Ep #16: The Five Phases of Career Confidence

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Get a 6-Figure Job You Love with Natalie Fisher

Ep #16: The Five Phases of Career Confidence

Welcome to the How to Get a 6-Figure Job You Love podcast. This is episode 16: The Five Phases of Career Confidence.

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, so I've been working with a lot of clients lately and I've noticed a pattern of kind of the phases that they go through. And I can tell that they're moving from one phase to another when certain things start to happen and certain light bulb moments start to go off. And their behavior changes and they start showing up differently and they start getting different results.

So in today's episode I'd like to go through those five phases. And as you listen I want you to just take in where you might be in these phases. And you might be between one and two or you might be between two and three. So they're not set in stone that you are in one. Maybe you have some inkling to the next one but you're not quite there yet. And so I'm just going to give you some concrete signs and kind of give you some examples of where you might be.

So the five phases, the first one is self-doubt, second one, curiosity, third one, possibility, fourth one, confidence and the fifth one, you're a natural boss.

Alright, so when most people come to me they're in self-doubt, in big self-doubt. So this is one that most people have been practicing for a while.

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Now, you'll see if this is you when I start to describe what it's like to be in this phase of self-doubt.

So if you're in self-doubt you are kind of hazy and unsure about your own ability to add value or the value that you have added or can add. So despite having added tremendous value in the past, maybe you're adding tremendous value right now in your current role. You're not clear on how to talk about it because you don't know the extent of the impact of what you're doing. You might not even know that it's having an impact, or you have added value in the past.

You know how you fit into the world but you're unsure of how you could ever convince somebody to hire you for the role you want and the salary you want because this seems to be very far away. And so here's how you'll know if you're in the self-doubt phase. You are probably feeling stuck, knowing you want to move but don't know how. You dread interviews. You don't think that you're any good at interviewing. You aren't feeling like you're consistently moving forward or making progress to your next career goal.

You think you might need something more than you already have. You might need a certification or something else outside of you. You might need more years experience and you think something's missing and until you can have that you aren't going to be able to get what you want. And in some cases that's true, but most of the cases with my clients it's not true.

You're very shaken by other people's opinions, so you take rejection very, very hard. If somebody says something negative about your résumé, or makes a comment to you about your experience or your abilities, you take it very hard and you take it to heart. And it upsets you often for a couple of days or even a few hours. Your belief is shaky and wobbly that you can

achieve what you want; get into that role that you want. You're maybe not even clear about the exact role that you want.

You have a hard time coming up with positive thoughts about yourself. So if I were to say, "Tell me 10 things that you love about yourself, 10 things that you do really well," you'd find it hard to come up with three. You're in a rush to get out of where you are. You're scared that you won't really be able to but you know you really want to. You live mostly in the land of I'm not good enough, not feeling good enough.

You often have compare and despair thoughts of other people being better than you. And if you see somebody succeeding you think, yeah, I could never do that, I'm not even close to that, she has, he has all this that I don't have. So you often have these compare and despair thoughts. Your brain is very used to finding evidence that you're not good enough and you're very good at supporting this being true. So if somebody tells you something or you don't get called for the job, or you don't get approved for the raise, you think, yeah, I know it, it's because I'm not good enough and your brain confirms it.

You're going through the motions, so you're still doing things. Maybe you're applying for jobs here and there, or you've asked for a raise a few times, it hasn't happened. So you're still going through the motions thinking, yeah, it'll happen eventually kind of in the back of your mind. But you feel defeated even before you really have the opportunity or before you keep going at it. You feel kind of defeated but you're like, yeah, I still think there is some possibility, because your behavior indicates that you're still going through the motions.

You shut yourself down ahead of time but you still have a glimmer of belief that you can do it, so you keep applying and you keep trying. You don't know what you're doing wrong and you have a lot of negative self-talk. So

there's a lot of shoulds in your language like I should have probably done this. I should have done this. I should be better at this. I should be farther along by now.

And if you look at job descriptions, if you're perusing job sites and you see a job description your first inclination is to use it against yourself. So you'll see it and you'll be like, but I don't have five years experience. Or I don't have these skills that they need. I don't have this. I don't have that. So you're automatically looking at what you don't have and why it's not a possibility for you, so you might not even apply.

