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The importance of following up—Nick Richardson's Take

I've occasionally volunteered to meet with undergraduates interested in law school and those with journalism backgrounds like me. What has surprised me most about these interactions is the lack of follow up from those seeking insight. I too made this mistake earlier in my career in various ways, but when I missed out on a potentially huge opportunity because I didn't follow up, I learned my lesson.

In one such instance, I met with a recent graduate thinking about law school after graduation from Mizzou's Journalism School, my undergraduate alma mater. This student's path and experience to date mimicked my own, so needless to say, I looked forward to our meeting.

This potential attorney arrived early, dressed the part and presented himself in such a positive way that I jokingly ended our meeting with "You're Hired." I reminded this student to get in touch because I had offered to connect him with a colleague currently practicing in the area he was most interested in.

I told my contact about this student and asked about the possibility of an informational interview, an opportunity my mentee asked about in our meeting. But this recent grad never got in touch. I wanted to follow up with him. At the same time though, I needed to feel 100-percent confident in attaching myself to any possible connection. This lack of follow through resulted in him missing out on what could have lead to part-time work.

A month later, another contact mentioned an opening that reminded me of this same person's dream job. But, since he didn't follow up initially, I—again—couldn't make a connection. The lesson: Simply follow up.

After meeting with anyone providing career-related advice, send a quick email thanking the person for his/her time and offer to stay in touch. A few weeks later, it's completely OK to send another email to check in or provide an update your job hunt. If you never hear back, then maybe this won't be a strong networking relationship for you, but this example shows that you never know who might be able to connect you with the connection to your dream job.

About Me: I run my own law office, www.nickrichardsonlaw.com, and started contributing articles to both the Palatine and Schaumburg pages of TribLocal in September 2009 (<http://tinyurl.com/y1sly3u>). Have a comment? Email me at: Therichardsonstake—at—gmail.com.