby while they wait nervously to be interviewed.

Even the most tranquil and centered among us can become frazzled by a job search. The stratospheric highs of an encouraging interview to the stupefying lows of a series of rejections can tear at a person's determination.

As "NO" reverberates in our skulls, doubt and negativity can seep into our psyches.

There must be something that can help us stay focused, resilient, enthusiastic, grounded, avoid rejection fatigue, and be identified as the candidate of choice by those fickle hiring managers. I believe there is.

In the following pages, you'll learn about the 4 M's; **mindfulness**, **mindset**, **moxie**, and **mojo**. When combined, these four pillars of success will prepare you to become the architect of - rather than a mere participant in - your job search and career.

This guide is all about you reaching your full potential. Success isn't something owed, and it's certainly not guaranteed. Rather it requires discipline, concentration, patience, action, and the overcoming of ego.

Success isn't a feeling, or a destination... it's a journey.

Let's take our first step.

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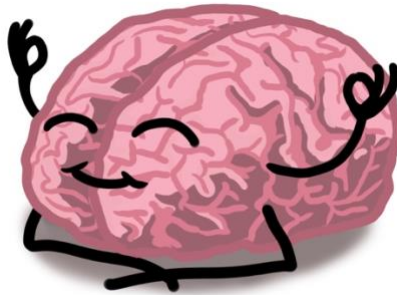
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## MINDFULNESS: THE DISCIPLINE OF BEING FULLY PRESENT

Have you ever left for a destination and arrived, only to realize you remembered absolutely nothing about the trip? Or have you ever had to re-read a chapter of a book because you couldn't remember what you just read? Most of us can relate.

These are common examples of 'mindlessness,' the exact opposite of our goal. It is a state we often refer to as being 'miles away' or 'autopilot.' In our "always on" digital age our brains are bombarded with constant information and disruption, and as a result many of us are greatly detached and feeling overwhelmed, stressed or exhausted. Fortunately, there is a scientifically-supported way to manage information overload and remain more focused – especially during the most critical phases of the job search.



Being fully present, or *mindful*, means having your attention, your thoughts, and your focus all fixed on the present moment. If you are speaking to somebody, your attention is focused on him or her and what he or she is

saying, and if you are performing a task, then you are entirely focused on the task at hand.

In recent years, mindfulness has become increasingly popular, and with very good reason; there is a growing body of research indicating that mindfulness provides many physical, psychological, and even performance-enhancing benefits. In fact, the benefits have been so dramatic that many organizations have started offering mindfulness programs to their employees. The U.S. Army and companies such as Aetna, Apple, General Mills, Yahoo, Starbucks, the NFL and Google use it to their benefit, with Google going so far to offer their employees a 19-hour course on the subject, which is so popular that thousands of “Googlers” take it each year.

Beyond the benefits of increased attention, mindfulness is also about focusing one's awareness on the present moment and doing so without judgment<sup>1</sup>. By being mindful, you can let go of preconceived notions, worries, or anxiety by focusing on the things around you or a specific task at hand. For instance, stop reading this for just a moment, take a deep breath and focus on where you are, what you see, what you hear, what you may smell, and what you feel. Simply pause and reflect.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-judgment is stressed in mindfulness because if left alone, our brain tends to automatically judge things as good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair, urgent or non-urgent and so on. Mindfulness-based approaches encourage the acceptance and non-judgment of our experiences, allowing us to be more aware and encouraging fresh perspectives.

Congratulations, you just aced your first mindfulness exercise!

There are plenty of things you *could* stress about while looking for a new job. You could stress about creating the perfect resume or preparing for that big interview. But mindfulness can be used as a tool to stay focused on a on your job search without getting *overwhelmed* or *stressed out*.

Mindfulness has been found to be instrumental in cultivating the right mindset, building resilience, and driving personal progress. It has been scientifically tested and shown to be a key element in the overall contentment and long-term happiness of individuals who practice it.

Job-seekers can utilize mindfulness in their job search to:

**Cultivate greater awareness** - Mindfulness has been proven to heighten our awareness, which allows us to be responsive instead of emotionally reactive and is a powerful method to help quiet constant brain babble and defeat automatic negative thoughts or “A.N.T.s” (more on those later.) Focusing on the present moment - not worrying about what may or may not happen tomorrow, or dwelling on yesterday’s so-so interview - enables us to gain clarity and make better decisions.

**Clarify and set intentions** – To stay mindful in your job search, you must focus on clarifying and properly setting intentions. When you become clear on what you’d like to achieve, you can better make those decisions that help you

set your goals into motion. You should set intentions that challenge you, but also help you focus on your search.

**Control internal and external judgments** – As humans, our brains tend to make instant judgments of people and scenarios. Using mindfulness, you can avoid making snap judgments about employers or job postings, and take time to research organizations and how you may fit into the role and their unique culture<sup>2</sup>.



Your brain also likes to make internal judgments, so I'd like to pause here and suggest that you avoid being hard on yourself as you search for a job. It's rare that someone possesses every qualification stated in a job description; most job descriptions tend to be more of a "Christmas wish list" than a true indicator of daily activities or even actual work to be performed. Be willing to present yourself based on what hard skills you do have and the strengths you

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<sup>2</sup> Company culture is one of the top five most important factors job-seekers consider before accepting a new job, according to a Glassdoor survey. Reading Google reviews (avoid placing too much emphasis on those that are anonymous or seem like personal attacks), interviewing current or past employees with recent, objective and unbiased knowledge of the organization, asking your potential employer for a partial day in the role or a "working interview", and attending a group meeting or brainstorming session for observation are all great ways to get a better understanding of an organization's internal culture.

possess that will help drive the desired business outcome. Remember, most hard skills can be learned or developed.

**Become more decisive** - Remember that you're never going to have *all* the information and for many job-seekers making a quick decision can seem too risky, as their minds are telling them to back away. Because of indecisiveness some can develop *analysis paralysis*, which is "the state of over-analyzing (or over-thinking) a situation so that a decision or action is never taken, in effect paralyzing the outcome."

In a job search quick decisions can sometimes be necessary, and you can use mindfulness to let go of the fear and make swift resolutions. Your future employer may just be one firm decision away!

**Handle rejection** - Learning to handle rejection is one of the most important skills you can develop in your job search, as it can become very difficult to stay motivated when you receive rejection after rejection. By using mindfulness, you let go of the self-judgment and fears trying to deflate you. Focus on what strides you have made and how you're improving on your job search with each interaction.

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*Fear keeps pace with hope...both belong to a mind in suspense, to a mind in a state of anxiety through looking into the future. Both are mainly due to projecting our thoughts far ahead of us instead of adapting ourselves to the present. -Seneca*

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Mindfulness is the first and most important piece in the job-seeking and career success strategy we'll build together. Let's give it another spin.

## A Quick and Simple Mindfulness Exercise:

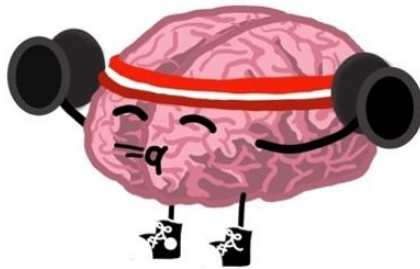
*One mindful breath is enough for us to suddenly notice the bright blue sky, the cool fresh air, the sound of the wind in the pine trees, or the music of the running river. -Thich Nhat Hanh*

Start with one single breath.

At any time during the day, pause and take a moment to focus on one breath.

Breathe in and breathe out.

Focus your attention on the process, where you notice the air moving, how your chest and abdomen move.



You're not looking for a revelation from this one simple exercise; think of it more like a little mental push-up for your mind.

That's it, or if you want to extend it to a few more breaths, that's wonderful.

This is your first real step into mindfulness and its benefits.

I've included a section on how to mindfully start your day near the end of this guide, and you can find more mindfulness resources on the Individual Empowerment page I've created for you at [workplusbrain.com](http://workplusbrain.com).

## MINDFULNESS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Any length of unemployment can seriously diminish an individual's sense of self-worth and well-being. Even worse, gaps in employment history or being currently unemployed may be seen by some hiring authorities as a "red flag," and used to disqualify an otherwise worthy and qualified candidate.

In April 2017, 1.6 million unemployed Americans had been out of work for six months or longer, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and nearly a million had been jobless for over a year.

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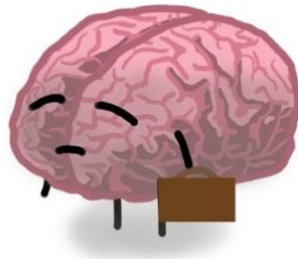
***Research studies have shown that job loss can take a psychological and biological toll as well, leading to depression, anxiety disorders, increased somatic symptoms, such as fatigue or headaches, and higher rates of medical illness. This toll may be worse for men, who are socialized to evaluate their self-worth in terms of their financial and career success. Suicide attempts also rise with unemployment. -Melanie Greenberg, Ph. D., Psychology Today***

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It's truly hard to comprehend that in an economy basically starved of right-fit talent, so many will still experience unnecessary stretches of long-term unemployment.

Reasons for unemployment are often attributed to economic factors, but psychological factors associated with employability also contribute to the problem, as unemployment can weaken our resolve and paralyze our efforts as we struggle to maintain the ideal state of mind necessary for a productive and successful job search.

Being out of work can hurt more than your wallet; unemployment can stir up your ego. Your ego likes for you to be on a false ledge. It prefers you in a state of mild (sometimes debilitating) fear.



Fearing you won't or can't get a job. In simple terms, the negative ego is that part in you that makes you feel bad. You're unworthy. You'll sound dumb. Look silly. Won't impress. "Who'd hire me now?"

Then there's financial insecurity, which has a tremendously negative effect on your peace of mind, creates stress and can even greatly hinder your personal relationships.

It's also quite common that when individuals do get reemployed, they often must accept jobs with lower salaries and less opportunities for advancement. More stress.

We can invest in ourselves to avoid the effects of prolonged unemployment or extended periods of job seeking. Instead of becoming anxious, depressed, irritable, or allowing our



situation to have a negative effect on our sense of self-worth, we will work to calm our mind and focus on building a mindset that is resilient and enthusiastic to produce our desired results.

