

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion



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Natalie Fisher

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Welcome to the *Get a Better Job in 30 Days* podcast. This is episode 6: People Pleasing to get the Job or a Promotion.

Welcome to the *Get a Better Job in 30 Days* podcast. I'm your host Natalie Fisher. I'm a certified career mindset coach who also happens to love dogs, lattes, and most importantly skipping the small talk and getting right to the conversations that matter. On this podcast, I will coach you on how to use your brain to build a wildly successful career and make a real impact in your industry. If you want to do more than just work for a living, you've got to start by making the right decisions now. Are you ready? Let's go.

Alright, today I want to get into this topic of people pleasing and not being our authentic selves. Because we're afraid of basically rejection or what other people are going to think or say, or we think we're going to lose out on an opportunity. Or we think that we're going to not be chosen because of who we really are and what we really want. So this topic has come to light for me in a very real way recently, navigating personal relationships.

And I started to see so many parallels as to how it also relates to career, and your job, and the place where we spend most of our time, and there's so many parallels. And also looking back at some of the mistakes that I've made in the past where I haven't been completely honest about who I am, what my strengths are, what I'm really good at in order to get a role. And when I did get that role, I didn't even want it because it was awful.

So I'm going to talk about that experience and then also I'm going to talk about being vulnerable and the struggles that I've had, and I'm going to have moving forward being vulnerable. And why it's so important, because at the end of that, at the end of stating who you are and having boundaries for what you are willing to do and what you're not. And everything that comes with all of this work is ultimately the life you want and the feelings that you want.

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

And the way that you want to be living your life, which is ultimately the most important thing because you only get one life and it's short. And you don't want to be living it for other people. And if we're going to make that decision we're going to need to do some difficult things and have some difficult conversations where we might be faced with rejection, or we might not get that job. Or we might have to walk away from an opportunity or a person.

And so that's what I want to talk about is how we step into that challenging conversation in an authentic way where we can hold our heads high at the end of it and say, "That wasn't meant for me, I probably wouldn't have been happy there anyway, or it wouldn't have been right for me." And knowing that because you voiced it, what you needed or what you wanted.

So a lot of the things that I see people doing are staying in a role for example where they're not making the money they want to be making. They work really, really hard. Sometimes they might work extra hours. They go above and beyond for that organization or for their boss, they work overtime. At night they get everything done and then they don't get compensated for it, they don't get rewarded for it, they might not even get recognized for it, and yet they're still there doing it.

And then what normally happens is they feel resentful and bitter. And they say to themselves, "Well, I did all of this, I have put my heart and soul into this company or into this project. And I haven't been given the validation or the compensation, or any of what I have really deserved for it." And then they feel resentful because of that. And that comes from them choosing to give and not setting a boundary. And strong people set boundaries. And setting strong boundaries is basically drawing a circle around who you are and keeping the things that you don't want out of that circle.

So I'm sure that you didn't want to be working 80 hours a week and not getting paid any extra for it. I'm sure that you didn't want to take on that extra responsibility and then not ever get compensated for it. I'm sure that's

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

not who you are, especially if you're resentful afterwards. And I don't blame you, I would be too. But that's you not setting a boundary when you do that.

So a strong person is going to set a boundary in that situation and they're going to say, "Look, I can help get this done but I am working 40 hours a week and this is how I suggest we get the rest of the work done." And present some solutions.

But they somehow draw, that however they decide to do that, they're going to draw a boundary and say, "I'm not going to work 80 hours a week unless I'm getting paid for it, or unless if you want me to work those 80 hours so we can get this done. This is what I'm going to ask for in return. And if I don't get that then I'm not going to do it." That's an example of setting a boundary.

And that's really hard to do because when you say that to somebody you're putting yourself in a position where they could then respond with things that you don't want to hear. They could say something like, "But it's your job. We've always been able to count on you. We really need you to do this." They could guilt trip you, they could say any number of things.

And this is where the difference between a weak person and a strong person really shows itself and where you really need to show yourself what you're willing to do for yourself. Because this is essentially you taking care of you saying, "Okay, well, I understand you need this done. But if you need somebody who's going to work 80 hours a week for no extra pay then I'm not your person."