So next indicator is even if somebody tells you that you're doing a great job at work for example, or they give you praise. Maybe they might say, "You did a really good job on that presentation, it was really well done, thanks."

You might downplay it or be tempted to downplay it and be like, yeah, but it wasn't really that good. I should have done this. I should have done that, they're just being nice. Instead of owning anything positive that you can see that you did, you tend to kind of downplay what you did. And be like anybody would have done it the same, I didn't do anything special. It's not really that big of a deal. It wasn't even that good. I should have done this or that.

So this is kind of the way that you will be talking to yourself if you're in self-doubt. And so I have another podcast episode called Confirmation Bias, you can check that one out. We can link that up. Because people get pretty deep into a hole of self-doubt and they practice it for a long time. And then your brain gets really, really good at building evidence that you're not good enough and you're not able to do it. And then you block yourself from succeeding.

So the key here is to really notice if you are in this self-doubt, if you have these tendencies, if you have this habit of thinking of yourself like this before you can move to the next phase. Because if you really did believe these things then you wouldn't even be listening to this podcast, you wouldn't even have tried. You wouldn't even be continuing to try if you really believed you were not able to and it was never going to happen.

So that's a thought we often have is it's just never going to happen. But we don't really believe it's never going to happen, do we? Otherwise we wouldn't still grasp at the little straws of possibility like maybe I'll just apply just to see what happens. Or let's listen to this podcast; see if it can help me. We wouldn't even do that if we really believed it wasn't going to happen.

So I have a client who put it very well, I just started working with her, she said, "Yeah, I guess if I really didn't think I had a chance then I would just go work at Starbucks because what would really be the point?" And nothing wrong with working at Starbucks, I worked there too and I loved it. But you have a career goal. You want to go for it. You have some indication of belief that it's going to be possible, it's very small. It might be a little tiny flame trying to get the fire started, but it's there. It's just hidden by all these self-doubtful thoughts.

So there's really no advantage to being in that place of self-doubt, but we end up there a lot and then we practice, and reinforce, and basically get really, really good at doubting ourselves. And if you continue to doubt yourself then you continue to create the pattern of you showing up as not good enough. And you don't give yourself really the chance to continue to give your all in the opportunities that you do get.

And so as we move through the phases on this episode you're going to see kind of how that needs to shift. But the first thing is to notice that you are in

self-doubt, you spend time thinking in this way and that is going to stay like that until you have the awareness of that.

So if you're in self-doubt you probably generally don't have a super high opinion of yourself or your work capabilities, or your mental capabilities. You probably just think you are average, not that big of a deal, not that great. And you probably think that's a good thing to think that way about yourself because you're like, well, I don't want to be arrogant. I don't want to be too confident because people will judge me. I don't want to be too big. So there's that too.

And if you have these self-doubting thoughts and you've had them for a while you don't have to worry about being arrogant because it's the opposite. It's the opposite problem basically. And arrogant is simply thinking you're better than everyone else.

And if you are having these self-doubtful thoughts right now, being better than anyone else is not your concern, your concern is feeling worthy and owning your own value. And once you get to that then that's where you want to stay, is just a self-confident person who knows what they can do, knows how they add value, knows how to talk about their value, gets right down to business when they're talking in an interview about what the job entails and what they need, but isn't specifically putting other people down in the process.

So it's just not something that you have to worry about if you have a lot of self-doubtful thoughts. So that is phase one, self-doubt.

Phase two, curiosity. So as I mentioned to get to phase two, curiosity, you first have to have that awareness that self-doubtful place is never going to serve you. And so you have a curiosity, and a desire, and a strong willingness to take some steps to move out of it. You realize, okay, there's

no upside to doubting myself every day and talking to myself like this every day. It's not getting me anywhere. And you first have to have that before you can move into curiosity.

And so what curiosity is, is you start to get really curious about your own thoughts that keep you in this unworthy place. And then you get curious about how you can get out of this unworthy place or at least not live there anymore, and maybe you visit occasionally for a little bit, but you don't want to live there anymore. So you're like, okay, I'm going to find out everything I can about this. What is it that I'm curious about that I can actually do?

