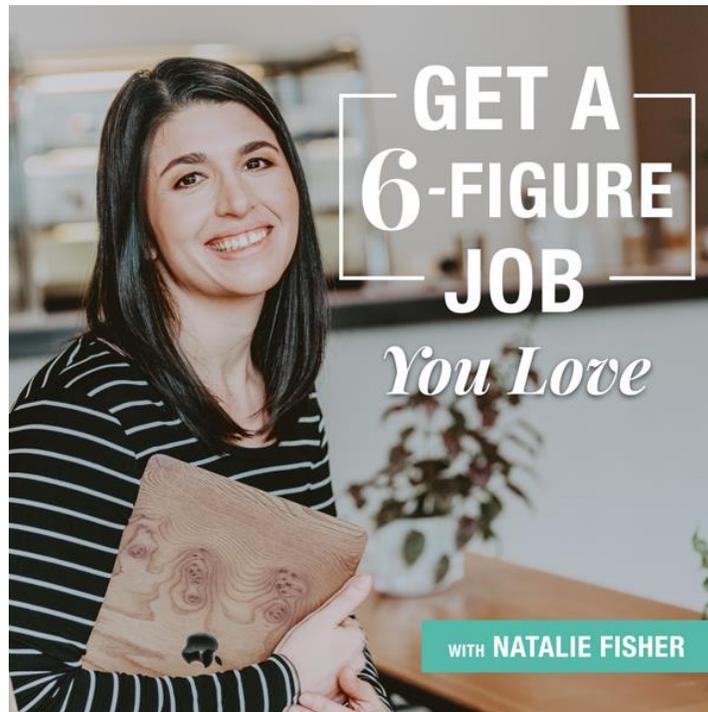


Ep #78: How to Add Maximum Value in Your Role with Paula Price



Full Episode Transcript

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Natalie Fisher

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This is the Get a 6-Figure Job You Love podcast. This is episode 78, how to add maximum value in your role with special guests, Paula Price.

Hey there, welcome to the 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 and 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 flap here. If you want to get a six 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.

Hello. Welcome to today's episode of the podcast where I have another very special guest, Paula Price is coming on today. And Paula Price is one of my clients, but she didn't hire me to find a job. So it's a little bit of a different conversation today. She's going to be adding value because she's also a coach and she coaches lawyers. And so without further ado, Paula, I'm going to let you introduce yourself and let us know who you help and what you do.

Hi, Natalie, thank you so much. It's such a treat to be with you on today's podcast episode and hello everybody who's listening, such a pleasure to be here today. I am a coach and I coach lawyers and I help them with all sorts of different aspects of their practices, whether it's job transitions, whether it's advancing in the role that they're in, whether it's navigating parental transitions, whether it's setting boundaries, all those types of things. So I'm very excited to be meeting with Natalie today.

Natalie helped me get my own podcast up and off the ground. And I love Natalie's work, I've listened to her podcast many times and really enjoy the messaging that she has. And I'm just really excited to be here today to have this conversation with Natalie, to connect with all of you and talk about all things that surround adding maximum value in your role.

Great. Yeah. Actually, I should mention what we're going to be talking about today. I've totally forgot. So we're going to be covering the topic of adding maximum value in any role, and Paula's going to bring some great value to that topic as she has a lot of experience coaching people around it as well. And I'm pretty selective on who I have on the podcast, so happy to have you too. So let's start with the first question, do you think that most people are adding maximum value now in their roles? If we were to ask the average person on the street how do they feel about the value they're adding right now, what do you think they would say?

I love this question. And Natalie, when you came up with this idea of looking at maximum value, I just loved the whole idea of it, the whole concept of it. And before I really get into whether people are actually adding maximum value, I think it really helps to step back and think about how we define what maximum value is.

Love it now.

Totally, because it's going to be different for everybody. And I think each of us comes to the employment situation bearing different skills, different strengths, different interests, different values. And so for each of us, maximum value is going to mean something quite different. And part of your question that I think is really interesting is asking whether most people are adding maximum value in their role. And I think there are people who at some unconscious level are asking themselves, what is it that I need to do to create that maximum value?

But I would say most of us are not, most individuals are not asking themselves, how do I add maximum value? And it's not because there's anything wrong with them, it's not because they're not motivated, it's not because they don't want to work hard, it's that this isn't really necessarily where they've put their focus.

And typically, I think where individuals are putting their focus, I think there's three things that come to mind for me and you may have other suggestions in terms of where people are focusing, but number one, I think people are looking at the job description. So maybe they've had that job description from that initial hiring stage and that's what they're focusing on in terms of what they're doing in their job, and so they're looking to that for guidance.

It may also be fear. I think a number of us out there are looking at the job description and saying, "Well, I want to make sure I do things correctly." Whether there's a true one form of doing things correctly, there may be some subjectivity in your role. And so when you focus on doing it correctly, you may also be worrying about getting it wrong. And when you start to do that, then you may focus on fear or you may focus on the more negative things that could come out, which takes your focus away from creating your maximum impact for example, and into what could potentially go wrong.

And that might be cultural. It may be that you're working in an environment where there's a lot of pressure to get things right, it maybe that you're working with individuals who don't have a high tolerance for experimentation, but that's, I think another place where you can have your focus. So maybe it's a job description, maybe it's fear. And then the third area, and this is something that I think really resonates in your teaching is looking at the process from a perspective of service versus a perspective of self.

And I love your podcast. And I think in some of the episodes where you talk about interviewing, for example, you talk about showing up in service versus thinking about how you're doing. Are you answering the questions correctly versus are you answering the questions authentically?

