

1. CAPM Prep

All you need to know if you are planning to write CAPM:

1] Time frame: In my opinion, 4 – 6 weeks should be more than enough for the preparation setting aside the last week for giving mocks.

2] Resources: Many refer to CAPM by Rita Mulcahy – Fourth Edition (It is an excellent book, and every chapter has 15 – 20 questions) PMBOK 6th edition is in too much depth, one can refer to clarify important concepts.

I referred to:

<https://www.udemy.com/course/capm-pmbok-6-exams-1/> (Just for Mocks, if you are outside India, you can ask someone to buy it for you from India, super cheap)

A well-structured course designed by Joseph Phillips <https://www.udemy.com/course/capm-pmbok6/> (This course is accepted by PMI for your CAPM exam qualifications.)

This website <https://www.projectprep.org/> has all the important documents, extra mocks, and important sheets required in a very concise format, print the ITTOs and refer to them every day.

This video will help you understand all the knowledge areas and processes better
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC7pN8Mjot8>

3] ITTOs: You won't be able to memorize ITTOs, I came up with tricks to remember them and understood the process and the flow of the project cycle. One should remember all the knowledge areas and processes thoroughly.

4] Mocks: I happen to give around 1000 - 1500 questions and only then I was confident about taking the actual test, 65-70% in the mocks should be legit enough for you to book the date. Never worry about the time you will have an ample amount of time to answer all the questions.

5] Slot booking: Either you book the slot and then prepare or book it once you start scoring well, the point is not to procrastinate, putting in 100 hours does not guarantee & justify the success of the exam. I gave my test at home

6] Be ready to face at least 10 questions from Agile these shouldn't be that difficult. Also, 15/150 questions won't be marked, and you won't know which ones are those.

7] Read the full question and all the options only then select one answer, the elimination method works

Never take a break while preparing for CAPM, you will lose touch and might have to start it all over again.

Important news: The syllabus for CAPM seems to be changing in 2023, if you are planning to write it, do make sure to give it before the start of the next year

Hope this helps and you can always reach out to me if you have any other questions. Good luck!

2. Self-doubt zone

Do you remember that phase in life when you are waiting for an admit letter from a university? That phase is when you are halfway there with 50% rejection letters or more, and all you can do is wait for that one acceptance letter. This waiting game now leads to probably doubting the decision that you made earlier. It makes you think about whether you took the right decision, and whether you should explore some other opportunities.

During one of my mentoring sessions, I came across a student who was going through this exact phase. The call started with all the possible options he had - master, B-school, business, and so on. Halfway down the call, he expressed that he always wanted to pursue a master's, but he is at a point with 4 rejections out of the 8-9 schools he applied to.

I immediately knew where it was leading, but I wanted him to realize that he is doubting his decision, and this phase of being patient and waiting for the result is important. So, I asked him a question, "Had it been a case where you had gotten an acceptance from a university that you want to pursue your master's from, would we be having this call?" He took a good long pause and replied, "I don't think so."

I could sense that if he genuinely wanted to pursue B-school or was so confident about it, he would have already given the test for it. The only reason his mind is wandering so much is that he is in a zone where every international student has been at some point in life - doubting the decision taken in the first place due to not receiving the appropriate and timely outcome that we expected.

Just before the session was about to end, I told him to let the results for all the universities be out, and then let me know if he still thinks the same or wants to explore opportunities. Having said that, I also told him, "If you are very confident about pursuing a master's and, for some reason, you could not get into the school on your first attempt, that does not mean you should give up."

The conversation had lasted for over an hour and a half, but it had left me feeling fulfilled as an aspiring mentor. I knew that the student was going to do great things, and I was excited to see what the future held for him.

3. 5-things I have learned after coming to the US

As a student studying or coming to the US, you want to make the most out of your academic and personal experience.

Here are 5 advice based on my own experience that can help you plan and navigate your journey:

1] Plan your journey: Without a solid plan, you'll be lost in a sea of options and opportunities, and it's all too easy to get overwhelmed. Start with a clear plan that will help you stay focused. While it's not necessary to follow it strictly, having a plan will help you prioritize and give you direction.

2] Find your tribe: They say that you can't choose your family, but you can choose your friends. And when you're studying in a foreign country, those friends can make all the difference. It's not always easy to find friends who share your vibe, but when you do, treasure them. Having a support system of like-minded people can make all the difference.

3] Take time for yourself: I always wanted to stay alone but could not until I left home after 26 years, I discovered that spending time for myself was the key to my personal growth. Spending time alone can be intimidating, especially in a new country, but it can also be rewarding, it allowed me to know myself better, and it turns out, I'm a pretty good cook, yes! Take this opportunity to discover new interests. Plus, you might just discover some hidden talents along the way!

4] Manage your resources: Money and time are two of the most valuable resources and managing them is an underrated skill. I make sure to calculate how much money I will have at the end of each semester so that I can plan my spending accordingly. Prioritize your tasks, do not invest your time in thinking but in doing, and keep track of your expenses. By doing so, you'll have a better understanding of your financial situation and avoid unnecessary stress.

5] Pay it forward: Share opportunities with others and remember that success is not a zero-sum game. Be kind and selfless. Don't fall into the trap of crab mentality or envy. By helping others, you'll also help yourself grow. Share opportunities with your peers, help them when they need it, and celebrate their successes as if they were your own. In the end, everyone will benefit.

What additional advice would you like to include?

4. GETTING LUCKY:

Do you believe in getting Lucky? Do you think you can improve your chances of getting lucky?

From escaping near death events multiple times to getting my visa approved one week before the university began, I have gotten lucky a lot of time and I am incredibly grateful for it and will always be.

I think you can improve your chances and I one of the ways of doing it can be as follows:

If you want to improve the odds of getting lucky, there should be more people wanting you to get lucky. Hold on, I got you covered allow me a minute – your colleagues working with you, your customers, your friends, and your family should also want you to get lucky then your odds of getting lucky improves.

But

How do you want them to make you lucky must be your next question would be? (Hold my Tea)

You can only achieve the above desired outcome by doing what is right for them, meaning:

If you own one a piece of business – implement what is right for customer and not what is right for the business because everything else will eventually fall in place

For Friends and Family – Always have their back no matter what your situation is, and it might be the toughest day for you, but you need to have their back, always. Period

Everybody else – Even if you believe in helping someone for the sake that the good deed might come around to you too, that is okay. Help for that sake at least.

We live in a very socially connected world; a good deed comes around much faster than what you think it takes.

GETTING LUCKY:

Building a solid foundation is as important as making sure your pizza has a sturdy crust to hold all those delicious toppings.

- For a moment let's go back to school:

For some reason, I remember those basic, yet fundamental concepts taught in school that somehow stuck with me, whether it's a mathematical formula or the famous phrase, "Mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell." Don't ask me why, just...ugh.

Imagine if we had learned some other crucial skills during our growing years, like personal finance, negotiation, public speaking, or even the basics of economics. We'd be way better off today! It all comes down to the foundation we build, which sets the stage for better growth & success.

- Enough, get back:

That's why I believe in sharing what I've learned (and I'm still learning) to help students heading to the US for their Master's. It's all about building a strong foundation.

Let's get real for a moment. Studying in the US isn't all rainbows and unicorns. We need to go beyond romanticized notions and embrace the practical side of the experience. Sure, it's exciting, but surviving requires more than just dreams and aspirations. It calls for careful planning and preparation.

- My intentions for incoming students are crystal clear:

- 1] Helping students develop a flexible plan for their Master's journey, even if it changes a hundred times. Having a roadmap is crucial.
- 2] Sharing my experiments with different networking, job application strategies and my personal experiences to broaden their horizons.
- 3] Encouraging self-reliance while setting up a strong foundation and cultivating a clear mindset.

If you have your basics right, you will fear no recession and the number of applications you've sent out.

EVERYTHING boils down to your skills, seizing the right opportunities at the right time, and luck.

Rest assured; I am committed to mentoring 500 students by the end of this year (I am halfway there already – Link in the Bio) with the best knowledge I have gained over the past 1.5 years. I also draw from the experiences of others to guide you toward making the right choices and taking the most effective actions.

If you're an international student with aspirations of studying in the US, feel free to connect with me—I'm here to support you every step of the way.

5. Networking

Last week, I had the privilege of hosting a webinar on "How to Network & build connections" for all the students planning to come to the US this Fall. It was an amazing experience sharing my insights and strategies with the upcoming batch, and I believe that building a strong foundation and making the best use of time during those two years master's program is crucial for success.

Another part of my mentoring is to introspect what I could have done better figure my mistakes and teach it to the batch coming ahead, that's exactly what I did.

During the webinar, I highlighted 7 invaluable networking strategies that I've personally been implementing consistently for the past 2 months. Here's a quick overview:

1. Leverage the Power of Alumni: Reaching out to alumni is undoubtedly the most effective way to increase responses and establish meaningful connections.
2. Prepare and Practice: Having well-prepared documents and responses ready before starting networking helps immensely. As you gain experience, you'll become more comfortable and adept at carrying forward the conversation.
3. Follow-Up for Success: Persistence pays off! Following up three times, once every week, after the connection is accepted can significantly increase your conversion rate.
4. Use ChatGPT to Your Advantage: I utilized ChatGPT to its fullest potential, guiding me on what questions to ask and conducting thorough research about the companies I was interested in.
5. Optimal Time for Coffee Chats: From my experience, I've found that 20-30 minutes is the ideal duration for a productive coffee chat with someone.

6. Show Appreciation: Always express gratitude for their time before and after the chat. If there were any tasks or suggestions provided during the conversation, make sure to follow-up on them promptly.

7. Expand Your Network: If you're interested in specific industries but lack alumni connections there, don't hesitate to reach out to professionals in the positions you aspire to or even higher up.

As of today, I have over 732 connection requests awaiting acceptance in my "manage invitations" section! Each connection request was personalized, which demonstrates the effort that goes into Networking.

Consistency has been the key to my success in networking. Every Monday, I send out connection requests until I reach the maximum limit set by LinkedIn. Throughout the rest of the week, I diligently follow-up and schedule calls, maintaining this routine week after week.

Discipline and consistency can open doors to incredible opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who attended the webinar, and if you missed it, feel free to reach out for any additional information or resources. Let's continue to grow together and achieve great things through effective networking!

6. Standing Out at the Career Fair: My Unique Approach

This year's career fair at Syracuse University brought together thousands of aspiring candidates, all vying for the attention of potential employers. Amidst the sea of resumes and elevator pitches, I decided to take a unique approach to set myself apart.

I created a job seeker business card for myself – a concept that had been talked about but rarely seen in action.

Here's what you'd find on my one-of-a-kind business card:

1. A concise introduction to who I am
2. My preferred job titles
3. My desired work location
4. QR codes linking to my resume and LinkedIn profile

As I visited each booth at the career fair, the reaction from recruiters and hiring managers was nothing short of astonishment. They admitted they had never encountered such an innovative approach before.

In a competitive job market, sometimes you need to step outside the box and showcase your skills and creativity. While it may not guarantee an immediate offer, it certainly opens doors to opportunities.

It's not just about waiting for an opportunity; sometimes, you need to create your own.

Goldman Sachs

After 8+ months of navigating this job market post-graduation, I finally made it.

I will never in my life forget the past year of unemployment and how it has changed me.

After 3 rounds, 4 hours, and 7 interviews I joined Goldman Sachs as a Senior Analyst, Risk Management a month ago and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity.

Someone without any pedigree and given this cruel job market to get into GS is a very huge accomplishment and I truly take pride in what I've achieved.

For the past 8+ months:

- I didn't have the guts to talk to my family and make eye contact with them during video calls and I hardly spoke to them as I would break down after the call.

- I doubted myself so much for the roles that I was applying to and if I could get a job at all.

The "Next steps" emails weren't making me happy anymore after 5 months of graduation.

- I was scared that I did not possess the mental capacity to perform and give my best in interviews. How will I land a job anyway?

I've been in tougher situations than this both physically and mentally and I've never given up on any kind of situation ever and I did not this time either.

I had my parents' picture in front of my screen the whole time, touched them before every single interview, looked into the mirror, and pushed myself through every single interview of GS.

There were weeks and months when I didn't step out of my house to take a walk or do anything at all.

I just did two things:

- applied for jobs
- prepared for interviews

8-10 hours every single day for the past 8 months.

I totally understand you when you don't feel like:

- talking to anyone
- doing applications
- giving interviews
- getting up the next morning after a final round of rejection

I wish I could say there is a way around it. If I am an outlier, then so are you.

Keep doing what you are doing because we don't have a choice, the market is improving, you are almost there, and it is just about time. Cheers!

29. Job seeker

October and November remain the most important months for job seekers before it gets cold.

Personally, it ate me up to sit like ducks the entire December and January until the hiring started.

As someone who graduated in December one of the challenging parts was graduating at a time when the hiring is the least of all months.

This is the final quarter of the year, not to scare you but since I have been through this, I wanted to mention that the first call I got after December was towards the end of February and it surely can differ for everyone depending upon the market.

The market has picked up already, September was great for hiring and fewer layoffs, so it is a great sign.

The whole point of this post is to remind you that it is time:

- to go all in full throttle.
- to make those few extra applications before you sleep, cold emails, take referrals and push as much as you can.
- if you are interviewing make sure you practice like it is your last interview ever, spend hours researching the company, values, mission, and vision, and practice narrating your stories in the STAR format.
- during interviews dress well, sit straight, chin up, and wear your confidence along with that killer smile of yours.

I hear you that you are frustrated, anxious, and don't see an end to this but your perseverance during these times will only make a difference.

I believe in you and so should you. Good Luck!

30. LinkedIn search

You must have heard that the “LinkedIn search bar is Gold” and it genuinely is.

Since I spent a lot of time looking for a job, I tested a few variations of them, and these are the TOP 2 that worked very well for me.

1]

If you:

- want to send a cold email
- know an industry you want to work in OR are getting calls from a specific industry, meaning – if that is where your resume is getting picked
- say e.g. you worked for a semiconductor company, and you feel the chance of your resume getting picked is the highest in this sector ----- get a list of companies related to the sector from ChatGPT

Do the following NOW instead of saving it along with your 100 other posts that you still haven’t opened:

- a] Search “hiring”
- b] Filter by Posts – Top match – Past 24 hours AND Author Company (List your companies here)
- c] Now you will see hiring posts directly from the targeted companies posted by a recruiter or the hiring manager or team members.
- d] You can now reach out, send an InMail, or a cold mail.

You can also tweak this to make it relevant to your role, I used to check this page at least 3-4 times a day until I saw repeated posts.

2]

If you:

- have a LinkedIn premium
- role, location, and company in mind (not required but if you have it, it will give you an edge)

- a] Go to search and press ENTER
- b] Filter by People – Location – Actively hiring (select roles) – Current company

You can keep playing with these, why this work because these 100+ people legit want to hire and these are not ghost openings, you can now follow steps c & d.

31. Retrospect

Reflecting every 30 - 45 days during my job search journey helped me evaluate my strategies and gave me clear directions to work more effectively.

If my resume didn't get picked for a month, I'd reassess it.

I would sit down and figure out where exactly all my calls were from, 60% were through referrals and cold mailing to the recruiter or the HM. I immediately started investing more time in those channels.

Another great insight: we often believe we're ideal for the roles we apply for because we feel we can do it given an opportunity, even if we lack direct experience, but the reality paints a different picture.

