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READY TO JOB SEARCH?

KEEP HOPE ALIVE: ➜ Many people with felonies in their history, find employment! Many however, get stuck by believing that they won't be hired because of their felonies.

Think positive! Don't become a victim of your own "stinking thinking". Are you ready to move on? Is your attitude right? Have you put the past behind you, including the people that were part of your criminal past?

> ***Put yourself in a state of mind where you say to yourself, "Here is an opportunity for me to celebrate like never before, my own power, my own ability to get myself to do whatever is necessary." --Martin Luther King, Jr.***

Take the time to prepare for successful employment ➜ Address Any Barriers…

- Education --Identification --Transportation --Child Care --Health Issues
- Job Search/Interview clothing that is appropriate for each type of position sought (e.g. Not a suit for a construction position, not "club wear" for a customer service job)
- Work history on paper, kept in pocket or purse! (dates, addresses, names & contacts for supervisors etc). Use this for Applications ***(see APPENDIX B)***
- Have a written list of 3 – 4 References with contact information ***(see APPENDIX C)***
- Computer Assistance/training: set up email address for job search
- Resume: paper copies, plus digital copies in email, BOTH formatted and non-formatted
- Determine whether the best resume is "Chronological" or "Functional/Skills"; make sure it has a "Highlights of Qualifications" section at the top that match specific job requirements
- Cell Phone (e.g. Safe Link: www.safelinkwireless.com)
- Voice Mail (Community Voice Mailboxes – Call your local "211 / Info Line")
- Computer training? Get help if you need it to upload and/or attach resumes and cover letters to applications (Learn to write COVER LETTERS – They are important!)

Attitude is everything!

Cognitive Behavior training can help

Staying Clean/sober – attend support groups and/or counseling

Anger Management classes

Soft Skills training / tutoring about employer expectations; find a mentor!

One who fears failure limits his activities. Failure is only the opportunity to more intelligently begin again.

--***Henry Ford***

Ready to Job Search?

Remember, case managers or Employment Assistants can only help you, to help yourself. YOU have to develop the attitude, and do the hard work that will get the job.

TOP METHODS OF JOB SEARCHING:

- Networking (who can recommend the job seeker?)
- Informational Interviews (not always best for Returning Citizens)
- Cold Calls (Excellent for Returning Citizens)
- Use internet/yellow pages etc. to write a list of places where you want to apply
- A little research goes a LONG way! Research the companies where applying ("never underestimate the power of flattering the employer")
- Call ahead to get the name of the hiring manager
- Research the skill requirements for desired position(s)
- Create a personal list of skills that match the job(s) being sought after
- Highlight three soft skills and three hard skills that "match" the job
- **Create a "personal pitch"** (elevator speech) that quickly highlights why you would be a good match for that position ***(see APPENDIX A)***
- Write out a script for making Cold Calls ***(see APPENDIX D)***

- Write out an honest, brief answer to "the felony question" ***(see APPENDIX E)***
- Write out answers to up to 25 possible questions he/she could be asked in an interview, ***AND PRACTICE OUT LOUD -*** sharing brief examples that demonstrate the answer (want to create a "word picture" in the employer's mind) NOTE: for a list of possible questions, go to: http://www.wisebread.com/how-to-answer-23-of-the-most-common-interview-questions
- Write out five questions that YOU can ask the employer at the end of the interview! NOTE: for a list of possible questions, go to: http://www.career.vt.edu/Interviewing/AskQuestions.html
- **Start "Cold Calling"** – ask for the hiring manager by name, and share "Personal Pitch"***(NEVER ask "are you hiring")*** with goal of setting up a time to go in and meet in person (eye to eye, smile to smile, handshake to handshake!)

And Finally…

- **Keep ORGANIZED!** Make a list of Cold Call contacts (in person or by phone), and include the dates and details about your follow-up action plan

Date	Company & Address	Hiring Mgr & Phone #	Result	Meeting Date?	Follow-up Date/Action

Nothing is predestined: The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings.
--Ralph Blum

APPENDIX A

WRITING YOUR "PERSONAL PITCH"

Choose three top "Soft Skills" that correspond to a particular job for which you would like to apply:

I am _____, _____,

and _____.

Choose three top "Job Skills" that correspond to a particular job for which you would like to apply:

and I can _____, _____,

and _____.

Finally, put it all together in a full statement as if the employer is asking you this question:

"Tell me more about yourself?" **This is your new "Personal Pitch!"**

NOTE:

You can/will change the type of "Job Skills & Soft Skills" you're sharing, to match each unique type of job for which you are applying.

