



How to respond when a Promotion is Rejected

- Have you ever applied for a promotion, but didn't get it? It can be tough, but it is possible to get through the experience with your ego intact, as well as garnering respect from others for your calm and considered attitude.
- **Calm down to begin with.** While you may feel a raging torrent of anger and perhaps a sense of unfairness at being passed over "after all you've done", this won't endear you to anyone witnessing a meltdown and it won't make things easier for you.
- **You cannot change what has happened.** And while feeling disappointed is natural and expected, making it known that you're upset and devastated about missing out will make others feel uncomfortable and could reach the ears of those in a position to promote you next time, causing them to wonder if you're able to handle difficult situations.
- **Most of all, don't sulk, behave petulantly or act as if something you were entitled to has been "stolen" away from you.** All of the responses will cause others to think less of you.
- **People won't mind you saying "This is disappointing, I really wanted it." That's expected.** What they will mind is hearing you complain and whine about the rejected promotion endlessly, dissecting the interview process and insisting that you were hard done by.
- **Request your supervisor and/or interviewer for a detailed discussion on your performance.** Listen openly to what they have to say and avoid being defensive. Find out the key parameters on which your performance was judged in the interview and get your supervisor's appraisal of where you're at now. Try to know what you could have done differently so that you would have surely got promoted. Also ask your manager what you need to do in the coming year so that you do not face rejection again.
- **Be aware that perception of your performance matters,** even if you feel that their perception carries no substance. If there is a perception from senior management that you're not promotion material for whatever reason, listen and learn how you can turn around that perception. You may disagree, but seek advice from various people as to what you need to do. Even asking for this impresses people and helps them to realize that you're serious about making the needed changes.
- **Get a second opinion.** If you suspect you're not getting a straight answer (quite possible if the person delivering the information is worried about upsetting you or isn't comfortable expressing the real reasons), then seek out someone whom you can trust to talk to and is likely to know the reasons and what to do next, such as a mentor or another supervisor or trusted senior colleague.
- **Assume nothing conspiratorial.** You don't know the often mundane reasons behind why one person is chosen over another for a promotion; many are very close decisions based on someone else having slightly more knowledge or experience of a particular area than you may have, rather than this being about your personality traits. Assuming favoritism or lack of liking you may or may not have any basis in fact



but once you start thinking in such a negative manner, you'll present a very negative attitude that can harm your future chances.

- **As much as you may not want to, try standing in the shoes of the interviewer.** It isn't easy making the right choices for positions in an organization; a lot of things have to be taken into consideration. And it's even harder for an interviewer who knows you but thinks you could do with a bit more experience; they know you will be ready sometime soon but not just yet and they also know that the decision will be disappointing.
- **Be polite and calm** to your boss and ask what you can do to be a better employee -- you may be frustrated, but you shouldn't make your feelings public or you won't be considered for a promotion in the future, either.
- **Focus on the future.** *This time* you didn't get what you aimed for but you can surely make things better in the future and increase your chances of getting a promotion *next time*. See this as a learning opportunity to help you get over the disappointment.
- **What can you do better?** Think back over the interview and application process. You'll know deep down where things could have been improved, where elements that could have been better were highlighted during the process. Start focusing on the things that you need to do to improve your chances and take action.
- **Believe in yourself.** You have it in you and you can change the way things are. If there is anyone who can make a difference to your situation it's *you!*
- **Prepare yourself for action.** Tell yourself that you need to take steps so that things improve in the future and you get what you deserve.
- **Be true to yourself.** If striving harder to get higher turns out not to be the rosy picture you'd painted, you have a great opportunity now to start reassessing your direction. If you do try hard to change your skill set and attitude but feel that what is required to get promoted in your current role is not what interests you or what you can do, then it may be time to try and find a job which suits you better, or even to be contented within the role you have now. There is also no harm in asking for expanded duties within a current role without having to go for a promotion. Keep all of your options open.