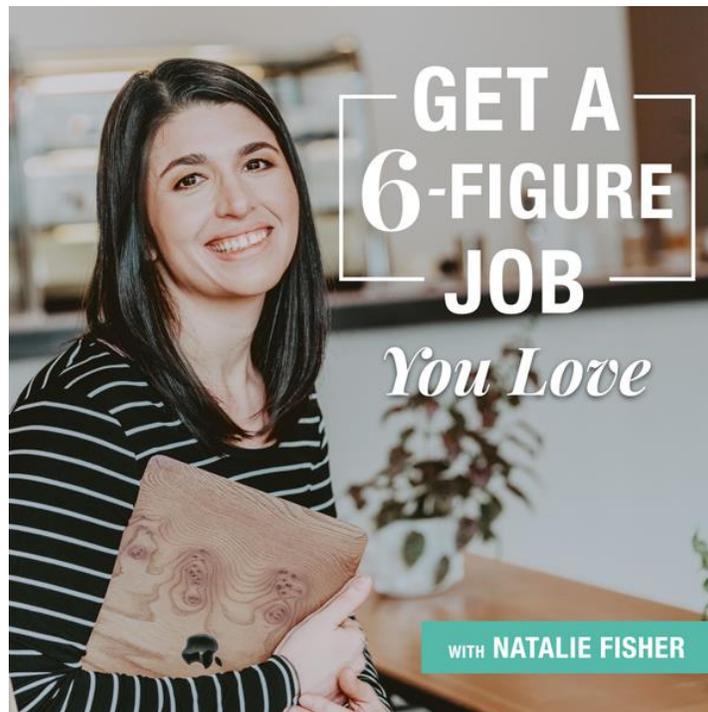


Ep #22: How to Use Job Descriptions to Your Advantage



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Fisher

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Hello and welcome to the Get a 6-Figure Job You Love Podcast. This is episode 22: How to Not Use the Job Description Against Yourself.

Hey there, welcome to the Get a 6-Figure Job You Love podcast. I'm your host Natalie Fisher. I'm a certified career mindset coach who also happens to want to skip all the BS and get to what it really takes to create real results for you in your career. On this podcast you will create real mindset shifts that will lead to big results and big changes in your career and your income. No fluff here. If you want to get a 6-figure job you love and create real concrete results in your industry and make a real impact you're in the right place. Are you ready? Let's go.

Alright, I've been getting a lot of requests to do some content around this because it's something that we often do. We use the job description against ourselves and it shows up like this. So if you're thinking I don't check all the boxes for this job, or when you see the job description you read it or you skim it and you automatically feel bad, because you're like I'm not this person. Or it seems so far away, I don't have these many years experience. Or I don't know how to do that or I don't have experience with this specific thing on one of the line items.

Or I don't have really strong skills in; fill in the blank, whatever it says on the job description. It shows up in all sorts of ways. This is kind of the flavor of what you'll probably think and feel when you know you're using the job description against yourself. So it could be like, no, if I'm going to apply for this I'm really going to need to get this certification before I even come back and apply for it. Or they're obviously looking for somebody who's way more qualified or better at this than I am.

Or they're probably not going to be interested in me because, insert whatever reason you have about what you're thinking about your own

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skills. And so that's kind of how we know we're using the job description against ourselves. And it's indicative of how you're going to feel when you look at it. So what quite often can happen is my clients will be looking on the job boards or something, it's one of the exercises that I give them to go and research job descriptions. And sometimes they can start using them against themselves which is not serving them obviously at all.

And so that's what I'm going to get into in this episode are some new ways to look at the job descriptions and how to actually use them to your advantage. So yeah, that's actually what I'm going to call this episode is how to use the job description to your advantage, because there's lots of information on there that is really going to serve you. And if you are able to look at it through the right lens then you're able to really use it. And it has a lot of useful stuff on there.

And also forgive me if I have a little bit of a hoarse voice. I'm just realizing that speaking into the microphone right now. But I'm going to continue on. So if my voice sounds a little bit different I just have a little bit of a sore throat, but I don't have Covid. I haven't been out anywhere.