Studies have examined the effects of mindfulness-based programs on the unemployed<sup>3</sup>, and the results were very positive. Mindfulness helped them reduce their symptoms of stress and increase their focus on everyday activities. Participants were also more confident in their ability to find employment, increasing their **employability**.

## A MODERN DEFINITION OF EMPLOYABILITY

### **What is *employability*?**

Employability has been defined as 1) "the capability of getting and keeping satisfactory work". 2) A set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and to be successful in their chosen occupations<sup>4</sup>."

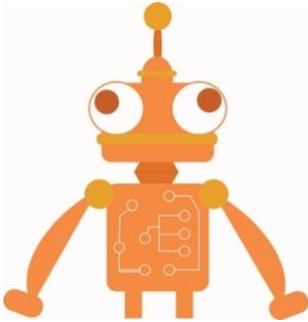
But, we're here to shake things up a bit, so I believe an expanded definition of employability is required; one that encompasses a more holistic and whole-person perspective. With the continued advancement of technology, the prospects for "satisfactory work" will be

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<sup>3</sup> Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction course on stress, mindfulness, job self-efficacy and motivation among unemployed people. Audrey de Jong, Mark Hommes, André Brouwers, Welko Tomic. July 25, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Employability Skill Development Lab - Sandip Foundation

shifting dramatically over the next few decades. You've got to be prepared to meet these looming occupational challenges head-on and with the *right attitude and mindset*.



Increasingly, organizations are seeking out those who can *work well with others*, not just *work*. Employees with the ability to contribute within a team concept, build great client relationships with empathy and enthusiasm, and most

importantly, manage themselves above all else, is at the top of every HR manager's wish list.

Therefore, employability is increasingly being measured beyond certificates, degrees, diplomas, hard skills and even most soft skills. Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured, such as typing, writing, reading, having experience in a specific industry sector, and the ability to use software programs.

I've interviewed thousands of candidates over a three-decade career. It's not uncommon to meet job-seekers who have obtained the same degrees from comparable universities, with education and hard skills matching almost identically on paper. Yet, one candidate will be more *employable* than the other. How can that be?

**Emotional Intelligence and Mindset.** Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, is the ability to understand other people

and what motivates them to cooperate with others. I've found that candidates who show high EQs tend to exhibit a growth mindset, meaning they believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.

My experience and career surveys have shown that both EQ and mindset dramatically affect employability. People with high EQs tend to be more successful in their job searches. Without EQ driving the right kind of mindset, it is possible that individuals will not realize their full potential.

**Consider the following facts from CareerBuilder:**

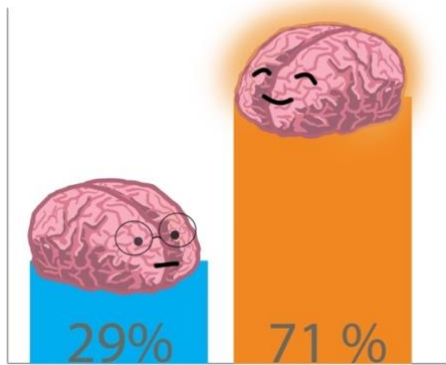
**71%** of employers say they value emotional intelligence (EQ) over IQ.

More than **1/3** of employers are placing greater emphasis on hiring and promoting people with emotional intelligence, and

**59%** of employers would not hire someone who has a high IQ but low EQ<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Online survey within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,662 U.S. hiring managers.



But isn't a person's IQ more important and mindset just another "soft skill?" Not quite.

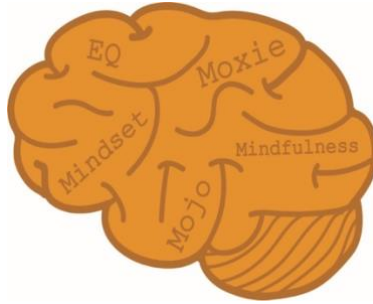
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***Technical competency and intelligence are important assets for every worker, but when it's down to you and another candidate for a promotion or a new job, dynamic interpersonal skills will set you apart. In a recovering economy, employers want people who can effectively make decisions in stressful situations and can empathize with the needs of their colleagues and clients to deliver the best results. -Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder***

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## **EQ IS THE BACKBONE OF YOUR SUCCESS STRATEGY**

Multiple studies have identified the one dynamic that employers see as a true necessity in their next hire - they seek talent with a desire to make a positive difference inside their organization; those who possess a higher sense of self and responsibility. *They overwhelmingly value Emotional Intelligence (EQ) over IQ and skill.*



A study published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior in November 2014 showed individuals who displayed emotional intelligence—the ability to discern other people’s emotions—**were more likely to bring home a bigger paycheck** than their colleagues who lacked Emotional Intelligence<sup>6</sup>, and Travis Bradberry, the author of Emotional Intelligence 2.0, has added this nugget which *always* perks up ears:

*“People with a high degree of emotional intelligence make more money — an average of \$29,000 more per year than people with a low degree of emotional intelligence. The link between emotional intelligence and earnings is so direct that every point increase in emotional intelligence adds \$1,300 to an annual salary.”*

That’s huge.

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<sup>6</sup> Rode, J. C., Arthaud-Day, M., Ramaswami, A., & Howes, S. (2017). A time-lagged study of emotional intelligence and salary. Journal of Vocational Behavior.

It was in the early 1900's that people began searching for an early predictor of success, and they settled on Intelligence Quotient or **IQ**; a score derived from standardized tests designed to assess human intelligence. But it quickly became clear that while IQ was important, there were other human elements that were perhaps even more relevant to individual performance and outcome. Studies have concluded that there is a small correlation between IQ and career success, with both career success and employability depending on individuals behaving in socially desirable ways, especially when interacting with recruiters, employers, and managers<sup>7</sup>. Now, decades of research point to emotional intelligence as the critical factor that sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack.

And here's the good news: unlike IQ - which is likely static and unchangeable no matter how much one wishes to improve it - emotional intelligence can be enhanced.

Psychologists John Mayer, Ph.D. of the University of New Hampshire and Peter Salovey, Ph.D. of Yale University coined the term emotional intelligence in an academic paper which was published in 1989. Emotional Intelligence is defined by Mayer and Salovey as follows:

*Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to*

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<sup>7</sup> Employability and Career Success: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Reality. Robert Hogan. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. Robert B. Kaiser.

*understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.*

I've read various, elaborate definitions for what makes up the concept of emotional intelligence, but I think Dennis Coon summed it up rather nicely in his book, *Psychology: A Modular Approach to Mind and Behavior*;

*“Emotional intelligence is the ability to consciously make your emotions work for you in a wide variety of life circumstances.”*

Throughout my career, I've met too many unhappy and unfulfilled people with a degree they'd never been able to put to great use and leaders who couldn't write a coherent business letter or email. I've also interviewed those who admittedly scored very high on IQ tests, and could paper a wall in certificates and degrees, yet couldn't keep a job due to poor personal qualities such as a lack of empathy, self-control, and skill in getting along with others, or as I've heard it stated, *the ability to play nice in the sandbox.*

Emotional Intelligence is the backboard for the mindfulness, mindset, moxie and mojo success puzzle we're building. You can increase your emotional intelligence by learning new behaviors that will allow you to act more appropriately, as well as feel less emotional stress when faced with challenging situations. *Our emotions should work for us, rather than against us.*

*In job seeking and your career, having emotional intelligence is essential for success. After all, who is more likely to succeed – a dejected individual who gives up after one bad interview experience and blasts the organization in an online rant, or an individual who stays in control, calmly assessing the situation, learning from the experience, and responding with control, gratitude and understanding?*



The American psychologist [Daniel Goleman](#), who helped to popularize the understanding of emotional intelligence, states there are five key elements to it:

**Self-awareness** gives you the ability to understand your own strengths and weaknesses. **Self-regulation** allows you to think your actions through before committing to them. **Motivation** is what drives you for either the right or the wrong reasons. **Empathy** allows you to navigate the needs of others, whether those others are on your team or customers of the business you work for. **Social skills** make it easier for others to work with you.

Understanding the significance of emotional intelligence is especially important for those who are job searching. Being able to display any of the five skills mentioned above in an interview and communication about the opportunity is sure to give you an advantage over other candidates. Always pay close attention to the way in which you display your



emotional intelligence in an interview or professional setting.

## HOW TO SHARPEN YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS

HONING THESE SKILLS AND ENGAGING THOSE AROUND YOU WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WILL HELP YOU BUILD STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE THAT MATTER: FAMILY, FRIENDS, COWORKERS, AND ESPECIALLY YOUR POTENTIAL EMPLOYER.

1. Practice **self-awareness**, which allows you to understand your strengths and weaknesses, and so you can give credit to those who contribute.
2. Take time to examine what motivates you and be sure you are motivated by a higher goal, purpose, or something you truly care about.
3. When you make mistakes, pause to examine what went wrong so you won't duplicate the mistake.
4. Pause and think before making decisions. This will help you avoid making future poor decisions when confronted with a similar situation.
5. Instead of listening to respond, listen to understand. Everyone wants to be heard and deserves that respect.
6. Watch your vibes, as they can affect all those around you. Ensure you're always projecting your best, mindful, and authentic self.



7. Practice empathy whenever you feel you may be entering a disagreement, or when providing service. Try to put yourself in the “other person’s shoes”; we should always try to see things from another’s point of view and without our own judgment attached.

## SELF AWARENESS AND YOUR JOB SEARCH

Self-awareness is the conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires. In our job search, the basic goal of self-awareness is to gain a better understanding of who we truly are, so we can make confident decisions which support our career goals, purpose or calling.

According to Daniel Goleman, self-awareness is the key to emotional intelligence. It’s also true that self-awareness is the cornerstone of effective career management, as research shows that individuals who are self-aware make more consistent career choices, perform better, experience longevity in their employment, and obtain more satisfaction from their work.

Directly contributing to both emotional intelligence and success, self-awareness helps you stay motivated, achieve your goals, and can help you understand your occupational fit beyond skills and interests by examining your emotions, moods and impulses and the effect they can have on others.

