

Ep #5: Student Mindset vs Career Success Mindset



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Welcome to the *Get a Better Job in 30 Days* podcast. This is episode 5: Student Mindset Vs Career Success Mindset.

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.

Hello. So I want to talk about this topic today because it comes up with several of my clients. And what tends to happen is that somebody can be a really good student. So they can have done really well in school. They have a master's degree, or a PhD, or a bachelor's degree, or they're just very good at learning and taking tests. And they're just very good at this way of operating.

And what this takes is for you to sit down and study and review material extensively in order to then prove that you know the material, that you've memorized it, that you've learned it and then you need to go prove that by writing a test, doing an exam or maybe a practicum in some cases. I would argue that the practicum is the most valuable and I'm going to talk to you on this podcast about what your practicum is and whether or not you might be avoiding it.

So there are two ways that are part of the process to getting your dream job and there are two ways in which you need to learn, what you need to learn in order to achieve your desired result of your better job.

So the one is to prepare beforehand, so that would include passive action, and so what the passive action is, is it is what good students know how to do really well. Which is to read a textbook, study, review material, basically memorize things, take notes, that kind of thing. And so that's what students

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are really good at and it's also the easiest way to learn. It requires us to not really do much. We can sit and listen and intake this information and it feels productive, and it feels good, and we enjoy it because we feel like we're gaining something.

And it is good, there is a place for it and I love it too, I would sit and learn all day if I could. But then I wouldn't be recording this podcast, I would be too busy reading a book on how to record the perfect podcast. So that's the first way and we do need to do a bit of that, especially if we're preparing for an interview. The most useful passive action would be to look at their website and research that specific company, what their needs are, what their values are to see if you align with them, so, some passive action definitely valuable and useful.

Then where most people get stuck is the execution. So what a lot of students do is they get stuck in the passive action without really realizing that they've been stuck there for a bit too long, for several reasons, which we'll talk about on this podcast. So they don't want to put themselves in a situation where they're going to be uncomfortable. They might not know the answer so they tell themselves, I need to prepare more. Maybe I even need to postpone the interview. So if they get an interview they might want to postpone it or put it off, so that they have more time to prepare.

And this is a very clear indicator that you're avoiding what you need to really do to get to your result. Because there's no way you can learn everything beforehand, there's absolutely no way that's ever possible.

So for example, if you want to learn to swim you can watch someone else swimming on video. You can practice swimming on land, you can read a book about swimming. You can watch a video of someone's strokes and the specific way that they're moving their arms and feet. You can study these videos in detail. But no matter what you do, until you get in the pool there is always going to be something that you don't know about swimming, because you haven't done it yet.

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So that's what I mean by there's no way to avoid the second part of the process, which is the most uncomfortable part of the process. There's zero way it ever works where you can just take passive action and then immediately succeed after you've read a book, for example. You have to actually get in the pool. You have to understand how it feels to be in the water. You have to practice the movements in the water. You have to start to build your confidence in the water, maybe with a lifejacket and then you start to gain traction and confidence from being in the water.

And until you become the person who knows you can swim, you're going to be in the water floundering and learning and gaining that confidence and belief in yourself until you do become that person that can swim. So this applies for interviewing and getting that job offer. You can only prepare your stories and practice them so many times. You can only review potential answers to potential questions so many times. You can only review a certain amount of them before there is actually a diminishing return on your practice.

You can only research and have answers for so many that you can actually remember, because our brains can't handle that much information anyway. There is literally unlimited information that could keep you busy for years learning it. And yet learning it will never give you the experience that you're really avoiding, which is actually getting into the pool and trying to swim and failing.

So the problem with being such a good student is that it served you for a long time and it got you through school and you became really, really good at studying for tests. But when you walk out into the world you get stuck in this and when you need to look for a new job you postpone getting your dream job because of this mindset.

So, often my clients think, well, I need to super prepare, I want as much time as possible because then if I blow this one opportunity I won't get another one, or it will be very hard to get another one of this caliber. I've

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heard clients say to me, “If I interview with this organization, and I fail it I have to wait a year until I can interview again.”

So arguing for their point that they need to prepare, over-prepare and maybe not even apply yet because they’re not ready. But it’s not like that, it’s not a test exactly like they’re thinking it is, because yes, well, maybe for that one organization you can’t apply for another year or go for an interview for another year. Then apply for a different organization, one that you’re not as excited about. But the point is you need to get into the water, which means you need to go on an interview.

And it’s not like you fail the test and you never get another chance. You can just keep going on interviews until you learn to nail them, you can just do that. And you don’t have to immediately go to the top of the company you most want and then have to wait a year. You can just decide that you’re going to gain this interview resilience and apply for other companies. So I call them the B list companies or the C list companies. And wait until you feel more confident with interviewing to apply for your A list companies, that’s an option.

But the point is you need to understand that you need to get yourself into the water, so to speak, because learning has its place, but it will never teach you the fundamentals of actually being in the pool.

Another way that this shows up, and sometimes this is supported by evidence, and we believe it makes perfect sense. But another way this shows up is clients will come to me saying, “I need to get another certification. I need to take another course before I apply for this job.” Or, “A recruiter told me I need to take this other course.” Or, you saw it on the job description that this course was required.

Or, for example, you just finished your project management certificate and then you decide, but I really need a business analysis certificate and a Salesforce certificate. And then you might get those and then realize, but I

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went for this interview and they require Agile certification, so I need to get that too.

And it's never ending because this is another version of over-preparing, practicing, wanting more time, staying comfortable in the student mindset of I know how to get a certification, I know how to study and learn this and pass the exam, I know how to do that. So let me do that first and then I'll go to the interview, because the interview was uncomfortable and maybe you've failed before. But let me ask you this, is that certification really required for you to get the role you want, is it really?