Anyways, so what happens as a result of thinking this way where you're thinking the thoughts that I just mentioned and you're kind of are in this compare and despair situation where you're comparing yourself to the boxes on the description. And you're starting to feel bad about yourself because you don't check them all. What ends up happening is, is that you feel discouraged and you feel deflated, and defeated before you even do anything. And so what happens is you don't end up giving yourself the best possible chance to even get an opportunity.

So you're not even giving them an opportunity to interview you because you're already getting discouraged. And you're convinced that, well, it's

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probably not going to matter anyway. And then those thoughts will breed other thoughts because thoughts often build on each other.

So it could often go down a spiral of like and also there's going to be so many other people and they're going to be so much more qualified than me. And they're going to have more experience than me and more skills than me. And I'm just not even going to bother because well, what's the point, kind of thing. And this is a place where you can easily get to in your mind and not be aware of it. And then realizing that when you go down that path you end up not giving yourself a chance, you don't even give yourself a chance.

So you might have a little bit of what they need. You might have the ability to figure it out. You might have the personality that's the right fit for them but you won't even give yourself a chance to discover that or even give them a chance to reject you, because you're shutting yourself down and you're self-rejecting. And it's also known as failing ahead of time because you've already decided that you're going to fail so then you don't even go for it.

And so that's what ends up happening a lot of the time with the job descriptions and then we just go into avoidance. And our brain's like I don't even want to look on there because I don't even know if there's ever going to be anything that I can do. They seem to have so many high expectations and I just seem so far away. I'd better go to school and study for 27 more years and get 70 more certifications before I can even think about applying. So this is a bit extreme but we do this, we do this pretty sneakily on a smaller scale.

And then it adds up and when you're thinking this every day then you're really just kind of getting yourself into this space where you don't feel very

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good about yourself. And really that information is all an option. It's optional to think this way.

So what I'm going to talk about today are some different ways that we can look at the job description and a bit of an insight or a perspective and some examples on how the job description works and how you can actually use it to your advantage. Because there's a lot on there that you can really benefit from even if you don't decide to apply for that job. Or even if that job's not the right fit for you, the description can still provide you with information and be useful either way.

So the first way that you can look at this differently is you can look at the job description to get clarity on what actually lights you up. So instead of looking at it like – I think the default way that we look at it is, we look at it more like, okay, can I do these things? Am I good for this job? Am I the candidate? Can I do this?

And so often when we see those five years experience with this or five years experience with that. Often that will deflate the person looking at it if they don't have five years experience. Maybe they have one year or three years and they'll automatically be like, I can't do this. And they're looking for this and they're not going to accept anything less than this. And so therefore it's not me.

But what if instead of looking at it like can I do this, am I these things, you looked at it where you asked yourself, what line items on this job description really light me up? What do I get really excited for when I look at it? And so some of the line items, you might look at it and say it's for a marketing position or something and it says, writing content for the weekly blog. And so you might look at that and you might be like that sounds

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awesome. That sounds so exciting. I would love to write blog content for this organization, this specific.

And you might look at what they do and you might be like, yeah, this sounds great. Or you might look at that and be like yeah, I don't really think I want to do that. That doesn't really sound like my thing. You don't really feel charged up, or excited, or passionate about that line item. So you can look at each line item and be like how do I feel about it? And what do I actually want to be spending my time doing? So it's not about you trying to be everything that they want. It's not about you wishing that you fit into the boxes or check them all.

Sometimes it's about what you want, where do you want to be spending your time? And where do you want to be adding your value? And where is going to be the organization's best use of your time? And whether it's this job description, or another, or wherever you end up, you get to use this as clarity. So looking down at the job description I want you to instead of think of it like I need to fit all these boxes, or do I fit all these boxes, or I wish I fit all these boxes. Think of it as like what is my ideal situation and what am I actually going to be doing in it? What does it look like to me?