A better understanding of your communication style, personality type, work culture preferences, strengths and

weaknesses will be critical as you create your search strategies and target your employers of choice. Let's start by seeing if you can *objectively* answer some key self-awareness questions below:

What motivates or inspires you?

What are your weaknesses?

How do you manage conflict?

Can you handle constructive criticism?

What derails you?

How do you respond to authority?

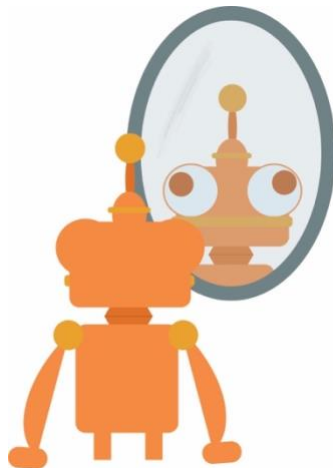
What triggers your stress, and how do you cope with these stresses?

Are you easily unsettled?

Do you relate well to others?

What is your communication style?

What did you learn? How well do you know yourself? Do you have work to do? Remember, we're all continuous works in progress, so don't beat yourself up if you need to make some improvements. Achieving self-awareness is a continuous self-improvement effort.



I would like for you to think about your answers and refine them before heading to an interview, as it will be the perfect opportunity to share your self-awareness and encourage the interviewer to perceive you as the ideal candidate. Self-awareness will allow you to communicate your competitive advantage over others and position yourself as a candidate of choice.

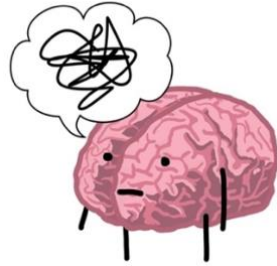
Here are a few tips to keep your self-awareness mojo rolling:

**Take a moment to reflect at the end of each day.** Think about what has gone well and not so well, and the possible reasons for those outcomes, says Dr. Dianne Gardner, Psychology lecturer at Massey University. Apply those learnings to your job search or on your next interview. Apply learnings consistently to ensure you are in a mode of continuous improvement.

**Reach out and seek feedback from others.** Instead of relying solely on your own opinions, ask those who have worked alongside you in a team setting (on the job, volunteering or a school project) to provide feedback, because they may spot potential problems before you or your next boss would notice.

## A SHORT PERSONAL STORY

In the process of writing this guide, I was confronted with circumstances in my business that could have produced negative emotions for me - at a time when I was most busy and needed to be productive. I lost key personnel in the middle of a high-growth period.



By pausing and paying mindful attention to my emotional state, I decided that being productive at that moment wasn't possible, as my business was a bit chaotic... and I was rattled. I knew that if I pushed, the quality of my work output would most definitely suffer.

I made the decision to back away from this project and focus on improving the business situation. Through mindful reflection I regained my enthusiasm and ambition to return to and complete what you are now reading. It was difficult, but without the necessary break in action I would have become overwhelmed and quite possibly may have shelved this project altogether.

Don't hesitate to take a moment to mindfully reflect when you notice your emotions creating anxiety in your life or work.

## SOFT SKILLS AREN'T SO SOFT AFTER ALL

Most resumes and subsequent job interviews focus on the work to be performed, or the hard skills required. It's often said that hard skills will get you the interview, but you need soft skills to get -- and keep -- the job. Your work ethic, attitude, communication skills, mindset, emotional intelligence and the personal strengths you hone and maintain, will be critical for career and life success.

One of the harsh realities of our modern economy is *jobs that can be automated will soon become automated*; innovation and technical advances are changing the fundamental nature, and future of work. Occupations which don't require critical thinking, communication, and collaboration abilities have been (or soon will be) turned over to robotics and artificial intelligence. Understanding these shifts and maximizing your abilities beyond basic hard skills will become critical for your success.



Hard skills are measurable. You either know how to drive a forklift, perform data entry, operate a machine, or you

don't. Hard skills are often listed on your resume and are easy for an employer or recruiter to recognize.

Soft skills, on the other hand, are individual and instinctive skills that are much harder to determine. Soft skills are sometimes referred to as "people skills" and relate to the way you interact with other people.

Increasingly, employers are seeking candidates who possess greater soft skills than hard skills because, while it is easy for an employer to train a new employee in a hard skill (such as how to drive a forklift or use a software program), it is much more difficult to train an employee in a soft skill (such as teamwork).

In a recent Fast Company article, author Stephanie Vozza wrote, "While education, degrees, and certification are important for scoring an interview, a new study by the HR software provider iCIMS finds that recruiters place a higher value on soft skills. From an ability to communicate well to being organized, these intangible qualities can be tough to measure, but they affect everything from productivity to collaboration."

Key findings from the study include the identification of the top soft skills and personality traits recruiting professionals value most in a job candidate:

The top three most valued soft skills are

- **problem-solving** (62 percent),
- **adaptability** (49 percent) and

- **time management** (48 percent)

The top three most valued personality traits are

- **professionalism** (71 percent),
- **drive** (50 percent) and
- **enthusiasm** (49 percent)

The report goes on to add that the business areas where soft skills are more important than hard skills include

- **customer service** (67 percent),
- **human resources** (67 percent) and
- **sales/marketing** (53 percent).

While hard and soft skills identification will certainly remain relevant gauges for hiring, there's a far deeper issue affecting employers that traditional recruiting methods can easily address: an ever-decreasing talent pool where the right combination of skills, attitude, and culture fit are difficult to find in one person.

Until recently, the dominant belief among HR professionals and recruiters was that candidates and employees either had what it took, or they didn't; that skills, intelligence, and abilities were static and could not be significantly developed. They could be sharpened, perhaps, but not truly developed.

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***Action may not bring happiness but there is no happiness without action. -William James***

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Research is showing that the fixed, antiquated employer attitude towards hiring needs to be left behind. More progressive employers are rapidly reaping the rewards of acquiring (and advancing) those who possess a growth mindset. In most cases, company fit is more important than a perfect skill match, and nothing drives that fit more than individual mindset.

By practicing mindfulness, we can readily develop the soft skills most coveted by today's best employers.

### SPOTLIGHT ON SOFT SKILLS: ADAPTABILITY

As employers continue to shift from singular job roles to job rotation and flexible job descriptions, **adaptability** will also continue to rise as a much sought-after soft skill. For good reason, flexibility/adaptability is identified as one of the most desirable candidate traits employers seek, as it is the quality of being able to adjust and respond to new conditions.

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*According to Darwin's Origin of Species, it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself. -Leon C. Megginson*

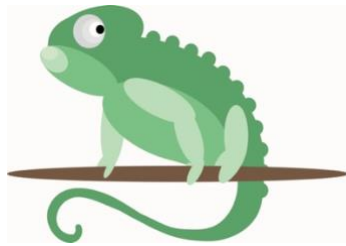
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Generally, those with a high Adaptability Quotient (AQ) also possess one of the principle underpinnings of a growth mindset, which is the ability to view challenges as opportunities; this enhances their employability factor

through continual learning and improvement. In fact, **91%** of HR directors believe people will be increasingly recruited on their ability to deal with change and uncertainty<sup>8</sup>.

By being adaptable, you can not only survive but thrive as you enhance your ability to respond intelligently and mindfully to the inevitable changes of life and work. There will be many aspects of a job that you may have to adapt to during your career and these may include new roles or responsibilities, changing customer needs, workplace demands, market changes or technological trends.

The worst time to try to adapt to change is when we're confronted with an immediate need for change. Paying mindful attention to the dynamics surrounding your job can help you become a better forecaster and allow you to become proactive to the shifting winds of business that can



affect your career. With mindful clarity you can meet challenges head on with a focused plan of action rather than a mindless, reactive response.

Adaptability will also allow you to boost your talent value, as every workplace needs those who can **keep calm and persist when faced with difficulties, mindfully accept new challenges, deal with changing priorities/workloads, keep**

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<sup>8</sup> The Flux Report, Building a resilient workforce in the face of flux. January 2014 by Right Management.

**an open mind, be less judgmental of others and willingly accept new perspectives.**

## IMPROVING YOUR ADAPTABILITY

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*Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in. -Isaac Asimov*

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To face the demands and complexity of the changing world of work, you will need to turn inflexibility into adaptability, as employers actively seek out candidates who can adapt to changing work environments, embrace new ideas, contribute creatively, are resourceful and receptive.

There are some people who just thrive on change and the unexpected. They enjoy variation to their routines and are naturally adaptable. However, if you are a 'stick to the plan!' type of person, preferring plans or routine to change and not too happy when the unforeseen happens, then you probably aren't inherently adaptable. Your organized, structured mindset is valuable— but it does make you less likely to be naturally flexible, and less likely to respond positively to that which interrupts those plans and lists.

Since how you frame any issue through your mind's eye is what determines your reaction, reframing how you see the issue will give you a far better shot at a successful outcome. Instead of seeing the challenge as a possibility for failure or as a threat to your happiness, reframe it as an opportunity to learn more about your capabilities and strengths - the

very capabilities and strengths you'll call on as you move forward with your job search and along your career path.

To turn inflexibility into adaptability, first start with working to become non-judgmental or more open-minded. Focus on listening to others more, try new approaches, fight the urge to react negatively when you hear differing opinions, and if something isn't working out the way you expect it to, pause and be open to the new experience, rather than judging it immediately with your own personal bias. Lose the inflexibility, or the rigidity of "It's my way or the highway" or "this is the way I've always done it!"

Possessing a great deal of tolerance, meaning you're open to accepting opinions and customs different from your own and practicing empathy, or acknowledging someone else's feelings, putting yourself 'in their shoes', allows you to interact with individuals at a much more positive and productive level.

If you're open to solving new challenges even when they are difficult and are willing and able to adapt your behavior in the process, you will increase your employability factor and enhance your experiences – on and off the clock.

A successful job search requires a whole new way of looking at the process and acting intelligently within it. As you shift your mindset, amazing things will begin to happen.

**MINDSET MATTERS**

Mindset.com defines mindset as “a collection of beliefs and thoughts that make up the mental attitude, inclination, habit, or disposition that predetermines a person’s interpretations and responses to events, circumstances and situations.”