E.g.

Almost 6 months before I graduated and a few months afterward I applied exclusively to Product roles because that is something I love doing, I have good knowledge about it both theoretical and hands-on.

In my mind, I was a great PM, but maybe my resume didn't reflect that.

Meaning:

- I had no PM experience in the US.
- I had not worked for a company with a title anywhere close to PM prior.
- I was just another co-founder who built a product, but which wasn't enough in such a competitive field.

The truth is, while we can grow into roles with the right training and opportunities, this job market often demands proof of experience up front.

It was clear that I didn't stand a chance in Product for now and instantly pivoted to Six Sigma roles leveraging my US experience and certifications.

Surprisingly now my resume started getting picked for Six Sigma-related roles.

To reiterate, reflection, pivoting at the right time, and focusing on what's yielding results made all the difference in navigating this job market.

32. Behavioral

The STAR format is NOT the only thing important while answering behavioral questions, the context of your answer is too.

Example:

Let's say you asked me, "Tell me about a time you led a project"

Answer: "Sure, this is when I was working at CXtec as a Lean Six Sigma Consultant where my team was responsible for overhauling the inventory management system."

Here's the issues:

- Do you know what CXtec is or what it does? Likely not.

Even if you proceed with a well-structured STAR response it might not create a major impact because it lacks context, don't answer just for the sake of it.

Instead, I could say:

"Sure, this is when I worked at CXtec as a Lean Six Sigma Consultant but before diving into the details, let me briefly explain what CXtec does – it is an IT hardware company that refurbishes hardware products like routers, switches, cables, etc." I would go on with the answer now.

You got the point how it made sense with just a slight adjustment, but it makes a huge difference.

Remember, you are meeting the interviewers for the very first time and they have no background on your experiences/projects, so don't assume.

Do not get intimidated by the interview process – easier said than done, I know! But I learned along on the way too.

Ask them to elaborate on the questions if you do not understand.

And most importantly, practice telling your story clearly and in detail—it takes preparation to deliver a great narrative.

33. No matter what, initially, the "Next step" email hits differently.

Here's the fun part though: after my first interview, I had already imagined myself working for this company, dreaming of a job, daydreams, the whole thing.

Chill, you are not alone. We've all been there.

I hope you get that email today but remember – don't start planning your first team happy hours just yet! :p

34. Emailing short and crisp

How I created cold email templates for job outreach:

I would make the cold email short and crisp as no one is interested in reading an essay about our lives.

Here's what I did:

1] Subject Line: Short, clear, and relevant subject line to grab attention.

2] Introduction: Started with 2-3 sentences introducing myself and, my background (highlight any pedigree if you have), and mention any expertise I have that can add value to this role.

Here's the most important step, highlighting how I can add value to their business or solve a problem.

3] Value Proposition: 4 bullet points that are relevant to my resume and JD not just picking keywords from JD but something that I have genuinely worked on only those should be present, read this step again.

4] Call-to-action: Link any portfolio or relevant links, attach my resume, and send it out.

Key Insights:

- Emails sent on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in the first half gave me the highest response rate.

- Following up is a game-changing technique, be it on LinkedIn messages or for emails, do not email/message and forget, always follow up 2-3 times with a difference of 4-5 business days.

- I used Hunter.io and RocketReach for email syntax.

- I trained a GPT chat by attaching my resume so it could create cold email templates tailored to my experience.

You can copy and paste the first half to GPT, and you should have your template.

No one knows your strengths better than you. Tailor your template to highlight how you can add value and align your skills with the JD.

Try to make your template this time, it helps a lot.

The only subscription that I have had and that has truly helped me over the past year is ChatGPT.

35. Should I focus on applying or studying for the interview?

While there is no perfect answer to this question, here's what worked for me:

Balancing both is tough, if I focused too much on applications and didn't prepare enough for an interview, I'd feel guilty if it didn't go well.

But If I spent more time studying and didn't make enough progress with applications, I'd feel I wasted some valuable time.

Honestly, I never fully cracked this and I am not sure if there is a one-size-fits-all solution.

I struggled with this for a long time and realized that balancing and compartmentalizing both is crucial.

E.g. Let's say it is Monday, and I have a call scheduled for Friday:

- I'll dedicate the first half to interview prep while I am fresh and then the second half to applications
- On Thursday I will set aside the whole day for preparation, practicing stories, and refining my elevator pitch
- If your call is after a weekend, study and prepare during the weekend because there will be fewer applications

Think practically, strategize, and adapt based on the situation.

All this will vary depending upon the nature, the role, and the stage of the interview.

Spend more time prepping if it is your final round as it is hard to get there in the first place.

For the screening round, you may not need as much preparation, but you see the point of balancing & allocating time here, right?

It also depends on the role:

- SDE, DA, and BA need more time brushing up their concepts and practicing LeetCode.
- PMs need more time with case studies, so eat the big frog first.

Remember, you don't have an offer until you have one so balance both.

37. New student

For anyone who has recently moved to the US (or arrived last Fall), by now you've probably realized it's NOT about:

- location
- program
- university
- course
- scholarship/fees
- RA/TA/On campus

What really matters? A good ROOMMATE.

I hope your roommate cooks for you today!

38. Who to Cold email?

Are you randomly picking up HM/recruiters and cold emailing them?

While it is a decent approach, do you have the time to send it to every HM/recruiter? Probably not.

If you haven't checked out my cold email template yet, please do it.

Here's when I reach out/cold email:

1. If I know who is hiring for the role:
 - a. It might be someone in your LinkedIn feed.
 - b. Sometimes the job posting mentions who's hiring.
 - c. Use the "actively hiring" filter on LinkedIn [I have written a separate post on filters too]
2. Only if there is a 60-70% match with the JD – If not, there is no point.

I got a call from Tesla because I emailed the HM, and she forwarded it to the recruiter.

There are about hundreds of candidates sending connection requests or InMail.

Do you think it is humanly possible for them to reply to all? Absolutely not.

Why do most people prefer to send out connection requests?

It is simple, easy, and feels like a short cut.

Don't be one of them, take that extra step to stand out in this competitive market by reaching out to them via email.

I usually skip referrals in these cases because my goal is for the HM to see my profile directly.

Referrals and cold emailing are a longer process, but ironically, the only way to stand out and get calls.

39 Pressure

At this point, a lot of you must be thinking about every wild outcome if you don't get a job, like:

- Paying off the education loan
- Wondering, why are you not getting calls
- Doubting the decision to pursue master's
- Regretting not gaining experience before coming to the US
- Wishing you'd learned something more relevant
- Asking, "Why me?"

Let's not even get to expectations.

Some of this is the past; it doesn't matter now.

Some of it is the future; it's out of your control.

All of it is tied to one thing: getting a job.

Focus on what you can control.

- Putting in 8-10 hours daily applying, cold emailing, and taking referrals
- Getting your resume reviewed and refined [Send today to 50 people in your network, 5 will respond.]
- Reflecting on what strategies are working for you

Do you have the time to:

- Sit and question about why companies ask for 2-3 YOE for entry-level jobs? No.
- Vent about companies ghosting or not giving feedback? No.
- Stress about companies not hiring international students due to sponsorship? No.

We're not here to change the system, we're here to change our own destinies for the better.

This job market doesn't define you. Don't make a rough market make you question your worth.

The only thing that matters is maximizing your TODAY: what can you do to make the most of this day?

And yes, the mental pressure is real and gets to your head especially during interview, I don't know how to fully get rid of it because it is natural, and I have no mantra for it.

Working on what I can control was the only mantra I found that kept me going.

Take 3 deep breaths, calm your nerves, and nail it.

40. May 2025

Are you graduating in May 2025 and wondering if it's the right time to start job hunting?

While it is true that recruiters often look for candidates who can join immediately, getting an early start is a huge advantage.

It is not about timing; it's about understanding the process.

Job searching includes multiple steps that require time to refine like:

- 1] Finding roles that match your skills
- 2] Iterating on your resume
- 3] Networking and connecting to alumni
- 4] Interview preparation [behavioral, technical, case studies]
- 5] Dealing with rejections, especially in later rounds
- 6] Developing your elevator pitch and narrative

All the above will set a good foundation for your job search journey.

Imagine going through all of it a month before or even worse after graduating.

Get used to this while the stakes are lower.

Once you are about to graduate or have already graduated the pressure to perform is intense which is why a lot of candidates get overwhelmed as to what to do because there is so much to do.

Everyone will go through each of the points above, it is just a matter of when.

Start today, and in a few months, you will be familiar with the cycle of applications, rejections, resume iterations, and improvements.

You will never be prepared to apply, applying is where preparation begins.

41. Phase 1: 6 Months Before Graduation

- Apply to every role where you match any keyword in the job description
- Mass cold applications: 30, 40, even 50 a day
- Mostly rejections

Phase 2: 3 Months Before Graduation

- Targeted applications for roles closely aligned with your past or recent experience.
- Mix in referrals, cold emails, and tailored resumes for relevant roles.
- Begin interviewing and reflecting on your job search strategies.

Phase 3: 3 Months Post-Graduation

- Applying only to roles that match your key experience, maybe 2 or 3 roles.
- Fewer cold applications, more referrals and cold emails, doubling down on what's working.
- Final round interviews and ongoing refinement of strategies.

As you move from Phase 1 to Phase 3, the pressure builds: expectations rise, and peer pressure, self-doubt, and anxiety creep in.

But by this point, you're aware of what works for you and it's only a matter of time.

The sooner you go through this, the sooner you realize what works best.

Focus on what you can control and stay on the course.

42. Dashboard

To all the folks applying for BA/DA roles: if you don't have a "Netflix" dashboard to showcase your skills, please don't be surprised if recruiters ghost you! :p

43.

Finally, one piece of paper that could make all the difference: your resume.

You've probably reviewed it yourself a thousand times, and by now, it's tough to spot what needs improvement.

That's where a fresh set of eyes can help.

If it's been 35 – 45 days without a single call back, it's time to refresh your resume.

Here's a quick approach:

1. Reach out to 40 – 50 connections TODAY – specifically those currently in the roles you're targeting. Politely request a resume review.
2. Expect 4 – 5 replies - when they do, send them the docx file. Request comments at their convenience and mention that a call isn't necessary (unless they prefer it).
3. Follow up in 3 – 4 days if you haven't heard back.
4. Incorporate common feedback and use your understanding of the job market to prioritize relevant suggestions.

Craft every bullet point with Results and Consequences in mind.

Tools, skills, and tech stack are fine, but focus on the impact you made.

Write out your initial bullet point, then use GenAI to refine it, but don't just copy-paste.

Remember: your resume will either sell you – or sell you out.

47.Relevancy

This job market is about relevance.

1. How much of your experience matches the role?
2. How much of your experience aligns with the domain/industry of the company?

Your resume has a higher chance of getting picked if it directly aligns with the role and industries.

Here's how you strategize your job search:

1. Use this filter for that

Search hiring by Posts – Top Match – Past 24 hours – Author Company

2. List all the “relevant companies” here [Get a list from ChatGPT]

3. Now scan for recent hiring posts from these companies.

This is a very niche filter, make the most of it by tweaking it as per your roles.

Now, stand out in your outreach:

Instead of the standard connection requests, craft a cold email to the recruiter or hiring manager.

Yes, it takes time to write, find their email, send it, and follow up — but this effort can set you apart from the 100 other candidates doing the easy thing.

If you're aiming for a different outcome, think outside the box, and take the extra step.

48.

If you've recently started working and behavioral questions make you anxious, this is for you.

Most of us have faced those interview moments where a question comes up, and we think, "I don't know, I haven't been in that situation before."

Been there myself!

Now, a few months into my job, I've found a helpful approach to tackle these.

Here's what I do:

I've started documenting every process that challenges me and tracking how I approach solving it.

This way, I'm building a toolkit of stories that answer behavioral questions in real-time. For example:

For e.g.

Recently, I had to coordinate a meeting with stakeholders across time zones, learn new processes and tools.

I noted down the problem, the steps I took, and the outcome. This simple record can now fuel multiple behavioral answers.

Make it a habit to jot down key points after challenging tasks.

You don't need to write every detail, just enough to remind you of the approach and outcome.

Over time, you'll have a catalog of real experiences, ready to use in STAR format when those questions come up.

And the best part?

These are your genuine experiences, making it easier to remember and deliver them authentically in interviews.

With years of experience, we tackle so many projects, take on challenges, and gain valuable insights—but how often do we document it all? Even if you note down highlights every couple of weeks, by year's end, you'll have an impressive record of your growth and achievements

49. The only reason LinkedIn kept the 'Saved posts' button out of sight is because they knew we never actually go back to it anyway :p

50.

There's so much we have now that it was once just a dream.

Five years ago, back in 2020, I was fighting to keep my company afloat, barely making ends meet.

Fast forward to now – almost three years into my journey in the US – I'm filled with gratitude.

As humans, we're wired – constantly seek more, and that's natural.

But today take a moment to realize that wherever you are today, you likely have something you once dreamed about.

Be proud of that. Be proud of yourself.

Yes, there's still a long way to go, and more challenges await. True.

But don't forget to pause, reflect on your progress, and let that build confidence in you.

No matter where you are in the world, write down everything you have now that you didn't have five years ago.

You'll see just how grateful and blessed you are (trust me, me too!)

I get it – a lot of this probably came with a side of stress, anxiety, and frustration.

But just for today, set that aside and go treat yourself to a ridiculously overpriced slice of avocado toast or a guilt-free midday nap.

You've earned it

51.

To those planning for a Master's in the US for 2025:

Studying as an international student in the US falls into the high risk, high reward quadrant.

It is far more challenging than the Instagram reels make it seem.

During my time at Syracuse University, where I mentored over 2,000 students and was the first student hired by the admissions department of the College of Engineering, I witnessed this firsthand.

Every semester, at least 7-10 students would come to me within the first month, overwhelmed and ready to pack up and go home.

The struggles are real like:

- 1] Coping with harsh weather
- 2] Managing part-time jobs and roommates
- 3] Doing every single task independently
- 4] Dealing with homesickness.

Trust me, a few of them couldn't make it through and decided to return home, even though I'd sit with them, helping to weigh the pros and cons and emphasizing that it gets better with time.

Why does this happen? Often, it's because:

- 1] There was a lack of clarity about pursuing a Master's
- 2] People came without a clear purpose (even if money is your main motivator, have a purpose)
- 3] They didn't fully evaluate the risks before coming
- 4] They were too naive and not practical enough to handle the situation far from home

It's true: the rewards can be great, but the journey demands a lot from you before things fall into place.

I knew the challenges I was signing up for, so I rarely complained about sponsorship issues, the lottery system, or the visa timer.

I'm not here to change the system but to change my destiny, and if the system improves along the way, that's just a bonus.

My intentions are simple and genuine: to educate incoming and current students and professionals by sharing my personal experiences.

Think about it: Have you ever seen someone who's secured an internship, a job, an H-1B, and settled down complaining about these things? (Well, aside from the fear of layoffs!)

Most of them are just enjoying the rewards that come after the struggle.

52.

While interview expectations may vary by role, there are a few essentials everyone should cover without fail:

1] Company Research - Know the company's:

- Mission
- Vision
- Core values
- Products/services
- Recent news

Don't just skim—really commit this to memory.