And so I think when we are focusing on ourself, are we doing this correctly? Am I getting it right? This can be an extension of that same sort of paradigm that you might be experiencing in your interview. And so the focus isn't on, am I adding maximum value? It's on, am I showing up okay? Am I doing this right? And I'm not sure that's the right energy if what you're really trying to create is maximum value.

So to answer your question, are people showing up and why, or why not? I think the why not is simply that people aren't necessarily asking themselves how they could be showing up and providing maximum value in their role. And if they were, they might have a different set of questions and a different focus in terms of what they're doing.

Yeah. So good. So many things there that I was like, "Yes, yes." And then I had some other things to add. So good. So the first thing you said was taking a step back and defining it for yourself, which I really liked, and what came to mind for me was what it's not. So a lot of people right now thinking it's working 12 hours a day or working extra time that you're not being paid for, or taking on extra stuff that really isn't within your capacity and you have to kind of burn yourself out for it in the end. And so I just wanted to mention that is not what we're talking about when we're talking about maximum value. Do you have any thoughts to kind of share what some examples of adding maximum value, it looks like?

Oh, that's so great. I think those examples that you gave are great because some of us will equate long hours with creating maximum value, but really it's focusing on the results. So if you are given a task and you go about that task, doing it the way that somebody has asked you to do it, that may be one way of doing it but there might be a more efficient way of doing it.

And you're going to be able to come up with that idea because of your knowledge, because of your skillset, maybe a way that is different from the person who's asking you to do it. They may not be aware that there's another way to do it. And so that might be an example where you're not necessarily adding more hours, you're not working harder, you're offering something that somebody else hasn't really thought of before.

Absolutely. Yeah. And a good example that comes to mind for me is when we're doing tasks like in Excel and we have to put in data or really menial things that you have to really task out and it takes a long time instead of kind of taking that and being like, how could I do this super efficiently? And taking the time to learn a formula that then is going to do it all for you automatically.

This just came to mind, because I know somebody who teaches a course on how to do that and makes people's jobs way easier for them just using Excel. And so they get to go, by investing in themselves and figuring out how to use Excel super efficiently, they're going to go and cut down the time it takes them to do those tasks and then they get to focus their brain on other things. And that would be a good example of adding maximum value. So making it more efficient, but still getting the same results, knowing that that's the thing that's possible and not burning yourself out, not working harder or longer hours or taking on more. So focusing on the results, I think that was the main key piece of what you were saying.

Absolutely. And I think the examples that you gave is an excellent example. And just bringing your own skillset to the table, that the person that is assigning it is in a sense limited to what they know. But what else can you add there that would really create better results, faster results, more efficient results? So, absolutely.

Yeah. And knowing that it doesn't necessarily have to take as long as it has been taking. Just having that possibility of like, oh, how could this be more efficient or faster or better? Just asking yourself that one question and then letting yourself come up with the answers. And like you said, they're going to have the answers, right?

Exactly. And I think that's the benefit of coming into something where you are coming with a fresh set of eyes. So there may be systems in place, they've been there for years and those systems are ready for an evolution and you might be the person to spark that.

Yeah. And I love saying that to people who don't have... They're like, "But I don't have a lot of experience." And I'm like, "You know why that's great is because you have this fresh set of eyes that hasn't seen this before, so you have a new way to look at it."

Exactly.

Yeah. Awesome. Really good. So the next question I had was, how does someone need to be thinking in order to add maximum value in their role?

This is such a great question, Natalie, and thank you so much for asking this question because the way that you're thinking really does have a huge impact. And I think the easiest way to explain this is to take a creative approach versus a reactive approach. And I really like juxtaposing creative and reactive because you're using the same set of letters, but they have completely different meanings.

So I think for a lot of us, the reactive mode is the default mode. So you may be showing at the office and the emails are flooding in. You have your clients that want certain things from you. Maybe your boss wants something from you, your colleagues want something from you. And so you're in this somewhat vulnerable state where you are responding and reacting to all the things that are going on around you.

So you're really fueled by demands, you're fueled by external expectations and that can create a lot of anxiety in people. And what I find is that they start to act from that place of fear. And at a neurological level, we know that when we're in that state of fear, when we're put into that fight or state, our creativity actually shuts down, our brain is really focused on survival. We just want to get through the moment. We're not thinking big picture and so it's limited.

So if you're able to turn that around and look at it from a more creative perspective, you are in a much different mindset. If you're thinking expansively, you're asking yourself the question of how do I do this

differently? If you're looking at going beyond the job description, if you're allowing yourself to say, "Okay, here's a set of rules that I think I need to go by where I'm reacting to everything."

But what if you were to rewrite that rule book where you are the one who is in charge? Maybe you start thinking more expansively in terms of who am I showing up as, what are my own personal strengths? What are my skills, how am I going to build on those things? Then you may find that you're able to have a more expansive approach. You're going to be able to start generating maximum value because you're now being creative. You're leaning into your strengths instead of being in that more reactive and constrained way of being. And it may be that you need to find an environment that supports that. I think there are some working cultures where-

Super important one.

Absolutely, there's such a difference. There are some organizations where it really is, you do what you're told to do and there isn't a lot of room to be creative, to work outside of that framework. But in a lot of organizations, I think that's a really valued skill when you're bringing that creativity. And they're looking for that, they're looking for that growth. And so you may need to find an organization where that is valued if that's something that you want to build for yourself.