Simply stated: Your mindset is *your* way of thinking, *your* disposition, or *your* frame of mind. Your mindset shapes your attitude, thoughts, perceptions, how you respond to setbacks and drives your ability to achieve transformational results. Mindfulness and a growth mindset are deeply connected and considered by many experts to play a major role in our contentment, success, and overall happiness.

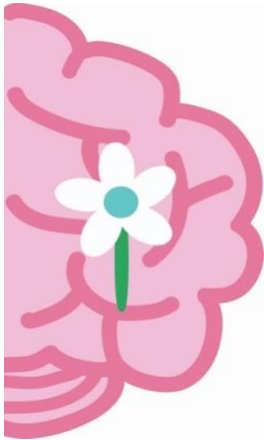
Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, formulated a truly groundbreaking idea: our mindset has a direct effect on our *individual success*.

Dweck describes in her book, *Mindset: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*, two vastly different mindsets: **A Fixed Mindset and a Growth Mindset**, and why it's not just our abilities and talent that bring us success-but which mindset we choose in our approach. In a nutshell, one mindset allows you to unleash your potential - **GROWTH**.

## A GROWTH MINDSET VS. A FIXED-MINDSET

From [mindsetonline.com](http://mindsetonline.com):

*“In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They’re wrong.”*



*“In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.”*

Note: Dweck cautions that having a fixed or growth mindset is not an either/or thing. People, she notes, are a mixture of fixed and growth mindsets. In addition, people can move from one extreme to another, depending on where they are in life. The person who becomes a CEO at the age of 45, for example, can suddenly believe he has all the answers—and

moves from a predominantly growth mindset to a fixed mindset<sup>9</sup>.

## DEVELOPING YOUR GROWTH MINDSET

Dr. Dweck explains that those who possess a growth mindset attribute their success to continual learning and



believe their talents and abilities can be improved and developed through their own effort and direct action. The growth mindset encourages and builds resilience while the fixed mindset does not. A Growth Mindset can serve as a protective barrier against psychological problems, such as unemployment induced stress, depression, burnout, and job disengagement.

Let's take a look at seven simple steps you can take to start developing your own growth mindset:

### Seven Simple Ways to Develop a Growth Mindset

1. Acknowledge and embrace your imperfections. You are imperfectly..YOU.
2. View challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.
3. Replace the word "failing" with the word "learning."
4. Stop seeking approval from others.
5. Set small, achievable goals that align with your greater purpose.
6. Take ownership over your attitude.
7. Focus on the process, not outcomes.

MINDFULNESS, MINDSET, MOXIE AND MOJO | Michael R. Frater

Now that you're embarking on your own personal mindset shift, you should understand that you can't change

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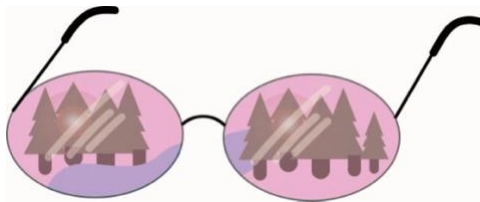
<sup>9</sup> Carol Dweck, January 2016 Harvard Business Review

someone else's mindset for them. People must know they can; they must know how; *they must want to do the work.*

## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GROWTH MINDSET

Don't let these misunderstandings about growth mindset sabotage your efforts at creating real and lasting positive changes in your job search, life and career.

**I already have it, and I always have.** Individuals often confuse a growth mindset with being flexible or open-minded or with having a positive outlook — qualities they believe they've simply always had. Dweck and her colleagues call this a *false growth mindset*. Everyone is a mixture of fixed and growth mindsets, and that mixture continually evolves with experience. A “pure” growth mindset doesn't exist, which we must acknowledge to attain the benefits we seek<sup>10</sup>.



**A growth mindset is just about praising and rewarding effort.** This isn't true for students in schools, and it's not true for employees in organizations. In both settings, outcomes matter. Unproductive effort is never a good

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<sup>10</sup> Carol Dweck, January 2016 Harvard Business Review



thing. It's critical to reward not just effort but learning and progress, and to emphasize the processes that yield these things, such as seeking help from others, trying new strategies, and capitalizing on setbacks to move forward effectively. In all her research, the outcome — the bottom line — follows from deeply engaging in these processes.

People sometimes believe effort is the only thing that really matters. "As long as I tried." It's not about merely trying, or even failing in the short-term despite our efforts, but the fact that those very efforts hone our abilities<sup>11</sup>.

If you want to tap into your pure potentiality and elevate your chances of success, the best place to start is by improving your mindset. You can keep on thinking the same way you always have, or you can wake up and realize that the destinations you seek will require an extraordinary mindset, hard work, and inspired commitment. Let's roll.

Please access your free Mindset Survey and 20 Guidelines for Developing a Growth Mindset at [workplusbrain.com](http://workplusbrain.com)

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<sup>11</sup> Carol Dweck, January 2016 Harvard Business Review

## TO SUMMARIZE:

### **Attributes of a Fixed Mindset**

- Believes intelligence and talents are fixed
- Believes putting forth effort is worthless or fruitless
- Believes personal failures define who they are
- Sticks with what is known
- Hides flaws so not to be judged as a failure
- Avoids challenges to avoid failure
- Tends to give up easy
- Ignores feedback from others
- Views feedback as personal criticism
- Feels threatened by the success of others

**Attribution to Dr. Carol Dweck**

### **Attributes of a Growth Mindset**

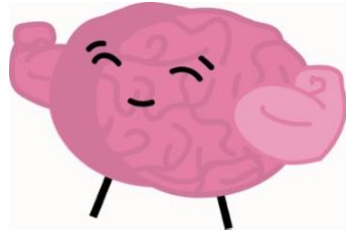
- Believes intelligence and talents can be developed
- Believes effort is the path to mastery
- Believes mistakes are an essential part of learning
- Views failure as an opportunity to learn
- Believes failures are just temporary setbacks
- Embraces challenges
- Welcomes feedback from others in order to learn
- Believes feedback is a guide to further improvement
- Views feedback as a source of information
- Views other's success as a source of inspiration and information

**Attribution to Dr. Carol Dweck**

## IDENTIFYING AND LEVERAGING YOUR STRENGTHS

A commonly asked question in job interviews is “What are your strengths?” and the overwhelming fact is that most candidates cannot discuss their key strengths in an authentic, enthusiastic, or convincing manner.

Many people tend to fall back on a common list of adjectives when confronted with the question, such as ‘trustworthy’, ‘hard-working’, ‘honest’, ‘punctual’, or my least favorite informal noun, ‘people-person.’ The problem is that anyone can make such claims about themselves. Instead, you need definitive examples of your strengths



and how they relate to the position for which you’re interviewing or the organization’s primary goals and objectives. This gives you a clear advantage over other job-seekers, who may not be as prepared to communicate their strengths in an authentic and compelling manner.

Here’s the thing: before you can discuss or even leverage your strengths, you need to identify them. Sounds simple enough, right? We’ll just Google “identify my strengths”, and... Whoa, Nelly! There are over thirteen *million* results. Can there be thirteen million different ways to identify our key strengths? No, but it can become quite overwhelming

sifting through all this information. I don't know about you, but sifting *isn't* one of my key strengths.

We could take one of those online quizzes. Millions of people have taken self-assessments to identify their unique capabilities. Or, we could just wait for a potential employer to sit us down with their favorite brain hacking tool and a pencil. A growing number of organizations are using personality, strengths or character assessments as part of the selection process: understandably, they simply want to hire the best fit for the opportunity.

I believe it's best if we identify our own strengths in advance, so we may meaningfully communicate them to potential employers. Let's pledge: We will not allow ourselves to be incorrectly defined due to our inability or refusal to investigate our strengths thoroughly and communicate them effectively.



With our goal identified, we must now pause to address one important fact: we as individuals are terrible self-assessors. Research by psychologists David Dunning, Chip Heath, and Jerry M. Suls <sup>12</sup> suggests that self-assessments of skill and character are often significantly

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<sup>12</sup> Flawed Self-Assessment: Implications for Health, Education, and the Workplace.

flawed, stating “In general, people's self-views hold only a tenuous to modest relationship with their actual behavior and performance... people overrate themselves.”

*In other words, we tend to paint a rather rosy picture of ourselves.*

For our strengths finding mission we should employ a far more constructive approach, viewing our strengths through a lens unclouded by our own personal bias, judgment or self-beliefs.

A good example of this approach is the Reflected Best Self Exercise™ from the University of Michigan’s Center for Positive Organizations. According to their website, “The Reflected Best Self Exercise™ (RBSE™) is a feedback seeking exercise that helps you identify and understand your unique strengths and talents. After you gather feedback from significant people in your life, the RBSE™ guides you through the process of creating a portrait of your best self and an action plan for leveraging your strengths.”

I prefer the RBSE, as it allowed me to gain clarity on my strengths by accessing the perspective of those I trust, who know my behaviors well, and whose opinions I value greatly. These individuals are my trusted advisors<sup>13</sup>, and

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<sup>13</sup> The truth is that we all need advisors as we can’t be experts in everything. A good trusted advisor can assist you in many areas of your life and career in which you have limited or zero experience. They can:  
**1.** Keep you updated with relevant and timely information. **2.** Provide necessary objectivity when evaluating a situation. **3.** Provide their own expertise, strategies or referrals to others who may help you

have achieved the very levels of thought, understanding, experience, success or wisdom I wish to emulate or attain. By applying this method, I arrived at a truer estimation of my personal assets:

- I thoughtfully selected those whose opinion I'd value
- I requested Reflected Best-Self stories from them
- I wrote my own Best-Self stories
- I analyzed all
- I composed my own personal Reflected Best-Self Portrait, and
- I created my action plan

Seeing ourselves through another's lens usually gives us a far better view of our true behaviors and strengths, those same behaviors and strengths we will need to communicate during our career life cycle.

Write down a list of your strengths that you identified as the result of reflecting upon a time when you were at your best, or feedback you've received from your trusted advisors.

When you complete this exercise, choose three to five of those strengths that match what a specific employer is seeking as you apply and interview. You now have excellent examples to communicate which more precisely demonstrate your strengths and abilities.

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accomplish your goals. Remember, it's a good idea to have multiple and qualified trusted advisors who possess a diversity of knowledge.