2] Elevator Pitch

- Tailor your pitch to the job description (JD)
- Use relevant keywords and highlight experiences that align with the role

3] Be Honest and Authentic

- If you mention a skill or keyword, make sure you know it well.
- Research and, if possible, prepare a story aligning your experience with that skill.
- Remember: interviewers can easily spot a bluff.

53. Key insights on interview

Remember these 2 key insights when gearing up for your next interview:

1] Align the company's core values with your experiences. For instance, if a core value is customer-driven, you could say:

"I'd like to highlight one of [Company Name]'s core values - customer-driven." Then, connect this to your experience by framing a story around it.

This approach shows cultural alignment and a thoughtful understanding of what the company values.

2] If asked, "Why [Company Name]?" Along with your main answer, mention recent news or initiatives taken by the organization.

This demonstrates your passion for the company and the depth of your research.

Ensure you've read the details thoroughly, as it leaves a lasting, positive impression on the interviewer when done well.

54. **Here are 11 things you can work on until the job market picks up around mid to late January:**

1. **Resume Review & Refinement:** Improve and tailor your resume.
2. **Network Building:** Connect with alumni and former colleagues.
3. **Portfolio Creation:** If your role requires a portfolio, take this time to enhance or build it.
4. **Dashboard Building:** Create or improve dashboards relevant to your field to demonstrate your analytical skills.
5. **Practice LeetCode:** Focus on your chosen tech stack and keep your coding skills sharp.
6. **Behavioral Interview prep:** Practice and frame your answers for common behavioral questions (you can find 26 key questions in LinkedIn's job section under Interview prep).
7. **Self-Reflection:** Evaluate your job search journey. What strategies have worked? What needs adjustment? What roles did you get the most call for?
8. **Explore US-based staffing companies:** They can be a good source of contract roles (avoid consultancies).
9. **Upskill with courses/certifications:** Take short courses in areas that are relevant to your field.
10. **Mock Interviews:** Schedule mock interviews with peers or mentors.
11. **Take time to recharge:** Give yourself some time to rest and reset at the end of the year.

It's natural to lose motivation without imminent deadlines, and most people won't act during this downtime.

But trust me if you invest your energy in these areas, you'll be ahead of the curve and enter interviews with greater confidence than most.

56.

It's heart-wrenching to see people with exceptional qualifications working jobs far below their potential just to make ends meet.

Knowing you're capable of more while feeling stuck is incredibly disheartening.

Do people in these situations sometimes want to pack up and return home? Absolutely.

But the real question is: Do they even have a choice? [We all know the answer]

For students seeking jobs or those who've been laid off, many of us are knee-deep in debt – debt that could take years to pay off.

Imagine how much scarier it gets if you're married, have kids, a mortgage, insurance, and school fees to worry about.

The pressure is overwhelming.

To students planning their Master's in the U.S: Don't come without a solid game plan.

You need:

- a clear purpose and vision for why you're here.
- backup plans (Plan A, B, and C).
- a thorough understanding of the risks, including immigration restrictions.
- mental and emotional strength to handle the challenges.

We're often spoon-fed: everything handed to us, shortcuts available at every turn, never read textbooks to find an answer.

But in the U.S., you'll be balancing daily chores, assignments, part-time work, exams, internships, and job hunting – all at once and all on your own.

If you need guidance, you must actively seek it.

And that's why many struggle; they've never had to do it before.

The truth is there's no blueprint for success here.

It demands resilience, adaptability, and relentless effort.

58. Interview Prep

Part 1/2

From 8 Months of Unemployment to Acing 7 Interviews at Goldman Sachs: How I Stayed Sane

Gathering the energy to prepare, let alone sit through interviews, felt impossible. Many of you might relate.

Waking up to endless rejections had become my daily reality, but I didn't let it stop me.

I kept applying to companies that felt out of my league—because how else would I get there?

One day, it finally happened. I received an email from Goldman Sachs.

I reread the email just to make sure it wasn't a mistake.

Think about it: I have a background in electronics engineering, experience in travel and manufacturing, and no direct connection to finance.

In such a tough job market, landing an interview with Goldman Sachs felt almost unbelievable. But I saw it as my chance to give it my all.

The toughest part wasn't just clearing the interviews, it was staying consistent.

Each round tested not only my knowledge but also my confidence.

There were moments when self-doubt crept in, and I questioned if I was good enough.

Balancing intense preparation with the weight of uncertainty wasn't easy.

But here's what helped me thrive: focusing on one step at a time.

Instead of worrying about the entire process, I poured my energy into doing my best in each round.

That mindset kept me grounded through all 7 interviews, even on the toughest days.

A Key Learning from This Experience:

Your past doesn't define you.

If I had let my unconventional background discourage me, I might have missed this opportunity to grow and prove myself.

To anyone out there struggling: keep faith in yourself.

Take it one step at a time, and trust that your moment will come.

You've got this!

59. Part 2/2

My journey:

I treated this as my last shot and prepared like never before—just as I had for every previous interview.

Here's how it unfolded:

- **Round 1:** Hiring Manager.
- **Round 2:** Superday – 3 interviews in one day, 1 the next.
- **Round 3:** 2 final interviews.

Each interview lasted 30–45 minutes. My focus? Nail the first 15 minutes - because that could make all the difference in moving forward.

The interviews covered a mix of situational, behavioral, resume-based, project-related, and product/service-related questions, along with a few on finance concepts and PM skills.

The interviewers were kind and supportive, clarifying any ambiguous questions, which helped me stay confident throughout the process.

After the final round, every passing hour felt like a lifetime, filled with constant overthinking - replaying every answer, wondering if I could've said something different.

Every notification on my phone felt like it could be *the* email, and the uncertainty was both exhausting and overwhelming

The constant battle to stay hopeful amidst the uncertainty.

My Strategy:

1. Tailoring my Experience:

- I carefully aligned my past work with the job description, focusing on relevant keywords like "Process Improvement" and "Risk Management."
- I structured every answer in the STAR format—clear, detailed, and leaving no room for ambiguity.

2. Bridging the Gap:

- Without a finance background, I emphasized how my skills could translate to the finance domain. I frequently added phrases like, "This is how I'd apply this in a finance context," to connect my experience to the role.

3. Researching Thoroughly:

- I dived deep into understanding GS and Marcus, even tracking recent news and developments.
- If I missed referencing something in one round, I made sure to incorporate it into the next.

60. 2 Phases

Stuck in the endless loop of applications? Here's how to break through

Every job seeker is stuck in one of two phases during their search, and the goal is to transition from one to the other as quickly as possible:

Phase 1: Applying

This phase involves:

- Submitting as many applications as you can.
- Tailoring your resume for each role.
- Networking and taking referrals.
- Sending cold emails.
- Using filters on LinkedIn to find the right opportunities.

Why it's tough:

- It's the most frustrating phase because feedback is rare.
 - You often don't know what's going wrong or why you're not getting calls.
 - It becomes a test of persistence and patience as you keep working without clear answers.
-

Phase 2: Interviewing

Once you transition to this phase, the focus shifts to:

- Preparing for interviews—round by round.
- Handling rejections and learning where you went wrong.

Common challenges:

- Lack of confidence.
- Inadequate STAR-format stories.
- Technical skills or answers that could be stronger.

Unlike Phase 1, in this phase, you typically know what went wrong and can work on improving specific areas.

How to Transition and Succeed

Here's what you can do to move forward:

- **Maximize each day:** Ask yourself, "How can I maximize my today?" Focus on actions like applying, networking, and cold emailing.
- **Transition to Phase 2:** Your goal is to get interview calls—do everything possible to reach this stage.

- **Ace Phase 2:** Once in the interview phase:
 - Prepare thoroughly.
 - Be confident and avoid repeating past mistakes.
 - Craft strong stories and refine your elevator pitch.
 - Continuously improve with every interview round.
-

Remember

- **Phase 1** tests your **persistence**.
- **Phase 2** challenges your **preparation**.

Transition quickly, learn at every stage, and you'll see results!

61. Process

Trust the process—but is the process trusting us?

That's a question that often lingers in our minds.

Applying to 200+ jobs per week without a single callback can shake anyone's confidence. But here's the real question:

"Are you confident in your resume? If not, how will the recruiter be?"

Here's what often happens:

- We judge our resumes ourselves, tweak a few keywords to match the job description, hit 'apply,' and then face a pile of rejections.
- While tailoring your resume for every single role isn't realistic, there are steps you can take to maximize your chances of landing the right opportunities (trust me, I've learned this the hard way!).

How to Make the Process Trust You:

1. Ask peers for a resume review
 - Reach out to individuals with similar backgrounds or experience.
 - Discuss the specific roles you're targeting and get their feedback on whether your resume aligns with those roles.
2. Track patterns in your applications
 - Keep a record of every job application that progresses to Stage 1.
 - Look for trends: Are there specific domains or skills that consistently get callbacks?
 - Use these insights to refine your resume and target similar opportunities.
3. Leverage LinkedIn and professional communities
 - Connect with peers or mentors who've successfully landed roles you aspire to.
 - Their advice and feedback can help identify gaps in your resume or job-hunting strategy.
4. Seek constructive feedback where possible
 - Not all companies provide feedback after rejections, but if they do, use it!
 - Even a small insight can guide you in improving your resume or cover letter for future applications.
5. Highlight specific achievements and relevant skills
 - Matching keywords is important, but it's not enough.
 - Showcase measurable accomplishments and the impact of your work differentiates you from candidates relying solely on buzzwords.

Final Thoughts: Building confidence in your resume (and yourself) is a crucial part of the job search.

Keep refining, keep learning, and trust that with the right adjustments, the process will start trusting your ba

64. Relevance/Pivot

Hope is not a strategy – apply where you truly fit.

The harsh reality of pivoting in this job market

One of the biggest reasons many of us pursued a Master's or MBA was to pivot – to transition into a different field or role.

For example:

Consulting → Data

SDE/DA → Product Management

Supply Chain → Project/Program Management

But the unfortunate truth? This job market isn't making that easy.

Competition is at an all-time high.

Companies want candidates who've already done the job (often in the same domain).

Relevancy matters more than ever – you either fit or get filtered out.

Every person I've spoken to who recently landed a job said the same thing:

"My previous role/domain matched exactly with what the company was looking for."

So, what should you do?

If you're struggling to pivot, don't completely shut out your existing expertise.

Apply for roles in your current domain alongside your desired roles.

Leverage your strengths while keeping an eye on long-term transitions.

I get it – this isn't what you signed up for, but adaptability is key. The right move now can still lead to where you want to be.

Apply to roles where you are a strong fit, not just where you could be one.

65.

The job search is a process, not a numbers game

Keep applying.

Focus on 2-3 job titles – casting too wide a net won't help.

Maximize your chances of getting a call by refining your resume, networking, and being strategic.

Try different approaches instead of just hitting 'apply' – cold apply, take a referral, cold email, use LinkedIn filters.

Move from application to interview phase fast – the sooner you start interviewing, the better.

Applying will get you interviews, but interviews will get you a job.

There should be no deadline to any strategy – keep going until you land something.

Reflect and analyze every 30-40 days, track what's working, and double down on it.

Do not let external news about layoffs or job market conditions affect you. Focus on what you can control.

Dress well for interviews, prepare thoroughly, and answer in a structured STAR format, not in long-winded paragraphs.

Keep a structured job search—track applications, follow up, and stay organized

67.

Stop chasing a job – start chasing interview calls.

Change your perspective from “I want a job” to “I want interview calls”

Getting a job is a process.

Getting interview calls is a task.

Shift your focus, and you'll feel less stressed and more in control.

Your goal? Maximize your chances of getting calls.

How? By diversifying your application strategy:

→ Cold applications

→ Referrals

→ Cold emailing

→ LinkedIn filters

Don't obsess over how many applications you submit daily, that's just a dopamine hit with no real outcome.

Instead, focus on one step at a time.

Once you get a call, pour all your energy into that interview.

Then the next. Then next until you reach the final round and land an offer.

Applications get you calls. Calls get you offers.

Move from applying to interviewing as fast as possible.

69.

Relevancy > Interest – when job searching

There's a difference between applying for a role you're interested in and a role you're actually a good fit for.

The role you're a good fit for aligns with your experience and resume.

The role you're interested in?

You likely have just theoretical knowledge and excitement but little to showcase.

I learned this the hard way. You will have to be honest during your job search journey.

For 6+ months, I applied to PM roles – got barely two calls. Despite having 4+ years of experience, my resume wasn't making it past filters.

Then, I shifted my focus.

I doubled down on Process Improvement & Six Sigma – why?

Because my resume was getting hits there. I had:

→ 8 months of U.S. experience

→ A certification and project

How did I know this? I followed my own data.

Every 45 days, I analyzed 2 things:

1. What roles & industries were picking up my resume?

2. What application methods were working? (For me, referrals & cold emailing > cold applying)

The GS role I landed? Referred + Process Improvement-focused. See the point here?

In my 7 rounds of interviews, only one person asked about my 4 years in India. The rest focused on my U.S. experience – because it was directly relevant to the role.

Key takeaways:

→ U.S. experience matters.

→ Relevancy matters even more.

→ Follow your data, not what works for someone else.

→ Listen to those who've been through the job search, not just those going through it.

Go after what you're a good fit for – your interest can follow once you're in.

70.

“Isn’t it too early to apply for jobs?”

Someone graduating in May asked me about this yesterday.

I curiously asked why, and he added, “Recruiters usually only hire candidates who are closer to the graduation date.”

Absolutely correct.

But who said that candidate would be you?

Whenever you start applying, it’s already too late.

The company you’ve been waiting for – the one you’ve been perfecting your resume for – only two things will happen:

1. You luckily get a call but bomb the interview because you have zero practice.
2. You get straight-up rejected.

There is,

No perfect time to apply.

No perfect resume.

No guaranteed first attempt success.

Getting a job is a process – not an overnight event.

→ Rejections turn into calls.

→ Calls turn into practice.

→ Practice turns into confidence.

→ And that confidence lands you the offer.

You can’t wait for the RIGHT TIME to apply to your FAVOURITE company with your BEST resume because...

All four of those words cannot be in the same line at the same time.

STOP the wishful thinking of applying to your dream company and getting selected in the very first go.

Waiting for the right time to apply to your dream company with your best resume?

It’s like waiting for the perfect gym outfit before starting a workout – by the time you find it, someone else is already lifting your dream job.

The best time to start applying? Yesterday.

71.

Think you're too late to land an internship? Think again.

You still have 3 months left to apply for internships—don't lose hope yet.

Internship applications work very differently from full-time job applications.

The strategies and approach for internships are completely different from full-time opportunities.

Internships in my opinion are more of a quantity game than a quality one.

If I were you, I wouldn't spend too much time networking or chasing referrals at this point.

Instead, I'd focus on getting the basics right, especially as a fresher.

What are those basics?

→ Apply to as many roles as possible with essential keywords in your resume.

→ Stay consistent – don't do 50 applications today and then just 5 tomorrow.

→ Add relevant projects to your resume to showcase value, especially if you don't have much experience.

→ Use multiple platforms to maximize your reach.

→ Try to apply when there are <100 applicants to increase visibility.

Internships usually last 12-14 weeks in the summer, so what does that mean for you?

Recruiters aren't expecting you to know everything. They just want to see if you have some understanding of the role.

They don't need you to be an expert, they need you to learn after you join.

With the level of competition, the key is maximizing relevancy and applying early.

Start today!