Yeah. And I think that's a key piece from the very beginning of anything is knowing that you're going to be in an organization that wants you to add maximum value because some actually don't, like you said. And it comes to mind an example of a client that I had, he was working in an organization and they basically told him, "Sit down and program these things into the computer." And he was like, "Well, I could do this a lot faster if I had this tool and we could just do this and it would be a lot faster." And his manager just said, "No, I'm not interested in that. Sit down and do what I told you."

Absolutely.

At that point, he was like, "Yeah, this is just not going to work for me." And he didn't last for much longer there. So it's kind of identifying that just won't work for you. But some people, I know lots of people who are very happy to go in there and sit down and put the data in and they don't have to think about it, they don't want to.

So this is the difference between someone who's going to continue to grow and add value because they need to, it's like a need to contribute and be creative and solve problems versus some people who are just going to be like, "No, just tell me what to do. I'll do it and then I go home." And they're happy with that. So I think that's super important. The most important piece is noticing that you need to be in an environment like that, you are that kind of person who wants to add maximum value doing these creative problem solving things.

Totally. Absolutely, Natalie. And I love how you set that up, because I think for different individuals there is that different need. I also think that the same individual can have different phases of life, where sometimes what they want is that job where they plug in and they do what they're told and they're not looking for whatever reason, maybe it's external commitments, maybe it's just the phase that they're at. But then something changes for them and their instinct is to go beyond, they want to grow, they want to change.

And so I think just paying attention for each of us to really assess, where are we? And there may be days where you show up and you think, "I'm so fired up, what can I do today to add maximum value?" And there may be days when you're just not feeling that same energy, and it's okay to not necessarily go in with that same energy every day. I think really what is so impactful about this question and I love that you came up with it is to start thinking about, how do I add that value? And for that to be on your radar, you're going to start making some changes. So I think that's just a great question to have in your mind, whether it's something that you act on every day or not.

Totally. Yeah. So good. You don't have to be adding maximum value every day, it's just something that you want to be working towards. And totally, and I think of the example of if you're setting a goal to lose weight or workout or a fitness goal, you're going to go work but every day isn't going to be your best day. It's not going to be like that, and expecting it to be like that would be setting yourself up for disappointment. So I kind of think of it like anything that you're trying to do, you don't have to be at 100% every day. I'm really glad you brought that up, because it would be unnecessary pressure and not necessary.

Absolutely. And just following on the exercise example, sometimes the rest days are the recovery days, and that's when you kind of see the results of your experiment. Maybe you-

And they're part of it. Yeah. The rest days are part of the goal. You have to rest in order to be able to come back and be sharper and be stronger.

Exactly. Which I think goes back to a point you made earlier about, it's not about overextending yourself and working harder and working longer, it's working strategically and seeing what happens and then moving forward.

Yeah. More efficiently is the goal. I always think to myself, how could I do this without doing all the things that I thought I had to do? And you can pair down a lot of things that weren't actually necessary if you just take the time to kind of think that and be like, "Well, could I get the same results without these things? Could we take these things out?" And often the answer is yes, most of the time the answer is yes.

Such a great point, Natalie. And absolutely, I can see how that would be such an effective way if you're looking at, you're adding the maximum value, what do I think I need to do? But being critical about that and saying, do I actually really need to do all these things? And you might be surprised at how many of those to do items fall off your list.

Yeah. And just being open to it. Maybe they have to stay on, maybe they have to get delegated, whatever, but just being open to all options. And then the way that I'm thinking of defining maximum value right now because I don't think we actually defined it, we defined what it wasn't. But how it's kind of coming together in my head is you're producing a result to the best of your ability.

Totally. I love that.

Yeah. And then in that way, because it is going to be different for everybody. And one person can go home and say, I added maximum value and the other person will be able to say the same thing, but they did completely different things and they created completely different results. So I think it is very individualized to the person. Next question. So do you think people pleasing can get in the way of people creating their best results, and how do you think that happens in the workplace?

Oh, I love this question, Natalie. It is such a great question. The answer is yes, 100%. I think there is a big misconception out there that the way to success is to make other people happy. Number one, I think if you are basing your own measure of success on how other people feel, you are leaving yourself to be in a very vulnerable position. You may feel ecstatic on the days where your boss is smiling and everything's looking like it's going really well, but you're going to be equally as unhappy when you put in the effort and you don't get the result that you want. So I think for that reason already, you're moving away from success.

Another point there is that you can't make other people happy. We're responsible for our own happiness. It's hard enough to make yourself happy let alone try to make somebody else happy. Especially if it's somebody who you see in your professional environment, you may not know them as well as you would need to to really press the right buttons. It's not setting yourself up for success, I think it's also distracting you.

If your focus is on pleasing that person as opposed to the results that you're creating, you're shifting your focus away from creating maximum value and then instead focusing on that one person, which may be aligned with the service of the organization that you're working with, it may be aligned with the goal but there may not be alignment.

I think another way that this can really distract you from creating maximum value and this comes up a lot with the clients that I work with is when you have this desire to please others, it can deter you from having difficult conversations that are really important conversations. So I've got a few examples and these come up a lot with clients that I work with. One of them is shifting deadlines.

So you're working on a project, something else comes up and you need to focus your attention to that project or the project you're working on turns out to be more complicated than you thought it was going to be, and you realize that a deadline that you committed to is pretty unlikely to be met. So instead of saying, "Hey boss, or whoever it is that you're working with, I've got an issue here. I think we're going to have to move this deadline back, we're going to have to find a different way to solve this problem." You may just keep working on that problem without saying anything. And then if that project doesn't get finished on time or it's not finished to the right standard on time, you've now put the whole project in a position where you do not have the time to fix it. So I think that's an example where the desire to avoid the conversation, the desire to please that other person can detract you from success.