And you can use the job descriptions as kind of a guideline of I really love this part of the job, or I'm lit up by this, or I really love this or this. I'm not so keen on. So if this is more than 20% of the tasks that I'm going to be doing then this is probably not for me. So looking at it more from you being in control of what you get to decide for your life and for your career versus what you already are and whether or not it fits into someone else's box or not.

And then if you do see something that really lights you up but then you don't have the experience for it, then that's different. So in that case you

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could say, “I’d really love to be able to do that but I just don’t have that experience. I haven’t been exposed to it in my career. I haven’t really had the opportunity to go after it. But it’s something I’d really love to learn.” So that’s a good indicator.

And then I want you to ask yourself, so say if I did get in this job and I did have to work extensively in this program or whatever, let’s say I would have to work extensively in Sequel. I’d need Sequel experience. And you really wanted to do it, you might say, “So if I did get the job, say this happened and I had to work in here, what would I do? How would I actually figure out the problems and solve them?” So if you got into it and you were doing it, then you’d have all these ways that you would figure it out.

So you’d be like, okay, well, maybe I call somebody that I know who’s really a wizard with this. Or maybe I would take a LinkedIn course, or maybe I would seek out some tutorials. Or if I had to figure something out in this program I would learn as I go and I would do it this way and also knowing that there are unlimited resources to learn these things. So having that knowledge and confidence in yourself that yeah, if I absolutely had to then I would be able to figure out. Also knowing that the type of work environment you want to work in is a supportive one.

I’m assuming my clients always want to work in a supportive work environment where people are collaborating and they’re not competitive against each other. So knowing that you’ll have that and be able to figure out anything as you go.

And then there’s going to be some situations where the person writing the job description has a very big list of things that they want somebody to do. And I have seen it, and you’ve probably heard this term, ‘They cast a wide net.’ So they just put everything on the job description that they want. They

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want this unicorn miracle person who can do everything. Sometimes that happens too.

So we have to kind of keep that in mind and be like there's probably nobody who's going to fit all those requirements and then also be the right fit and the right personality. It's very unlikely sometimes depending on how the job description is written and who wrote it.

So when that's the case sometimes you have to be like, okay, so if I were in this job and it's not humanly possible for one person to do all of this, then how would I handle it? Then you have to put yourself in an expert position saying, "Okay, if I was, then I would figure out how to get it done, not me doing it all myself", because it also comes down to you being a generalist or a specialist. And so we all kind of have a little bit of generalist in us, because we all kind of do a little bit of everything in our lives and in our jobs too.

But then there's always going to be the things that we're really good at and so we're best spending our time there. So it's called your zone of genius and you're going to want to spend more time in your zone of genius. And your zone of genius doesn't mean it's something that you have five years experience in. It might be something that you're really passionate about and that you're really committed to learning and that you're going to catch on to quickly because you want to and you're excited about it.

So you're going to have your zones of genius and then you're going to have your general things that you know about and have a little bit of experience in. So when you see a job description that's huge and it's got all these things on it and there's no possible way that one person could do it then you've got to put yourself into the expert shoes. And be like if I was the person who was responsible for this, what would I do?

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So you might – so say on some job descriptions I've seen things like review and draft legal documents or something. Let's say it's for an HR position, or something like that and they want you to – they have on the job description, 'review and draft legal documents'. And it's also got a whole bunch of other stuff. So, maybe as an expert you would say, "You know what? I can do this to a point or this is what I would do. However, I would consult with a legal expert on this particular line item to get these things done." And that would be the smart thing to do because it's a legal thing.

And if you're not a lawyer, and you're not trained in that field then it's probably not something that you should be spending your time doing, unless of course you want to and you want to get into the legal field then that's different. But normally with those things there's a lot of room for kind of getting things done in a different manner. So if it's blog content and that's not your zone of genius then you can suggest that that get outsourced and you can figure out how to do that, and you can do it cost effectively.

Or you could maybe, if it's the legal thing; maybe you find a place to purchase some legal templates that would serve the purpose of that, that have been drafted up by a professional lawyer, so just some examples of that. But you do not, like often you'll see job descriptions that are so big that not everybody can do. There's not a person who fits all those requirements anyway.