Prompt:

"Illustrate a race against time with a calendar in the background, highlighting three months remaining. Show a person rapidly submitting multiple internship applications through different platforms, with keywords subtly glowing on their resume. In another corner, depict a recruiter reviewing a resume with 'relevant projects' highlighted, symbolizing the importance of showcasing skills over experience. Use a clean, motivating color palette of soft blues, greens, and warm beige to convey urgency while keeping the tone encouraging."

Does this match the message you want to convey?

72.

"I'll figure it out later."

That's what most students think when it comes to internships – until later it becomes too late.

I get it – coursework is overwhelming and applying feels like a chore. But if you don't make time now, you'll regret it later.

Landing an internship will:

- Give you legit US work experience
- Provide hands-on learning in your field
- Expose you to the real-world industry
- Help you figure out your career path
- Open doors to co-op opportunities

Most importantly, it will give you a huge edge in your full-time job search.

One internship can put you in the top tier of candidates. I've seen this firsthand.

When I interviewed at GS, 1/7 interviewers asked me much about my 4 years in India – instead, they focused on my 8-month US internship because it was relevant, and US experience matters.

For the next three months, prioritize.

Skip a few social events, manage your coursework efficiently, and make applying for internships a daily habit.

Start today. Even one application is progress. You won't regret it.

73.

Is an MBA/MS in the US worth it? A note to all incoming students.

The dream is tempting, but is the risk worth it?

Only you can decide.

Have you considered the risks, or are you ignoring the reality of today's job market?

If you're a fresher or someone with a few years of experience considering a pivot after pursuing an MBA/MS.

Could you take a moment to assess whether this decision is right, given what is happening in the US job market right now?

The job market has been tough for the last two years, and I'm not sure when or if things will improve by the time you graduate.

Many talented candidates, with impressive pedigrees, are still struggling to find jobs after over a year.

The competition pool is fierce, and opportunities are scarcer than ever.

No matter which school you attend, breaking into the market as a fresher will be extremely challenging, and securing your first opportunity may take longer than expected.

Does the ROI make sense right now?

Is the risk worth it?

→ Spending \$50K+ on tuition

→ Dealing with immigration stress

→ Navigating internships and job searches

→ Managing other financial and the emotional toll of starting over in a new country

Freshers often lack visibility into the corporate world, and seeking exposure makes more sense when the job market is thriving.

The reality is that at 21-22, handling financial and emotional stress can be very difficult when the market is not in your favor.

You must calculate whether you're prepared for the risk of returning home if things don't work out, especially when the financial burden could take a decade to pay off.

Make an informed decision – don't let wishful thinking cloud reality

74.

Internship or full-time job > On-campus job or driving Uber.

No debate.

The whole purpose of coming to the US was to live, learn, and earn – not just to survive.

You didn't take on all this financial burden just to settle for labor jobs with nominal pay.

That money might seem like a lot when converted, but is it really worth sacrificing your long-term future?

Ask yourself:

→ Did you come here to just get by, or to build a career?

→ Are you spending your time wisely, or just taking the easy way out?

Going after an RA/TA? That's fine, it can help with expenses.

I'm not completely against it – working part-time can help ease monthly expenses, and I get that.

But it should never be the end goal.

But neglecting what truly matters, like applying for internships or full-time roles, is a mistake.

Too many people spend \$50K+ on tuition, copy assignments, flunk courses, pile on unnecessary stress, and then end up working 20-hour shifts in a dining hall.

And here's the hard truth:

Many graduates without jobs are now driving Uber or working in restaurants full-time, instead of applying every single day and networking aggressively.

Relying too much on short-term earnings can derail your long-term plans, leaving you stuck in a cycle of financial strain and missed opportunities.

75.

3 Key Factors to Consider Before Choosing a University in the U.S.

For international students pursuing an MS, picking the right university goes beyond rankings. Here are three critical aspects to evaluate before making your decision:

1. Course Relevance and Availability

→ Does the university offer courses aligned with current industry trends like AI, Robotics, and Product Management?

→ Are these courses available when you need them?

Some universities expand student intake but fail to scale faculty or course availability, creating scheduling conflicts.

2. Career Support and Guidance

→ A strong career services team should offer personalized mentorship – resume building, LinkedIn optimization, and job search strategies.

Master's students don't just need punctuation fixes on their resumes; they need industry-specific guidance, networking support, and job market insights.

3. Company Engagement and Hiring Opportunities

→ Does the university attract top companies that offer internships and full-time roles, especially those willing to sponsor visas?

→ A good university doesn't just provide education – it actively connects students with recruiters and bridges the gap between talent and opportunity.

Your education is a major investment, so do your due diligence.

A great university isn't about just having a fancy campus – it's about ensuring you have the right skills, support, and career prospects to justify the cost.

And most of these answers?

You'll get them from someone who graduated recently, not from glossy brochures.

76.

It has been six months since my paychecks started hitting the bank – here's how I've been managing them.

With zero state tax in Texas, spending wisely can make a huge difference in savings.

I've always tracked every single expense in an Excel sheet – whether it's a carton of milk or a trip.

Moving to a new city makes you feel like buying all of Wayfair, but I stuck to only the essentials:

- Chair, standing desk, bed frame, mattress

- Air fryer, monitor & accessories

- Bookshelf, dresser, toiletries

Here's how my finances look today:

- 40 percent of my salary goes to expenses (rent, bills, groceries, sports, outings, etc.)

- 60 percent saved after tax

- First priority: Building a six-month emergency fund (Especially given the job market)

- 60 percent of savings goes toward education loan repayment (refinanced to 6 percent – more on that soon)

My biggest financial rule:

Before buying anything new, I wait 30 days. If I still need it, I buy it. If not, I move on.

No car? No problem.

I don't have a car, and I don't plan to buy one for at least two years.

I live 15 minutes from the office, and my total daily commute costs five dollars.

The idea that "you need a car in the U.S." is overhyped.

If you have a family or a long commute, it makes sense. Otherwise, it's a liability. Period.

I've just started my money management journey again and will keep sharing my learnings and mistakes and no way I mean to preach to anyone anything.

Am I doing it right? I don't know.

Is it working for me? Absolutely.

Take what resonates, ignore the rest.

77.

Your firsts always hold a special place – they may seem trivial in hindsight, but at that moment, they meant everything.

- F1 visa approval
- First year away from home
- First trip in the U.S.
- First RA/TA/on-campus job
- First lecture
- First friend in a new country
- First paycheck from campus work
- First internship
- First full-time job
- First big paycheck
- First car
- First house
- First relationship

Each of these moments shaped you.

You either learned from them or earned from them.

But as life moves forward, we often forget how much those "firsts" once meant to us.

We chase new goals, searching for the next milestone, yet rarely pause to appreciate how far we've come.

This isn't about living in the past – it's about being grateful for today while staying hopeful for tomorrow.

"You once wanted the life you have and if you don't like the life you have, you probably won't like the one you want but don't have either" – Unknown

78. Refinancing

How I reduced my Education Loan Interest by over 50%

From 13.95% → 10.24% → 6.25% and still aiming lower.

Here's how I did it:

- Phase 1: INR to USD [13.95% → 10.24%]

InCred to MPower (If your loan is already USD, you can skip this step.)

MPower is one of the few refinancing options for international students.

You may be eligible if:

- You live in the U.S. and have worked full-time for at least 3 months post-graduation.
- You have a valid visa (H1-B, F-1 on OPT) or are a DACA recipient, refugee, or asylum seeker with at least two years of work authorization.

Things to know:

- MPower charges an origination fee (typically 2-5% of the loan amount).
- The process can take a month or more, so keep paying for your installments.

This currency appreciation acted as a cushion, offsetting much of the interest accumulated over the past two years.

However, students who initially took loans in USD wouldn't have benefited from this advantage.

For example:

- If you took a ₹40L loan in 2022 when \$1 = ₹75, your principal would be \$53,333.
- If by 2025, \$1 = ₹87, the principal becomes \$45,977—a difference of \$7,356, reducing the impact of past interest accrual.

The origination fee is worth it because it allows for further refinancing at much lower rates (as low as 4% in later stages).

- Phase 2: USD to USD [10.24% → 6.25%]

MPower to SoFi

- Fast process – Application, approval, and funding were completed in less than a month.
- Zero transfer fees – No extra cost to move your loan.

→ Further refinancing options – After three timely payments, you may be eligible for rates as low as 4-5%.

Key takeaways:

- Converting INR to USD loans reduces interest and unlocks better refinancing options.
- Education loan rebates can help during tax filing.
- Even a 4% difference in interest rates can save a massive amount over time.

If you're an international student with an education loan, refinancing strategically can make a huge difference.

I understand this can be a complex topic, so please feel free to contact me if you have any questions :)

Consultancies are exploiting students, taking advantage of the tough job market and their desperation.

No one else can secure a job for you, you must do it yourself.

Paying \$3,000+ or giving up 10-20% of your salary isn't worth it.

Adding fake experience to your resume might work temporarily, but it won't take you far.

Think of your career like a plant – no one else will water it for you.

Calling a sapling a banyan tree won't make it one.

We came to the US for education and a better future, and it's OUR responsibility to apply for jobs.

These consultancies profit off fear.

They hire people for INR 10k – 20k to mass-apply on your behalf, something you should be doing yourself.

Saying "I don't have time to apply" is just an excuse.

It's like saying, "I don't have time to water my plants, but I want them to grow."

Instant gratification has ruined more careers than not getting a job at all.

Shortcuts may feel like an easy way out, but they don't build long-term success.

The job market is tough, but the skills and discipline you develop while applying and networking will serve you far beyond just landing a job.

Instead of paying someone else to do the work, invest that time in learning, networking, and improving your application strategy.

The effort you put into today will shape your career for years to come.

Having said that, staffing and recruiting can be valuable. Landing a contract role is a solid option.

80. Networking within the company

Networking doesn't stop once you land a job – it truly starts there.

In the past six months, I've spoken to over 50 people, from Analysts to MDs.

I've realized that intra-company networking is one of the most underrated career strategies.

No matter where you work, you already have a massive commonality, you are a part of the same company.

That alone gives you an entry point to start conversations.

Yet, many hesitate:

What if they're too busy?

What if they won't respond?

Remember.

We are all human, and we all want to feel important and useful.

The biggest honor most people get in their lives, or one of the biggest is when other people ask them for help.

So, be shameless about reaching out.

If you don't ask, the answer is always NO.

Talking to others can give you exposure to different teams, projects, and potential career moves within your company.

If there's a team you want to join in the future, start networking with them today.

Being fearless in approaching people has already opened doors for me.

Relationships > anything.

And company alumni?

That's a golden asset I'm already seeing the value of.

81.

After graduating in December 2023, I knew the job market was brutal.

So, I saved up three months' worth of expenses.

Unfortunately, my job search took longer than expected, and I had to borrow money from friends.

I could have taken shortcuts – just like some people I knew.

Some avoided paying rent, knowing landlords wouldn't check mid-semester.

The same people routinely ordered from marketplaces, used the items, and then returned them.

Some even placed unnecessary refund requests for groceries just to save a few bucks.

The point is: if you don't pay now, you will pay later – one way or another.

And when that time comes, the cost will be far greater.

That's how karma works.

One of those who lived rent-free had to hop between cities, still failed to land a job, and eventually had to pay a consultancy and a cut in their salary just to survive longer.

That's how things balance out.

Back in school, I traveled for free – just for fun, because I was naïve.

But even now, I see professionals skipping travel fares on their commute, returning orders just to get refunds.

These are mature adults, at least by age. Is it really that hard to be ethical?

Being financially unstable doesn't justify cutting corners.

It's like saying, "I lost my job or cannot get one, so fake consultancies are my only option to stay in the country."

What kind of logic is that?

I paid my rent, even when it hurt.

When my borrowed money ran out, I promised my landlord I'd pay the balance with my first paycheck – and I did, because that was the RIGHT thing to do.

You can't outrun your choices.

They'll catch up.

And trust me, the consequences won't be pretty.

"We must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy. - Albus Dumbledore"

82.

No one posts about the silence between applications and offers, but that's where the real story is.

We celebrate offers – and rightfully so – but not many talk about:

→ The months of uncertainty

→ The endless rejections

→ The final rounds that didn't convert

→ The guilt of not doing enough, even when you're giving it your all

There were days I applied to 30 roles and still felt unproductive.

Nights when I questioned whether this journey made sense anymore.

The inbox stayed silent.

The referrals went unanswered.

And yet, the next day, I had to show up and do it all over again.

What helped wasn't motivation – it was discipline.

→ Reflecting every 30-40 days

→ Tracking what was working

→ Doubling down on referrals and cold emails

→ Letting go of what didn't move the needle

You only need one "yes."

Until then, don't forget your process.

Everyone goes through the silence.

Everyone wants the dream job.

Great team, exciting work, perfect location, competitive pay, fast growth, hybrid setup...

All at once.

But let's be real – how many people actually get all of that in their first role?

The truth is: you need to get in first.

→ Get into the market

→ Get your foot in the door

→ Start somewhere

Your first job doesn't have to be your dream job.

But it should give you one of these:

- Skills
- Visibility
- Network
- Stability
- A stepping stone

We spend so much time perfecting resumes, waiting for the right role, refreshing job boards, and hoping for that opening – only to forget that momentum matters more than perfection.

People who took up roles that didn't check every box – but they showed up, learned fast, built credibility, and then moved closer to what they really wanted.

Your career isn't made in a single leap. It's shaped by the steps you take consistently.

Start somewhere.

You can always pivot.

But you can't pivot from a standstill.

84.

The most underrated skill in grad school?

Knowing how to ask for help.

Just asking. Clearly. Specifically. Without hesitation.

Most students hesitate –

"What if it sounds silly?"

"What if I'm bothering them?"

"What if they say no?"

So they sit with confusion.

Miss deadlines.

Struggle in silence.

But here's the truth: you're not expected to know everything.

Not about courses. Not about career paths. Not about job search strategies.

The difference between those who figure it out early and those who struggle for months?

A message.

A question.

A conversation.

Ask your seniors how they landed an internship.

Ask your professor if you're unsure about a topic.

Ask your roommate how they structured their cold emails.

People won't always have answers – but someone will.

And most are more willing to help than you think.

Closed mouths don't get fed.

You're in a new country, a new system, and a new phase of life.

Asking for help isn't a weakness – it's a strategy.

And it might be the best one you learn here.

85.

No one cares if you're tired.

No one's counting how many hours you applied yesterday.

No one's asking how many rejections you handled this week.

This job market runs on one thing: **results**.

Yes, it's hard.

Yes, it's exhausting.

Yes, it's unfair.

But at the end of the day, results > excuses.

You're either in the application phase or the interview phase.

If not in either, something has to change.

That doesn't mean burning yourself out.

It means staying consistent when no one's watching.

It means managing your energy, not your time.

It means waking up every day and asking, *"What can I do today to get one step closer?"*

No strategy works without discipline.

No amount of motivation lasts without systems.

This market will test you.

Not once, but every single day.

You can pause. You can rest.

But you can't afford to stop.

The moment you stop tracking your job search,
You stop treating it like a goal – and start treating it like a gamble.

You wouldn't build a product without tracking user feedback.
You wouldn't run a business without looking at numbers.

So, why run your job search blind?

For the longest time, I thought:

"I'm applying. I'm doing everything. Why am I not getting calls?"

Then, I started tracking.