Another example of that is staying in a job too long. So there are clients that I've worked with who've been in a job too long and they know it. And one of the reasons that they've offered to me is that they dread having that conversation with their employer. They don't want to leave them. And so by- I had that too. Yeah.

Absolutely. And by staying, unfortunately what's happening is they're not helping the relationship that they're trying to preserve. They're trying to maintain the integrity of this relationship with somebody. They like them, they want to please them, but what they're doing is actually depriving that other person of the opportunity to find somebody else who's more suitable to the role. Maybe they're not doing their best work in the time leading up to it because they are no longer engaged. And so this people pleasing is getting in the way again, of creating maximum value.

And then the third example that I had, maybe it's a subset of the time slipping away, but delivering bad news. I think sometimes something happens on a file or in a project or maybe even something is happening for you that's negative. Maybe something in your personal life that if you shared it, you'd be able to come to a better solution.

And so I think again, because you're not wanting to have that difficult conversation, you're not wanting to disappoint somebody, you're not engaging in a conversation that could be really productive.

And in all of these examples, the longer you put that conversation off, I mean, chances are you're going to have to have a conversation about it at some point, and it doesn't get easier to have that conversation and it doesn't get easier for the person that you're trying to please. So I think that's another way that the people pleasing can really backfire and you're distracted from creating the maximum value and you're also potentially creating a situation that makes it more difficult for yourself and for your employer.

Absolutely. So it's like discomfort now or discomfort later either way.

Exactly. And even though the discomfort now is immediate, chances are the degree of that discomfort is going to be less severe than the discomfort of doing that thing at a later date, which so often happens as you know with procrastination. The longer we put things off sometimes, I mean, sometimes the problems go away and a small, happy percentage of the challenges, but often it's not helping the problem.

Yeah, for sure. And the part about people not wanting to leave their job or being really hesitant to have that conversation, I've coached on that a lot. And I wanted to add just one question, who are you living your life for?

Oh, totally.

That kind of brings everything into perspective.

It's such a great question, Natalie, and yet people get so caught up in that. It seems so obvious for us talking right now, but when you're in it, it doesn't feel like that.

I know. And I've been there myself too. I thought about when you were talking about trying to please your boss and then putting that control in your boss's hands of whether or not you're adding maximum value or whether or not you're happy. I had a boss like that and she was like, one day she'd be really stressed out and angry and it didn't matter what I was doing, she was in a mood and then the next day she'd be feeling good. And it was really hard to manage emotions around that, but it totally took on my focus off of what I was actually supposed to be getting done and the results I was producing because I was preoccupied with making her happy.

100%.

So it made so much sense when you were saying that, I'm like, "Yeah, I've been through that myself."

I think many of us has. I have as well. And it's the strategy that you're now focusing on isn't on, am I delivering the best product? I mean, ideally you are and chances are you are, but there's this additional focus which is, am I going to catch them at the right time? You described these different versions of the same person like, who are you going to be speaking with that day and how are you going to approach that conversation? And you're no longer focused on the impact on the value, you're focusing on that relationship. So it can be really challenging.

Yeah. So if I'm seeing the main result that we keep coming back to is, just stay focused on the results. And yes, that can be hard sometimes with all the stuff that gets in the way. But if you can keep that at the top of your mind, it's like, I'm here to produce a result for myself, for my own satisfaction and my own accomplishment, but also for the organization then. And that's where you can keep coming back to like your home base and then these other things, you can be aware of them but you can manage them a lot more effectively.

Totally. And it's so good. And it goes back to the definition that you offered, which I love, which is looking at it from your own perspective, looking at it from your own strengths, looking at it from your own skills like, what is maximum value to you? And again, it's bringing it home, like you said, and all of a sudden the locus of control goes from being in the hands of somebody outside of yourself to external circumstances, to something that you can absolutely control.

Yeah. And defining it ahead of time being like, if I get this done and this complete, this will be a very proud moment for me. I will be happy with this. Because I think a lot of people just go to work and they're just working, working, working, and they don't really have that, like you said at the beginning, the focus piece, what they're focusing on.

Totally. And that happens when you're working on a big project and the end goal may be weeks or months away. And so if you're able to give yourself these smaller goals, these smaller incidences where you're producing that value, you're going to be able to have those success moments a lot more frequently and that can keep you going, right?

Absolutely. It's so important.

[crosstalk 00:25:49] on the back externally, "Okay, I'm going to have these checkpoints along the way that will keep me motivated."

Yeah. And giving them to yourself too. I had a coach one time. I was complaining about not getting some results or something, and I was talking to her about it. And she said this thing to me that was very profound, she's like, "You're going to have to get used to doing things without getting a cookie every time." And I was like, "Oh, I'm expecting cookies. That's my problem."

Totally. And we're trained to expect cookies, that's how school is set up. You go, you write your exam, you get your A or whatever it is, and then you move onto the next task. But when you enter the professional world, you're not really getting a report card on a day to day basis. You don't hand in your memo and they're like, "Great job. Here's your gold star." You have to be a lot more self-sufficient when it comes to giving yourself that feedback.

Yeah, absolutely. I know we're both not saying that feedback isn't helpful and that we shouldn't get feedback from our employers and stuff, but it doesn't come as frequently. It's not as obvious. And a lot of the times that is the biggest thing that you can do is learning to give yourself that feedback. Even if you did something and no one else noticed, it's like, "Yeah, you know what, that was really good. I'm really proud of that." That will give you the fuel to keep going.