And being willing to walk away from situations like that, that don't serve you, because ultimately in the end you are going to pour your heart and soul in and you're the one who's going to be left empty afterwards. And then you're going to blame them for not recognizing you, when really it's your responsibility to set that boundary and not take that work on without having that conversation about what you need.

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

So if you're in a position where you feel like you've been doing a lot of work, not been compensated accordingly then you need to look at why you've been allowing that. Why have you stayed there? Why have you been continuing to do that, because ultimately the only person who decided that that was okay was you?

So another way that we try to people please is when we're trying to get into a position or we're trying to get a promotion. We might work really hard expecting that to happen. Or we might say some things that are not completely true. We might not be completely upfront about who we are.

And so I'm going to talk to you about a story where I did this and I completely regretted it afterwards but it is a good lesson now to be able to talk about. So I went for an interview for a job as an office administrator years and years ago. And they were asking me questions and it was going really well. I was answering all their questions really well and we were getting along well, everything seemed to be going so well. And then they asked me about accounting.

They asked me some questions about reconciling credit card statements and a lot of accounting jargon and asked me how I felt about those things. And I lied about it. I had done it before, that was true. I had handled those things previously. But then I hated it, if I am being honest with myself it was not something I wanted to be doing, I didn't enjoy it. And so instead of saying, "Accounting and numbers is not my favorite part of what this job description entails. I understand it's part of the job but if it's a larger part of the job I am probably not the person you're looking for."

"So depending on how much time needs to be spent doing these tasks, I am probably not your girl," is really what I should have said. But instead I said, "No problem, I love doing those things, I handled all of that at my previous job. And I would be happy to help you guys out with it too." And of course that's what they wanted to hear and since everything was already going so well, I didn't want to risk it. I didn't want them to not like me.

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

I didn't want to end the interaction on a negative note, or how I saw it at the time would have been ruining it, didn't want to ruin it. So I said, "Sure, no problem." But that was a mistake because I got the job. And once I got in the job I realized that it was pretty much a 100% of the job and it was worse than they had led me to believe. So essentially I was cleaning up months and months of accounting work, accounting records, numbers, receipts that had been incorrectly processed or filed, working with a very tedious system that was so frustrating. I won't get into it.

But I lasted three months there. I hated going in, got to the parking lot, parked my car, felt like throwing up, mustered myself and got up and went in anyway. But that could have all been avoided. It could have all been avoided by a momentary difficult conversation. And that would have been me standing up for myself and saying, "It's not really my thing, numbers are not really my thing. And I understand that it's part of it, but if it's any more than say 20, 30% of the job this is probably not for me, I'm probably not the person you're looking for."

It would have saved me time, would have saved them time, but I didn't do that. Thankfully I did learn from that and I said it the next time I went for an interview and I was very clear and I was able to be very articulate about what I wanted. I said, "Numbers are not my strong suit." And I told my future boss this and he said, "Not a problem, it'll be a couple hours a week at the most." And I said, "Perfect." And that was probably one of the best positions I'd had.

So I feel like it's really important to recognize that it will be uncomfortable when you're setting that boundary for yourself in the beginning. It'll be uncomfortable to risk somebody not liking you or to risk somebody not matching up with what you want, but in the end it saves you so much time. It would have saved me three months in a place that I hated.

So because we're on the podcast and I'm getting a little bit more vulnerable, I thought it would be an ideal opportunity to share with you

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

something that's really vulnerable for me. So as I just explained, I've gotten really good in my career at expressing and stating what I'm good at, what I want to do, what I don't want to do, what I will do, what I won't do, what I want. I'm good at that in my corporate role and in my business, and in the beginning that was hard but it got easier.

And so now if you've been listening to the podcast or following me, you know that I was – I got out of a 10 year relationship about six months ago. And I have just recently started dating someone new and this is really difficult for me because I'm not really super well versed in how to do this dating thing. I'm really good at the interviewing thing. There's so many parallels to that, but I'm very emotional, and so it's quite difficult. But the parallels are the same.