I created a simple sheet with:

- Roles I applied for
- Company & domain
- Source (cold apply, referral, cold email)
- Resume version used
- Interview progress
- Feedback (when available)

After 30–40 days, patterns started to appear.

- I was getting more calls from roles that matched my recent experience.
- Referrals and cold emails got me 3x more responses than cold applies.
- Some resume versions worked better in certain domains.

That's when things started to change.

I stopped applying randomly.

I doubled down on what was working.

And the interviews started coming in.

You don't need a complex system.

You just need one you can stick to.

If a job search is your goal, track it like one.

Your clarity is hiding in your own data.

No one teaches you how to go from being a student to a working professional.

There's no course for it. No checklist. No orientation.

But the shift is real – and you'll feel it.

From:

- Submitting assignments at the last minute
- Taking naps at 3 PM
- Juggling 4 projects at once with half-attention
- Skipping meals to save time or money

To:

- Owning your calendar
- Being accountable for your work
- Saying “no” when you need to
- Realizing your time, energy, and focus actually matter

Your relationship with time changes.

You stop doing things just to finish them.

You start doing them because it reflects on you.

You learn the value of showing up – even when it's uncomfortable.

You think twice before spending your energy.

And slowly, you start becoming the person you once looked up to.

The transition doesn't happen overnight.

But when it starts, you'll know.

Because suddenly, everything feels a little more real.

Back home in India, life comes with built-in support systems.

“Beta, did you eat?”

“Your assignment is due tomorrow.”

“Here’s your tiffin, your schedule, your to-do list.”

Parents, teachers, relatives – someone is always checking in, guiding, nudging.

Whether you like it or not.

Then, one day, you land in a foreign country.

And suddenly, it’s just you.

You’re juggling classes, part-time jobs, grocery runs, cooking (burnt rice, anyone?), visa paperwork, and oh – trying to have a social life.

No reminders. No one is packing your lunch. No one notices if you skip a meal.

And it hits you: the real culture shock isn’t just in the accent or the food.

It’s in the sudden independence.

Many students go through this.

They’re not lazy or clueless – they’re just adjusting to a life where no one’s holding their hand.

But here’s the thing: they adapt.

Slowly, they build routines. Learn to prioritize. Make friends who become family.

They figure things out, one messy day at a time.

The journey from being spoonfed to being self-sufficient is messy, humbling, and incredibly powerful.

Every international student has lived their version of this shift – and come out stronger for it.

Your first few months at work aren't about proving yourself.

They're about observing.

Learning how things actually work.

Asking smart (and sometimes obvious) questions.

But no one really says that out loud.

So what happens?

New grads and interns walk in feeling like they need to have all the answers.

Like they need to impress from day one.

And when they don't – when they struggle to follow meetings or forget who owns what – they spiral into imposter syndrome.

Here's the truth: the silent learning curve is real.

Every company has its own unwritten rules.

Slack channels, meeting culture, team dynamics – it takes time to decode.

So, instead of trying to prove you belong, try this:

→ Take notes on what people say and how they say it

→ Ask thoughtful follow-ups, even if you're not 100% sure

→ Offer help when you can – but be honest when you need context

Quiet curiosity goes further than loud confidence.

And the ones who grow fastest?

They're not the ones with all the answers – they're the ones asking the right questions.

So, take a breath.

You don't have to shine immediately.

You just have to pay attention – and keep showing up.

That's how you build trust. That's how you learn.

And before you know it, you are contributing – with clarity and confidence.

90.

Your resume doesn't speak.

You do.

And in behavioral interviews, that difference shows fast.

Especially in roles where communication, collaboration, or leadership matter more than hard keywords – your stories do the heavy lifting.

But here's what most people get wrong:

They treat interview prep like a checklist of questions.

"Tell me about a time..." → Generic answer.

"Greatest weakness?" → Something about being a perfectionist.

Instead, flip the script.

Start with your own experiences.

Think about the messy, real moments – the ones where you struggled, figured things out, asked for help, or helped someone else.

Then, practice telling them out loud. Not word-for-word perfect.

Just real, structured, and clear.

→ What was the context?

→ What was your role?

→ What did you learn?

The more you practice, the more your stories sharpen.

And the sharper your stories, the more they reflect the real you – not just the bullet points.

Remember: you're not trying to perform. You're trying to connect.

To help the interviewer see how you think, solve, and grow.

And the only way to do that?

Practice your stories like your career depends on it – because it kind of does.

Don't wait for feedback — *go ask for it*.

Seriously. The worst career advice is: "Just keep doing your best and hope someone notices."

Hope is not a strategy.

In your first job, your internship, even years into a role — silence doesn't always mean you're doing great.

It could mean people are too busy.

Or they assume you already know what's working (or not working).

So instead of guessing in the dark... ask.

→ "Is this what you were expecting?"

→ "Anything I could do differently next time?"

→ "What would make this even better?"

Simple questions. Huge unlocks.

Feedback doesn't just tell you what to improve — it shows your team you *care* enough to ask. That you're coachable. Invested. Paying attention.

Yes, it can feel uncomfortable.

But that short discomfort is way better than months of quietly doing the wrong thing.

Clarity saves careers.

And the people who grow the fastest?

They don't wait for annual reviews. They treat feedback like a habit — not a performance review surprise.

So next time you wrap up a task, a meeting, a presentation — don't just hope for a pat on the back.

Ask how it landed. Listen. Iterate.

Repeat.

92

You can't control the market.

But you *can* control how ready you are when it picks up again.

And that makes all the difference.

Job hunting in a slow market feels like running in place.

No callbacks. Few openings. Endless waiting.

It's easy to spiral into "Why bother?" But here's the truth: this is the *perfect* time to prep quietly and consistently.

→ Revamp that resume — not just the format, but the *story*.

→ Practice your interviews — with real feedback, not just in your head.

→ Build a small portfolio or project — even if no one's asking for it (yet).

→ Keep a weekly log — of wins, setbacks, insights, and progress.

None of it guarantees a job tomorrow.

But all of it adds up. Because when the market turns — and it always does — the people who've been quietly preparing?

They hit the ground running.

Not scrambling to catch up.

So no, you don't have control over hiring freezes, layoffs, or market timing.

But you *do* have control over your clarity, your skills, and your readiness.

And sometimes, that's more powerful than luck.

93

Certifications won't get you a job.

But learning what the job *actually* needs? That might.

It's easy to fall into the "one more course" trap.

Especially when you're feeling stuck.

You convince yourself that one more badge, one more certificate, one more Udemy sprint will finally make your profile pop.

But here's the thing: employers aren't hiring certificates.

They're hiring people who can *do the work*.

So before clicking "Enroll," ask yourself:

→ What do people in this role actually *do* every day?

→ What tools are they using?

→ What problems are they solving?

Then go build *that*.

Even if it's messy. Even if it's small.

Make a project. Contribute to something. Write about what you're learning.

Show your thinking — not just your course completion rate. Because here's the honest truth:

A project that reflects real-world thinking is worth more than five PDFs that say "Certified."

Learning is always good. But learning with *direction*? That's career-changing.

Just because we're done with college doesn't mean we stop learning.

If anything, the real learning starts once we start working.

But it looks different now.

No grades. No structured syllabi. No professor telling us what to read.

Just...problems we don't know how to solve yet.

→ Reading documentation instead of textbooks

→ Picking up a new tool because your team uses it

→ Watching how senior folks ask questions, structure their thinking, manage chaos

It's less about lectures, more about observation.

Less about memorizing, more about figuring things out as we go.

At first, that can feel frustrating.

Like we're expected to know things no one ever taught you.

But here's the secret: No one knows everything.

The ones who grow fastest? They stay curious. They Google without shame.

They ask, "How did you do that?" even if they feel behind.

So, no, our learning journey doesn't end with a degree.

It just shifts from being taught to teaching yourself.

And what if we could fall in love with that kind of learning?

We'll never feel stuck for long.

9 Tips for Starting Your First Job in the US

1. Ask questions — early and often.

No one expects you to know everything. In fact, asking thoughtful questions shows you're engaged and proactive.

2. Calendar = communication.

Block your work time, focus time, even break time. It's normal here — and it sets healthy boundaries.

3. Speak up in meetings.

Even if it's just a question or a summary. Visibility matters in remote/hybrid teams, and silence can be mistaken for disengagement.

4. Learn to say “I’ll get back to you.”

You don't need to have all the answers on the spot. It's okay to pause, research, and follow up.

5. Small talk isn't small.

It builds trust. Ask about the weekend. Talk about the weather. Say something in the elevator. It matters.

6. Learn the tools, not just the tasks.

Slack, Notion, Jira, Zoom — knowing how your team works is just as important as what they're working on.

7. Feedback is normal — not personal.

US workplace culture is feedback-friendly. It's not a criticism of *you*, it's input to help you grow.

8. Don't skip the 1:1s.

Whether it's with your manager or mentor, those regular check-ins are where real conversations (and growth) happen.

9. Be kind to yourself.

New job. New culture. New everything. It's okay to feel lost sometimes. You're learning more than you realize.

Growth doesn't always feel good.
But it *does* usually feel necessary.

That awkward in-between season? The one where things aren't working, but new doors haven't opened yet?
That's where most growth happens.

It's in the rejection that stings a little too much.
The project you fumbled.
The version of you that no longer fits — but you're not sure who comes next.

It's easy to think, "If I'm struggling, I must be doing something wrong."

But sometimes, struggle is just...evidence of change.

Of trying.
Of learning.
Of stepping into something you haven't mastered yet.

You won't always get a neat lesson right away.
Sometimes the only win is that you *kept going*.

So if you're in a season that feels like discomfort more than progress — hang in there.

This version of you is still shaping the next one.
And that's worth sitting through.

99.

Everything comes at a cost. You don't get everything. You *trade* for it.

And most of the time, the cost isn't money — it's discomfort, discipline, and trade-offs no one claps for.

You want to study abroad and build a better future?

You'll miss birthdays, family dinners, and the comfort of being known without explaining yourself.

You want a stronger, fitter body?

You'll trade late-night snacks for early-morning soreness.

You want a calmer, clearer mind?

You'll have to quiet the noise, sit with yourself, and unlearn years of autopilot.

You want to earn in a country that pays well?

Get ready for visa stress, complex paperwork, and a constant reminder that you don't fully "belong."

You fear AI might replace you?

Weekends will mean courses, side projects, and learning to adapt faster than the algorithm.

You want financial freedom or early retirement?

You'll have to live below your means now, learn how to invest, and skip some of the shiny things along the way.

You want to start over?

New city, new role, new you?

It will feel like losing everything before you find your footing again.

You want to build something of your own?

Sleep less. Risk more. Learn to hear "no" without flinching.

You want a healthy relationship?

You'll need to show up when it's hard. Learn to listen. Unlearn defensiveness.

You want to change yourself — really change?

You'll have to let go of the version of you that made others comfortable, but kept *you* stuck.

Harder choices now → easier life later.

Easier choices now → harder life later.

It's not punishment. It's the price.

100. Not everyone will understand your decisions, and that's okay.

- Leaving a stable job.
- Switching careers.
- Turning down an offer everyone else would've taken.
- Moving cities.
- Starting over.

These choices don't always make sense on paper, especially to people on the outside looking in.

You'll hear:

"But it was a good role."

"Are you sure now's the right time?"

"Why would you walk away from that?"

Because sometimes, the reason isn't obvious.

Sometimes, it's just a feeling: "This isn't right for me anymore."

And that's valid.

We spend so much time justifying our path, making sure it sounds strategic, impressive, or logical.

But real growth? Doesn't always look logical in the moment.

- Maybe you chose peace over prestige.
- Health over hustle.
- Curiosity over convention.

That kind of clarity often looks like confusion to others.

But you're not building their life. You're building yours.

So here's something to keep in mind:

You don't need universal approval. You need personal alignment.

And if a decision feels right deep down, even if it's hard to explain right now, it's probably worth making.

You can always update your LinkedIn later.

- What's one decision you made that others questioned, but you knew was right for you?

For me, it was choosing to pursue my Master's.

101.

The real paycheck isn't just money.

It's the peace of not being broke anymore.

It's that moment when you check your account and feel relieved instead of tense.

When you can buy groceries without overthinking.

When "let's split the bill" doesn't send you into silent math mode.

During the job search, everything felt uncertain: my calendar, my inbox, my bank balance.

Some days were hopeful. Most were just heavy.

And then the offer came.

And the first paycheck hit.

And it wasn't just about what I could buy, it was about what I could stop worrying about.

→ Rent wasn't scary anymore.

→ I could send money home.

→ I could finally take a breath without guilt attached.

People talk about career growth, titles, salaries, and sure, those matter.

But the emotional shift? The quiet dignity of being financially okay again?

That's the part I'll never take for granted.

So if you're still in the middle of the grind, please know:

It gets better.

Not overnight, but definitely over time.

And when it does, you'll realize the real reward isn't just income.

It's the peace of finally not fighting your way through every week.

102. You don't need 5 years of experience.

You need 5 good stories that show how you think, what you've learned, and what you do when things get messy.

Freshers often feel stuck in interviews:

→ "I don't have enough experience."

→ "I've only done a few projects."

→ "I haven't worked full-time anywhere yet."

But here's what most don't realize:

Interviewers aren't looking for the fanciest resume, they're looking for proof.

Proof that you can solve problems.

Proof that you know how to work with others.

Proof that you've actually learned from what you've done.

And you don't need a job title to show that.

You can build strong stories from:

→ A group project that almost failed, but didn't

→ An internship where you figured out something no one showed you

→ Freelance work that forced you to manage deadlines and expectations

→ A coursework challenge where you learned more from failing than succeeding

→ A side project you finished just to see if you could

The key is reflection.

→ What was the challenge?

→ What did you do?

→ What changed because of it?

You don't need 5 years.

You need 5 stories, told clearly, with context and confidence.

→ If you're prepping for interviews right now, write down 5 stories that shaped you. They don't have to be perfect, they just have to be real.

103.

The best financial decision I made?

Tracking every single dollar, even when I barely had any.

I needed to know where my money was going, because there wasn't much of it.

Every coffee, every clothing, every weekend plan, every Uber, I thought was "just this once."

So I started tracking everything.

Not to guilt myself, but to understand myself.

→ What was I spending emotionally?

→ What was I buying just to feel "normal" in a new country?

→ What could I cut without cutting joy?

Some days, the numbers were humbling.

But it gave me clarity, where my money was going, what mattered, and what could wait.

I still track my expenses today, not because I have to, but because it reminds me:

But the numbers look a little different now:

→ I save 60%, spend 40%

→ I chose to live close to the office, even if the rent is a bit more, because time saved = energy protected

→ I've avoided liabilities that would pull me into lifestyle inflation

→ And I still pause before every non-essential purchase, not because I'm scared, but because I'm aware

Tracking money when you don't have much builds the mindset you need when you finally start earning.

Money isn't just about what you earn.

It's about what you keep and what you prioritize.

104.

You don't need clarity to start.

Starting is what gives you clarity.

Sounds backwards, right?

We're taught to wait until we're sure — of the path, the outcome, the timing.

But most of the big shifts in life? You figure them out *while you're in them*.

→ I didn't have total clarity when I decided to move countries

→ I didn't know exactly how things would go when I changed fields

→ And I definitely wasn't ready when I applied for roles I felt underqualified for

But I started anyway.

Was it messy? Yes.

Did I figure it all out overnight? Absolutely not.