Totally. And I can't help but throw in values. I think looking at what is really important to you and aligning what you're basing your own feedback on. Are you doing the things based on your strengths, based on your values, are you aligning those things? Because if you are acting consistently with what's really important to you and then you are following through, you're going to be creating so much more satisfaction than if you are kind of just showing up at work and hoping that somebody's going to say, "Hey, you did a great job today." So there's just a really big difference in approach and how you feel.

Yeah. And it's a lot easier for you to do that, it's a lot easier for you to feel that way when you are aligned in a place.

Totally.

Yeah. And again, comes back to that environment, a lot of people are trying to add maximum value in an environment that for some reason or another doesn't support it or doesn't support the fact that you want to be doing things to add service in a certain way. I'm thinking of an example. I worked in a customer service call center for a while and it felt like I wasn't empowered to actually help the customer. It felt like I had to always tell them, "No, refer back to the policy. You agreed to this. No." And now that you're saying that, being in conjunction aligned with your values, that was clearly not aligned with my values. It felt horrible.

I'm just like, "I agree with the customer. I think they should get this. This is unfair." But yet my job was to tell them, "No, you can't." And that was the way that the company identified me doing a good job. But to me that wasn't a good job at all, it was like, "This doesn't work for me." But it was years ago, I didn't have the knowledge I have now. And at the time I just thought I had to push through and do it. I didn't last very long there, I think I ended up there for a year. But it wouldn't have been something that I could go home and say, I had maximum value no matter how well I did.

Totally. Yeah. It's such a great example that you gave that idea of feeling almost like you're trapped, you can't add that value. And sometimes that happens depending on the individual that you're tied to within your organization. So you may be in an environment where you have multiple people that you work with and for of them, you're able to go that extra mile. They inspire you to add maximum value, I mean, that just comes naturally from your working relationship. Whereas there may other individuals who are almost constraining. When you're working with them, they're micromanaging or they've got this very exacting way of doing things and they don't want you going outside the lines. And so it's really finding for yourself where your sweet spot is, where you're feeling like you're performing at your optimal level.

And that may mean that you can do that where you are, but it may also mean that where you are just doesn't offer that. And that's, I think where it becomes really important to start looking outside of where you are, seeing what opportunities are available to you and to ask yourself what it is that you're looking for. I mean, if you are going to make that transition from where you are to another organization, what is it that you want there that's going to allow you to create what it is that you're trying to create, to create that maximum value?

Absolutely. Yeah. And it brings me to the podcast that I recently did on premium offers. And just knowing that you can decide what that looks like for you, and then you can go and find that. And just knowing that's always a possibility. So if you find yourself in a situation like that where you do feel like you're strapped and constrained and stifled, you can be like, "You know what, listening to this right now is a sign that I need to branch out and that I don't have to accept this. This doesn't have to be my reality."

Absolutely. Because as you said, who's in charge? That's not exactly your question, but-
Who are you living for?

Exactly.

Yeah, for sure. So whenever you have the tendency to people please or stay in something out of guilt, just remember, who are you living for?

I need to write that up somewhere.

Yeah, totally. I don't need it so much anymore, but I used to because the thoughts of other people come in like, "Oh, the person's not going to be happy. Oh, they don't like this."

Yeah. Which is totally natural, we all want other people to be happy. We want to be in service. We want people to be happy around us but we have to make that we're not doing that at the expense of ourselves, at the expense of greater objectives. So I think it's a great question.

Who loses out in the end for real? Yeah. Okay. So how can you approach the job description in a way where somebody could add maximum value instead of approaching it like they need to fit into the box that the job description has described, how can they approach it in a different way where they can kind of bring their full selves to the table?

So this is such a great question, Natalie. And I think it kind of ties back to this whole idea of being creative, asking yourself questions. And when it comes to a job description, I think we have to look at that for what it is. It's often a list of bullet points based on what the person who has sort of created that job description, what they think that job needs. And there are likely bullets on there. I mean, probably all those bullets, they're going to want you to do those things, but it may be that there are things that are missing from that job description that the person who created it didn't think to include because they didn't know it was a possibility.

It may be that there are things on that job description that have been done a certain way, kind of like your Excel spreadsheet example; we've done it this certain way, it's time consuming, but maybe there's another way to do this that would be more time efficient.

And so I think it's looking at the job description and then asking yourself some questions about it like, how do you in particular do those things? So if it's drafting, I don't know, I'm trying to think research memos, that's something that comes up in a law firm context, for example, how do you do that in a way that is uniquely yours? Or looking at the task and thinking, "What are the specific skill sets that I bring to this equation that may be different from what other people offer?" And start being creative with the thing that you produce in relation to the bullets. You mentioned this before, but what is not on the list

that you might add to that list? Maybe it's a different way of doing things, maybe there's a component of it that people haven't really thought of before.

Yeah. So it's like there's a spectrum of how to look at the job description. The one person might look at it and they're just like, "Oh, okay. So this is what I have to do. That's it, done. I'll just go and follow these instructions." And then on the other side of the spectrum, somebody might be like, "Oh, well, we probably don't need this. We can do this this way. This can be done a lot faster using this other thing." Maybe somebody who looks at it just from a complete blank slate where they're not afraid to fail or make anybody mad, they're looking at it in a completely different way.

You kind of want to start branching into that consultant mode, looking at it as a consultant might look at it and be like, "Okay, this company needs these things done. They need these results." And then the questions kind of come from there, it's like, "Well, what would I do? If I had to do this, would I do it this way?" And in the interview process itself, this is something that you probably know I teach is getting curious about what they need and asking them more questions about those bullet points and stuff.

