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03-25-2026 | ASK THE EXPERTS

Do you just hate rejection or do you have ‘RSD’?

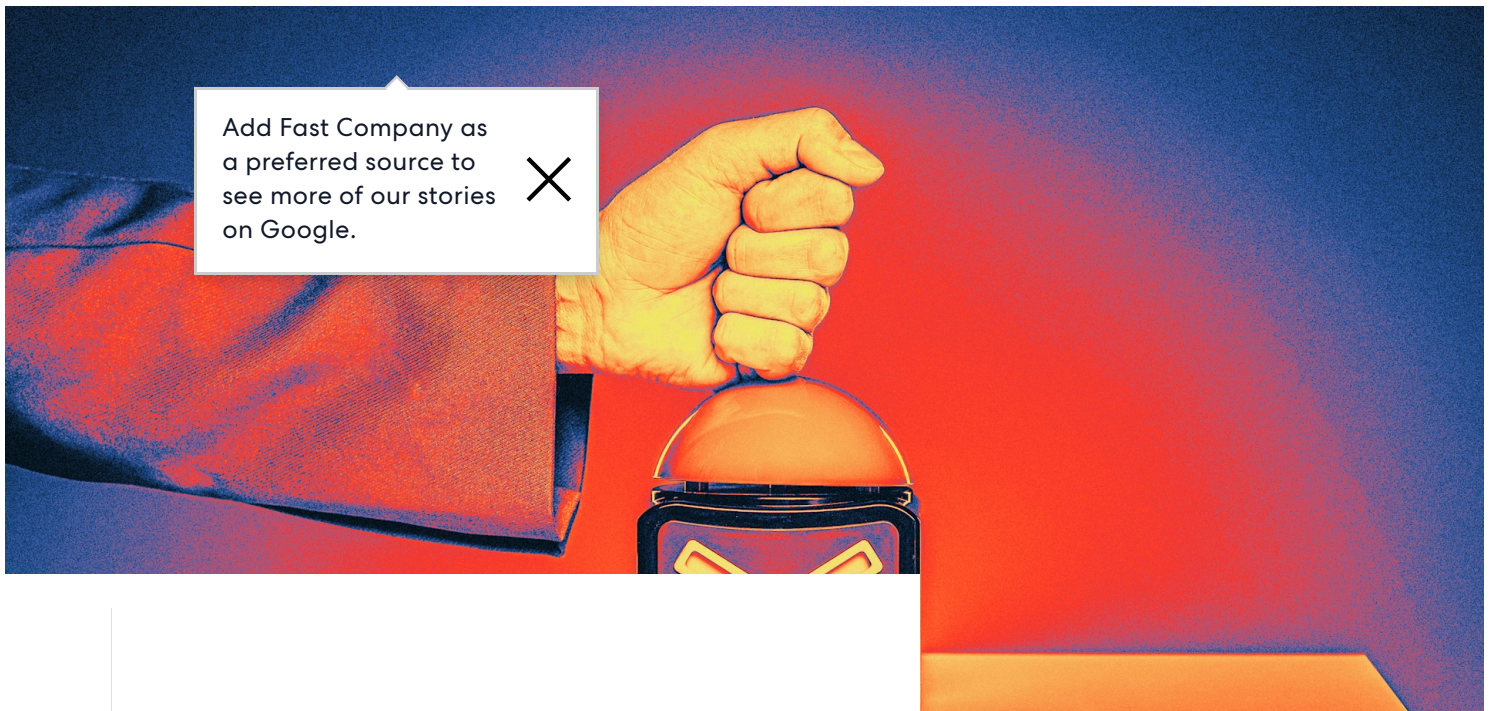
How rejection sensitive dysphoria can shape your career.

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Having rejection sensitive dysphoria, or RSD, is physically painful, all-consuming, and disproportionate to the event that triggered it.

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While a neurotypical person is able to recognize rejection, rationalize it, feel bad about it, and then move on with their day fairly quickly, RSD feels like a bull has charged at you and headbutted you in the chest, and it comes with a tremendous amount of shame.

RSD is defined by the Cleveland Clinic as “severe emotional pain because of a failure or feeling rejected,” and is a symptom of the emotional dysregulation often seen due to the extra criticisms a person with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) will have encountered as a child.

WHAT IT'S LIKE

My RSD used to rule my day-to-day office life and therefore my career. I lost count of the number of times I was told that I took things “too personally.” Being late for work was excruciatingly painful: I either overexplained or shut down entirely. If someone replied to my email and it didn’t match the energy of my original email, I’d feel rejected.

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I was often unable to focus on my work because my brain was replaying a social encounter. I often assumed someone didn’t like me if they walked past me in the corridor without a few words of friendly small talk. I used to over-apologize a lot because I always assumed that disapproval was imminent.

RSD made me scared to ask for help. I watched other, less competent people get promoted above me simply because I was too scared to ask for a promotion. And if I sensed I was about to be fired, I'd seize whatever control I could by quitting before they could say they didn't want me there anymore.

THE MULTIPLE WAYS RSD CAN AFFECT YOUR CAREER

If you're someone with RSD, it can hugely shape your career. Firstly, colleagues may think you're rude, because RSD can turn people into blunt communicators. You'll want to get in and out of social interactions as quickly as possible because, in your mind, the less you say, the less chance there is for criticism, rejection, or talk behind your back. However, being a snappy communicator is often perceived as rudeness, which actually increases the chances of sensing negativity from others

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