But every small action gave me a little more direction — a little more data to work with.

Here's what I've learned:

Waiting to feel "ready" is often just fear in disguise.

You're not confused — you're just scared to be bad at something new.

Start anyway.

→ Try the course.

→ Write the cold email.

→ Take the interview.

→ Say yes to the project you don't feel 100% ready for.

Because confidence doesn't come from having a plan.

It comes from seeing yourself take action — even when you're uncertain.

No one really tells you how lonely moving abroad can feel.

New country. New routine. New everything.

You spend the first few weeks adjusting to food, weather, and silence.

You say “all good” on calls, but inside, it’s a mix of pride, pressure, and homesickness you can’t quite name.

Some days, the homesickness is quiet.

Some days, it hits you mid-grocery run, when you see Parle-G biscuits in the international aisle for \$4, or frozen naan that would’ve made your mom roll her eyes.

You laugh at it later, but in the moment, it lands hard.

But slowly, so slowly, you don’t even notice at first, you adapt.

→ You find your spots.

→ You learn the weather app is a lie, but layer up anyway.

→ You make friends who get your references (and your spice tolerance).

→ You get excited about little routines, walking the same route, cooking your version of Maggi, catching a sunny day like it’s a personal win.

You learn that “settling in” isn’t one big moment.

It’s a hundred small ones that sneak up on you.

And you realize:

It’s about rebuilding something new, from scratch, with people you meet along the way.

You can be a 9-pointer in college, top of your class in school, and still feel completely lost in your first job.

Because of the real shift?

Soft skills start mattering more than grades ever did.

Suddenly, it's not about solving the assignment, it's about explaining why it matters.

Not just doing the work, but trusting yourself with it.

Not just knowing the answer, but knowing how to ask better questions.
In school, the rules are clear.

In the workplace? The lines blur.

- Can you speak confidently in a meeting, even if you're the most junior person there?
- Can you take ownership of something you've never done before — and figure it out?
- Can you talk to stakeholders who think differently from you, and still get things done?
- Can you turn a project into impact, not just a task list?

This part hits hard for people who were "always good at school."

But it's also where real growth begins.

You realize success isn't just about being right, it's about being understood, trusted, and able to adapt.

So if you're feeling behind in your first job, you're not.

You're just learning a new skill set, one they don't teach in college.

I was talking to a friend recently, and she said something that stuck with me:
"I'm just not that confident in myself."

And I realized how common that feeling is.

So many smart, capable people quietly carry this weight.

Not because they're not good enough, but because they don't see themselves the way others do.

Confidence isn't just about how you talk in meetings.

It shows up in every part of life.

What opportunities you chase.

How you handle rejection.

Whether you speak up or stay quiet.

Whether you start or wait until things are perfect.

It's the difference between staying stuck and moving forward.

But here's the thing
Confidence isn't something you're born with
It's something you build.

You build it by doing small things you thought you couldn't

By showing up even when you doubt yourself

By collecting proof that you're figuring things out

The more you do
The more you trust yourself
And the more that trust turns into confidence

If you're feeling stuck
Start small
Do one thing that makes you slightly uncomfortable
Repeat it until it feels normal

That's how it starts

What's one question you hope they don't ask?

That's the one you need to prepare for first.

In every interview prep session, there's always that one question people try to dodge.

→ "Tell me about a time you failed"

→ "Why is there a gap on your resume?"

→ "Why should we hire you without experience in this area?"

We try to rehearse around it. Hope it doesn't come up.

But that quiet fear? It stays with you the entire interview.

What changed things for me was flipping the mindset.

Instead of avoiding that question

I made it my starting point.

I wrote it down

Practiced it out loud

Turned it into a story I could stand behind

And with that, the rest of the interview started to feel easier.

Because I wasn't hiding anymore.

I was ready.

Confidence doesn't come from having all the answers

It comes from not being afraid of the hard ones.

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The question is: "Tell me about yourself."

The test is: Can you connect it to the job description?

Everybody answers this question by walking through their resume.

Safe. Predictable. Forgettable.

But inside the first 5 minutes, the interviewer isn't just hearing, they're deciding:

→ Does this person get what this job entails?

→ Can they deliver that value here?

Think of your answer as a pitch.

Not a summary. A signal.

Here's what works:

→ Begin with who you are professionally in 2-3 lines

→ Emphasize 2–3 related experiences or strengths that align with the JD

BONUS: Connect the company's values to your experience.

→ Finish with why you're excited about this particular role or team

You're not there to recite everything you've done

You're there to make it easy for them to see how you fit

Customize it like you'd customize your resume

Because if it is done correctly, your "about me" is your first impression strategy.

A majority of people fumble in interviews

Not because they don't know the answer

But because they've never practiced saying it out loud.

You think you're ready.

→ You've written your STAR stories.

→ You've read the job description 10 times.

→ You've imagined how the interview will go.

But then the question comes, and your brain goes blank

Not because you don't know

But because you've never heard yourself explain it before.

Real prep isn't just knowing what to say

It's rehearsing it.

Out loud.

In front of a mirror.

To a friend.

Or even recording yourself.

Because how you say it matters

→ Clarity. Confidence. Pacing. Structure.

These things don't show up on their own

You build them through reps.

It feels awkward at first. That's fine.

Better awkward now than silent later.

If you're serious about landing the job

Treat your prep like performance practice

Not just mental review

The best way to prepare for an interview?

Ask yourself what the interviewer is really trying to find out.

Most people focus on memorizing answers.

But interviews aren't tests, they're conversations with a goal.

Every question is a signal.

Not just what you say, but how you think.

→ "Tell me about a conflict with a teammate"

They're not asking for drama

They want to know if you can navigate people's problems like a professional

→ "What's your biggest challenge?"

They're not testing weakness

They're checking if you reflect, learn, and bounce back

→ "Tell me about a time you led something."

They want ownership, not just fancy titles

Once you understand the why behind the question

You can shape better answers

More honest, more relevant, more impactful

So next time you prep

Ask: What are they trying to learn about me here?

Then answer that.

Writing cold emails shouldn't take 45 minutes.

So I built a custom GPT to help job seekers do it in 5 simple steps.

If you've ever stared at a blank screen thinking:

- How do I start this email?
- Should I sound formal or friendly?
- How do I connect my resume to the job?

This tool is for you.

Here's how it works:

1. Tell it who you're writing to (Name, if you have it)
2. Mention the company + role you're applying for
3. Pick a tone (formal, friendly, or warm)
4. Upload your resume PDF
5. Paste or upload the job description

That's it.

You'll get a clean, personalized cold email draft in seconds, not something generic, but something you can send.

Here's a prompt you can copy and try:

"Write a formal cold email to [Name] at [Company] for the [Role] position using my resume and the JD below."

Sometimes, the hardest part is just getting started.

This makes that part easier.

Try it out and let me know what you'd want to improve.

Built for job seekers, with real job seekers in mind.

Your resume got you in the room.

Your storytelling gets you the offer.

Most people think once their resume lands the interview, the hard part's done.

But interviews aren't about repeating bullet points.

They're about bringing them to life.

What did you actually do?

How did it help the team?

Why does that story matter for this role?

That's where most people fall short.

They give surface-level answers.

Or worse, answers that have nothing to do with the job they're applying for.

Here's what helped me prep better:

→ I looked at the JD and picked 3–4 themes they clearly cared about

→ I went back to my resume and pulled stories that matched those themes

→ I practiced telling those stories in STAR format: short, specific, relevant

Same resume. Same projects.

But now, I was telling them in a way that made sense to the interviewer.

If you want to stand out, don't just know your resume

Know how to connect it to the role in front of you.

5 things I always research before an interview:

1. Company values and mission
2. Products or services
3. Recent news or announcements
4. The person I'm speaking to
5. Job description themes

Most people only prep their answers.

But standout candidates?

They do their homework on the company, too.

Here's why this matters:

→ Company values and mission

What do they care about?

Use this to align your stories with what they stand for.

→ Products or services

What do they actually do?

Learn the language.

Ask smarter questions.

→ Recent news

What's new and notable?

Referencing a funding round or feature shows real interest.

→ The interviewer

Who are you speaking with?

Knowing their role helps you frame answers that land.

→ The job description

What are they hiring for?

Extract keywords. Prep stories that match their real needs.

This kind of prep? It helps you stand out, without sounding rehearsed.

Why prep for 50 interview questions...

...when GPT can predict the top 10?

I used to treat interview prep like cramming for an exam.

Cover everything. Just in case.

But here's the truth:

→ Your job description is a cheat code.

→ It already tells you what matters most.

→ GPT just makes it faster.

Then I started using AI to turn job descriptions into targeted prep.

Here's the prompt:

"Based on this job description, what are the 10 most likely behavioral and technical questions I'll be asked?"

Or this version:

"Here's a job description I'm applying for. Can you extract the top 10 behavioral and technical interview questions based on this role's responsibilities and required skills?"

The result?

→ Spot-on questions

→ Clear themes

→ Zero fluff

Instead of guessing...

I practiced with purpose.

→ Confidence went up.

→ Time spent prepping went down.

Interview prep shouldn't feel overwhelming.

It should feel strategic.

You know you've adapted when:

- Frozen roti is... acceptable (kind of)
- Maggi Masala lives in your backpack
- Rent is split down to the second decimal
- You bond over visa stress and dal recipes
- Weekends = rest, regret, and resume edits
- You cook extra so future-you doesn't suffer
- You've mastered 3 meals with 5 ingredients
- Job rejections feel like wins ("at least they replied")
- You've become your own tech support, chef, and therapist
- Your resume has more versions than your fridge has groceries
- You're cooking, applying, and questioning life at the same time
- "Do you have Venmo/Zelle?" beats "How are you?" in frequency
- Wi-Fi, groceries, and emotional support are shared with roommates

Welcome to the international student experience.

Chaotic. Resourceful.

And honestly... kind of impressive :)

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There was a phase in my job search...

...I made a PowerPoint for "Tell me about yourself."

Yes, an actual slide deck.

Why?

Because I wanted to show what I'd done.

Not just tell.

It helped me:

→ Stay on track

→ Highlight what mattered

→ Avoid rambling

I practiced keeping it under 5 minutes.

And I only shared it if the interviewer seemed open.

If they said yes → great.

If not, → I just switched to the verbal version.

It wasn't about showing off.

It was about intentional storytelling.

Bringing structure to a question that's too open-ended.

And honestly?

→ The reactions were mostly positive

→ They saw the effort

→ I felt more confident

→ It set the tone: "This person came prepared."

Of course, it takes practice.

You can't rely on the slides.

You still need to own your story.

But done right?

It makes your answer stick.

During my job search, every “no” felt personal.

- Like I wasn’t enough
- Like I did something wrong
- Like I had to fix myself, not just my application

But here’s what I learned:

Rejection is not the enemy.

It’s feedback.

It’s redirection.

It’s data.

It’s not a reflection of your worth.

Just a mismatch in timing, needs, or context.

You can do everything right and still hear “no.”

You can be the perfect fit and still get passed over.

That doesn’t mean you’re behind.

Or not good enough.

Or not trying hard enough.

Here’s what helped me shift:

- Track effort, not just outcomes
- Take notes after interviews, not blame
- Treat every rejection as a step forward in clarity
- And most of all: keep going

Because...

Consistency > confidence

Momentum > motivation

Process > perfection

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You're applying daily.

Networking weekly.

Tweaking your resume constantly.

And still... it feels like you're going nowhere.

That's not a lack of effort.

That's a lack of direction.

There's a difference between being busy and being stuck.

The job search blurs that line fast.

You keep doing things, so it feels like progress.

But if it's not working → it's just motion, not movement.

I've been there too:

→ Applying to roles that weren't aligned

→ DMing people without knowing what to say

→ Rewriting my resume for the 17th time, just to avoid interview prep

What helped me shift?

→ Stepping back to ask: "What's actually moving the needle?"

→ Tracking effort and outcomes

→ Being okay doing less, as long as it had purpose

Because productivity isn't the goal.

Progress is.

So, if you feel stuck?

Pause.

Not to quit.

But to reassess.

Ethics won't show up on your resume,
But they will show up in your life.

There were moments during my job search when it felt tempting to cut corners:

- Add "extra" experience
- Consultancies
- Claim work I didn't really do

It would've been easy.
Faster.
And maybe no one would've noticed.

Even if no one finds out... I would know.
And that was reason enough.

Because here's the truth:

You don't just carry the job you get,
You carry how you got it.

Even when it took longer...
Even when others got ahead, taking shortcuts...

I never wanted a role I had to lie to earn.

There's a different kind of confidence that comes from knowing:

- Every line on your resume is yours
- Every story you tell is true
- Every offer you get is clean

Ethics won't boost your keyword score.
But they build a kind of self-respect that outlasts every rejection.

Shortcuts are easy to take, until you realize they cost you the one thing that matters: trust in yourself.

What you say in interviews reflects what you believe about yourself.

You can have the perfect answer.

The ideal experience.

The right format.

But if your voice lacks conviction?

Something falls flat.

I've seen it in myself. And in others:

→ Speaking too softly, like you're unsure you belong

→ Rushing through answers, hoping they won't dig deeper

→ Downplaying wins with "I just helped with..." or "It wasn't a big deal..."

And yet...

Someone with less experience, but more clarity, lands the offer.

Why?

Because interviewers don't just evaluate your answers.

They notice your tone.

They sense your energy.

They pick up on how you talk about yourself.

Prep matters.

But belief is what brings your prep to life.

Before your next interview, ask yourself:

→ Do I sound like someone who believes they belong here?

→ Am I proud of the work I've done?

→ Would I hire me based on how I talk about myself?

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Getting an interview isn't the hard part anymore.

Getting one at all is.

In this market, you won't get 20 chances to warm up.

You might get one.

Maybe two.

And that means you can't start preparing when the invite lands.

→ Not when the recruiter emails

→ Not the night before

→ Not when panic finally sets in

By then, it's too late.

→ Too late to rehearse your stories

→ Too late to brush up on system design

→ Too late to hope LeetCode's muscle memory kicks in

If you're job hunting in 2025?

Prep needs to happen daily.

Not because you're not good enough,

But because the window to prove it is short.

Study like the interview is already on your calendar.

Because one day soon, it will be.

And when it comes,

You won't get to hit pause.

Tired of sending your resume to 15 different people,
...and still not knowing if it's "good enough"?

We've all been there:

- "Can you take a quick look?"
- "Does this match the JD?"
- "Should I reword this bullet?"

So I built something that gives you answers instantly.

---- ResumeMatch Pro (Prompt is inbuilt) ----

A custom GPT that reviews your resume like a hiring-minded mentor.

Upload your resume + job description.

It'll break it down for you, section by section:

- ✅ Feedback on wording, structure, and alignment
- ✅ Bullet rewrites in STAR and XYZ formats
- ✅ Keyword + skill match analysis
- ✅ Gaps in experience or phrasing
- ✅ ATS-friendly formatting tips
- ✅ Suggestions that sound human, not robotic

Because you shouldn't have to guess your way through every application.

And you definitely shouldn't wait for feedback when you can generate it in seconds.

Link in the comment :)

What's worse than getting rejected? Not even knowing why.

Some days, you'll do everything right,

And still hear nothing.

No reply.

No call.

Just silence.

Sometimes, it's about control.