Yes. Absolutely.

Anyways, continue your point. I feel like [crosstalk 00:34:12].

No, no. I love it, because you're exactly... My next points that I was going to suggest is, what if those bullets were just a starting point? So if you're looking at that at as, here's the job description that exist, but I know that I want to grow and I know that I want to help them grow. So starting here, how do I build on that for them? How do you build on it for yourself? How can you build on these skills to grow into the next iteration of wherever it is that you are aiming to be in your career? And I think the last question that I would offer is, how else can I show up in service? So those are just some ideas for looking at the job description and then thinking about what else is possible.

Yeah. And something I wanted to add is in the interview itself, when you're asking the questions about what needs to be done and how they're doing it now, et cetera, you can also ask them, what is the trajectory of somebody in this that you've seen so far? Because you want to set up the interview to know that the growth is going to be available to you in that company as well. So it goes all hand in hand, like you said. Great points.

Absolutely. And before we move on to the next question, I just wanted to highlight one of the questions that you asked, which was turning it back to the person asking and saying, what does success look like? So I think really getting curious about what success looks like may lead you down that path where you can see other clues for how you can really create maximum value because the job description might say, here's a task that we want you to do, but that task is probably aimed at a bigger goal. And when you know what that goal is, then you're better able to think of other ways of getting there.

Yeah, exactly. And that reminds me of when you're asking questions like, why are we doing it this way? Those are questions to bring out efficiencies or bring out conversations about making things more efficient and adding maximum value. Whereas the opposite as we were talking earlier is like, don't ask why, just do what you're told. And so in the interviews, you can really tell how those conversations are going by their response to how they engage with questions like that. Awesome. Okay. So what is your opinion of asking for permission, when is it right to do something or when is it okay to go ahead on your own?

And I love this question, Natalie, because I think so many of us walk around with this at an unconscious level, we're waiting for somebody to either ask us to do something or to give us permission to do something. And coming from my background is as a lawyer, so very rules based. You go to university law school and then you write the exams and you practice around rules. And so I think we adopt implicitly

this rule book of how you're supposed to do things. And so to go outside of that can feel really challenging.

And what I've noticed though, is that having that implicit rule book can be really limiting. And when you want to go beyond that, there are a few things that you might think about in terms of how you can approach that. So number one, I think is to really understand the framework that you're working in. So you and I were talking about different organizations, some of them are really going to value and appreciate if you're going to come in with an innovative idea, others really just want you to follow the process that has been followed for however many years, and they don't want that. So you need to understand the framework in which you're working and what the culture is and what the expectations are.

And then with that in mind, I mean, you may have flexibility within your mandate to just go out and try things. In which case you don't need the permission, you can give yourself that permission and experiment and see what happens. Or if you're in an environment where you think you might need that permission, I think the best approach is to get yourself thinking about what it is that you're trying to do, come up with the plan, create that plan to the point where you're comfortable presenting it.

Here what you're really going to be doing is an exercise in selling. You're going to come up with your idea, you're going to present your idea. You're going to explain why it's a good idea and how it's going to contribute to the organization in some way, why it's doable, why it's easy, why it's better, whatever that looks like. And then you can go and make that pitch. So you're going out and you're creating that new way of doing things and then you get that buy in. So you've got your permission.

And the third thing that I wanted to say here is to really start just noticing. I think again, going back to asking yourself this question, am I adding maximum value? How do I add maximum value here? When you start asking yourself that question, you might start realizing that the answers that you come up with are, "Well, I could go and do this thing, but that would be different from how we've done it before and I don't know if that's really going to gel with my boss, or whoever is overseeing my work."

And so if you start to notice where you are not doing things because you don't think you have permission, then you can start doing something about that. So I think just raising that awareness, where are you stopping yourself? Because you don't think that you're allowed to do something that you need permission for that. And then deciding consciously whether you go ahead and do that, that it's okay for you to do it differently without getting permission or do you need to take this other approach just to get that buy-in and then act on it.

Yeah. Those are all really great points. While you were talking, an example came up for me. So I had this client and she was... Then I think this happens with a lot of people. They do have more autonomy in their roles than they are using, just because they've come from another environment where it's been different or the way they grow up, or whatever. So they're very hesitant and they err on the side of way too cautious. And that can really slow you down and slow your results down.

Absolutely.

The example of the client I'm thinking of, she was tasked with doing a large project and she wanted to get some survey feedback from a couple of the departments. So I was asking her how that was going, what was stopping her from completing it, and she's like, "Well, I have to get the manager to look it over first." And I was like, "Why?" I was interested to know why the manager had to look it over if she was getting this information from other people. And yes, some organizations might want you to do that.

But anyways, the manager had postponed this meeting twice to look over her survey. He hadn't looked it over and she was just not getting where she needed to go because she was waiting for this permission and it was taking about two weeks. And so I thought, okay. I could see clearly this was slowing her down.

Because if she had this information already, she could have continued working on the project. She could be a lot farther ahead. So it was established, like there's a few ways you can go and do that.

You can be like, okay, if I don't have the answer by this day, I'm going to send it out or you could go talk to the person. But it turns out in this case, she didn't need permission at all because he wasn't really that invested. It wasn't that big of a deal, it was fine. She just could send that survey out to everyone and get the information without having any consequence without there being any trouble, even saving that manager time because he didn't really want to look at it.

