
Career Setbacks

How to Stay Strong

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Introductions



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Welcome & Framing the Session



What we will cover together

Quick agenda overview:

1. Understanding emotional impact of setbacks
2. Reframing the feedback
3. Tools to move forward with confidence

NB – We want to support you to **reframe, regain confidence and build resilience**



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Current career challenges

- Pressure on the service
- Scrutiny on spend
- Restructuring
- Uncertainty
- Competition for roles
- Emergent skills



Image Source: Stock Images

Emotional Impact of Setbacks

Common reactions to rejection or uncertainty: **self-doubt, loss of control, overthinking**

Especially hard in vocational and values-driven environment (NHS):

- **Impact on identity** (“I care, so I should succeed”)
- **High expectations**, high pressure
- Structural change **out of your control**



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Emotions: signals, not verdicts

Emotion	What it might signal	What you can do with it
Disappointment	You cared deeply about the opportunity	Reflect on what mattered – can you find another way to pursue that?
Anger	You felt something was unfair	Identify what's in your control. Take action.
Anxiety	You're facing uncertainty and risks	Ground yourself. Focus on preparation.
Deflation	You've been giving a lot and used up energy	Rest, recover and recharge. Go again.

Reframe setbacks and feedback

- Understand the difference between **evaluation** and **identity**
- Not being selected does **not equal not being good enough**
- **3F Model** for processing feedback:
 1. **Facts** – what actually was said or decided?
 2. **Feelings** – how do I feel about it?
 3. **Focus** – what can I learn or do differently next time?



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Useful feedback strategies

- Receive the feedback at a good time, in a good place and **take notes**
- **Ask questions** – be specific but don't challenge or reject (*“what would make me a stronger candidate next time?”*)
- **Look for patterns**
- **Separate “fit” from competence** – many outcome are about timing and context (beyond your control)



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Confidently moving forward

- **Confidence is habit** not a fixed trait
- And small wins, **small steps rebuild it**
- **Change the narrative:** “This is what I learned and what I’ll do next”
- **Track your growth**, not just your outcomes
- Set **micro-goals** – 1 application, 1 new contact etc.
- **Shift your mindset:** “My value isn’t determined by a panel’s choice”
- Reconnect with your purpose: **3 Horizons**

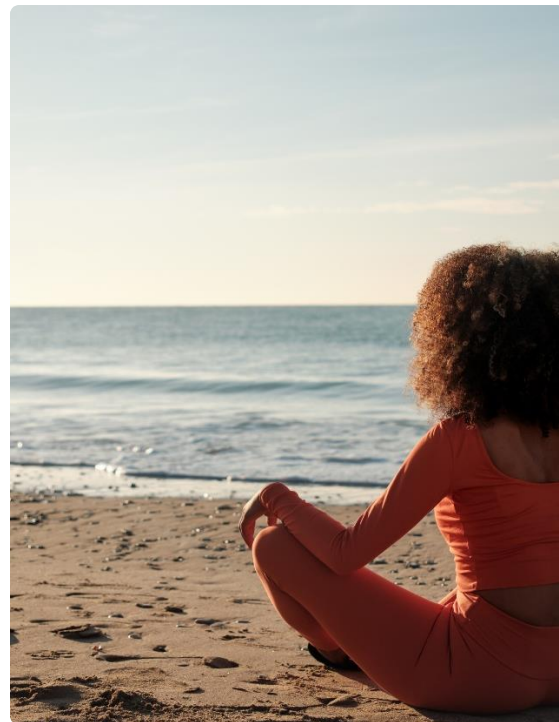


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Resilience during change

- Resilience is **not** pushing through
- It's using **recovery and perspective** to handle challenges
- Key practices to **build resilience**:
 - **Connect** and don't isolate. Find support
 - **Control what you can**. Accept what you can't
 - **Care for your energy**: sleep, movement, downtime, fun, food, distraction, mindfulness etc.



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Closing Reflection

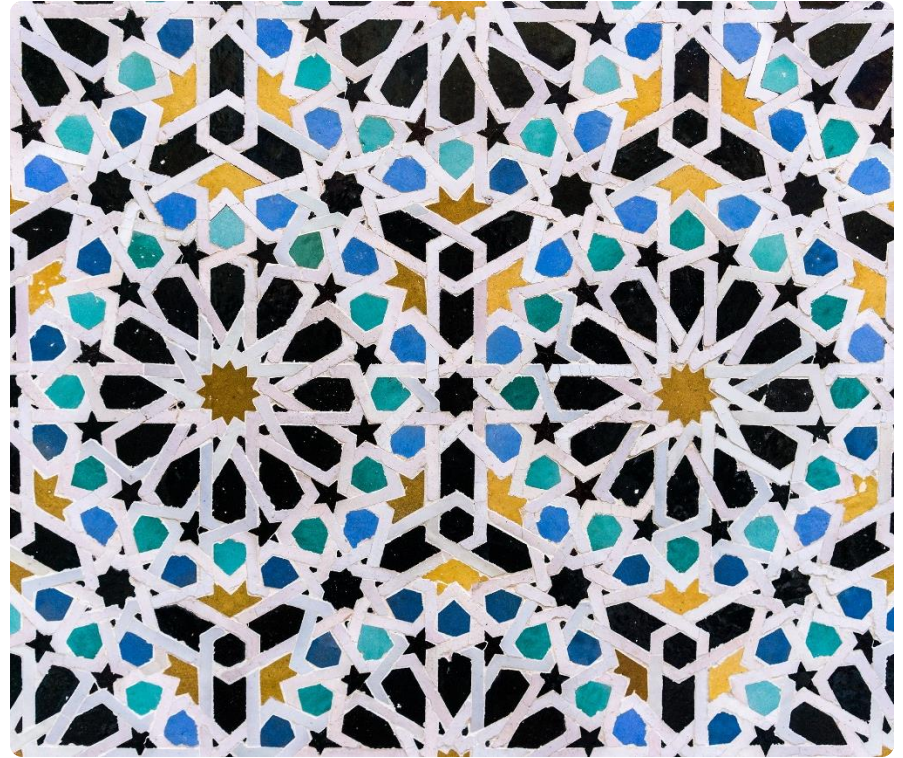
- Let's recap the three core ideas:
 - Feelings are valid but are not facts.
Facts beat feelings
 - **Feedback is just information** and is not your identity
 - **Progress is built from reflection** that leads to taking further steps
- **Persistence is a superpower** – every 'no' brings you closer to the right 'yes'



Image Source: Stock Images

Your career is a mosaic

- One rejected tile does not ruin the whole picture. Each experience (whether good or bad) contributes to the final, beautiful artwork of your career.
- Setbacks remind us that the path to success is rarely a straight line. The detours, the closed doors, the 'no's often lead us to our greatest destinations.



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“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”

Nelson Mandela



Thank you