So I've met this new person, I really like him. I want him to like me. We've been dating for a bit over a month now, almost two months. And I need to start asking him some hard questions to see if we're on the same page. And it's the same as in the interview, I know that if I don't ask him the hard questions and I don't know then I could be wasting months of my life, or I could be wasting time with somebody who's the wrong person.

So for example, I needed to ask him what he was looking for, if he was interested in a relationship because if he wasn't, I know I was going to need to walk away, because I'm looking for a relationship. So I need to put that out there and I need to say, "Are you on the same page as me? This is what I want. Is this what you want?" Which was super hard to do, because if he had said no, then I would have needed to walk away from something that I really wanted. I didn't want to walk away from.

And it's the same in an interview, you really want the job and if you say your truth it's possible that your truth might not match up with what they want and it might mean that you have to walk away from that opportunity. So I had to do that because in this case he wasn't doing it. But I knew, I was like okay, well, at least I'll find out now, because I don't want to be six

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

months down the road and then him saying, “Yeah, I’m actually not interested in anything serious.” I’d be like, “Yeah, I really wish I’d had that super uncomfortable conversation earlier.”

So that was something really hard for me to do and I did it and luckily we were on the same page. So I was like, “Okay, that’s good.” But I was also willing to walk away if I needed to. So that was also setting a boundary, it was saying, “You know what, this is what I need, this is my truth, where are you at with that? Does this match up with what you want?” And if he had said no, I would have had to have been okay with it. It would have sucked, it would have been painful, but in the end that would have been what was best for me in my greater good.

And it’s the same for when you’re going for an interview, or for when you’re drawing a line around who you are as far as how much work you’re going to do, without extra compensation, or what is what you’re willing to tolerate.

So the whole overarching theme of this is you get to decide. You don’t have to just work 80 hours or take on that extra responsibility, or do that extra work, or manage that team, if you don’t believe that you are going to be paid accordingly or compensated accordingly. And when you’re asked to do it is the time when you should be saying, “Great, I would love to do that. These are my terms.” And then you decide, if they want you to do something, you decide, what is it going to take for that to work for you.

And then if they say, “No,” or however they want to phrase it, you need to stand firm in what you’re willing to take. And if you don’t do that then you’re somebody who has no boundaries and you’ll just do whatever. And then most likely you’ll be resentful later for having done it, because you know that you wouldn’t have done it if you knew that you were going to end up there.

Another big reason why we are afraid to voice our truth, say what we want or set terms is the first reason is because we’re afraid we’re going to get

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

rejected, or we're going to lose out on this opportunity, or we're going to have to end something that we were really excited about. That's the first reason.

And then another reason that I feel is worth noting is that we're afraid that nothing else is going to come our way. We feel like this is it, if I don't stay in this job and do this extra work then I'm not going to find another opportunity like this. Or if I tell this person that I want a relationship and they don't, then I'm not going to ever find another person like this. It's the fear of not knowing what possibilities exist when you say no to the one in front of you which isn't serving you. And I get that, because I think that's a big reason why I stayed in my relationship for 10 years.

And I feel like I'm a bit hypocritical, honestly, because when it comes to jobs I tell people all day, every day, "If you're not happy you can leave, you can find another job, I'll help you do it." And I see that as super easy to do, because that was my experience. And I believe that, I fully believe that if you are in a job right now that you dislike or you really don't want to be at, you know you can do more and make more, that you can absolutely find another better job.

But when I look back and I realize that I stayed in a 10 year relationship that I wasn't fully happy in and I told myself, I made a commitment, I said I was going to be here, I'm not going to give up. I was really in a job that I hated for way too long. And part of me I think believed that I wasn't going to be able to find anything better if I left. And now that I have left and I've gone through all that, I know that that was completely untrue.

And so if that's you, if you're thinking, but I can't leave this job, Natalie, because I'm not going to be able to get anything better, or what if there isn't anything out there for me? Or what if I can't get anyone else to hire me? I assure you, first of all that you can. And secondly, that it's so worth it. And I'm speaking to you from a place of I never thought that was possible in my relationship either until I took the step, I did that really hard painful work of

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

leaving. And have now seen what is possible and what can open up when I started to believe it could.