Is there anybody else in the world doing the role you want to be doing without that certification? Probably yes. So if that's the case you are using that certification as another way to postpone your growth and being uncomfortable. And it will never be enough because you can have 100 certifications and still have the same problem of not being able to nail an interview.

So that's the underlying problem with the student mindset, it served you really well, you're an amazing student, but you're not very good at getting out into the world and failing, and being uncomfortable, and embracing the fact that it's part of the process. So that's where you need to realize the difference between passive action and massive action.

So the passive action is what I explained earlier about how you're preparing, reading, studying, taking another certification, passive action is way more fun and way easier. It requires no discomfort, we get to sit there. We get to take in some information. We get to try things on our own time. We get to take our time doing it. You can sit back, listen and learn. And if you're a student you love that and it tricks you into thinking that you are being productive and that you are moving forward. And it's useful, yes, but it's really avoiding the inevitable part.

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And this is going to be a necessary role in achieving any goal that you have. So I like to use this example, so I'll try to describe it as best I can. But have you ever seen on TV where they make the clay pots and they have that little spinning machine that goes around and around, and then you put the clay there and then you mould it with your hands? It goes around and around and then you're moulding the pot into the shape that you want it to be and you're just using the momentum from the machine while you get to mould it.

So there was a study done and it was two groups, one group was assigned, you need to make one clay pot and it needs to be perfect and you have an hour. The other group of people had to make as many as they could in that hour regardless of what they looked like. The goal was get as many as you can done, the other group was assigned to make one perfect one, and they had the same amount of time.

So guess what happened? The group that was assigned to make as many as they could, ended up with one at the end that was even better than the group of people who only had to make one perfect one. So they spent one hour making one thing perfect, where the other group was just like, okay, put it on, go, okay, done, put it on, go, okay, done. And they were learning along the way the nuances of how to shape it better and better every time. And that exercise alone yielded better results than the group of people who had to make one perfect one.

So what does that tell you? You can sit and prepare forever, and then you can still not be in the same place as if you had just gone and failed, gone and failed, because we guarantee, those people who just had to go and do it, and they'd be like, okay, good enough, done, keep going, keep going.

They had some pretty mangled attempts at pots that didn't work out too well. But they got the hang of it, they learned, they built confidence and they're a lot more confident in the end to put another one on there and know exactly how to do it a lot faster, understanding the nuances, how to

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move their hands properly. They learned so much more from that experience than the group of people who had one hour to just tweak, and perfect, and mould, because there's only so much of that you can do.

So in the end it has a diminishing return and it just postpones where you really want to go. So when you're in the student mindset, you are essentially deciding to fail ahead of time, because there's only a certain amount of preparing that you can do and at some point you can't prepare anymore, it won't help you.

So of course you don't want to go on another interview, most of the times when this happens it's because somebody has been on an interview and it hasn't worked out, they have been very disappointed and they've thought to themselves, well, if I'm going to go on another one, I really need to make sure that I'm prepared this time. I didn't have the information last time, I should have known this. I should have known that.

But it's by going and figuring out what you don't know that you can fill in those blanks for yourself, because if you don't go and you don't have the experience then you never know what it feels like to actually be in the water. And you can never build the confidence that you need in order to swim. So it's called failing ahead of time, and when you fail ahead of time you never even give yourself the chance to succeed.

And you trick yourself into thinking that you will, but really you could have been in your dream role already because failing forward and failing productively, it's called the worthy fail. Like going on an interview and failing it, that's a worthy fail and it's a win and it's something to be proud of. Sitting at home preparing, not applying, telling yourself that you need more time, that is not a worthy fail, that doesn't even count.

So failing ahead of time, if you are doing this my friend, be really honest with yourself, and just realize that one of the most important factors to your success is going to be recognizing that when something feels really

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uncomfortable, it is part of your growth on the journey to getting your dream job. So recognize that you are avoiding your growth and recognize that there is no way around it, only through.

And until you realize that, you're going to be in a very, very slow progress loop and you're going to be even more terrified to go on those opportunities. And when you're more terrified the chances are you're going to fail them. So would you rather fail a whole bunch of little opportunities and nail the one you really want? Or would you rather wait, prepare, wait, prepare, and then have so much pressure put on yourself that you fail your big opportunity anyway? Which would you rather do?

And you're always going to face some sort of discomfort, so you're either going to face the discomfort of preparing and avoiding, over-preparing, knowing that you know you're avoiding what you need to do, putting that pressure on yourself, that's all very uncomfortable. Or the discomfort of actually going and doing it, and failing, and recognizing, okay, this is what happened; this is what they asked me that I didn't know. This is what I'd like to handle better.

And so I like to call it data collection, going on an interview, it could be a conversation, it could be data collection, it could be an experiment. It can be anything you want to call it. But you need to go on it, that's the only way that you're going to get the information that you need in order to get the job that you want.

Alright my friends, that's what I've got for you, student success mindset versus the mindset that it really takes to be successful in life after school.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm going to be giving away an amazing surprise gift basket with all my favorite things in it. It will have some headphones, some books that I love and some other fun things that I know you will love too. And I'm going to go all out on this one, so you'll want to get in on this. I'll be giving away three of these to three lucky

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listeners. To get a chance to win one of these surprise gift baskets all you need to do is rate and review the show on iTunes.

I want to create an awesome show that provides a ton of value, so please let me know if it's resonating with you. To learn more about the contest and how to enter, go to nataliefisher.ca/podcastlaunch. I'll be announcing the winners on some upcoming episodes. Thank you so much for listening and I will see you on the next episode. Bye.

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