We questioned that and then she was like, "Yeah, I guess I don't really need to, I guess I could just send it out." I'm like, "Do you think you're going to get in trouble if you do?" And she's like, "No, not really." So if there's situations where you could be just really overly cautious and not really know it because of your previous environments or if you have some trauma or if you're just scared of getting in trouble all the time, then you probably are going to err on the side of overly cautious which over the long term, if you keep doing that will really slow down the speed at which you create maximum value or whether you get there at all on certain projects.

Totally. I love that example. And I mean, that comes up in a law firm environment too, where really junior lawyers are looking to senior lawyers to review their work. And that's how it operates for a certain amount of time. But part of the growth is to move away from that. And I think that really requires communication between the junior and the senior to say, "Listen, I'm ready to start doing this without going through the approval process or whatever that looks like."

And it's effective for a number of reasons. One of them being that it just helps that person, the more junior person that's learning to then go out and learn on their own, to develop their confidence that they don't need to have, in your case, it's the approval of the survey or whatever that looks like. And once you start doing that, you just build confidence and you are then empowered to create more value in your role.

Yeah. And I mean, the worst that can happen is you do get a slap on the wrist, or something. And you're like, "Well, you really should have asked me about that. I really should have gotten not first." But just by still having done it, that was a courageous step that you took. It was still something that you did, it was still something that has value for you and your own growth, even if you do get in trouble for it after.

Yeah, absolutely.

Awesome. Yeah, really good points on that. And I think that it's like there's a spectrum. It's like, you can be way too cautious and then you can be way too overzealous, not ask for permission ever and then there's a different problem. So you want to kind of be in the middle where you're not totally too slow about it, you're being strategic about it.

And also one thing I wanted to add there is sometimes people can be really slow at making decisions and that can really hold you back. So just knowing that you can be creative in how you get them to make the decision or maybe you get them to delegate the decision to somebody else.

Absolutely. And that's part of the creativity, right?

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

It's, how am I going to make this decision really easy for that person to make that decision?

Yeah. Great question.

It's kind of that same line of as asking for permission, okay, well, if I come to them with the ready-made package and all they have to do is click yes on the email, whatever it is, you're off to the races. So I love your point about decision making, how you want that to be made more smoothly, more quickly, because that will create more impact. It'll create better results.

Yeah. And ultimately the person that you're waiting for is slowing down your growth trajectory.

Yeah, absolutely.

It's your responsibility to get creative as to how you get them to make those decisions faster or easier or work out a system so that they're more confident.

I love that. Absolutely. It is your responsibility. And I think the more we take ownership for the trajectory of our career in each of those moments, that's growth, that's learning how to work with different individuals to accomplish a thing that you're trying to accomplish.

Yeah, absolutely. And I have personal experience with that with working with some really tough executives who didn't ever want to make a decision [inaudible 00:44:29] and I was just really annoying about it, to be honest. I'd just be like, okay. And eventually, they would just be like, "Okay, we need to work something out here because you're bugging me too much." I'm like, "Yes, I know, but I don't want to be." So when there's a will, there's a way.

And ultimately you're helping them. And if that's a strategy, that's a strategy. Your decision's getting made.

Yeah. And I mean, I remember-

That would be a day where you added maximum value.

Yeah. We figured out how we were going to get them to... Because they're the ones who ultimately want the result, right?

Yeah, absolutely.

I was like, "You want the results." It was kind of going back to what you said about selling them on getting this result faster and then why it's going to take longer because they're just swept up in their own day. They're not paying any attention to it. They're like just avoid, avoid, sometimes. So it really is the responsibility of the person who needs to get the work done to kind of facilitate those decision making.

Totally. And if you look at it almost like a game, right?

Yeah.

Like, how am I creating value here? How do I do this? What's in my skillset? And making it fun so it's not necessarily a problem, right?

Yeah.

If they're not making a decision, they're not making a decision, but how do you get creative? How do you make that fun? How do you make that a challenge so that you're building on your skillset and you're getting better at doing that thing.

Yeah, absolutely. Because the alternative is just being like, "Well, they haven't decided yet I'm waiting, I'm waiting, I'm waiting." And then you just wait and then your growth is withering away there.

Yeah. Your growth is withering and the impact is not being made. The decision isn't being made, the results aren't being created. And so, absolutely, I think the more that you're pushing that forward and that will look different for everybody, whether it's getting approval for a project that you want to work on or some other thing it's if you take that responsibility on yourself and people will appreciate that. People appreciate it because often the reason they're not doing it isn't because they're not interested, it's because they've got five other projects on the go and it's just, it hasn't grabbed their attention.

So true. And I've had people thank me for it too. I'm like, "Yes, I know I'm being annoying right now, but this is for this result." And they're like, "You know what, thanks are pushing me on that. I know I was avoiding it."

Yeah, totally.

Absolutely. Awesome. So the last thing I wanted to touch on was examples of ways that lawyers in particular have gone against the grain and how it's worked out in the past to create maximum impact.

Thank you so much, Natalie. And a couple of examples come to mind. One example is the whole pandemic example. So law firms traditionally have not been all that receptive to flexible working arrangements. So where you've got people working from home, certainly not in the same way that people move to a home based environment, particularly in March, 2020. And so that was really a wholesale example where a situation was thrust upon the world that required everybody to respond in a way that engaged creativity and doing things differently.

And I think what that opened up was a lot of opportunities for people to do things differently and create value in a much different way. And we sort of saw that at a larger scale with some of the larger firms that are used to having this big institutions, big offices. What was particularly interesting, and I think for the purpose of our conversation is looking at some of the smaller organizations and how they really almost benefited from being smaller, from being able to act more quickly for being more nimble in the way that they were set up and to innovate in a way that they were able to innovate using technology to reach people in a different way.

