

Somewhere between fishing and dating

Written by Julie Desmond

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Somewhere between fishing and dating lies that other great American pastime: looking for work. According to the numbers, more Americans are looking for work this month than have in a long time. Spring is in the air and new jobs are out there, waiting to be found. If only it weren't so frustrating.

Job searching is like fishing. A person digs for worms (or shops for bait), dusts off the ol' fishing pole and drops a line in the water. And then he waits. Nothing happens. He peers into the water. He sees whole schools of fish splashing around his hook. A nibble here and there but no bites. He reels it in, unwraps a sandwich and surveys the lake, wondering where he should drop his line in the next time.

Like a good angler, a job seeker can improve his odds by fishing smart. Use the right bait; make your resume or application shine, and make sure it's relevant to the job you want. Ask around: where are they biting today? Ask people you know, people who know you, if they know anyone who is hiring. And finally, keep an eye on the prize; once your line is in the water, once your application is out there, don't just sit around and wait. Do something. Follow up, read about the company, take a class to improve your skills, try out a networking group. Don't reel it in until you have to. You won't catch a fish if your net is in the boat.

Job searching is also like dating. A person spends all day planning for his big date. He ties his tie, shines his shoes, shaves and splashes on a few handfulls of cologne. He arrives on time and smiles when his date says hello. He's shaky but he's smooth; no one ever sees him sweat. He gets through the first meeting, the second meeting, he thinks things are going pretty well until... silence. The cold shoulder. Instead of the text he was expecting... nothing.

Like a savvy romantic, a determined job seeker won't wait around by the phone. He keeps stepping out, spends time with other people and has a few adventures. That is, until there's a commitment. After that, he does not need to date – or fish – anymore.

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