So that's going to take seeing yourself as a valuable opinion, being like, okay, so I can look at this job description and if I was in this job this is what I would do. I would be able to take care of this, this and this. Then I would get help with this. I would outsource this. But I would make sure all of these things – I was clear on the results that they needed and I would go after it.

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So you need to see yourself as a valuable opinion and a valuable source to them already. So somebody who's thinking strategically about this because it's not going to be very effective to have somebody in the role who gets in there and thinks, oh my God, I have to do all these things. And then is working themselves to the bone far into the night trying to figure out all these things, when really that's not going to be sustainable. They're going to burn themselves out. They're not going to be able to sustain that.

And they're not going to probably do a very good job on all of the things anyway because, well, we're humans and we have things that we are better at and things that we're not. So a key component is knowing your own strengths. So that's a big part of it too. So that's kind of two ways so far, look at it to get clarity on what you want. And then sometimes know that the job description is just really big and it's really not going to be one person.

And they don't mention the level of support that you have or they don't get into that on the job description either. But you can assume that you're going to have some level of support if it's an organization, or you'll find your own. You'll be resourceful and figure things out a different way.

Yeah, so I briefly touched on this a little bit earlier in the episode, but I'll get a little bit more into it now because it is a common theme that I see with clients and people that email me. They want to go and get a bunch more certifications first. They're like, so I'm working on this certification, and then I need this one, and then I need this one. Because on the job description maybe it said, PMP certification, maybe it said Agile certification, Grand Master certification, this, this, this, like Salesforce certification. Then I need this, then I need a business analysis certification, then I need this and I need this.

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And so they keep on just kind of following the job description trying to get more, and more, and more on their résumé. But the truth is you could do that, you could literally have 70 certifications and you could still not have the job you want. And I've seen that happen, not 70, but a lot. And it's kind of just a way to postpone failing. It's a way to postpone doing the hard thing. You're avoiding.

So it's easy for a lot of people to go and do a certification. They're like, I'll feel much more comfortable signing up for a certification, going through the guided process, taking the test and getting this result than I do going on an interview, mastering my interview skills, figuring out how to have this conversation where I can communicate what I do offer right now. And communicating what I can figure out, and then having that end in a rejection. That's something you're avoiding or that's something very scary.

But it's not scary to be like I'll go get another certification because then that will make me more attractive and then I'll get the job. So the way that you can tell if you're doing this is how many interviews are you going on? Are you going consistently on interviews? And I mean if you've gone on 10 interviews and they all told you for the kind of job you want, "You need to get Grand Master certification first." I mean there's always going to be a company who's willing to train you and pay for that for you and give you that as an employee.

And if you did go to 10 interviews and they all said, "You need to go get Grand Master certification first or you're never going to get this job." And that's really unlikely that that would happen, but if that's happened as an extreme example then we can look at okay, maybe you do need Grand Master certification. But if you have been getting interviews in the first place, the likelihood is you don't need another certification.

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Because if you are getting interviews it means they already are seeing enough that they would invest time in speaking to you. So you already have enough on your résumé, because another certification is not going to change that at all. The only thing that a certification will change is you putting it on your résumé and feeling like you're more confident. But it's not the certification. It's your thought about the certification. But if you're already getting interviews then you do not need any more certifications.

You need to work on your interviewing skills. Because like I said, you could have a ton of certifications and still not get the job you want, and that's happened. And there's a lot, we can see lots of evidence of that. There's a lot of people with PhD degrees that don't have the job they want. And it's because of the fact that they're not willing to go out there, and keep going on interviews and failing enough times to figure out what it is that they're not doing or they're not saying, that's going to get the interview to be successful.

So understanding that it's not about your – if you're getting interviews, it's not about your education, it's about your interview skills.

And then I also wanted to touch on something that's really, been really impactful for me because I actually never finished school. So I never finished, I went to business administration school and I was going to finish a degree in business administration, and I actually ended up getting a well paying job through somebody in my program. And I decided, well, I've got a job, I'm making money, I don't need to continue to go to school and so I just never went back, because school for me wasn't somewhere that was comfortable. So I was more comfortable in the interviewing scenario.

