

# Break it down | Christin Smith Myers

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Getting a new job is a big job in itself. It can feel overwhelming. If you're currently employed, how do you find the time to work on it? If you're unemployed and prefer not to be, how do you stay positive and energized?

Job searching will never be easy. But it's much more manageable if you break it into smaller tasks. Your task list might look like this:

- Update your resume
- Pull together your references
- Tweak your LinkedIn profile (or build one if you've never had one)
- Draft a cover letter that can be tweaked for the individual job
- Post your resume on job sites
- Look for jobs in your area of interest/expertise
- Identify companies for which you might like to work
- Reach out to people in your network

If those tasks still feel too big, break them down even further. To update your resume:

- Find your old resume
- Identify key words you'd like to include
- Gather dates of employment and titles
- Brainstorm a summary of qualifications
- Write 5 bullet points for each job, or if that feels like too much
- Write 5 bullet points for one job
- Ask a friend for help writing it or proofreading it
- And so on...

Breaking tasks down also helps you create or maintain momentum. You may not like the traditional first or second task of a process, but if you can accomplish the third, you then have more energy to tackle the others. If the tasks aren't sequential, you have lots of choices. So if you don't feel like working on your resume today, you can still spend time researching companies, looking for jobs, or reaching out to other people.

Smaller challenges are also easier when broken into tasks. For someone like me, "Plan the kids' birthday

party" feels huge and stressful. But when I look at it in terms of specific to-dos, it feels way easier.

- Pick a theme
- Choose a date
- Invite family members
- Plan the menu
- Purchase decorations
- Purchase paper products
- And so on...

I've done this with business and self-development books I wanted to read (listing all the chapters, planning on reading one a day). I've done this with Toastmasters speeches. (I decided I wanted to achieve the Competent Communicator designation on my birthday so I looked at that date for speech #10 and then worked backwards to figure out how I was going to get my remaining six completed in 10 months). I've done this with converting to online bill-paying (instead of tackling all our bills at once, each time a bill came in, I followed the process to transition to e-billing). I've done this when encouraging my kids to clean their rooms. (First, pick up all the books. Then work on the clothes. Now it's time to pick up Legos.)

Almost anything is easier to achieve if you break it down.