



FORGING #CAREERSUCCESS AND #HIRINGSUCCESS



# The Miseducation of the Underrepresented Job Seeker

Jennifer Tardy Consulting, LLC



# Welcome!

Thanks for downloading the JTC Guide: The Miseducation of the Underrepresented Job Seeker. I will unpack 10 beliefs about the hiring process and how to overcome them. As a matter of fact, this guide is jam-packed with tools and resources that you can apply immediately to your job search! It includes the miseducated belief, challenges with maintaining these beliefs, truths you should know, my advice for you, examples and even references to videos that you can watch for added support.

As you are reading through this guide, know always that my wish for you remains the same. May the journey to the top of your profession be one that is free and clear of barriers and full of opportunities for employers to recognize and utilize the value you offer. May the world be impacted positively and uniquely all because you had the courage to follow your ambition.

*– Jenn Tardy*



Wait a  
minute, have  
we met yet?

## Meet Your Career Coach – I'm Jennifer Tardy (she/her/hers), Career Success Coach

I own and operate JTC, which is a diversity and inclusion consulting organization in Maryland. Through my #CareerSuccess coaching programs for job seekers and #HiringSuccess diversity training programs for recruiters, I am on a mission to make it easy for recruiters and historically underrepresented job seekers to meet and forge career success. I am an official partner to LinkedIn and The Society for Diversity, where I serve as a career coach to its members.

I have vast industry experience as a Recruiting Thought Leader, Diversity Practitioner, and Career Success Coach with over 14 years of human resources and recruiting experience. I have recruited in the tech, healthcare, education, railroad, plumbing supplies, and professional services industries.

I am a graduate of Virginia Tech with a bachelor's and master's degree in Business Administration. I have received several certifications in Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion, including Professional in Human Resources (PHR), Certified Diversity Recruiter (CDR), Certified Diversity Practitioner (CDP), and Certified Diversity Executive (CDE). I am also a Certified DiSC Instructor.

In addition to Jennifer Tardy, LLC, I am also co-owner of Proving What's Possible, LLC (PWP), headquartered in Altavista, VA. PWP is a Mental Health Counseling organization that provides mental health skill-building services to help individuals cope with mental illness and achieve community stability and independence.

I reside in Maryland with my two boys, Austin and Aiden, and my love, Antione.

Want to learn more about my journey to the top of my profession, visit <https://www.jennifertardy.com/about> to read the timeline of career events that led me here.



# About JTC

## Our Mission

Forging career success at the intersection of employers and historically underrepresented populations (i.e., women, people of color, veterans, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQ+ community).

I am a career coach, strategist and diversity recruiting consultant to employers. #TeamJTC provides coaching and training with an expertise in challenges that impact historically underrepresented populations in the workplace. On the flip side, we provide diversity recruitment training and consulting to employers seeking to attract, recruit, and retain ambitious job seekers just like you.

Use this guide as a reference during your job search or as you are working to get a promotion within your company. If you want to go deeper in your learning, feel free to join our Offer Magnet Job Seeker community where you get access to a course AND we meet LIVE and discuss topics like these and many others.

## Ready to get started?

In this guide, we are counting down the most impactful beliefs that impact the way in which we show up for interviews. Let's start with Belief #10!



**We tend to believe that the hiring process is inherently fair.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

We tend to accept one-size-fits-all career advice on getting an interview, passing the interview, getting an offer, getting employed, and even getting promoted. We use that one-size-fits-all career advice even though it has not fit into our experience (i.e., it does not acknowledge the biases that must be navigated). Then, when we receive a rejection notice, who do we tend to think the problem is? US. We (job seekers) begin to believe we are the problem when it is likely that it is the hiring system that is the challenge.

### **Here's the truth.**

I hear people say that the hiring system is broken. But the hiring system is not broken. It is doing exactly what it created to do centuries ago. The hiring system was built to advance heterosexual, white, cisgender, able-bodied men. So, it is vital to understand the context of that. Even though there have been laws enacted, such as the Civil Rights Act 1964, to move the needle and curb overt discrimination, there are still many covert practices influenced by unconscious biases still happening.

### **Want my advice?**

Seek job search advice that enables you to navigate the bias. Look for career tools, tips and tricks that include advice tailored to your job search experience and that helps you navigate unconscious bias.



**We tend to believe that the hiring process is inherently fair.**

**Here's an example:**

A career expert may suggest that during an interview it is important to make eye contact at all times. You may have been raised in a culture where maintaining eye contact is perceived as staring, is rude and disrespectful. In addition to sharing the tactic of making eye contact, a culturally competent career expert may also recommend you try a unique hack (or exercise) for making eye contact especially when it doesn't feel natural to you.