## OPTIMIZING EMOTIONS FOR THE JOB SEARCH AHEAD

We've already identified that looking for a job is in the top five of life's most stressful events, and there can be negative self-judgments and self-talk associated with the job search that we need to meet head-on and conquer with our improved mindset. Job searches commonly require individuals to put themselves out there again and again to the increasing scrutiny of employers whose processes, procedures, and requirements force some to lose self-confidence, self-respect and sometimes, hope.



Even armed with mindfulness and our growth mindset, it becomes vitally important that we protect ourselves mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually to help avoid increases in stress due to the length of time it may take to find employment or overcome the obstacles we encounter. One way we can do this is by becoming more aware of our thoughts and judgments and how they impact

our emotional well-being or undermine our prospects for success.

Your mind is very powerful, in fact, it's the most powerful tool you have right now in your job search arsenal.

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***What is a thought? Where is it? Can you touch it?  
It's amazing to think something so intangible could cause us  
so many problems. -Headspace***

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## THERE'S NO NEED FOR COMPARISON

Let's face it; we live in a world obsessed with popularity and profit. We tend to compare ourselves with those who seem to have more achievements, make more money, or boast more friends on social media.

Unemployed and surfing social media can be a journey into misery and self-loathing, if we allow comparison mode to kick in. *That goofy high school chum who was a C student is already the VP of an organization and here we are at home, sitting in our pajamas, applying for entry-level positions!*

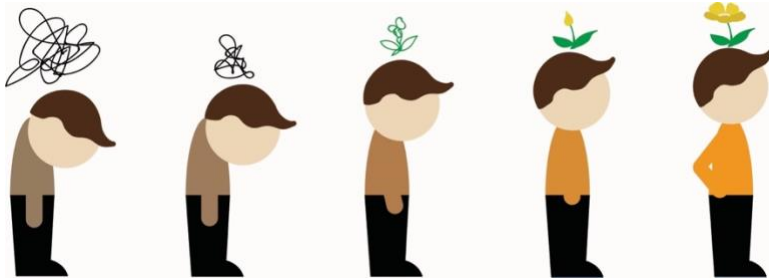
We've got to remember that sometimes we're not seeing the entire picture online; often what we are seeing is an individual's highlight reel – only the good stuff on parade. We can't fall into the trap of comparing or negatively assessing our current situation against someone else's.

We make judgments daily. It's human nature to make assumptions or develop opinions about things, and whether we realize it or not, we make them about



ourselves. Our judgments act as a lens or filter to how we perceive our world.

Adjust your lens and you'll see with improved clarity.



## KILLING A.N.T.S - AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE THOUGHTS.

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*A large tree grows from a small twig. A nine-story building begins with the laying of small bricks. A thousand-mile journey begins with a single step. Pay attention to your thoughts: they are the source of your actions. -Lao-tzu*

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“I didn’t get the job... **I’m such a loser.**”

“I didn’t get called for the interview... **nothing ever goes my way.**”

“My boss wants to see me... **I must be in trouble.**”

In the face of uncertainty or challenge, some fall into what I like to call “ant beds.” Swarming, swirling and undesired thoughts take over; thoughts that psychology tells us can drive depression, stoke anxiety, and fuel negativity.

As soon as we're ready to take the risk; to step forward into growth, abandon our comfort zone and move off maybe, our brain allows A.N.T.s to creep in. It starts whispering things like, we're not smart enough, educated enough, we'll never be taken seriously or someone else is already doing that, we can't do it any better!

According to the National Science Foundation, the average person has about 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts per day. Of those, 80% are negative and 95% are the same repetitive thoughts as the day before and about 80% negative. Our thoughts define our reality and our self-talk reflects not only the way we think but how we feel, act and respond.

**We need to reframe these undesired thoughts to get us on a path of growth.**

When you first perceive an ANT entering your gray matter, recognize it, write it down, and confront it immediately.

When you hear yourself say "ANTS!", STOP and correct them.

### A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA

I don't know about you, but I'm a visual guy. In fact, countless studies that have confirmed the power of visual imagery in learning, proving our brain is just one big image processor. Being that words are abstract and rather



difficult for the brain to retain, I decided to give you something additional to exterminate the A.N.T.s; a visual that you can embed in your brain. Every time an A.N.T. tries to rush in, you're going to mentally unleash your own personal **ATOMIC ANTEATER**<sup>14</sup>.

## MOXIE

The dictionary defines moxie as *force of character, determination, or nerve*, but for our purposes, we'll define moxie as the courage, resourcefulness, and determination individuals employ to overcome adversity in pursuit of their goals.

Moxie is guts, backbone, grit, gumption, resilience, and our new friend adaptability thrown in for good measure. Your moxie should give you the ability to mindfully cope with difficulty, hardship, or the unexpected and confidently respond in a manner that refuses to grant failure a foothold. Moxie sparks the initiative required to push forward, sometimes against great odds, towards the outcome you desire or, as a job-seeker, your goals and objectives....even after you've been disappointed or knocked down.

"Knocked down." Those two words are a powerful metaphor at this phase of our journey, so I'd like to put this in a little different context for you: Boxer. MMA fighter. Job search. All three endeavors can result in heavy blows to the head, even knockouts - unless we're prepared. Throughout

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<sup>14</sup> Atomic Ant eater would be an excellent name for a rock band.

this guide we've prepared for the matchup. You versus the job search. I believe our brain-training is sound and won't let us down. Now, let's step confidently into the ring. Sure, it's a gamble. You may get knocked down once or twice, but there is no shame in getting knocked down; it's how you respond that matters.

A boxing catchphrase "protect yourself at all times" offers simple, yet powerful advice for all pursuits in life, especially job seeking and our career endeavors. We can prepare and work diligently to protect ourselves but getting knocked down at some point is a real possibility. This can be a traumatic event for some. How do we bounce back from the knock down and carry on to the last bell? After all, we're in it to win it.

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***If you have moxie, you won't let a minor setback stop you from trying again, because you're a determined person who doesn't give up easily. -vocabulary.com***

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We look to find the benefit in those knock downs. This may sound a bit crazy but let me explain further: benefit finding is the process of deriving growth from adversity and has become a central theory in the evolution of positive psychology. It is possible for individuals to experience major positive changes because of challenging life events, such as the adversity and stress associated with a job search.

In general, research has revealed positive long-term effects of benefit finding. For instance, some individuals report a new appreciation of their own strength and resilience, an enhanced sense of purpose, greater spirituality, closer ties

with others, and changes in life priorities. Others feel that their relationships are stronger and that they have become more compassionate or altruistic<sup>15</sup>.

Let's give it a spin.

The goal of this exercise<sup>16</sup> is to create awareness of the possible benefits of challenging life events, as it is believed that explicit focus on the positive characteristics of negative life events can help to boost resilience.

1. Discuss a traumatic event (e.g. loss, severe physical injury, etc.) in as much detail as possible for a few minutes with a trusted advisor. Try to freely express all emotions and thoughts they have about the experience.

2. Now focus on the positive aspects of the experience.

Below are some questions to help guide you:

- How has the experience changed you?
- What has the experience taught you?
- How has the experience made you better equipped to meet similar challenges in the future?
- How do you feel that this experience has made you grow as a person?

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<sup>15</sup> Affleck & Tennen, 1996; Davis et al., 1998; McMillen et al., 1997

<sup>16</sup> Reference: Positive Psychology Practitioner's Toolkit / Benefit Finding. Considering life events from different viewpoints be a way to reduce dichotomous (black or white, good or bad and all or nothing) thinking. The aim of this exercise is to create a balanced perspective on negative life events, rather than to stimulate positive thinking. Even when positive thinking is used to avoid negative feelings that accompany the traumatic life event, it can be considered as a form of experiential avoidance and should be discouraged. Benefit finding may not work for everyone.

This exercise should help you resist the urge to ruminate, or dwell on issues. It's natural for us to reflect on disappointments or worries, as by replaying the situation in our minds we hope to reach a new awareness that will replace our anxiety with understanding and allow us to move forward. But by simply playing the same distressing scenes repeatedly in our head, we tend to magnify the issue, becoming even more distressed or uncertain every time we do.

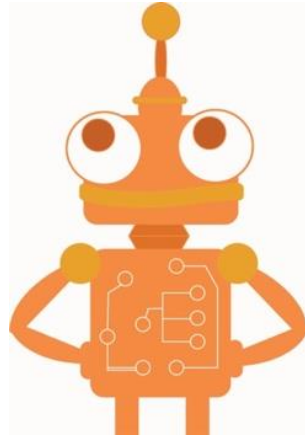
Every time you stumble, stop to receive the lessons. Write about every knock down or setback in a journal or notebook and repeat the benefit finding exercise. You gain endurance and wisdom when you choose to learn from challenging life events, becoming a stronger and more resilient individual.

Some problems and difficulties are necessary for us to go through to get our focus back on what we want and deserve out of life.

## MINDFULNESS FOR MOXIE: SUPPORTING PERSONAL RESILIENCE

If you've been job-hunting, you've undoubtedly taken some dings to your armor. Objections, stalled hiring processes, poor communication from employers, and outright rejections can seriously weaken your resilience.

According to the American Psychological Association, resilience is “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means ‘*bouncing back*’ from difficult experiences.”



But is the ability to stay focused on the present moment in a non-judgmental way a spark for resilience and well-being? New research says *yes* and establishes a strong link between mindfulness and resilience.

Writing in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, researchers Badri Bajaj and Neerja Pande present evidence which confirms that psychological resilience is stronger in mindful people<sup>17</sup>. Bajaj and Pande’s study involved 327 undergraduates (236 men and 91 women). The participants completed a series of surveys measuring their emotional state, life satisfaction, mindfulness and level of resilience.

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<sup>17</sup> Mediating role of resilience in the impact of mindfulness on life satisfaction and affect as indices of subjective well-being. Badri Bajaj and Neerja Pande. September 2015.

The researchers found "individuals with higher mindfulness have greater resilience, thereby increasing their life satisfaction." They note that "mindful people ... can better cope with difficult thoughts and emotions without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down (emotionally)" adding "Pausing and observing the mind may (help us) resist getting drawn into wallowing in a setback."

