

The Email: 3 Ways to Handle Rejection and Overcome Setbacks

Ever had one of those days when you've labored for hours with sweat and tears on a project but encountered a significant setback? I did this week. Here's my story. . .

Last Monday, I led a conference call and briefly looked at my phone to check emails. One of the subject lines caught my attention, "Changes at Tenet." I immediately opened the email and read the grim news, "Unfortunately, this means that the representation agreement between you and our agency will be terminated "... .Ugh.

I began writing *Disciplined Leader* in 2010. I've invested countless hours in *Disciplined Leader* because I believe its message is critical in today's world. I ask the question, "How does one connect his or her secular and spiritual life in their business, community, or school and become stronger leaders?" I believe we become better leaders through knowing and following Jesus; through discipleship.

Since I began writing, I collaborated with two editors to complete a 10-chapter, 67,000-word manuscript. I attended a writer's conference, began writing a bi-weekly blog, trained people, attended platform-building courses, and employed a digital marketing firm to build awareness. I even secured book endorsements from Dan Cathy, CEO of Chick-fil-A, Chris Robinson, Executive VP of the John Maxwell Team, and Bryant Wright, Lead Pastor of Atlanta's Johnson Ferry Baptist Church.

But my most significant milestone was signing with a literary agency, Tenet. My agent was Waldo. I'll never forget Waldo's call to me last April. Tenet would sign me after a long

consideration period and represent *Discipled Leader* to publishers. It seemed a lifelong dream was coming true.

The challenge is I rarely ever heard from Waldo. I'd send emails, leave voicemails, and send texts with little or no response. When I did hear from him, I'd ask about his strategy and approach. I never received specifics other than he'd sent my book proposal to top publishers and was awaiting email responses. He only told me that silence in the publishing industry is a good thing, and the process may take 18 to 24 months to find a publisher. Not very assuring, but I decided to trust him.

I've also been praying diligently for God's help. Author and Pastor Andy Stanley says that a God-given vision requires God's intervention. Meaning, if God gave you an idea or dream, he will make it come true. I've been talking to God about the vision he gave me and seeking his help to get the book into the hands of people that need to read it.

That's why the email subject line caught my attention last week; "Changes at Tenet". . .

Good morning, Preston:

*I am writing today to let you know that due to some health struggles, I have made the difficult decision to step away from agenting, effective immediately. Tenet will not be replacing me at any point in the near future. **Unfortunately, this means that the representation agreement between you and Tenet will be terminated** – you should expect to receive a termination letter from Tenet's president in the next week or so.*

You are free to seek new representation immediately. If you need any guidance in this area, feel free to reach out. My Tenet email will be online through May 1st, but I can also be reached on my personal email...It has been a privilege to work with you, and I'll be praying for your success!

REJECTED!

I reached out to Tenet's president for reconsideration but to no avail. He said they kept four of Waldo's agented authors and couldn't represent me. He wrote:

It [Disciplined Leader] is an important topic, and the presentation is well done; your social media is improving steadily, but it is not yet what our publishers would consider successful. It wouldn't be fair to your next agent to continue down the path we've gone, so I'll be sending out a letter today confirming our decision. A fresh pair of eyes may be just what the project needs to get over the hump.

REJECTED AGAIN!

The funny thing is that I'm at peace with it. I truly believe that God engineers all circumstances, and this setback is just part of the journey. While my search for a new agent begins again, I've made the decision not to become bitter or quit. I will press on. Why? Because I believe *Disciplined Leader's* message is essential. It helps people become better leaders by growing closer to Jesus and becoming his disciples. There is no higher call than that.

This isn't the first time I've experienced rejection. How about you? Have you heard anything like that?

- *We like your work and skill set, but we've decided to go in a different direction.*
- *We regret to inform you that you've not been accepted.*
- *I'm afraid we have to pass on your proposal.*

We all will experience some form or fashion of rejection during our lifetimes. The question is, how do we handle rejection? Here's what I've learned . . .

It Hurts: I wish I could tell you that the news I received didn't affect me. It was tough reading Waldo's email in the

middle of a meeting and trying to stay focused. I was angry, frustrated, and deeply disappointed all simultaneously. I said a brief prayer to God and sought his help. I said, "Lord, if this is a vision you gave me, please intervene and make a way for this dream to come true." Over a short period, I processed my emotions and decided not to be a victim. I shifted my thoughts and silenced my inner critic. I pivoted from doubting to believing and remembered that the rejection didn't define me.

Remember Why: I wrote *Disciplined Leader* to help others become better leaders through discipleship. I've seen God use the message and content to make a positive difference in many lives. The book and platform are my calling. I want to glorify God and make him know. That's my "why." A little rejection won't deter me from my calling or mission.

Keep Going: Rejection can be considered a setback, an obstacle, delay, or circumstance that prevents you from advancing. However, the key is to persevere, not give up, and take risks. I take comfort from the list of famous books rejected multiple times by editors, agents, and publishers, including *Gone with the Wind*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *Moby Dick*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Recognize any of them? I know if I keep going, something good will happen, God willing.

I'm very encouraged by what the future may hold. I remain steadfast in my mission.

When you encounter rejection or other setbacks, I hope you will acknowledge that it hurts, remember your why, and keep going. If you do, you'll be on the road to achieving your dream.

Want to learn how to uplevel your leadership skills? Visit my website, prestonpoore.com, today!

Cheers,

Preston