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

Common Pitfalls of Interviewing





**Interviewers will assess me based ONLY on my knowledge, skills, and abilities.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

We try to show up as our authentic selves during the interview, expecting to be fully accepted, and bias may seep into the interview process. For example, if I am interviewing and the hiring manager gets locked in on the fact that I am wearing big earrings, that becomes a distraction. Instead of thinking and assessing me for my knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the job, they are more focused on the idea that perhaps my earrings are inappropriate.

### **Here's the truth.**

It is important to explore standards of professionalism: (1) what is and what isn't professional, (2) what it means, and (3) where did it originate from. Many organizations in the US were predominantly white male dominated organizations when they started and still use the same standards of professionalism that they used on day one.

### **Want my advice?**

When you are interviewing, it becomes important to influence the focal points.

### **Here's an example:**

Let's say that your hairstyle deviates from standards of professionalism (historically rooted in white, middle-class norms). This could mean, for example, that you have locs (like me). Career advice for you may mean tying your locs back so that they do not become the focal point upon which you are assessed during the interview.

During an interview, your goal is to direct the interviewer to only focus on your knowledge, skills, and abilities. Although you can't control the situation, you can try to influence it. For example, if during the interview you and the hiring manager spend 10 minutes talking positively about your hair, that is still 10 minutes that the interviewer is not focused on your knowledge, skills, and abilities.



**Interviewers will assess me based ONLY on my knowledge, skills, and abilities.**

A very important disclaimer. Now, if you decide that you are not interested in tailoring your authentic self for the interview, that is okay and completely acceptable. At that point, you must look for an organization that will embrace your authentic self from the start of the hiring process.

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Have a Conversational Interview







**My resume (i.e., work history) can speak for itself.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

You will likely spend too little time selling your knowledge, skills and abilities as the ideal fit for the role.

### **Here's the truth.**

You are the only person who can fully speak to and give credit to your past achievements. For example, it is challenging for many women to talk about their successes because it can feel like you are being boastful or bragging. However, no one else will do it for you in the hiring process. Therefore, you have to develop that skill to do so. When you uncouple the emotion and judgement surrounding sharing your capabilities (with confidence), it will help relieve the feeling of being grandiose.

### **Want my advice? Speak to the facts.**

The best proof is having successfully done the same work in the past. Speak to those facts.



**My resume (i.e., work history) can speak for itself.**

**Here's an example:**

If the employer says that she is looking for someone with great presentation skills, rather than saying, "I have great presentation skills", which may feel boastful to some, say, "over the last 5 years, I've delivered over 15 presentations and each time I've received very positive feedback."

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Become the Top Interview Candidate





**I will be able to tell if I'm being discriminated against or if bias has affected my ability to get a job.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

If you are sitting in an interview trying to decipher if bias is taking place, it will distract you from being fully present to the interviewer.

### **Here's the truth.**

More than likely, you (and the employer) will not know or recognize every single time bias occurs. You may notice overt forms of discrimination, but bias can be highly nuanced and subtle. Furthermore, bias can occur when you are present and not present (i.e., interview team feedback sessions) during the hiring process.

### **Want my advice?**

Work with a career coach that can show you how to navigate common hurdles. If this option is not available to you, then use Google to learn more about common biases.

### **Here's an example:**

Instead of focusing on identifying bias during an interview, prepare for your interview by thinking about common biases and how you can overcome them. Here are some examples of common biases that emerge during interviews. Do a little bit of research via Google to learn more about each and recommendations to navigate them during your interview:

- Confirmation bias
- Halo effect
- Affinity bias
- Expectation anchor



**I will be able to tell if I'm being discriminated against or if bias has affected my ability to get a job.**

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

The Steps to the Job Hiring Process [AND HOW TO ADVANCE TO THE NEXT STEP]





**This must be a good environment for me to work in because they are talking about the importance of diversity and inclusion here.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

You are likely to not do your own research on the organization commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### **Here's the truth.**

Not all companies that are on a journey to working to increasing diversity have an environment that is ready for you. In other words, companies tend to be more focused on recruiting for increased diversity rather than and understanding that they must also focus on retention. Therefore, proceed cautiously when assuming that environments are ready for you. Make sure that the work is not performative.

### **Want my advice?**

If diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to you, unpack what precisely an ideal inclusive environment would look like to you. What would be happening in an environment that really believed in diversity and inclusion? Build questions around this vision and find out how near or far an organization is from this inclusive work environment. This will enable you to ask tailored questions better to understand the complete DEI picture at that organization.

Ask questions that matter most to you. First, ask yourself (1) why it is vital for you to understand whether or not an employer is committed to diversity and inclusion and (2) what does that mean to you. This will enable you to know what you are looking for as a job seeker.



