

A Sermon on Challenging Job Searches

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for October 29th, 2023 (and beyond)

This sermon is in dialogue format and the Book of Job is in the Holy Bible if you wish to look there first.

Dialogue:

Honest Searcher: I'm reasonable and willing to negotiate respectfully. I understand that being over 45 years old and having some health conditions may result in your feeling it would be fiscally irresponsible to hire someone qualified and able to do the work of your open position if it would result in a greater increase in terms of health insurance premiums than if another equally qualified and able candidate applies for the same position with a less likely increased premium result. I'm willing to waive employer health insurance coverage to compete for the job I'd otherwise be hired for in full context.

Union/Potential Co-Workers: We can't let you do that. That's no way to compete. You're undermining our contract by asking for less. You are a scab and expect a hostile work environment.

Potential Employer: Our business isn't unionized, but I fear if I agree to the waiver you've suggested that you will experience a hostile work environment unless it is never disclosed. Are you willing to sign a confidential waiver?

Honest Searcher: Yes, but my concern is that in the event of a health emergency, if a co-worker misinforms emergency services regarding my insurance carrier that it could come out and then it might be worse than if it was just disclosed up front rather than as a shock upon shock in the event there was any such emergency which I don't anticipate and believe very few ever really do.

Savvy Searcher: Don't ask, don't tell. Simple. Just sign it and assume or pray there's never a medical emergency while you're at work. I'll sign it.

Union/Potential Co-Workers: No, you won't sign it. Not confidentially and not openly. You will not. This business provides health insurance benefits to all employees. It says so in the handbook. You are not going to change that.

Honest Searcher: The law says I can waive the medical insurance benefits at my option. Given my age and arthritis (not debilitating and manageable now), most employers don't see it as a good investment long-term and find the likely increase in medical coverage costs when compared to other candidates a reason not to hire and I need gainful employment.

Union/Potential Co-Workers: Sign up for SSDI.

Honest Searcher: SSDI is very limited and will not cover my basic living expenses. People on SSDI are still encouraged to find gainful employment and/or rely on charity or family assistance where the SSDI is just supplemental and basically covers medical or expenses directly related to the disability, not full living expenses.

Potential Employer: Let's ask the government what they can do for someone in your position.

Government: SSDI supplemental support if qualified. If a legally incompetent dependent with no family accepting legal guardianship, we can put you in a group home or institution. Even if you are legally competent, if you are a dependent adult the government tends to view you as legally incompetent or can only find basic services for you in environments that cater to the legally incompetent. If you have family or friends that can support you, that's likely your best option if unable to find gainful employment which remains your best option. There's currently an average 2-year waiting period for housing in the Section 8/Public Housing system. There is also charitable assistance, but charities are over-burdened as is the public housing system at this time. Have you tried playing the lottery? It could happen.

Honest Searcher: I'm willing to negotiate. I'm willing to cover my own health insurance and choose my own plan if earning a living without burdening my employer with the coverage. I'm competent and independent as a matter of law. I made the Dean's List at university and graduated with honors from junior college. I have skills, knowledge, and experience.

Potential Employer: I'd love to help, but I've decided on a different applicant who is equally qualified and happy with our medical coverage benefits.

Union/Potential Co-Workers: Wonderful, welcome!

Honest Searcher: I can't hide my age and sometimes my joints swell in an obvious way even though it doesn't result in immobility. I know if I could just waive medical benefits that a real capitalist would see the benefits outweigh the risks in terms of hiring me.

Union/Potential Co-Workers: Get out, stay out! Public assistance! Charity! Don't you have any friends?

Honest Searcher: How is that not discrimination?

Union/Potential Co-Workers: We demand our medical benefits not be put at risk by new hires nor anyone else. It is a slippery slope. One negotiated waiver turns into everyone being coerced into waiving their medical benefits at some point and weakens everyone's ability to negotiate.

Savvy Searcher: I have other non-disclosed conditions and I got the job with the coverage. Worse conditions too and their insurance is going to go up. I bet they'll change the plan to worse one any way.

Potential Employer: Good luck to you honest searcher. I'm sure you'll find someone who appreciates what you have to offer in all respects. Don't give up.

Honest Searcher: Thank you and church donations are tax-deductible.

Potential Employer: We have a matching program here where we match donations our employees make to their favorite causes and between those and write-offs, the tax-deduction from any additional donating does nothing because it exceeds what we would owe with the matching deductions and write-offs.

Honest Searcher: I understand. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Potential Employer: [Internal: That's a competitive applicant and I respect their willingness to negotiate. No one has ever asked if they could waive any benefits. That was a first for me.] You might want to consider being an Uber driver. Do you have a car?

END DIALOGUE

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.