So I went to this job opportunity and I did not check all the boxes, I came in through a referral. And they trained me on everything that I needed to know

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for the job. So knowing that it's not about your certifications and your level of education, I mean your level of education is great. And I'm not saying don't go to school. I think education is really valuable. But it's not the only thing you need. It's like you're missing a whole piece quite often for the interviewing piece, for the sales piece, for the selling yourself piece.

That piece if you don't have that, you can have all the education in the world and it doesn't matter. So if you're getting interviews that means you don't need any more education. You need to master your interview skills. You need coaching on that. You need to invest your time and energy on that. And that might be more uncomfortable for you than going to another certification.

Alright, and then the other thing is, is that the job description is giving you information. So it's a source of data and facts that you can use to use to your advantage instead of against you. So it's telling you what problems need to be solved in that organization right now. It's telling you what organizations are wanting to spend money on to solve problems. It tells you why they're hiring for that job, why they're willing to pay someone to come in and help with these things. It tells you what you do have that you can bring to the table.

So if you're looking at the description in terms of what you can do you can also focus there. It gives you strategic information about what phase the company is in right now and what they need extra brain power spent on. And if that organization needs these problems solved you bet other organizations and other hiring managers have the same problems. So this is all information that you're going to miss if all you are focused on is but I don't have five years experience doing that, or I don't have that specific background.

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You're not going to see the wealth of information that is there because what interviewing is, is basically showing them that they have a problem and you can solve it in giving them certainty, and clarity, and confidence in you to be the person to do it. But you'll always miss this information if you're focused on yourself and what you're not. And maybe the job description that you're looking at isn't even the job for you. Maybe it's not even the right fit. Maybe it doesn't even matter. But you can still use it, you can still extract information from it, it's going to help you.

So if you're looking for helpful information on the job description you will be able to find it, but you have to be looking for it.

So another way that I like to look at the job description is it is asking for help. It's basically a company putting out this thing saying, "Hey, I need help with this. We don't have enough manpower. We don't have enough brain power focused on these things, we need help." And if you struggle believing that you can help, then that's the real problem. The description is just a bunch of words on a page that someone arbitrarily decided was going to go there.

Sometimes they get it right and sometimes they get it wrong, yet we let those words discourage us from going after our dream careers. We let ourselves shut down and stop making progress consistently because of those words. We avoid looking at other job descriptions because we're not sure that we fit all the boxes or they're not all things we can do. Of course they're not. We forget about all the experience and capability that we do have. We convince ourselves that we have nothing to offer and that we're not worth anything as a human.

Well, again, I'm being a little bit extreme here. But this is what can happen if you consistently keep looking at the job descriptions in this way. And then

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that leads you, you know where that leads you, I explained it in the beginning. It leads you to failing ahead of time, not giving yourself a chance, let alone giving anyone else a chance to see who you are. You don't give them any reason to even call you because they don't even know you exist because you looked at these words on the page and you decided that you were never going to be the person for that.

So another way, so this is the last thing I want to say on this episode is that your attitude is always going to be worth more than your skill set. So most hiring managers they're always going to love a good attitude versus the best skill set.

So there is his Harvard Law Review study that I love to refer people to, and it's called The Lovable Fool Versus The Competent Jerk. So the lovable fool, and they did a study. So they asked I don't know how many hiring managers, thousands of hiring managers whether or not they would rather hire somebody who is more like the lovable fool versus the competent jerk.

So the lovable fool is a lovely person, they are great to work with, they're there to serve. If you ask them for something they're like, "Yes, yes, of course, I'll do whatever I can to get this done for you. This is when I'm going to have it done." And they're just very pleasant to work with. They're very approachable; you know that they're going to help you if they possibly can. They're going to run around and do whatever they can to get this done for you. And they make you feel very comfortable coming to them or working with them.