**This must be a good environment for me to work in because they are talking about the importance of diversity and inclusion here.**

**Here's an example:**

When interviewing, instead of asking a generic DEI question, *do you support diversity and inclusion?* Be specific and ask, *"what do you do to ensure everyone has a voice during team meetings?"*

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Understand the Corporate Diversity Continuum



**Jennifer Tardy / Career Success Coach**



**If I did not get the job, then I must be a reject.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

Believing that you are a reject sets you up for continued rejection. Rather than allowing yourself the space to be present during an interview so that you can show up as your best, you spend more time thinking that you will fail this interview too.

### **Here's the truth.**

This is one of the parts of the job search process that becomes very emotional. I don't think people give enough credit to job seekers regarding the experience and emotional weight that they carry while trying to advance their career through a job search.

It is important to practice being self-aware and recognize you are experiencing emotions around receiving a rejection for a job offer. And it is important to recognize when you are moving into a space where you may feel like a reject. Receiving a letter of rejection does not make YOU a reject. It only means THIS job was not meant for you. And that's okay.

### **Want my advice?**

There are so many reasons behind the scenes as to why you may have gotten rejected for that opportunity. Ask for feedback.

Frequently, organizations send a generic rejection letter. Although this is intentional in order to protect organizations, it can create an insight gap for you as the job seeker because there is a lack of understanding around why you were rejected. To manage that information and protect yourself, ask for feedback to fill that gap. One of the best ways to get feedback is before you leave the interview. If you do not get the opportunity and have already received the rejection letter, then ask the recruiter, *would you be willing to jump on a call with me?* This increases your chances of receiving feedback and enables you to receive that feedback live (i.e., on the phone or in-person), which in turn will likely be more specific.



**If I did not get the job, then I must be a reject.**

**Here's an example:**

Right before the interview ends, and when the employer asks you if you have any questions, ask, "Is there anything I said (or did not say) during this interview that would leave you less than 100% confident that I'm the right person for this job?"

If feedback is shared with you, then ask, *do you mind if I share something with you?* This provides an opening for them to invite you back into the conversation, as well as an opportunity for you to close the gap BEFORE they make a decision.

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Get Interview Feedback From An Employer (Especially if Rejected)







**I am lucky to have gotten this interview. I'll do my best in this interview hot seat.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

When you believe this, you are likely to show up nervous and feel anxious because you are focused on how great the company is and you've forgotten about how great you are too. You begin thinking that you are simply "lucky" to have gotten this interview, rather than the fact that you've earned a seat at this table because you are qualified for this role.

### **Here's the truth.**

Before going into any interview, you must (#1) know your value and (#2) know the value you bring to any employer. This helps to ease the nervousness and allows you to show up more confidently during the interview.

### **Want my advice?**

Know **your** value and know that **you** bring value to any employer as this job will bring value to you. When you shift this perspective from luck to knowing your value, you show up in the interview with more confidence and knowing that this interview is NOT a hot seat, rather it is a space where I get an opportunity to share the value I can bring to an employer. Furthermore, when you understand your value, you are better equipped also to assess the employer and see if they are right for you. Not every employer deserves the opportunity to tap in to the value that you offer.

### **Here's an example:**

Review the qualifications for the role. Know (for yourself) the number of qualifications you meet directly, indirectly, or not at all. For those you do not meet, how far off are you - what will it take to close that gap? Go into the interview fully aware of your value to the employer. Don't forget to include the additional value you can bring to the employer that was NOT identified as a qualification in the job description but is relevant and is your secret sauce. Now when you enter the interview, have fuller confidence that you earned your seat. Your job is to articulate your value and assess the employer for the value the role can bring to YOUR life.



**I am lucky to have gotten this interview. I'll do my best in this interview hot seat.**

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Be Confident During Interviews (Even When Nervous)





**All the rules for getting a promotion are the same, no matter the company.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

You will take the same standard actions to get a promotion that may have worked for you at the last company. When they do not work for you at this company, you risk thinking that you may be the problem, rather than the promotional process, for example.

### **Here's the truth.**

The path to success looks different at each organization. What you may discover is that some journeys are direct while others are indirect. You may also learn that there are unwritten rules to success that you were not aware of, which will vary from company to company. For example, in one company, the path to success will be based on revenue generated and, in another organization, it will be your client satisfaction rating. Therefore, you must identify what success looks like at your current employer. With that said, you should look for patterns by way of how those individuals identify (i.e., race, gender, disability, etc.). What information do those patterns reveal? This enables you to learn the “game” and make an informed decision about if you what to “play.”

### **Want my advice? Research success paths.**

Explore: What does success look like at your company? Learn the rules for promotions at your company so that you know exactly what you need to do to be viewed as ready now or a high performer ready for the next opportunity.