So you want to start with what you do have. Why have you gotten to where you've gotten so far in your career? What have you accomplished? What has worked for you so far? What are the moments and the stories in your career and in your life that you are proud of? Now, if you're not used to thinking about these things because you've been in self-doubt for a long time and you've lived there, it might be harder for you to come up with these things. But most of the time, people can come up with something right away or it might take them a little bit to think about it.

But I promise you that you have things that have happened in your life that you have done, that you contributed to that are you are proud of. It's just a matter of bringing them up more often. So then you get curious about the impact that you could have had, the impact that you could have had in your workplace so far, that you've had in the past. Ideas you've had and how they've had an impact. What would have happened differently if you were not there to have that or to take that initiative?

What do you think would have happened if you were not there, if you're thinking about a particular project, or idea, or something that you worked on? Then you want to dive deep into all the things that you can do and are doing and have done. And you want to get curious about the times when

you didn't know something at all. You were assigned a task and then you figured it out. So this is where you kind of dig in and explore, and mine your brain for all the things that have worked and that you have done.

So I have a good example from one of my clients. We were talking about this and she said one of the things that she didn't know how to do at all in one of her previous jobs was make cold calls. She had to pick up the phone and make these cold calls. And it was very uncomfortable. She didn't know how to do it, she didn't want to, but she did. She figured it out and she became really good at doing these calls.

And she even had a different co-worker who said, "You know what, I can't do this." She ended up taking a step back, going into a different position that paid less money so that she could avoid making the cold calls. So that's just an example of a story, but you have a story where you figured something out that you didn't know before. How did you figure it out? What was your thought process? You want to get really curious.

You want to be curious about the times when you've passed through discomfort to get to the other side of something that you didn't want to do. In my client's case, making the cold calls. So we dug into her thought process about that and what made her able to be successful at that, even though in the beginning she had no idea. She had never done it before, it was uncomfortable, it was strange and foreign to her, and then she became the master at it. So we want to explore the thought process.

You're getting more curious about how to articulate the value like how could that be really valuable? And how could I show someone else the value of that or explain it in a way that's valuable? And you're looking for examples, and answers, and stories to tell, and you're just kind of getting curious, how this could work. How could this be possible for me that I could

achieve the role that I want? How could this be possible? How could I do this?

And you're genuinely starting to get curious about the opportunities that exist out there and how you might be able to contribute with what you do have to offer. And so you start to get curious about networking and how it works, how it's worked for other people. How it could work for you.

I have a podcast episode on niche networking which you can also check out and it gives you some examples of some stories of how it works. But you start to get curious. You're curious about what it really takes to nail an interview and master the interview process. You get curious about learning the skill of interviewing. And then failures start to affect you less and less because you're getting into a curious mode.

So instead of, if you get rejected, or if you get told that you didn't get the job instead of being like, there's something wrong with me. I should have done better. I told you I'm not good enough. Instead of that, which is where you would be in the self-doubtful phase, you're more curious. You're like, okay, so I wonder why, let's do an evaluation, let's see what I could have done better. What can I learn from this interview experience? Did any questions throw me off? What happened there?

And you then take it from a curiosity perspective but you don't go to the self-doubtful place, which is where you are used to going. You start thinking of your own questions to ask in the interviews because you're actually curious about what they need and how you can match up to what they need so you can help. You're curious about whether you're a good fit, and if what you can do and what they need are aligned.

Instead of worrying about being accepted, rejected, you're curious about whether or not you could potentially deliver the results that they want and

whether or not you can add value, and how you could add value. Curiosity starts to drive action. You decide to get some answers and you decide that you don't want to stop until you find the answers. Then the action that you take from curiosity creates the next phase, which is possibility.

Alright, phase three, possibility. So when you're in phase three, possibility, you start to see – you really start to solidify what it looks like for you to be considered, seriously considered for the high level roles that you want. And you can see yourself interviewing for them because you've got a bit more of a foundation on what you can do, and how you want to be adding value in the best way.