And you can tell that they're always doing their best even if they don't have the knowledge and experience that someone else might have, they're still a joy to work with and be around. Versus the competent jerk who is incredibly smart. He has all the skills, all the answers. He has a through the roof IQ

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but you don't want to go up and talk to him because he's a jerk. So you do anything to avoid him.

You even spend more time trying to figure out a problem yourself than trying to talk to him because talking to him is scary because you don't want to because he might make a rude comment, or he might yell at you. Or he might be condescending, he might ignore you. He's unpredictable, you never know what's going to happen but you know it's not going to be good. You might be prepared to get yelled at. You might be like, "Well, I really need to ask him this so let's see what happens."

I have experience working with a competent jerk for quite a while. So I was always like, "Okay, well, I need to get the answer to this, I'm just going to brace myself. I know he's probably going to think I'm an idiot for not knowing but I'm going to ask him anyway because I need the answer." So working with people like that takes the energy out of you. It means that you're now thinking about them and stressing out about their reaction and trying to avoid them. And it actually takes away your brain power from doing your own job because you're stressing out about this person.

So lovable fool versus competent jerk, guess who actually normally gets the job? It's the lovable fool. So the quote goes and I don't know if I'm going to butcher it but I'll try to remember. It says, "When someone is pleasant to work with their coworkers will do anything to try to extract every piece of competence that they have because they want them to succeed and they want to keep working with them. Versus if they're going to work with the competent jerk they're going to lose patience very quickly and they're just going to be like, "Well, eff you then, you're not going to help me anyway.'"

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So yeah, that extreme example is given to you because you're probably in the middle. You're probably really great to work with and maybe you don't have all the experience in the world but your attitude is going to be more important. And even the study shows that your attitude is going to be something that people find more desirable than your skills and your knowledge and intellect.

And I honestly, I know that's true because I know for a fact that I have gotten jobs where I have not been qualified. I have not had checked all the boxes and it was just a matter of connecting in that interview and showing them that I would figure it out for them, I would do what I could. I was very service oriented and I really had that desire to be like I will figure it out, I will do whatever it takes. These are the things I've done before. This is the type of person that I am.

And that's the kind of person that they want to hire, so keep that in mind, and everything that we talked about today on the podcast. And when you're looking at job descriptions from now on, remember that those are going to be the thoughts you want to choose instead of being down on yourself for no reason. So new thoughts about job descriptions, they are a source of information. They are asking for help. You don't have to hit all the boxes to get the job. Lots of people have gotten interviews without hitting all the boxes. Lots of people have been hired without hitting all the boxes.

Most hiring managers will hire for attitude, not for skill. They think of course we can teach her Sequel but I can't teach her to be driven, have a good attitude, work well with others, be creative and a resourceful thinker. I can't train someone to do that. But they can teach you, easily put you into a course to learn the technicalities of this specific program. They can teach you that.

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And then the job description, the person who wrote it doesn't always know what's realistic. They don't always know what they're talking about. You as the person potentially doing the job, you do. And then look at it as what can I offer? What can I do on this job description? What do I want to do? Where do I want to spend my time? How do I want to add value? And then that gives you the position of the driver of your own career, you get to decide. And then through the means of which you start applying for jobs you get a lot more opportunities.

So you're not just limited to the job descriptions that you see, and I have other episodes, one specifically on niche networking and opportunity stacking which gives you so many more opportunities to create from your own brain, creating the opportunities from scratch versus just relying on the ones on the job boards. And the job boards sometimes work, sometimes you can really get aligned with that role and apply and get it. And that's definitely happened for my clients. And sometimes you need to start thinking outside the box.

But the job descriptions are always going to be a source of information for you.

Alright, well, that's what I've got for you today. Thank you so much for listening and I will talk to you next week. Bye.

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natalie@asknataliefisher.com. That's all you have to do. I will send you a link to book your free coaching session until spots fill up.

And I'll be sharing these with my community. So if you've got something you need coaching on, I can assure you somebody else is going to benefit from that too. And it's going to be a win/win for all of us. So can't wait to see your reviews coming in and I can't wait to coach you. Talk to you soon. Bye.

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