Sometimes it was innovative in the way that they delivered legal services. So moving away from a more traditional model, maybe it's the billable hour model to maybe being more of a different format. I'm thinking sort of this electronic ways of doing things that was previously not really done in a legal context. So I think just the push toward innovating is an example where those were opportunities that were created by circumstances, but now we're creating value in a way that we weren't creating value before and we're learning that it's actually possible. That the rules that we thought were in place that we needed permission, all of a sudden that has become the norm. So I think that was a big shift.

Another place where I've seen it with lawyers, again, it sort of speaks to the more organizational level, but for individuals who go out and found their own law firms. And what I've noticed among many practitioners who go out and they start their own practice, is they do it with a very unique approach. And I can think of a few examples of lawyers who've gone out and created with intentionality, a working environment where their values are being reflected in a way that they weren't able to have those values reflected working for a larger institution.

And so they're targeting a specific group of clients. So maybe they're not looking for the same sort of institutional clients that a larger firm would serve. They're looking for a person who wouldn't necessarily have access to those resources but they have access to their resources, or maybe it's the way that they set up their working arrangements.

So they, before the pandemic set up virtual working arrange so that they could accommodate individuals who were not able to work in an office five days a week, or maybe they have a particular practice area that they want to work in that wasn't really... there wasn't that option within the environment that they were in, they couldn't do that. It was just too much of a niche area.

So I think what we really see is where there's innovation, those to me are the examples of taking that, how do I create maximum value based on what I'm interested in? What are my skills? How do I create that in the world? And so sometimes that's really in a sole practice and sometimes that can happen using those same skill sets, you might be able to bring that into your organization.

Yeah. And the lawyers who go out and found their own firms based on their own values is because they didn't like or they didn't align with the bigger firms and how they did things. And so they've now created these environments that are different and now they are able to go and offer premium job offers to people who feel the same way as they do. It's a beautiful thing really.

Totally. Absolutely. It is creating that culture and being inspired to do that.

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And being like, "Yeah, we don't have to do it this way." Because I mean, I can see people having a love of the law, but like really not liking the way that something's been done for 20 years in this big firm and being able to see exactly how it could be different just as effective and just serving different people.

Totally. Absolutely, Natalie. And I think there's such a broad spectrum of how we can do things. Again, it goes back to that unwritten rule book. There's such a broad spectrum. It's not like one way is right and one way is wrong. It's that each of us will have a very different idea of what we want to do. And being able to either create that where you are, or if that's not an option to be able to create that for yourself. Or maybe it's finding an environment that is supportive of that. So there's so many different ways to do it.

And I think the big question is really going back to what you proposed this idea that creating maximum value with the choice that we make is something that do is something that we decide what that looks like, and then we get to set the measuring sticks that we're going to look to to decide whether or not we've created that.

Yeah. Absolutely. And I love that, because that was a big part of my growth journey was dropping the rules on how things needed to be done. And I'm just like, "Oh, I have to do them like this person because this person's really successful." And it's like, actually that doesn't work for me.

Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah. It is possible in any industry, even legal where it seems like everything is very driven by the rules which it is, that's the law but there are still so many nuances and flexibility in how you can run your law firm that are not written in stone, right?

Absolutely.

Amazing. Thank you so much.

Thank you.

Yeah. Those are all the questions I had for you. And now I just want to let people know where they can find you. And if they're interested in working with you, how they might get in touch with you.

Thank you, Natalie. So I recommend anybody who would like to get in touch with me, you can reach out on LinkedIn. I'm there, Paula Price, you'll find me. I have a podcast. So I can't remember if we mentioned at the beginning, but one of the things that Natalie helped me with was to bring my podcast to life. It's called the Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers, you can check it out. We talk about all things, life and law related. And so you're welcome to find me there.

And then if you did want to work with me, I do one to one coaching work with clients and speaking for firms. And so you can find me at uplevellawyercoaching.com. So those are all places where you can find me. Natalie, I just wanted to say thank you for inviting me to join you here today. It's been so much fun to see... Those of you listening, you don't have the benefit of seeing Natalie, but it's so lovely to see her here on Zoom. So thank you so much, Natalie. It's such a pleasure being here today. Thank you.

Yeah. Thank you so much for all your answers, your well thought out points. We gave some great examples here and I think anybody who's... The takeaways from this episode, I think if I were to sum them up are like focusing in on those results and knowing that however you need to get to those results,

as long as you get to the results that you want and you're happy and proud at the end, then you've done amazing.

Absolutely. And thank you all of you who are here today and so excited to be connecting with all of you. And I think Natalie you've shared so many great takeaways and thank you, it's been so fun.

You're welcome. All right. Well, thank you so much.

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If the community and the video vault doesn't already make you feel like you won the lottery, we also have live coaching calls every week. So every Tuesday at 3:00 PM, you will receive a live coaching call link to join us on Zoom. And you will stay laser focused on your goal. You will get the Zoom link to these calls as soon as you sign up. So between the video vault and the community and the weekly live coaching, the program is literally fail proof.

I'm so confident that you will get the results that you came for that I have a worry free money back guarantee. If it doesn't work for you, we'll send their money back there. There hasn't been a single person who has wanted their money back. In fact, the success story keep on coming in. Oh, and did I mention that this is lifetime access? Do not wait, go to www.nataliefisher.ca/start and make the decision right now that you will land your six figure role in the year 2022, starting in January. I will see you inside.