Bajaj and Pande conclude, "Mindfulness training could provide a practical means of enhancing resilience, and personality characteristics like optimism, zest, and patience."

Resilience is one of those intangible soft skills that is difficult to develop and sustain, but it is an absolute necessity for your well-being and a key component for current or future performance. The workplace can be a challenging environment for employees for a variety of reasons, and you will undoubtedly call upon your resilience as you navigate complex relationships and adapt to changing work demands.

Mindfulness isn't the only answer for increased resilience, but it's a great start for your goal of adapting and responding positively to stress or adversity, as you can stay open to your present experience without judgment. No matter the scale of your issue, resilience is all in how you *choose to respond*.

Resilience is the optimism to keep bouncing back from failure and is rooted in a *growth mindset*, one which



perceives a challenge as an opportunity to learn rather than an obstacle to overcome. A mindset which employers overwhelmingly prefer.

## MOJO

On a rainy Saturday morning, feeling flat from a wicked week, I flopped into my favorite recliner and began to flip through channels looking for something goofy to watch. I landed on the movie Austin Powers, The Spy Who Shagged Me.

Groovy; brain candy mission accomplished.

Wait, what's this? Dr. Evil has ventured back to 1969 and successfully stolen Austin's mojo! Well, the rest may be a bit too PG-13 for some, so I'll wrap it up by saying Mr. Powers was successful in retrieving said mojo and I was quickly back to work, as the cinematic crusade got me to thinking about the importance of personal mojo in our own endeavors and how we can bolster and even protect it from being damaged or stolen.

Although the term "mojo" originally referred to a magic spell, hex, charm or magical power, the modern dictionary also defines it as "a power that may seem magical and that allows someone to be very effective, successful, etc."

Each of us has an outward, fluid expression of individual drive and initiative, which is enhanced and supported by our emotional intelligence, mindset and moxie. Mojo is basically the way we approach life; it is our drive,

personality, passion, confidence, the energy we emit or how we greet and interact with our world and communicate with those we encounter.

Being that your mojo is also that first impression you make, it can have a tremendous effect on your success or failure. Example: First interviews are first impressions; they are round one of your fight for the prize. You will either go on to the next round, or your mojo can knock you out of contention.

How important is mojo to hiring managers? Research has identified *interpersonal skills* (the skills used by a person to interact with others properly) and *communication* as among the top traits job candidates overwhelmingly needed to improve<sup>18</sup>. Poor mojo delivery is affecting job-seeker success. That's unacceptable.

When your mojo is firing on all cylinders, you're in the zone. You are confident and capable of communicating your strengths positively and in an effective manner. Mojo is the language of confidence; it's about being able to intelligently express yourself without doubt or hesitation.

Example: You can use your new and improved mojo to win the first round by being likeable and building a rapport with the interviewer, as your goal is to put them at ease. Your mojo shouldn't be an overconfidence or cockiness, but rather a state of personal empowerment that allows you to focus on mindfully communicating and connecting with

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<sup>18</sup> PayScale Inc. 2016 Workforce-Skills Preparedness Report.

people with your newly developed skills rather than focusing on turning in a grand performance. You will easily access your mojo and interact with creativity, intelligence and energy. In other words, you'll crush it. Boom!

It's Mirror Time. Personally, and professionally, what's the first impression you establish with others? That's your mojo. It's either fine-tuned to build the success you deserve and drive your thrive or it's holding you back, and when you're part of a team, fine-tuned mojo is expected.

Build it. Refine it. Protect it. Work it.

If you've been engaged in our journey together, your mojo should be improved as we've endeavored to strengthen its pillars of support<sup>19</sup>. You're readier now than you've ever been to stand out and succeed. You should be proud of your progress.

## HOW TO RECHARGE YOUR MOJO

Sometimes, the most accomplished and talented people can have their self-confidence shot. Job loss and the job search can both have dramatic effects on our mojo as we deal with immense stress or feelings of loss, inadequacy and rejection. Conflict or problems in our personal lives can also drain our energy reserves and compound those feelings as we struggle to get back to one knee. These are just a few

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<sup>19</sup> Mindfulness, emotional intelligence, mindset and moxie.

examples, but there can be so many other reasons our mojo can be exhausted.

So, what to do when feeling flat or your mojo-meter is sitting near empty? Over time, our batteries may get run down and we operate with less and less power until we can barely keep our own light on, let alone effectively illuminate the pathway of our success journey. When you get sapped, try these strategies to take charge and seize control of your mojo!



**Move.** Not to a new home or city, but physically move your body. Rather than spending all day replaying the negative over and over in your head or worrying about things mostly out of your control, reinvest that time for a walk, hike or bike ride. Throw ball for your hounds. Play catch with your kids. Just move. Sedentary isn't always the best choice when confronted with a depleted mojo.

Instead of mindlessly scrolling social media, find a fitness guru on YouTube and do the routines in your living room, in those ugly sweatpants you wouldn't be caught walking to the mailbox in. Studies have shown that when we engage in some form of physical exercise, we generally seem to feel

happier, be less anxious and feel a sense of accomplishment, which is vital for mojo. Exercise has also been shown to improve the sleep patterns of insomniacs, as well as lower their anxiety<sup>20</sup>.

**Practice mindful meditation.** Many people have taken up meditation because they find it helps them reboot when stress piles up, giving them a renewed sense of self and purpose. Research has shown that mindfulness meditation can have many positive effects on self-confidence. Self-confidence is critical to prime mojo.

Regular meditation boosts your resilience, enabling you to alleviate stress, manage emotions, and supports a more positive outlook so that you can bounce back from setbacks<sup>21</sup>. I've included a short meditation section at the end of this guide. Should you meditate? That's entirely up to you, but I can personally attest to its benefits and it will be a complement to your new strategy and journey.

**Show gratitude.** We shouldn't wait for Thanksgiving to acknowledge what we're grateful for, as it magnifies positive emotions. Think of a time you showed real gratitude to someone, not just a quick "thanks" via text, but a pure expression of gratitude directly, like "Hey! I'm thankful for YOU. Thanks for being such an awesome

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<sup>20</sup> Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

<sup>21</sup> A 2014 literature review of 47 trials in 3,515 participants suggests that mindfulness meditation programs show moderate evidence of improving anxiety and depression. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, US Department of Health and Human Services.

individual!” Did you notice a change in their mood from your small act of kindness? How long did it take? Pretty cheap and painless, too.

For starters, gratitude is not just an action, it’s a positive emotion, and a very powerful one at that. Gratitude serves a purpose, as positive psychology research has shown that acts of gratitude are not only beneficial to the people receiving the compliment, but even more so, to the one who performs the act.

It’s simple. Whether you send a handwritten note (my personal favorite) or make the effort to go face to face, choose your communication and let people know that they are truly valued.

As the leading scientific expert on gratitude, Dr. Robert A. Emmons, states: “Research on emotion shows that positive emotions wear off quickly. Our emotional systems like newness. They like novelty. They like change. We adapt to positive life circumstances so that before too long, the new car, the new spouse, the new house—they don’t feel so new and exciting anymore.

But gratitude makes us appreciate the value of something, and when we appreciate the value of something we extract more benefits from it.

In effect, I think gratitude allows us to participate more in life. We notice the positives more, and that magnifies the pleasures you get from life. Instead of adapting to goodness, we celebrate goodness. We spend so much time

watching things—movies, computer screens, sports—but with gratitude *we become greater participants in our lives as opposed to spectators.*<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Emmons also defines gratitude as having two parts: “(1) affirming goodness in one’s life and (2) recognizing that the sources of this goodness lie at least partially outside the self,” and goes on to add a way of looking at gratitude ‘outside the box,’

“...Mother Theresa talked about how grateful she was to the people she was helping, the sick and dying in the slums of Calcutta, because they enabled her to grow and deepen her spirituality. That’s a very different way of thinking about gratitude—gratitude for what we can give as opposed to what we receive. But that can be a very powerful way, I think, of cultivating a sense of gratitude.”

Gratitude builds you and the recipient UP. Win-Win. Mojo magnified!

**Helping Others.** If you want to really boost your mojo, stop thinking about yourself and start helping others. Sure, you can help that friend move, but I’m thinking a bit deeper contribution may be necessary if you want the fullest experience and receive the fullest charge.

Think about investing one-tenth of the time you spend on social media or your smartphone towards improving the

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<sup>22</sup> Why Gratitude Is Good, Robert Emmons, November 16, 2010. MIND & BODY Magazine

lives of others. Volunteering is a gift to those in need and can charge your mojo in several ways. First, by contributing to the improvement of other people's lives, you witness directly the difference that you make, and you personally live and feel your value. I can promise you this; the smile on the face of a needy child or witnessing a neglected animal's fear ease as they receive loving care will fill your soul and is worth more than a thousand YouTube motivational videos.

Most importantly, giving back forces you out of your bad mojo zone and recharges your batteries through interaction with the right vibes. Usually those who volunteer are happy, more fulfilled people, feeding off energy received from their volunteerism and by positively impacting the lives of others. You can't help but catch the vibes rolling off their mojo. You will recharge – and as you do, you will see that you are capable of much more than you ever imagined.

**Laugh.** A good laugh recharges your battery, and we've all heard this one; "Laughter is the best medicine." It turns out there's some science behind that adage. Dr. Gulshan Sethi, head of cardiothoracic surgery at the Tucson Medical Center and faculty at the University of Arizona's Center for Integrative Medicine says, "Laughter activates the body's natural relaxation response. It's like internal jogging, providing a good massage to all internal organs while also toning abdominal muscles." Wow – relaxation and six-pack abs? I need to laugh more often.

The job search and life in general can be very disheartening at times. Laughter increases our resilience to the negativity



we may encounter. It's also been proven that people who are resilient are happier and more successful<sup>23</sup>.

So, instead of staying down, let's laugh it up! Make humor a priority by watching a comedy or sharing funny stories with your friends. Your mojo will thank you for it.

You've looked at who you are and are becoming more aware of yourself as a unique and talented individual. You've been on an exploration to enhance your emotional intelligence, build a growth mindset, master your moxie, command your mojo and fully utilize your strengths to fulfill your potential.

Let's keep moving!