And also the whole transformation that I did in changing myself, and becoming that person that would attract a person who was at my level now. When the person who I was with for 10 years, was a decision that I made 10 years ago that I was defaulting to every day, for way too long, now that I can see it clearly. So if you're afraid that you're not going to be able to find something else, that is a very normal fear to have.

But if we look out in the world and we see the abundance of opportunities that exist, I guarantee you that it is not true. And I can say that from personal experience and from having gone through that time of believing that it wasn't true. And now I just say to myself, imagine if I hadn't left, imagine if I hadn't left and I was still there, I would never have the experience now that I'm having that is so much richer and so much better. And will ultimately improve the quality of my life regardless of whether this works out or it doesn't.

It was just obviously always there, I just had to say no to the thing that wasn't working, so that the thing that would work could show up. And I could give it that opportunity and that space in my life. And it's the same with you, if you're stuck in a job that you really hate, you really don't want to be there, you have to start saying no to that in order to be able to say yes to the job that you really do want, and believing that it exists. And there you have it.

So you always get to decide. And remember, you're living your life for you, not for anyone else. And when you take on these extra responsibilities without setting new terms, or when you work all those extra hours, or when you do lie about something in an interview like I did. Or when you fail to ask the important questions, you're the only one who ends up later down the road potentially with an outcome that you don't want. And you're the one who lives with it.

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

So it's a moment of discomfort now for a life of freedom in the future. And once you get used to stepping into those moments of discomfort and those conversations of discomfort then it becomes easier to do.

So with me talking about how much I'm not well versed in accounting and how that's not my strong suit, and I would say I'm capable of it. Of course I'm capable of it, I'm happy to do some of it because I understand it's necessary but this is not my ideal job. You would phrase it in a way that you understand that it's a part of the business. But if they're looking for someone who needs to do it full-time then that's not your person. So where was I? I got off tangent.

It's about deciding that you are going to draw those boundaries for yourself, and you can do it in a very nice, very kind, very well said way. So that you are comfortable with how you say it, but it's still going to be uncomfortable to say it sometimes because you always risk either rejection, or potentially losing something.

And that's kind of the thing you have to accept is I'm willing to walk away from this because it doesn't ultimately serve me and I need to find that out now, before I get in too deep. And I'm months down the road, I've wasted six months with someone who didn't want a relationship. Or I've put in 80 hours a week for six months for a company whose never going to compensate me or promote me. Or I've accepted this job that I hate, that now I'm eventually going to have to figure out how to quit.

Or any number of things that can happen when you say yes to something or you failed to ask for your needs, or you failed to speak your truth, any time you do those things you risk being in a situation down the line that you do not want. And the only person that you can blame for that is you, it's for not actually speaking up and saying, "This is what I'm willing to do. These are my terms." Or saying, "This is what I want. Where are you at?" Or saying, "That's not actually my strong suit. If you're looking for somebody who does this, it's probably not me."

Ep #6: People-Pleasing to Get the Job or Promotion

So, some examples of how you need to do that in your life and how important it is. And I know that a lot of my clients have come to me, they're in one of the situations where they have been putting way too much in, not happy, feeling like they're working so hard for no reason. And basically asking themselves, "Why am I doing this?" And any time you can change that, you can decide I'm not going to do this anymore and I'd like to move forward in a different way.

And the first step is going to be deciding what you're willing to tolerate. So what do you want your job to look like? How many hours are you willing to work? How much responsibility are you willing to take on for the pay or the compensation that you currently get?

And what conversations need to be had in order for you to really step into your truth and what you know is going to be necessary for you? And maybe that means having a conversation in your current role, with your current boss, or maybe it means leaving that organization and looking for a place that will compensate you for what you have been doing accordingly.

Alright, well, that was kind of a difficult episode for me to record. But I thought it was really fitting considering what I have been going through and how I went through the growth professionally. And now I am going through that growth personally and it's hard, so I get it.

I hope you guys enjoyed this week, please leave me a review. Let me know what you think, I'd love to hear your comments. Thank you so much for listening, and I will talk to you next week, okay, bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of Get a Better Job in 30 Days. If you're ready to dive deeper into your career mindset and start making a serious impact in your industry, join me at nataliefisher.ca/getstarted. I will see you over there.