APPENDIX B

MAJOR POINTS ON AN APPLICATION

BE PREPARED:

- Read all directions before beginning to fill out the form. It will save you time and embarrassment.
- Follow directions exactly. If it says print, then print; if it says last name first, give your last name first. Read it through thoroughly.
- Make the application neat and easy to read-it will be judged on appearance and content. Be sure to print. Remember that most employers will not even read a messy application.
- Give complete and accurate information. If blanks don't provide enough space, finish your explanation on a separate page. Do not write "see resume" even if the application repeats information. (You can attach a resume to it)
- Read each question and decide how you will answer before you begin to write. This will help you fit the answer into the available space.
- Answer all questions. If a question does not apply to you, write N/A for not applicable. Do NOT leave spaces blank, it looks like you forgot something or have something to hide.
- Do not scratch out or write over mistakes. Try to get two applications, in case of mistakes. Fill one out for practice and then copy it onto the other form.
- Take your time, but work steadily. If you take too long filling out an application at the company, the employer may think that you are not prepared.
- Do not use sarcastic answers.
- Answer questions honestly-never lie. Even if you are not found out and get the job, you could be fired later…and may be liable for civil prosecution.
- Ask questions if you do not understand something on the form.
- After you complete the form, reread it carefully, check it for accuracy, correct grammar and spelling, make sure that it is neat.
- Follow up on the application at regular intervals, about every week, until you hear from the employer.

APPENDIX C

REFERENCES ON APPLICATIONS

Carefully consider the people you would use for references. ***The strongest references from the employer's viewpoint, will come from people who are in the business community.*** If you do not have former employers that you can use as references, think about people who are familiar with the work you do even though you may not have worked directly for them.

Do you know pastors, teachers, church workers or any participants in support groups? Who can report something positive about the quality of you as a person or about your work? Perhaps you mowed lawns when you were younger, did odd jobs for neighbors or have done volunteer work.

- ◈ Once you identify 3 names for references, you want to get permission to use these people. This will make sure that there are no surprises! If these people know about your criminal involvement, this will also be an excellent time to remind your references of how you have changed and are moving forward with your life in positive ways.

- ◈ Make sure you have the complete information for your references. Is each name spelled correctly along with the phone number, full address with the zip code and their job title (if they are working and you are giving their work address)?

- ◈ Make sure that each of your references know your accomplishments since you last talked to them.

- ◈ Let them know when you are going for an interview, so that they can anticipate a phone call from the prospective employer.

- ◈ It is also a great idea to <u>send each of your references one of your resumes</u> so that they can highlight the same skills with your employer as you are emphasizing during your job interview!

You don't have to get it perfect--
-- you just have to get it going.
Babies don't walk the
first time they try,
but eventually they do.
- Mark Victor Hansen

APPENDIX D

EMPLOYER COLD CALLS

What is it that you want an employer to remember about you?

How do you use the 30 – 45 seconds to your advantage?

Try some of the following suggestions:

- *Call ahead to check the name of the hiring manager*; ***call again*** and ask for the hiring manager BY NAME - you stand a better chance of getting directly connected
- Have written notes in front of you to help reduce your fears
- Create a script to ensure that your introductory statements have the impact that you want
- Refer to your 30 second summary of your skills and strengths (your "personal pitch")
- Keep your resume, relevant documents, calendar, and pen at your side
- Whether in person or on the telephone, remember to SMILE, it makes a difference in your voice!
- Strong introductory statements are important to get your conversation started:

Begin with an enthusiastic greeting	"Good morning, Ms. Jones, do you have a moment?"
Tell them who you are	"My name is Ted Smith."
Tell them why you are calling	"I am interested in working at your restaurant."
Market your skills, experience, and abilities **(hard skills)**	"I have 5 years experience in various restaurants preparing and cooking entrees, salads, pastas, and sauces as well as baking special desserts."
Mention personal strengths (soft skills)	"Past employers have found me to be hard working, able to work independently as well as part of their customer service team, and I thrive in a busy environment."
Ask to meet with them in person	"I was wondering if I could come by this afternoon to meet you and to give you my resume in person."
If yes, set up time and date	"Tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. is better? Great, I will see you then. Please, let me give you my name again and phone number, in case you need to make any change.
If no, go to plan B	"I understand that you are not hiring at present. May I send in my resume and check with you in a couple of weeks? Great!"
If no, ask for leads	"Do you know of any other restaurants that may need my skills at the moment?"
Thank the employer	"Thank you very much for your time."

Don't stop talking until you get through this part

APPENDIX E

ANSWERING THE "FELONY QUESTION"

Employers want to know

a) what you did b) what you have done to change c) what skills you bring to the table

They want to hire employees for their company who can:

1) increase their profits
2) save them time

There are many different ways to tell the truth: Remember, "ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING"!

- Keep it honest – clear and straightforward
- Avoid talking too much; don't ramble. Silence is golden!
- Tell the truth in a positive manner: this is your time to talk about change and moving forward in your life (Use your personal pitch, if appropriate)
- This is not the place for "True Confessions"- keep the focus on your positive qualities
- Keep your comments related to the work situation: *tie in what you've learned* to how you can contribute to the employer's company (if possible)
- Your personal/home situation is not the employer's business
- Keep comments focused/brief and to the point

Words and phrases* to avoid *when explaining your situation:

Convicted
Crime
Trouble
Did Time
Facility / Institution
Felony (1 thru 5)
Drugs

Alcohol
Cocaine
Crack
Parole Violation
Trafficking
Aggravated Assault

Manslaughter
Burglary
Forgery
Embezzle
Caught a case
Theft
Incarceration

Words and phrases to use instead of the above:

Problem(s)
Poor judgment
Substance related
Bad environment
Made restitution

Mistake(s)
Issues
Treatment
Program
Counseling

Paid back debts
Second chance
Completed program

Rehabilitated
Opportunity