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<sup>23</sup> Psychological Resilience and Positive Emotional Granularity: Examining the Benefits of Positive Emotions on Coping and Health. Michele M. Tugade, Barbara L. Fredrickson, and Lisa Feldman Barrett.

## MINDFULLY INFORMED VS SCATTERSHOT

Mindfulness is the core component of a successful job search, as it is the ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. Mindfulness will allow you to better navigate the process and replace job search stressors with a clearer, more defined focus that supports the mindset, moxie and mojo required to effectively pursue opportunities.



It's now that you'll want to step back and assess where you are and what you want. Some job-seekers take a scattershot approach to the process, throwing their resume at every job opening they come across in hopes that it will stick. That strategy rarely works and often leads to increased anxiety as poorly thought-out efforts are seldom rewarded.

Our 4M strategy won't allow such an approach, as we've worked too hard to get to this moment – this moment of launch. So, let's step back from the situation and take a

deep breath. It's time to pause and prepare before we push on.

I know you're champing at the bit to get out there, but I'd be a poor guide if I didn't prepare you fully. As we've discovered, your success depends on many factors, some of the most important being traits. And what is the number one attribute hiring managers predominately seek in a prospective candidate? *Informed*.

I'm a little surprised when a candidate looks across the desk at me and asks, "So, what do you guys do here?" as their phone chirps nonstop. The same phone they could have put to far better use researching my organization in advance of their interview (first impression.) Round one could very well result in a knockout.

Preparation is vital to a successful job search. *Informed vs Scattershot*. Which would you hire? It's a no-brainer; *nearly nine in ten (88%) hiring decision makers agree that an informed candidate is a quality candidate*<sup>24</sup>.

I define an *informed candidate* as one who mindfully pauses to research potential employers, not only to ensure they possess the right qualifications for the job, but also to make certain they are aligned with the corporate culture and purpose of the organization.

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<sup>24</sup> We Asked 750 Hiring Managers What Makes a Candidate Irresistible, Here's What They Said. September 25, 2017. Amy Elisa Jackson. Glassdoor surveyed 750 hiring decision-makers in the United States and the United Kingdom as part of the study.

According to Glassdoor, companies look for the following in prospective employees:

- They're prepared for the interview and ask pertinent questions
- They demonstrate having the right experience
- They're knowledgeable about the job role
- They know about the organization's culture and values
- They have the right *expectations* about compensation and benefits

Employers have reported that informed candidates improve the overall interview experience, are more engaged, take less time to achieve productivity and attain higher levels of job satisfaction.

Mindfulness supports concentration and focus, helping you maintain a relaxed and aware state that is open to attention and learning. Learning about the organization you are approaching for employment is an absolute must if you expect to be regarded as a serious candidate for the role.

I'm urging you to become mindfully informed of the organizations you will target in your job search as it will give you a tremendous advantage over those who aren't.

## EXPECTATIONS VS REALITY

Reaching the end of a job interview, the hiring manager asks a soon-to-be graduate with an average GPA from a B-level college, "What starting salary range are you looking for?"

The student replies, "In the region of \$100,000 a year, depending on the benefits package."

The interviewer inquires, "Well, what would you say to a package of six weeks of vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental insurance, company matching 401k and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?"

The job-seeker sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are you kidding?"

The interviewer replies, "Yeah, but you started it."

This joke makes its way around the internet in varying forms and it always makes me wince; I've witnessed far too many candidates get skewered by their unrealistic job search expectations, so poorly communicating their desires that they ultimately destroy all potential of hire.

It also emphasizes the essential importance of having realistic expectations when job hunting. It's great to have high expectations and yes, you've invested a great deal of money in a degree. You're motivated, educated and ready to start "making bank." Now, let me alert you to what you are in the eyes of potential employers - you're an untested and unproven commodity.

Sounds a little offensive, but it's true. I'd like for you to use your newly acquired 4M skills to create informed, emotionally intelligent and adaptable expectations before you sit down in that interview chair.

**Do your homework.** Like real estate, the job search is all about location, location, location. Different industries, trades or professions thrive in different geographic areas; where you live often dictates the types of opportunities, and compensation, available to you. For example, if you're looking for a serious career in digital marketing and advertising, you should target those areas with the highest concentration of growth and a moderate to high number of help wanted positions advertised. Those areas would offer the best match for your expectations, and that may very well *not* be your hometown. As a result, your salary expectations would be quite different when communicating with an employer in a high-growth area versus the opposite.

Perform a Google search of your skills or degree and matching high-growth geographical areas which support your career goals, or you can access a complete list of U.S. industries and supporting job data on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

Compensation also differs greatly from one region to another, so it's a good idea to research sites like Indeed, Glassdoor, and SalaryExpert, among others to get average compensation and cost of living data in your target locale for the type and level of work for which you are seeking.

So, before you fly in with your list of demands, ensure you've chosen the right destination. I'm not suggesting you should set your sights at the low end of the career or compensation scale, but I am encouraging you to gather all the information necessary for a more logical, successful and less stressful job search. This small investment of your time will demonstrate to the interviewer that you have a genuine interest in the organization and usually leads to a more engaging and authentic conversation during the actual interview. Employers respect *informed* candidates.

Finding a job can be tough, but sometimes only as tough as you make it. Many people start their search with unrealistic expectations, only to be met with rejection. Use these suggestions to avoid those unnecessary rejections and to ensure your job search is more productive and rewarding.

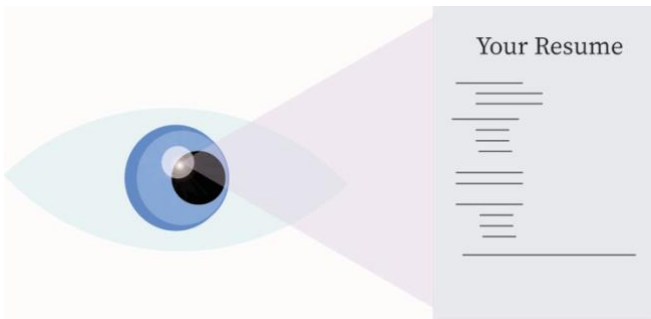
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***Action may not bring happiness but there is no happiness without action. -William James***

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## SIX SECONDS TO STAND OUT

According to a study released in 2012 by TheLadders, which used a scientific technique called “eye tracking” that analyzed how long 30 professional recruiters reviewed candidate profiles and resumes, and what was focused on, **recruiters spend an average of six seconds reviewing an individual resume.**



The same study found that within those six seconds recruiters spent on the resume, 80% of the time was spent on: the job candidate’s name, current title/company, and previous title/company.

Six seconds, and 80% of the time on what I describe as non-factors. Not a very mindful approach to recruiting. In fact, it’s a rather fascinating approach being that most recruiters complain of a lack of right-fit talent.

Fascinating, but we’re not here to judge. We’re here to mindfully apply ourselves to the job search and overcome obstacles. The six second focus issue? That’s an obstacle we’ll overcome.



Hundreds of resumes and most deemed a no-match. A chronological resume will do very little to engage those recruiters who are becoming disengaged from resume review, one of the key ingredients of successful recruiting.

Here's where mindset and strengths identification will come in handy. Our task now is to create a strengths-based resume that will stand out against hundreds of chronological style resumes loaded with hard skills. It's hard to stand out if you're considered a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy.

It's a fact that resumes that highlight specific strengths and meaningful statistics catch the attention of top hiring managers and recruiters when they're forced to scroll through hundreds of resumes. Your strengths-based resume will help you highlight tangible results and key accomplishments.

You didn't start this journey to be just like everyone else, did you? You're going to deliver different. You're not a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy. You're going to intelligently stand out and create separation from all the other job-seekers.

Visit [workplusbrain.com](http://workplusbrain.com) to download your free PDF "Build a Strengths Based Resume."

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION

We've arrived at that pivotal moment; the first impression. You're ready to ace an interview; I know it and you know it. Mindfulness will keep you focused and grounded as you make an authentic human connection with those you meet one on one or in a group interview setting.



It's important to remain in the present moment, staying focused on the job search without getting overwhelmed or stressed out. So, before you sit with others, sit with yourself. Prepare by slowing down and being mindful of your intention – what type of position you are looking for, how you can benefit an employer or how you can make a difference utilizing your strengths. The goal is to bring your non-judgmental, dynamic and authentic self to the interview.

Suppressing any personal bias and negative self-talk with mindfulness, ask yourself if you have the skills, experience or strengths necessary for the roles for which you are applying. Take time to analyze the outcomes of past interviews – examine the positives and the negatives. What went well? What didn't go so well? Be direct and honest with yourself. You will refine your identity and your search by looking inwardly and putting those lessons to work for you.

Now is also the perfect time to start the process of daily visualization and affirmations to support and promote the outcomes you seek. Many years ago, a very good friend and mentor gave me the book *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain. The book outlines creative visualization, which is essentially visualizing, through mental imagery and affirmation, whatever you wish to create in your life.

I was very young and unemployed - down on my luck and myself; I needed a boost. The creative visualization technique went on to become a cornerstone of my personal and professional development, as I effortlessly adopted the process into my daily routine. Creative visualization, along with other personal behaviors and dynamic traits I adhered to, would eventually help me surpass my professional goals and set me on a pathway of entrepreneurship and creativity. Part of that creativity is what you're reading right now.

Before your interview, I'd like for you to try something. Take a deep breath, close your eyes and see yourself walking into the reception area and greeting everyone you meet with a confident smile and polite demeanor. See yourself in the office, fearlessly answering the interview questions, positively communicating your strengths and building a solid bond with your interviewers. Believe you already work there. Believe that you are meant to be there, and this is the first step in your new career pathway. You deserve to be there. Mindfully own the moment.

If at any time during the interview you start experiencing anxiety, I'd suggest you deploy the S.T.O.P. technique, which is an excellent way to calm your nerves in an interview and focus on what is being said or asked, rather than the pre-packaged statements or answers you've got knocking around in your gray matter, screaming to get out. Using this technique, you will give a more authentic, contemplative and measured response.



**S** – Stop, take a moment to pause your thoughts and actions.

**T** - Take a few deep breaths, following those full breaths in and out – you are centering yourself and bringing yourself entirely into the present moment.