Here's what you can't control:

→ Interview questions

→ Who else is applying

→ Referrals not landing

→ Internal hiring freezes

→ Recruiters ghosting you

→ Interviewer mood or bias

→ The number of roles open

→ When they get back to you

→ Rejections after "great" interviews

→ Whether they even see your resume. And here's what you can control:

→ How well you tell your story → Following up without spiraling

→ Your energy, mindset, and prep → Building projects that show real skill

→ The clarity + tailoring of your resume → Not tying your worth to one outcome

→ Staying consistent, even when it's hard → Tracking what works (and doubling down) → Reaching out to people who've been there → Practicing daily: Leetcode, STAR, mock interviews

The line between stuck and steady? It's where your focus lives.

Work on what you can control.

Let the rest pass.

And when the opportunity comes, be ready.

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You can be grateful and still want more.
Both can exist—and they should.

It's easy to tie happiness to the *next* thing:
The better job.
The visa approval.
The next big step.

But here's a quieter truth:
You don't have to postpone joy until you get there.
You can enjoy what you have *while* working toward what's next.

Yes, we're wired to grow.
To imagine more, reach higher, and stay curious.
But that doesn't mean we can't feel full along the way.

Be content with what's present.
Be consistent in what's coming.
Have one desire at a time—and meet it with clarity, not chaos.

Gratitude isn't the opposite of ambition.
It's what keeps you steady while ambition pulls you forward.

Because the journey is longer than any one outcome.
Might as well enjoy the view.

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The hardest question in interviews isn't technical.
It's "Tell me about yourself."

Most people fumble interviews, not because they lack experience,
But because they haven't built their story.
They know what they've done.
But not how to talk about it.
If you don't know your own story, no recruiter will either.
The job search is storytelling.
And like any good story, yours needs:
→ A clear starting point (what brought you here)
→ A build-up (what you've learned and done)
→ A direction (where you're headed, and why this role fits)
It's not about making things sound perfect.
It's about making them connect.
Practice it like a pitch.
Tailor it to the job.
And most of all, believe it when you say it.

Confidence doesn't come from a perfect resume.
It comes from knowing exactly who you are,
And how to explain it.

Feeling stuck in your job search?
Ask yourself these 10 questions first.

I wasn't getting interview calls.
And for a while... I blamed the market.

But then I sat down and asked myself 10 uncomfortable questions.

Here's what helped me get unstuck:

- Does it align with the JD, or just list tasks?
- Have I practiced telling my story out loud?
- Is my resume clear about the value I bring?
- Have I reached out to people in similar roles?
- Am I tracking what's working (and what's not)?
- Am I applying to the right roles, or just any roles?
- Are my bullet points results-driven, or just task-based?
- Am I waiting for the "perfect" role, or adapting actively?
- Am I letting rejection slow me down, or guide me better?
- Do I know what sets me apart, and can I say it in 1 sentence?

If you're feeling stuck, start here.

The answers might be uncomfortable.
But they'll also be honest.

And that's where momentum begins.

Some friendships don't end with a fight.
They just quietly fade.

Not because of drama.
But because of growth.

Then, I started to grow,
And staying in those circles started to hold me back.

I've kept friends I've known for a decade.
We've grown together.
We still challenge each other.
We still align.

But I've also stepped away from people I've known just as long.
Not out of ego.
Just misalignment.

I've let go of some really good friendships.
People I've known for years.
People who mattered.

The more I read, reflected, and worked on myself, the clearer it got:
Not every friendship is meant to grow with you.

Some started when I was a different version of me.
And holding onto them meant shrinking that version just to stay close.

It's not easy.
But growth requires space.
And sometimes, that space means letting go.

This isn't about superiority.
It's about direction.

Some friendships evolve.
Some expire.

Both can be true.
And both can be respected.

You're not behind.

You're just not following *their* timeline.

I've had people ask,

"When are you settling down?"

"Shouldn't you be thinking about the next big thing—marriage, house, promotions?"

But my timeline hasn't looked like theirs.

At 23, I was a co-founder.

We did ₹1Cr in revenue for two years straight.

Then COVID hit—

And everything paused.

I went from running a company

To selling masks and sanitizers

To starting all over in a new country.

I moved.

Rebuilt.

Started from scratch—not just professionally, but personally.

And honestly?

I'm okay with that.

Because not everything meaningful fits on a resume.

And not every milestone comes on cue.

Some people find their rhythm early.

Some, like me, take the long road—intentionally, thoughtfully.

You're not slow.

You're just building something that doesn't need to be rushed.

So if your journey looks different?

Let it.

You're not late.

You're right on time—for *your* life.

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I used to track the number of jobs I applied for.
7 today. 12 yesterday. 50 this week.
It felt like progress.

But most of those apps?
Silence.

So I changed my metric.
I stopped counting how many I sent.
I started tracking interview invites instead

And everything shifted.

Fewer roles.
But more intention.

I tailored my resume.
Rewrote it for clarity, not keywords.
Practiced my stories.
Followed up with focus.

And slowly, the calls began to come in.

I stopped measuring effort.
Started measuring impact.

Because it's not about how much you apply.
It's about how well you connect.

And that's what moves the needle.

Struggling with resume clarity? Try my ResumeMatch Pro, link in comments.

Communication isn't just about speaking clearly.
It's about thinking clearly.

And that's where writing comes in.

Writing is slow.
That's what makes it powerful.

We speak fast, sometimes faster than we think.
But writing forces clarity.

I've experienced this myself.
When I write, I realize what I actually believe.
What's worth saying. What's just noise.

It forces structure.

Even when I feel stuck or overwhelmed,
I open a doc and just start writing.

10 minutes in,
The confusion softens.
Decisions feel sharper.
The next step shows up.

Writing isn't about being a writer.
It's about being a clearer thinker.

If you can write it clearly, you can explain it clearly.
In interviews.
In meetings.
In life.

Start with one page.
It's always enough.

Many people skip the cold emailing approach, saying, “No one replies anyway.”

But then,

I didn’t cold email expecting replies.
I did it for visibility.

With 500+ applicants, I wasn’t trying to out-keyword anyone.
I wanted to stand out and take the path with more friction.

Most people send a connection request.
Maybe drop a comment.
Or fire off a quick InMail.

It feels like an effort (To satisfy ourselves of doing it).
But it’s the lowest-friction path, which means everyone’s doing it.

And when 300 people do the same thing,
It’s not humanly possible for any recruiter to notice them all.

So I picked a different route: Cold emailing.

I only reached out when I knew who was hiring.
No generic blasts. No guesswork.

→ One short email.
→ Followed by 2 nudges.
→ 3-4 business days apart.

The outcomes were binary:

0] Ghosted or rejected (happened often).
1] Or... a call.

Especially if you have 3+ YOE.
That credibility? It’s leverage.

It’s not desperate.
It’s strategic.

Struggling with a cold email template? Try my ColdEmail Pro, link in comments.

So why isn't it working?

You've tweaked your resume 10 times.

Sent 1000+ applications.

Cold DMed people.

Built a tracker.

Posted online.

Maybe even took a course or two.

But still, no real traction.

No interviews.

No replies.

Just burnout.

That's the trap:

False progress.

Activity that feels productive,

But it isn't moving the needle.

Here's what shifted it for me:

→ Tailoring my resume only for roles I actually wanted

→ Sending cold emails with follow-ups, not just connection requests

→ Practicing stories out loud, not just writing bullet points

→ Measuring outcomes (calls, invites, feedback), not just volume

The market is hard.

But being busy isn't the same as being effective.

You don't need to do more.

You need to do what works, on repeat.

Trade motion for momentum.

Start small.

Stay honest.

Along with the resume, the referrals, the “perfect” prep

What really matters is how quickly you shift:

- From last-round rejection to another application
- From feedback to action in your next interview
- From chasing an aspirational role to going back to a foundational one, because the timing isn’t right yet

I’ve been there.

I wanted certain roles badly.

But the market didn’t move.

So I did.

I went back to what I had experience in.

Regrouped.

And pivoted smarter.

And here’s the truth:

You won’t get many chances.

So don’t make the same mistake twice.

Be clear about what you want.

But stay flexible about how and when you’ll get there.

It’s not a detour.

It’s a strategy.

Ever been asked a behavioral question you didn't have an answer to?

It happens.

And that's okay.

You won't always have a "time you handled a conflict"

or

"a time you led without authority"

or

"a time you managed stakeholders."

Because maybe...

You haven't done that yet.

So what do you say?

You don't fake it.

You don't freeze either.

You reframe.

→ Talk about a similar situation

→ Keep it honest, clear, and thoughtful

→ Pull from academics, volunteering, or side projects

→ Walk them through how you would approach it, and why

Interviewers aren't looking for a perfect story.

They're looking for clarity, structure, and how you think.

You're not expected to know everything.

But you are expected to respond with intention.

If you don't have a story, structure your thoughts.

Do you also apply for the role and reach out to 10 random recruiters on LinkedIn?

You might treat this as "networking" to satisfy yourself
But that's not targeted.

That's just noise.

Recruiters get 100s of InMails and cold messages
Most of them are vague, misaligned, and mass-sent.

Do you want to stand out?

Start with clarity. Ask only one question.

"Do I know who is hiring for the role?" If no, then apply and move on.

But if yes, then:

- Reach out only to them, the recruiter, or the hiring manager
- Don't drop a LinkedIn message. Send a thoughtful cold email
- Follow up twice, spaced out by a few days

That's what worked for me.

Less outreach.
More intent.
Better results.

The difference between silence and a call-back
Often comes down to how well you aimed.

Don't just reach out.
Reach out right.

"Grind in your 20s, settle in your 30s."

We've all heard that one before.

But here's my honest take:

What if grinding all through your 20s comes at the cost of

missing the one thing that takes the longest to build:

A meaningful relationship?

We glorify the hustle.

Build. Fail. Learn. Repeat.

And yes, there's value in that.

But when someone says, *"Don't even think about a partner until you're settled,"*

That's where I pause.

You think you'll grind nonstop in your 20s

And magically find someone when you hit stability?

Good luck with that.

Ask people in their 30s earning well,

They'll tell you it only gets harder.

Because age doesn't guarantee maturity.

Experiences do.

I feel, it's not about "finding someone after you settle."

People aren't marketplaces you browse once you max your 401(k).

You don't stumble into meaningful love because your LinkedIn title changed.

You build it. Brick by brick. Through chaos. Confusion. Career shifts.

With someone who's figuring it out too.

While becoming someone worth loving, *with* someone who's doing the same.

And if you lose someone you thought was your person?

That's okay too.

Self-soothing, healing, and growing without bitterness,

That's real growth. It doesn't matter how many failed relationships, startups, or jobs you've had.

When the right one shows up: partner, idea/team, or role,

Go all in.

That's when it compounds.

Every time we add **age** to the equation, we add pressure.

Society's timeline has nothing to do with your truth.

We've romanticized a checklist that has nothing to do with actual fulfillment.

And if there's one thing I've learned,

Pressure and comparison are the enemies of presence.

It's not just the rejection that hurts.
It's what it slowly does to your self-belief.

You start questioning every line on your resume.
Every answer you gave in the interview.
Every move you made.

And after a while...
You stop trusting yourself.

You hesitate to apply.
You doubt your own wins.
You second-guess things you once felt proud of.

That's the quiet cost of long rejection phases,
Not just fewer calls, but fewer reminders that you're still worth betting on.

I've been there.
After every "we regret to inform you,"
There's a voice in your head that whispers:
"Maybe I'm not as good as I thought."

But here's the thing:
You are.

One offer. One conversation. One yes.
That's all it takes to flip the script.
Not because someone finally "validated" you,
But because you chose to stay ready anyway.

Don't let rejection rewrite your story.
Keep showing up, as if it's still yours to tell.

Confidence isn't loud.
Sometimes, it's just quietly trying again.

The reason your job search feels overwhelming?
You're trying to do everything at once.

Apply. Prepare. Network. Track. Interview. Repeat.
It feels like you're spinning in five directions with no progress in any.

That used to be me.

Until I broke it into stages:

- Research: What roles fit me best?
- Resume: Is it clear, tailored, and aligned?
- Apply: Am I being intentional, not just active?
- Prep: Do I know my stories cold and structure tight?
- Interview: Can I show what they need, not just what I've done?

When I stopped multitasking,
the entire process and focused on one step at a time,
The pressure dropped.

The quality went up.
And results started to show.

You don't need to do everything today.
Just the next right thing.

Job search isn't a race.
It's a process.

Structure it like one.
It'll save your sanity.

Why the first 5 seconds of your LinkedIn message matter more than your entire resume.

Because no one's reading your full message
Unless the first line gives them a reason to.

Most cold messages sound the same:
"Hope you're doing well."
"I came across your profile..."
"I'm currently seeking opportunities..."

That's not a hook. That's a snooze.

The people you're messaging?
They're busy.
Scrolling.
Skimming.

If you don't lead with clarity, relevance, or intent
They're gone.

So try this instead:

→ "Saw you're hiring for X just applied and wanted to introduce myself."
→ "I'm a data analyst who recently worked on [relevant project] loved your recent post on [topic]."
→ "Quick note: I've applied for X role and would love to share why I think I'm a great fit."

Get to the point.
Make it human.
Make it easy to reply.

Because your resume might be strong
But your message is the bridge.
And if no one crosses it,
They'll never see what you built.

It's strange how we normalize burnout
But still feel guilty for resting.

We celebrate all-nighters.
Romanticize the hustle.
Wear "I've been so busy" like a badge.

But the moment we slow down?
Guilt creeps in.

You finally take a day off
And your brain starts asking,
"Shouldn't you be doing something?"

I've felt that too.
Resting, but not really resting.
Because mentally, I was still racing.

Here's what I've learned the hard way:
Burnout doesn't ask for permission.
It shows up when it wants to, uninvited.

Rest isn't a reward.
It's a requirement.

You don't need to earn your break.
You just need to take it before your body or
mind makes the decision for you.

The work will be there.
But your peace?
That's yours to protect.

The job market isn't just about what you do
It's about how clearly you explain it.

You could've led a high-impact project,
built key features, saved the company millions...

But if you can't articulate that in a way that
makes sense to someone outside your role?

You'll get passed.

It's not about dumbing it down.
It's about connecting the dots.

- Can you explain your work without a buzzword spiral?
- Can you highlight results, not just responsibilities?
- Can you tailor your story to what the role actually needs?

Articulation is the real differentiator.
In interviews. In resumes. In intros. Everywhere.

It shows clarity.
It shows confidence.
It shows that you know what you're doing and how it matters.

If you're doing good work but still getting overlooked,
It may not be the work; it may be how you're talking about it.

Say less, but say it better.

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You're optimizing your resume,
But have you optimized your mindset?
Because the job search isn't just a strategy game.
It's an emotional one.
You can have the perfect resume.
You can send 100+ tailored applications.
You can prep for every behavioral question.
But if you spiral after every rejection,
Lose momentum after one bad week,
Or tie your self-worth to every company's decision...
You'll burn out before the right opportunity finds you.
Mindset is what keeps you steady when results aren't.
It's what reminds you that one "no" doesn't erase your value.
And that progress isn't always loud, but it is building.
Job search isn't just about how you show up.
It's about how long you can keep showing up.
So yes, optimize your resume.
But also, optimize your mindset.
That's what gets you to the finish line.

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Nobody really knows what they're doing in their 20s.

We're all just guessing, adjusting, and hoping something sticks.

