

The American Counseling Association's "Counseling Corner" Weekly Columns

Moms And The Stress Of Job Hunting

from the American Counseling Association

The growing economy has been encouraging large numbers of women to face something potentially very scary – job hunting. It may be for financial reasons, because the kids are all in school or have flown the nest, or simply because someone is seeking a new challenge. Whatever the reason, looking for that full or part-time job can be stressful, especially if it's been a number of years since you've been in the work force.

But there are ways to reduce the stress of that job search, and it can even be an interesting and rewarding experience if you approach it feeling prepared and confident. Some suggestions on how to make that happen:

- Start by interviewing yourself and taking inventory. What activities have you been involved with? What skills have you developed? Do some skills need updating or polishing? What things are you good at and that you enjoy?

- Update your resume. Check the bookstore or library for resume writing guides, or look online for tips. Check out the U.S. Department of Labor website (www.dol.gov) for links to Federal or state labor offices that can offer advice and assistance. Once your resume is written, keep it handy and don't be shy about handing out copies.

- Make contacts. Look for workshops offered by local business groups or state agencies. Join committees or do volunteer work with your local school, library, church or synagogue. Such activities can be enjoyable and give you new skills, but as importantly, they provide valuable networking contacts. Often the best job opportunities come not from the local "help wanted" pages, or websites but from the people you meet.

- Think outside the box. Just because you once worked in retail or were a secretary doesn't mean that's all you can do now. Examine how you've grown and what interests you. Consider not just jobs you know you could easily do, but work that would truly challenge and interest you. Believe in yourself and employers will believe in you also.

Yes, that first job interview will make you nervous. But it's also a learning experience, helping to ready you for interviews number two or three.

The key is simply to prepare yourself as best you can, and to consider carefully both what you can do and want you really want to do. Make job hunting an exciting and rewarding experience and it will lead to fulfilling work.

Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcerner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org.

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