**O** - Observe what is happening to your body, mind and emotions. Look at the interviewer's body language. Interpret their tone of voice, does it match how you perceived the statement or question? What is the interviewer really asking you?

**P** – Proceed, after considering what you've just observed about yourself and the interviewer, with the answer that

first pops into your head and then elaborate on it if necessary.

The S.T.O.P. technique also supports Mindful Listening, which is essential to truly understanding others. When we allow another person to express themselves without interruption, judgment, or disregard, it truly supports effective and mutually satisfying communication - the foundation for deeper understanding and connection.

There is no trick to it; you simply allow your attention to rest only on what the interviewer is saying or asking you, rather than allowing your mind to drift. Your responses will be aligned to the actual conversation because you *listened*. Everyone deserves to be heard and feel as if their contribution to a conversation matters - even interviewers!

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***We have two ears and one mouth so that  
we can listen twice as much as we speak. -Epictetus***

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You can find more advice on the basic, yet very fundamental processes involved in a successful job search on the Individual Empowerment page I've created for you at [workplusbrain.com](http://workplusbrain.com). Here you will find many additional resources to help you prepare and ace that interview!

## INTERVIEWING TIP: CONVEY EXPERIENCE, LEARNING AND GROWTH

Life is an endless series of experiences and opportunities that help shape who we are, and all have a basis in our learning and growth. Being able to succinctly communicate your abilities in an interview through a three-step experience, learning and growth discussion will set you apart as a candidate of choice.

Most hiring managers conduct behavioral based interviews which are designed to discover how the candidate acted in specific employment-related situations. The reasoning is that how someone behaved in the past will usually predict how they will behave in the future, i.e., past performance is a predictor of future performance.

The concept here is simple: When a hiring manager asks you one of those famous “Tell me about a time when you.... “ interview questions, you will follow through with a concise, yet informative response:

Experience – Give a synopsis of a time when you were confronted with a similar situation and one which suggests you have the experience they're seeking.

Learning -- Share what you learned from the experience or how it possibly changed your perspective in a positive manner.

Growth – Highlight how you would use the experience and subsequent learning to support the initiatives of the employer or enhance the position you’re interviewing for.

At the end of the interview, you will have intelligently engaged the hiring manager in an insightful conversation that left a stronger impression of your capabilities. You just put your mindfulness, mindset, moxie and mojo to work in full support of the ultimate goal:

You = HIRED.

## A THANK YOU NOTE IS REQUIRED

A face-to-face interview requires a hand-written note of gratitude. Period. The investment is small – I recently saw a pack of fifty thank-you cards at Walmart for less than eight bucks – but the return on that investment can be **huge**.

In a recent survey<sup>25</sup>, eighty-six percent of hiring managers said they consider post-interview thank-you notes influential when evaluating candidates, but only twenty-four percent of candidates they've interviewed send such messages. WOW.



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<sup>25</sup> A Little Thanks Goes A Long Way. Accountemps survey of more than 300 HR managers in the United States, 2017.

Thank your interviewer, reiterate your interest in the position and emphasize the skills and value you would bring to their organization. Keep the thank-you note brief, double-check all your facts and proofread for any spelling and grammatical errors before you mail.

Be mindful that only five percent of employers thought text messages were an appropriate way to communicate after an interview.

## MINDFULLY STARTING YOUR DAY

*A beautiful day begins with a beautiful mindset. Every day you wake up, think about what a privilege it is to simply be alive and healthy. Stop focusing on the negatives and everything that could go wrong and start thinking about what could go right. Better yet, think of everything that already is right. Be thankful for nights that turned into mornings, friends who turned into family, and past dreams and goals that turned into realities. Use this mindset of positivity to fuel an even brighter today and tomorrow. -John Geiger*

Starting your morning a little differently may just be the key to fostering the positive mental attitude that creates energy and ultimately gives you the confidence you'll need to meet the challenges of your day head on!

The experts at Harvard recommend that we be deliberate about our attention, that we should "set an intention for our attention" before we get caught up in daily distractions. Let's do just that.



I'VE FOUND I CAN ADD MORE CLARITY TO MY DAY AND THE TASKS AHEAD OF ME IF I START EACH MORNING WITH THESE FOUR SIMPLE EXERCISES:

**1. Pick a personal power statement for your day.** Don't check that smartphone or log onto your computer until you've set a positive intention or mantra; one that you will repeat to yourself throughout the day.

Personally, I remind myself that I am responsible for how I feel and how, or if, I *choose* to react. *"Today's creative endeavors (insert projects) will become prosperous and successful"* is one of my personal power statements. Your personal power statement is always stated in the present tense, as it reflects your most current ambition or goal.

**2. Practice a mindful act.**

Whatever you normally do before you head out to tackle the day, those usual morning routines, pick one and be present in that moment. Slow your mind and become mindful of the activity

itself. For most, one typical morning routine is shaving. Modern multi-blade razors allow you to scrape the razor around over your face or head fast and hard, rushing to get it over and done with so you can get on with your day.



I've added a mindful twist to that rather thoughtless task. I shave with a double edge safety razor. Don't let the addition of 'safety' to the description fool you because if you aren't careful, you'll carve your mug up like a Thanksgiving turkey. Nothing forces you to pay more attention to the moment than the act of "wet-shaving."

These aren't those cheap razors sold in bulk bags in the grocery checkout line. Safety razors are the real deal, and they force you to slow down and pay attention. Wet shaving forces you to focus on being fully present in the moment. There you are; hot water, lather and a wickedly sharp, unforgiving blade. You're forced to slow the process, become mindful and pay attention. There is nothing in the moment but you and the razor. It is a moment of pure mindfulness, and one could easily suggest it is almost as valuable as meditation.

**3. Take time for a relaxing breakfast or morning mindfulness session.** *"I don't eat breakfast, Mike."* Well, I'm not your mother and there won't be any lectures on good eating habits here, but I would like you to pause and mindfully chew on something (besides today's agenda.) Get outside and sit with your protein shake, cup of coffee or a glass of juice. Take your dog for walk or find a quiet place to sit with your thoughts (without judgment) for 20 minutes – *no smartphone*. My deck or favorite recliner works for me. The goal is to pause and reflect; taking a deliberate break and detaching momentarily from the demands of your day is a guaranteed way to improve your mood, gain clarity, and

avoid becoming overwhelmed. *Bonus:* work in some slow breathing (in for 3 seconds, hold for 3, then exhale for 3, and repeat.) Just pause and *breathe*.

**4. Write a note of gratitude.** Before you grab your keys and start the commute, put pen to paper and write a thank you note to someone who has made a difference in your life. “*Can’t I just message, text or email them, Mike?*” I’d prefer you to do it the old-fashioned way, and so will the recipient. Emails, tweets, texts, or social media messages require a small investment; fast and free to send, we sometimes receive hundreds of messages *daily*. How many handwritten notes do you receive *yearly*? Exactly. The effort will be appreciated by those you reach out to.

Gratitude is a powerful tool in training your brain to focus on the positive. It goes hand in hand with mindfulness in its focus on the present and appreciation for what we have *now*, rather than increasingly wanting more. Gratitude has also been shown to increase mental toughness, so you’ll be ready to tackle tomorrow with even more enthusiasm, persistence, and resilience.

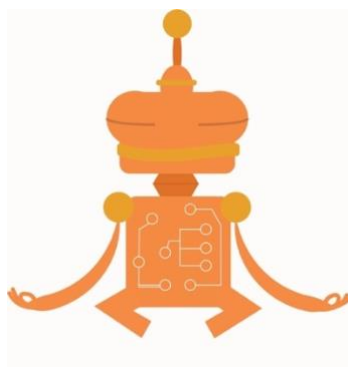
**BONUS:** List three things (or people) you are truly grateful to have in your life. How do they make a positive difference? Write it down. Now, ensure they know it.

*Reflect. Renew. Express Gratitude. Seize the day.*

**A SIMPLE MEDITATION PRACTICE**

IN CONTRAST TO FORMAL MEDITATION, YOU CAN ALSO CULTIVATE MINDFULNESS INFORMALLY BY FOCUSING YOUR ATTENTION ON YOUR MOMENT-TO-MOMENT FEELINGS AND CONSCIOUSNESS DURING YOUR EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES. THIS IS DONE BY SINGLE-TASKING— THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT IS NORMALLY IMPRESSED UPON US BY OUR “ALWAYS ON SOCIETY” AND FRANTIC BOSSES—DOING ONE THING AT A TIME AND GIVING IT YOUR FULL, UNDIVIDED ATTENTION. AS YOU EAT YOUR BREAKFAST, DRIVE TO SCHOOL, OR SIT WITH YOUR PET, SLOW DOWN THE PROCESS AND BE FULLY PRESENT AS IT UNFOLDS, INVOLVING ALL YOUR SENSES. IF YOU’RE NOT READY FOR MEDITATION, SIMPLY SKIP THIS SECTION.

You can easily start your mindfulness journey by practicing the following exercise:



1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Pay attention to the breath as it goes in and out. Observe the feeling of the incoming and outgoing breath. Breathe calmly from the diaphragm, letting the stomach rise and fall.
3. Whenever attention has wandered away from the rise and fall of the breath, perhaps toward other thoughts and feelings, internally note that change of attention, and gently bring the attention back to the breath.
4. No matter how many times attention strays, bring it back to the breath. This act of continuity prepares the mind to

cope with reactivity in a calming way, resulting in a more stable awareness.

For more meditation resources, please visit the Individual Empowerment page at [workplusbrain.com](http://workplusbrain.com).

## GO BE SUCCESSFUL

Now, when confronted with a job search, you'll be able to put your 4M lessons to excellent use and meet the challenge opportunity head-on! And remember, what you've learned doesn't just apply to career pursuits, but to life in general. The more mindful you are of what's going on in your own brain and body beforehand, the easier it will be to enjoy happiness and secure your dreams.

Thank you for taking this journey with me. I wish you the best of luck in all you do!

Go get 'em!

Mike

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Mike still believes in the power of the creative individual, hard work, dedication and the importance of building winning teams - one key player at a time. His work creates positive and successful outcomes - empowering people and the organizations they serve.

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