

Here's A Reminder to Give Yourself Pat Yourself on the Back

Ever receive the notification that states: *"Your proposal for XYZ job has been declined?"* You question whether you sold yourself short, or if you happen to come across as unqualified? This was it, the kind of opportunity that offers a challenge, the kind that requires creative thinking, the kind of opportunity you yearn for. You love what you do, but you've been stuck on repeat. It happens from time to time, and it's something that you expect. Nonetheless, that doesn't negate the need for change. So, you seek it because experience reminds you that it doesn't always come looking for you. And there it was, in all its beautiful glory, only to be ripped away from you without having the chance to try to prove otherwise. Although it is the nature of the beast, it is an aspect of this gig working world that gnaws at your self-esteem.

You can't help but wonder if it's deliberate when the alert pops up in your feed, as in, it has been rubbed and smeared all over your face, making a child's version of a makeover look like an airbrushed masterpiece. Sure, there have been times when your proposal didn't make the cut. There have been times when rejection is implicit, while there have been other times when it was delivered in bold-face text. But you were able to swipe it under the rug. We can chalk it up to resilience or having enough work to get by. The fact is, when you are feeling secure, rejection may not have the same impact as when you are feeling less than secure.

It is not the fault of the job site or the client seeking to hire. It is certainly not the freelancer's fault. Pointing fingers won't change the fact that somebody else was awarded the gig that seemed to have all the potential in the world. What needs to be recognized is the work that goes into searching and bidding. The time and effort can equal the amount of work that goes into an actual project.

The moment you realize that, oh no, I have hit a plateau, and I have a pile of bills on the downstairs coffee table waiting for my attention and none of my clients are reaching out for upcoming work. Or when you realize that the holiday season is approaching and there is that high possibility that I may not be able to give to my loved ones the way I want, those realities creep up, and once they've reached their destination, it's like an alarm blasting in your ear. Confusion, disorientation, and a sense of frantic takes over, providing an open invitation for rejection to arrive in its truest form.

Too bad there isn't a reward for trying and not giving up. Too bad there aren't more accolades for persevering. Ranting about it may be a temporary fix, but we know once that dissolves, we must dust ourselves off and try again. Maybe we should start acknowledging that more, the effort that goes into keeping ourselves afloat? We should start patting ourselves on the back more for presenting ourselves to the world this way. There isn't a guarantee that this will produce more resilience, but what is guaranteed is the need to stay motivated. It's the exertion that becomes trying, but, if we never try, we'll never know the meaning of hard work. That right there deserves a major pat on the back.