**All the rules for getting a promotion are the same, no matter the company.**

**Here's an example:**

Identify who is in your organization's most coveted roles and ask yourself who in your network has access to those coveted positions. Set up a meeting with them and ask *how did they get there?* For example, did they all know the Vice President of the department? Then, with your newly found information, ask yourself, *am I willing to "play that game" here?* **Learn** the game and then **decide** if you want to play the game.

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Get a Promotion



Jennifer Tardy / Career Success Coach



**In order to access new opportunities in my workplace, all I need to do is keep my head down and work hard. Someone will notice me.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

Many people believe that if I work hard, people will notice me within this organization. **When you do not get noticed, you begin thinking that there is an issue with you, rather than with your employer.**

### **Here's the truth.**

It is not always your work ethic that gets you to the next level in the organization, as stated in belief #3. In reality, you can work so hard that your manager tries to keep you in that role simply because you are doing such a great job! The truth is, if you notice that you are being overlooked for new opportunities, even though you are a super hard worker, it may be time to have a courageous conversation with your manager.

### **Want my advice? Research success paths.**

Make sure that you know for yourself what your desire is and talk with your manager about those desires now (and in the future). Also, ensure you are aware of any gaps you may have in knowledge, skills and experience. You can do this by reviewing the future job description.



**In order to access new opportunities in my workplace, all I need to do is keep my head down and work hard. Someone will notice me.**

**Here's an example:**

However, often it takes having courageous conversations with your manager saying, *I love my role and my job here. I would like to know what does it take to access a new opportunity?*

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

How to Tell Your Boss You Are Unhappy





**An employer SHOULD and WILL pay me my worth.**

### **The challenge with maintaining this belief.**

You may spend more unproductive time and energy in trying to convince your manager that you are “worth” more so they should pay you more. You approach your meetings with messages that start with, “I think, I feel, I believe,” and often those conversations become more emotional and lose steam quickly.

### **Here’s the truth.**

An employer’s responsibility is to pay you the worth (i.e., market value) of the role that you enter. As a matter of fact, the employer's responsibility is to minimize overhead costs. Do you know one of the most considerable overhead costs? Salary. Therefore, it is not the employer’s responsibility to pay you your worth, and I invite you to uncouple that idea. Instead, think about worth in terms of the type of roles you are applying to.

### **Want my advice? Research success paths.**

Stop accepting roles that are more junior to your experience level. Ensure that you are entering roles that match your level of knowledge, skill, and abilities. In other words, as you are considering your worth, apply that to the role to which you apply. When you apply to a role that matches your expertise, the pay will follow.



**An employer SHOULD and WILL pay me my worth.**

**Here's an example:**

If you have 15 years of experience in Customer Service Management, apply to positions that require that level of knowledge, skills, and experience. Do not apply to an entry-level Customer Service role and try to convince the manager that you are being underpaid. When you think about "your worth", think about it in terms of applying to positions that match your level of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Pay follows the roles we enter.

**Want more? Check out this video on our Career Success YouTube Channel:**

Why You Aren't Getting Paid Your Worth





# Offer MAGNET Job Seeker

If you enjoyed this free resource, then check out our flagship course for job seekers: [Offer MAGNET Job Seeker](#).

FLAGSHIP COURSE FOR JOB SEEKERS

## Offer MAGNET Job Seeker



The Offer Magnet Job Seeker Group Coaching Program includes a course, community and coaching. Become an "Offer Magnet" in just 4 weeks with my exclusive at-home training, and you'll be positioned to:

### Think

**Think** about who you are, about your worth, and about the outcome of your job search. Our goal is to get you to a positive mindset.

### Nail your interview

We teach you how to prep for your interview and develop persuasion techniques.

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We'll help you describe what to tell the employer about who you are and your previous career experience, whether it is in your resume or during an interview.

### Negotiate like a pro

Determine what you want within an offer package and how to articulate that to the employer.

### Design your strategy

What has worked in your job search and your networking?

### Make a smooth exit-transition

We teach you how to leave one job or employer.



"This program was recommended to me by a close friend. I decided to join when I lost my job due to covid-19. During my time in the program, I learned a lot about myself which helped me during my job search. The modules were extremely helpful in helping with my resume and interviewing. The weekly group meeting helped me stay accountable, provided valuable insight, and connected me with new people. I highly recommend this to anyone stuck in their job search. I will be joining again in the future!"

Learn more about our services at [www.jennifertardy.com](http://www.jennifertardy.com) or email us at [info@jennifertardy.com](mailto:info@jennifertardy.com).

# If you are a job seeker, I want you to do three things TODAY:

01

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**Are you ready  
to work with  
Jennifer Tardy  
personally to  
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