When I was younger, I imagined my 20s would bring clarity, stability, direction.
Instead, it brought a lot of trial, error, and... confusion.

But here's the truth I wish I knew earlier:
This decade isn't about having answers.
It's about being brave enough to ask the questions.

It's about trying different roles, moving cities, falling in (and out of) love,
pivoting careers, meeting new people, losing some along the way.

The beauty is in figuring things out as you go.

Because uncertainty isn't a sign you're behind.
It's proof you're growing, testing, exploring.

Nobody has it completely figured out—
Some people are just better at pretending.

So breathe a little easier.
Enjoy the messy process.
The answers don't come all at once—
They come exactly when you're ready to hear them.

What you say in the last 2 minutes of an interview matters just as much as the first 2.

The intro gets their attention.

But the close? That's what they remember.

Too many people rush the ending:

"Thanks for your time."

Or "I'll wait to hear back."

But here's the truth,

You get one last shot to reinforce why you're the right fit.

Try something like:

→ "I've really enjoyed learning more about the team and the role, this aligns well with the kind of problems I love solving."

→ "If there's anything else I can share to support your decision, I'd be happy to."

→ "Thanks again for the opportunity. I'm genuinely excited about what you're building."

And always ask:

"What are the next steps?"

Not to pressure. But to show you care.

The first 2 minutes make them curious.

The last 2 minutes make them confident.

Don't just fade out.

Finish strong.

The difference between “I’m looking for any role” and “I’m looking for a role where I can do X” is massive.

One sounds desperate.

The other sounds intentional.

If you’re applying everywhere, talking to everyone, and still hearing nothing,

It might not be effort you’re lacking.

It might be clarity.

Because here’s the truth:

Recruiters don’t want to guess where you fit.

They want to know exactly what you bring and where you want to apply it.

Instead of saying:

“I’m open to anything.”

Try:

“I’m looking for a role where I can work on product strategy, user research, and early-stage execution. That’s where I’ve created the most impact.”

Specificity is confidence.

It shows you’ve done the work.

It tells them what to do with your profile.

If you’re not getting responses, don’t just double your applications.

Sharpen your positioning.

Vague won’t get you noticed.

Clarity will.

I used to spend hours planning my job search before actually job searching.

Should I rewrite my resume first?

Or reach out to people?

Or start applying?

I'd open 10 tabs, make 3 to-do lists, then feel too overwhelmed to start.

Sound familiar?

Here's what I've learned:

Clarity doesn't come before action.

It comes from action.

The more I executed, sending a message, applying to one role, tweaking one bullet, the clearer my path became.

That momentum helped me see what was working, what wasn't, and where to adjust.

That's when strategy kicked in.

If you're stuck in your head, start small.

→ Message one person.

→ Apply to one job.

→ Edit one section of your profile.

Don't wait for the perfect plan.

Take imperfect steps.

Because thinking won't get you unstuck.

Doing will.

If you're scared to follow up, you're overvaluing silence.

I used to hesitate.

What if I come across as pushy?

What if they've already rejected me?

But here's what I realized:

Silence doesn't always mean no.

Sometimes it just means busy. Or forgotten. Or undecided.

And a well-timed follow-up?

That's not pressure. That's professionalism.

It shows you care.

It shows you're serious.

It shows you're willing to take initiative, even when it's uncomfortable.

The key?

Keep it short.

Keep it polite.

Remind them of your interest and value.

You're not asking for favors.

You're just making it easy for them to remember you.

So if it's been a few days, follow up.

Not ten times. Not every morning.

But once or twice, with intention.

Because silence isn't a rejection.

But never showing up again? That is.

And if one email brings your chances down,

They were never that high to begin with.

Your resume should read like a movie trailer—not a biography.

Think about a good trailer.

It doesn't tell the entire story.

It gives you just enough to get curious, to care, to show up.

That's exactly how your resume should feel.

Too many resumes are overloaded.

Every task, every detail, every skill.

No wonder recruiters skim them.

A good resume creates intrigue and clarity, not overload.

→ Highlight only your best moments (impactful, relevant, aligned).

→ Show results over responsibilities.

→ Keep it concise—make them want to meet you to hear the rest.

Recruiters don't need your full story.

They just need to know why they should pay attention.

Leave some room for conversation.

Don't share every scene, just the highlights.

Less is more when it's strategic.

Be a trailer, not a biography.

Your job search spreadsheet shouldn't just track jobs,
It should track mistakes.

Most spreadsheets look the same:

→ Company, role, date applied, status.

But the real value?

It's in the column that almost nobody has
A reflection column.

Every rejection, ghosting, or failed interview is data.
Not personal. Not shameful.
Just valuable data you can learn from.

So track it:

→ What went wrong?

→ What could've been better?

→ One thing you'll do differently next time?

I started doing this after a streak of rejections.

Patterns became clear.

Adjustments became obvious.

Progress became measurable.

And suddenly, each rejection wasn't a loss.

It was clarity.

Don't just track your attempts.

Track your lessons.

Because your next job isn't found in your wins

It's found in how you handle and adapt from your misses.

Living alone sounds exciting
until it's just you and your thoughts at 9 p.m.

No roommates.

No background noise.

Just you, a quiet room, and a half-eaten dinner.

At first, I loved the idea.

Freedom. Independence. No one is stealing my leftovers.

But what I didn't expect?

How loud silence can feel when there's no one to share it with.

Adulthood comes with these weird in-between moments

Where you're not lonely exactly,

But you are alone.

And learning to be okay in that space?

That's a whole skill.

It means making peace with your own thoughts.

Finding joy in small routines.

Creating connection, without waiting for someone to knock on your door.

It's not always easy.

But it's where self-trust starts.

So if your evenings feel quieter than you'd like,

you're not doing life wrong.

You're just learning to sit with yourself.

And that's brave, too.

No one claps when you choose discipline over dopamine.

No one sees you skip the scroll and go to bed early.

Or open that job board instead of Netflix.

Or write that cold message instead of watching “just one more video.”

But that’s where growth starts.

In the quiet wins.

The small, boring choices you make when no one’s watching.

Keep showing up without the instant reward.

And here’s the thing:

Dopamine fades.

Discipline compounds.

Choosing long-term momentum over short-term comfort?

That’s the real flex.

It’s not glamorous.

But it’s powerful.

So if no one noticed your win today

that early morning, that hour of focus, that skipped distraction,

let this be your reminder:

It counts.

It’s working.

Keep going.

Because the most life-changing progress?

It usually starts in silence.

Rejections aren't always about you.

Sometimes it's timing.

Sometimes it's the team.

Sometimes it's simply headcount.

I used to internalize every "no."

What did I do wrong?

Where did I mess up?

But here's the thing:

Hiring decisions aren't only about your worth; they're about fit, timing, budgets, and things completely out of your control.

You can deliver your best interview and still not get the role.

And that doesn't mean you're not good enough.

It means your best opportunity is still ahead of you.

Every rejection isn't a judgment; it's a redirection.

It's one step closer to the role meant for you.

Stop treating every "no" as proof you're lacking something.

Start seeing it as proof you're brave enough to show up.

Keep showing up.

Because the right "yes" won't need convincing, it'll recognize your value from the start.

You're not defined by the roles you don't get, but by how you bounce back from them.

The most expensive lessons I've learned had nothing to do with money.

They came from:

- Ignoring boundaries
- Missed chances I didn't take seriously
- Trusting words without actions
- Holding onto relationships long past their expiration date

These lessons didn't cost me dollars; they cost me time, peace, and emotional energy.

The ROI was emotional, and it was real.

Because here's the truth:

Some lessons you can't budget for.

They hit deeper.

They linger longer.

But here's what I've realized:

Those emotional investments weren't wasted.

They taught me clarity.

Self-respect.

What healthy connections actually feel like.

The price might've been high, but so was the return

Now, I'm learning to invest smarter, not just with money, but with my energy, attention, and trust.

You can always make more money, but rebuilding trust, reclaiming lost time, or healing from a painful relationship takes more than just effort.

It takes self-awareness, courage, and clarity.

Spend it wisely.

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The moment you feel like giving up usually comes right before the email you've been waiting for.

I can't count how many times I've almost closed my laptop, convinced it wasn't worth it.

One more rejection.

One more unanswered message.

One more day of silence.

It's easy to think, "Maybe it's just not happening."

But here's something I've learned the hard way:

Breakthroughs rarely send advance notice.

They arrive quietly, right when you're questioning if you should quit.

That email, that call, that opportunity, it often appears just beyond your lowest point, reminding you why you held on in the first place.

So if you're tired, discouraged, or just about ready to stop, hold on a little longer.

Your persistence matters.

Your effort counts.

Your moment could be closer than you think.

And if today feels like giving up, remember why you started.

That email might be just one refresh away :)

157

You don't need a 5-year plan.

You just need to not quit on yourself this week.

I used to think I had to know exactly where I'd be in five years.

The title. The salary. The city.

But the truth?

Most of those plans changed anyway.

Life did what it does, surprised me.

What's actually kept me moving forward hasn't been big, intimidating timelines.

It's been small, consistent commitments:

→ Sending that one application

→ Showing up to the gym even when I didn't feel like it

→ Finishing the book, I said I'd read

The future can feel overwhelming.

The present is manageable.

When you zoom out too far, the path feels impossible.

When you zoom in on just this week, it feels doable

So if the big picture is scaring you, shrink it.

Focus on the next step, not the next five years

Your only job right now?

Don't quit on yourself today.

And tomorrow, do it again.

When you stop asking “What’s the best format for my resume?”
and start asking “What’s the clearest way to tell my story?”, things shift.

I used to obsess over templates.

Should I use two columns? A bold header? Icons? Colors?

But the truth?

No format can save a messy story.

And no template will hide the fact that you’re unclear about your value.

A resume isn’t about design trends.

It’s about alignment.

It’s about making it obvious, in 6 seconds, why you’re a fit.

That means:

- Leading with impact, not job descriptions
- Highlighting results that match the role you want
- Cutting anything that doesn’t move the story forward

When I stopped treating my resume like a decoration and started treating it like a narrative, my results changed.

Recruiters didn’t just skim, they connected the dots.

The right format is the one that makes your story impossible to miss.

Because resumes don’t get you interviews.

Clear stories do.

The AI-powered STAR method changed how I prep for behavioral interviews.

I used to ramble through answers.
Too many details in the beginning.
Not enough impact at the end.

Then, I let AI help me tighten the story.

Here's how I use it: [Full prompt in the comments below]

1 Write out your rough answer to a behavioral question (like: "Tell me about a time you handled conflict on a team.")

2 Paste it into ChatGPT and say:

"Rewrite this answer in STAR format: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Keep it clear, concise, and professional."

3 Ask it to highlight where the story feels weak (too vague, too long, missing results).

4 Refine, practice, repeat.

The beauty of STAR is structure.
The beauty of AI is feedback.

Together, they turn messy stories into confident answers.

Because interviewers don't just want to hear what happened,
They want to hear about what you did and what changed as a result.

And that clarity?
It makes you unforgettable.

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The clock is ticking.

In a job search, momentum matters more than perfection.
Apply. Interview. Learn. Adjust. Repeat.

If you get rejected, cry for a night.
But tomorrow? Get back at it as if nothing happened.

You can't afford to spend weeks dwelling.
Every day you pause is a day you could be iterating.

The faster you cycle through attempts, the faster you find clarity, and the faster opportunities open up.
Treat each rejection as feedback, not failure.
Treat each "no" as proof you're still in the game.
Keep moving.
Keep showing up.

Because the only way out is through.

Most people read the job description once. Use it to practice every single day.

Do not cram the night before an interview,
scrolling question lists, rehearsing answers in your head, and hoping you'd sound confident.

Instead.
Treat it like a workout.
Short, consistent reps.

Here's how I would do it:

1 Get your questions from the job description - paste the JD into ChatGPT, and say:

"Based on this job description, generate 10 role-specific interview questions -mix of behavioral and technical."

2 Then say:

"Ask me these questions one by one. Wait for my answer before giving the next. At the end, give me feedback on clarity, structure, and confidence."

3 Answer out loud, as if you're in the room.

4 Read the feedback, adjust, and repeat tomorrow.

It's not about sounding perfect - it's about training your brain to think on the spot.

Five minutes a day builds more confidence than five hours of last-minute panic.

Because interviews aren't just about knowing your answers.

They're about knowing yourself.

Friendships in your 20s shift.

In college, it was constant calls, daily hangouts, and inside jokes on repeat.

Now? It might be months without talking, different cities, busy jobs, lives moving at different speeds.

At first, I thought that distance meant the friendship was fading.

But then I noticed something else:

The real ones always show up.

Maybe not for every Friday night.

But for the big things.

The hard things.

The moments that actually matter.

That's adulthood friendship.

Less about frequency, more about depth.

Less about constant presence, more about reliable presence.

And when you do meet again?

It's like no time has passed at all.

So if your friendships look different now, that's okay.

It doesn't mean you're drifting apart.

It just means you're growing in parallel, and still choosing each other when it counts.

Because the strongest friendships don't need constant proof.

They just need trust, time, and a quiet kind of love.

AI for LinkedIn optimization is underrated.

Most of us write our profiles like a digital resume,
dutifully listing roles, skills, and bullet points.

But LinkedIn isn't just about history.

It's about visibility.

The right words in your headline, summary, and experience can make the difference between getting found and getting overlooked.

Here's how I use AI to tighten mine:

Headline

"Rewrite my LinkedIn headline with keywords recruiters search for in [industry/role], while keeping it natural."

Summary

"Turn this summary into a clear, engaging story that shows my strengths, values, and career direction."

Experience

"Rewrite these bullets to highlight results and impact, not just tasks. Keep them concise and metrics-driven."

In minutes, you get polished, recruiter-friendly language, without losing your voice.

AI won't invent your story.

But it will make sure the right people actually see it.

Because your LinkedIn shouldn't just tell what you've done.

It should attract where you want to go.

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You can't outsource clarity.

Not to ChatGPT.

Not to a consultancy.

Not to anyone.

I used to think if I asked enough experts, downloaded enough templates, or read enough guides I'd magically "figure out" my career direction.

But here's what I learned:

No tool can answer the questions you haven't asked yourself yet

Clarity isn't something people hand you;

it's something you build from the inside out.

The internet can polish your resume.

A coach can sharpen your strategy.

AI can help you wordsmith your outreach.

But none of that works if you can't first explain in plain language what you actually want.

The hardest part of the job search isn't finding opportunities.

It's defining which ones are worth chasing.

You can't outsource that part.

You have to do the work yourself.

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Most people prep for interviews by skimming a company website or LinkedIn page.

The problem? You miss the details that actually make you stand out.

That's why I built a custom GPT to do the heavy lifting for you.

Drop in a job description, and in minutes it gives you:

→ **Company Overview** — mission, values, products, culture, customers

→ **Leadership & Team** — key executives, founders, backgrounds

→ **Recent News & Updates** — funding, launches, announcements

→ **Industry Context** — competitors, trends, positioning

→ **Interview Talking Points** — 3–5 smart questions to ask

→ **Challenges & Opportunities** — growth areas or struggles

→ **Role Alignment** — how your skills connect to their needs

→ **Likely Interview Questions** — behavioral + technical

It's like walking into the interview with your own personal briefing.

The goal isn't to memorize every detail.

It's to show up prepared, curious, and aligned.

I'll drop the link to my custom GPT in the comments.