

# What actually helps to go from stuck to first paying gigs

## Re-engineering expectations

Anchor job search solely on proximity to the field rather than title, e.g. apply for “any job that consists of computers” (even minimum-wage data entry). Lower the barrier to entry until someone is forced to say yes.

Defeat the sunk cost fallacy. Sunk cost makes us think, “I dropped out four times, therefore my efforts are wasted unless I become a developer instantly.

Wipe the mental slate clean today. My time in the psych ward or away from traditional paths isn't a debt to pay back; is just a fact. Acknowledge the losses and maneuver entirely based on today's possibilities, unattached to yesterday's mistakes.

## Lean on human psychology to open the door

Shift to mandatory in-person meetings, networking events, or direct messaging. Bypass the resume robot and get your face in front of a human whose intuition can see your genuine hunger.

*We vastly prefer saying yes to requests from people we like, relate to, or share similarities with. I didn't get my initial job by being the best coder. I just found a guy who I could relate to and did my best to impress him.*

Focus initial interactions entirely on connection rather than qualification. Ask questions, show extreme eagerness, be genuinely interested in them. Likability trumps paper qualifications every single time when filling entry roles.

## Proving value

Minimum wage dictates minimal effort. Ignore market norms at the beginning. Use your skills to increase the value even though your pay initially stays the same. By treating work as a personal prideful social obligation to overdeliver, we force an explosive growth in real-world skills.

We irrationally value things more when we pour our own labor into creating them. Gain tremendous confidence by building solutions to solve actual problems at the tasks you are being assigned instead of solving generic textbook exercises in college.

**We are emotional beings heavily driven by contextual framing, not pure logical robots counting college credits. Go ahead and prove that momentum and social validation matter far more than academic certificates.**