

# Handling Rejection

*A session from  
the Rx CD System*

**Rx**

# Handling Rejection:

The ability to handle rejection on a personal level, based solely on your self-esteem; the ability to see yourself as valuable, separate, and apart from your role or position in life.

## Why is this skill important?

A person with a low score in this area will be prone to viewing rejection or criticism as a personal affront, a mark against who they are as people, and will react in a defensive, hostile, or emotional manner. In short, they will allow negative feedback to have a negative impact on their self-esteem.

But why would you be unable to handle rejection? Let's look at a few reasons:

1. Is it your basic personality style? You may require an excessively high level of acceptance from other people.
2. Are you an approval seeker? You need to get constant reinforcement and acceptance in order to feel satisfied.
3. Are you not assertive enough? You may be accepting rejection as a way of life because you aren't assertive enough to push for your goals.
4. Are you pre-programmed to expect people to say no? You may not even try very hard to achieve your goals because you assume that you won't be able to achieve them.

In contrast, people with good scores in this capacity are able to separate their value from their performance. They do not take rejection or criticism in an overly personal way, and the security they have in their own value is based on their own appreciation of themselves as individuals and not on the opinions of others.

Achieving your personal and professional goals takes courage, integrity, and resiliency. You may have to take difficult or unpopular action to best serve your organization, or you may have to admit to making a serious mistake on an important project. The most successful people make well-considered decisions, do their best to implement what they believe is the best course of action, and handle any negative feedback or difficulties with grace and courage.

The ability to handle rejection is absolutely essential—not only to professional success but to personal satisfaction. You must have or develop enough ego strength, or resiliency, to handle rejection and failure and to bounce back from difficulty without it leaving permanent scars on your psyche.

One of the best ways to get better at handling rejection is to get better at your job skills so you experience rejection and failure less often. If you are good at what you do, and deliver on your promises, you won't face disapproval of other people, failure to complete tasks, or rejection of your ideas.

It is inevitable that you will have failure in your career and personal life. It is NOT inevitable that failure is a permanent state—what you do with failure is up to you! It is best to redouble your efforts and try again. If it absolutely won't work, the most resilient people know to step back, re-group, and develop a new plan or pursue a more important goal.

## What are skills associated with Handling Rejection?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Handling Rejection:

- Forges ahead with little or no hesitation in the face of difficulty or adversity.
- Handles criticism from others with no outward sign of resentment.
- Doesn't take rejection as a personal affront.
- Is self-motivated rather than relying on external elements for motivation.
- Recovers quickly from setbacks.
- Handles feedback objectively and positively.
- Moves past setbacks without lengthy self-analysis or other delays.
- Takes the initiative when faced with adversity or setbacks.

## How do you develop your own skills in Handling Rejection?

- Do not take “no” personally—don't allow a negative response to make you feel like a failure.
- Create an image of yourself as a person who can handle tough times with confidence and dignity.
- Develop your psyche to the point that you don't expect rejection to happen. Instead, expect success and anticipate acceptance.
- Learn from other people who seem to be able to bounce back from failure or difficult challenges. Ask them questions about how they think and behave.
- Take 100% responsibility for the results you deliver—bad or good.
- Make long-range goals, and keep them in mind. You may experience small failures along the way, but if you keep your big picture goal in mind, you will likely find some way to achieve it!
- Move toward your most important goals every day, and relate your daily objectives to your bigger goals.

- Learn that the easiest or most efficient way to do something is not necessarily the most effective way to get things done.
- Attack your fears—if you define what your fears are, you can work toward eliminating or reducing them.
- When you make mistakes, turn them into learning experiences. Once you have fixed the situation to the best of your ability, think over the mistakes you made and figure out how you could have taken better or more effective action.
- Be persistent! Find new ways to accomplish key tasks if you can't get them done in the "usual" way.
- Be assertive! Push for what you want, and don't accept rejection or failure.
- Focus on your results. Make your actions count—don't waste energy on futile or pointless tasks.
- Don't look at problems at work as catastrophes... problems are rarely catastrophic.
- Don't panic! If you over-react about a new difficulty it is likely you won't maintain the mental flexibility to come up with a rational, creative solution to the problem.
- When facing a difficult decision, analyze different alternatives and consult with appropriate individuals within your organization. Then take decisive action on whatever decision you make.
- Be prepared to explain your rationale. Be open to others' reactions and help them come to terms with your decision if they don't agree with it.
- If you make a mistake, admit it. Then work immediately to put the fire out!
- Don't shoot the messenger of bad news. If the problem is the result of something you did, work to solve it. If it is someone else's problem, help him understand the problem and give advice if he asks for it.
- Stand up for others when they need support. Not only is it the right thing to do, but people you support will be more likely to support YOU when you need their help!
- Stand up for what you believe in. If you are asked to do something you believe is unethical, "blow the whistle." Suggest alternative ways of achieving similar goals, if appropriate.
- Don't make excuses for things you haven't done. Just do your best to achieve them as quickly as possible.

## Handling Rejection Activities

### Activity 1: Resiliency

Concentrate on the idea of resiliency. Think of at least three times in your life that you behaved with resiliency—times that you faced rejection or failure but made it through the experience. Describe those times, and remember how you felt when you finally succeeded.

1.

2.

3.

## Activity 2: Interview

Think of someone you know who is particularly good at handling rejection or dealing with failures. Ask her what she does to keep herself going in times of trial. Interview her about a difficult time she managed to make it through.

1. What are the key lessons you learned from talking with this person?
2. What can you do to become more like this person in terms of dealing with rejection or handling failures?
3. What will make it difficult for you to incorporate these new behaviors into your life?
4. How will incorporating these new behaviors into your life benefit you?

## Activity 3: Obstacles

Write down any goals you feel frustrated in reaching. Then, for each goal, write down what is preventing you from making progress. For each obstacle, try to think of at least two alternative methods of moving past the obstacle.

Goal #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways Around Obstacle #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways Around Obstacle #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways Around Obstacle #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways Around Obstacle #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways Around Obstacle #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways Around Obstacle #2: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Activity 4: Focusing on Success**

For every rejection or failure you have experienced, you have most likely experienced hundreds of successes—from small to big. But it is your nature to focus on the negative, not the positive. This activity will help you change that mindset. Remember, if you expect rejection, you will most likely get rejected; but if you expect acceptance, you will most likely experience acceptance.

Every day for seven days, congratulate yourself for doing something well. Concentrating on these positive experiences will help you build your confidence and change your negative mindset. At the end of each of the next seven days, write down at least three things that you did well or experienced success at—no matter how small they may seem.

When you have completed the week, review what you wrote, and allow yourself to feel proud of your successes. Keep that feeling of accomplishment with you throughout the next week!

Day 1:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Day 2:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Day 3:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Day 4:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Day 5:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Day 6:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Day 7:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE