



# Shepherd Care®

Revision Date:  
May 22, 2023

*To Care for People Where They Live and Work*

## COMMUNITY Care TOPIC

### How to Survive Rejection

There's a way to handle rejection with flair. I always come back to the same three truths to survive it. When it comes--that awful companion, Rejection--and says *no*, I realize what the *no* signals. It signals that I put myself out there. It means I risked something. It means I offered myself. These are good things. But it doesn't make us feel any better in the face of a friend who spurns us, a company that jettisons our resume, a publisher who turns down our novel, or a family member who forsakes us. It doesn't soothe the hurt that comes from hoping for something that doesn't come about because somebody--or just circumstance--delivers that awful *no*.

#### Three Things

But three things do soothe. Or at least they helped me this morning when I read another email rejection about a book proposal. I want to live with flair, after all. What does it look like to endure rejection with flair and style?

1. We do what we do because it's our calling--our unique way to offer a gift to the world. We do this whether or not it ever receives approval or recognition. We *keep* doing it because we serve others, because we want to make a contribution for love, not for money or prestige or even anybody loving it back. Phew! Aren't you so glad your *doing* is not dependent on *our* loving it? I had a student who didn't get a call-back for an audition for a major network singing competition. But this guy was born to sing. Did a rejection stop him? That week, we asked him to sing for us in class. He stood up, sang the most amazing renditions of various songs, and we cheered and hollered like crazy. He's not going to Vegas, but he delighted *us*. For that day, at that time, it was enough. Somebody, somewhere, wants to receive the gift we offer.

2. Every "no" is an opportunity for a "yes" somewhere else. I think this applies to break-ups, schools that reject us, and jobs that fire us. My dream school turned me down for graduate school. I wept and wouldn't leave my dorm room. I went to Michigan instead; certain I was doomed never to meet my Southern Gentleman. My Southern Gentleman also got into Michigan. You know the rest.

3. If I believe in a divine plan (which I do), I know that God does not withhold good things from his children. If I don't get the thing I *want*, it means it wasn't good for me (at least at this time). If it's good, and part of God's plan for me, then I can chill out and enjoy the wait.

Rejection is good for me because it brings me back to reality. It reminds me that I do things (write, teach, plan new projects) because I *love* to do these things. That's the reward--not any prestige or wealth or even anybody loving it back. And there's a divine mystery to the order of a life. The *no* is also a *yes* somewhere. I can rest in the timing and the plan of the *yes*.

Rejection is a beautiful and terrible thing. It's awful in the truest sense of the word. Awful: to inspire awe and deep reverence. I respect rejection. I'm thankful for what it reminds me of and how it helps me live with flair. Living with flair means to respect the rejection. It reminds me *why* I do what I do.

Introducing your Community Chaplain

**Eric Kieselbach**  
(pronounced "key-sill-baa")

Email:  
[eric@shepherdcare.us](mailto:eric@shepherdcare.us)

#### Co-Authored Article Series:

Co-authored by Katy Armstead, Project Architect, Roanoke, VA, and Chaplain Eric Kieselbach

"When you feel 'kicked to the curb' just remember that the curb can be fun!"  
*Abigail Kieselbach*

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

**Romans 8:28**

All Scripture quotations, except otherwise noted, are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769. Public Domain