You start to come up with some thoughts about yourself that sound like this. Wow, okay, I've done some pretty cool shit. Or, yeah, I guess I can see how I really did make an impact with that project. Or, yeah, I guess I am the kind of person who went above and beyond.

When I coach my clients, the possibility comes forward when they start to say things like, "I guess. I guess, yeah. I guess, yeah." Or, "That's a good point. I suppose I do have enough knowledge and experience to do that. I suppose I can figure that out." It's almost like I have to sell them on this possibility before they start to sell themselves on it, then they start to see it.

But the gift of this is that when you discover the facts have not changed at all, you're still the same person who did the same things. After some coaching you realized that the things you did actually made a difference. And the results that you created happened because of you then you start to see how much possibility there really is for you to do more of that, and increase in levels of your ability and capability. You start to get better at identifying your own accomplishments and your own thought process that got you to where you are now.

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And you can start to vocalize it in a way that you feel good about, so not a braggy way, just a way that you feel proud and confident to share. You can believe it's possible that you could be the right candidate for one of these roles. You start to kind of fill in the blanks for your value.

So before when I would ask, "Okay, what value do you offer?" It would be very difficult for someone in the very self-doubtful phase to answer, and if they did answer it would be kind of a self-deprecating like, "Oh well, I kind of did this and I kind of did that, but it wasn't that great." Exaggerated, but oftentimes when my clients start out they're very self-doubtful. And it's very apparent in how they talk about themselves. And that's why they're not showing up in the interview as accurately as they could be.

So they're able to start seeing the possibility of adding very specific value and being the right fit for that specific organization in the role. You can start to believe it's possible for you to make more money. You can start to believe, okay, six figures is a possibility for me. You can start to believe in you being able to contribute a 100,000 worth of value and you can talk freely about it. You start to see how this could be possible.

In this phase this is where my clients run into I don't want to be arrogant, so that happens here as well. But I can tell you again that you don't have to worry about being arrogant. You first have to get to self-confidence. And if you haven't gotten to full self-confidence yet you don't have to worry about coming off as being better than other people. And if you don't inherently believe that you're better than other people then you wouldn't have to worry about being arrogant.

Being confident is just liking yourself, liking others and knowing that you can collaborate well with others, who have different strengths than you, but that you can achieve great results together, and trusting yourself to always figure things out. I mean you always have before.

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You build what you can do and this is how the next level works with sentences like it's possible I'm the right fit for this role. It's possible I'm the right candidate. It's possible I can deliver the exact value that they want in this role. It's possible my personality is the exact right match for this organization. It's possible I could be paid six figures. It's possible I have everything I need right now to move forward. It's possible I can have the trust in myself to figure this out, and it's possible that I will. So that's kind of where we are in possibility.

And then once we get there then we can move to phase four, confidence. So when you're in the confident phase your thoughts are more like I know I can help. I'm confident of the value that I offer. And you know that you've done some work so you've either done some coaching or you've gotten some coaching on how to express and realize your real tangible and intangible value. And then you can share your value because you believe in it yourself.

You start thinking I have value to offer. Something as simple as that, I have value to offer. It's just a fact of life and what you know to be true, it's not even in question. You know that no matter who sees your value or doesn't see it, that it's still there. You know that nothing you have done or can do has changed because someone else says something to you.

So as I mentioned in the previous one, in one of the previous phases, I think it was self-doubt where you're very shaken if somebody says something to you negative. If somebody makes a negative comment you are very affected by it. When you're in the confidence phase you're not affected by it at all. So if somebody told me, "Natalie you suck at interviewing." I would be like, "Okay." I mean it would not faze me one bit.

So when you're in the confident phase you know your value, you're aware of it. You've done work to identify it. You know you're getting an idea how

to talk about it. And you are not shaken by if a recruiter says something to you, which a lot of the times they can. Recruiters can be mean sometimes. So if you're in the confident phase that's not going to bother you. So you know your value's not in question, so now you can master how to showcase it and communicate it.

You are now thinking of ways you can show your value in a creative and unique way. So instead of just walking in there and assuming they know because you know, being like, "Yeah, I can do that. Yeah, I can do that." I mean you want to have that confidence for yourself, but now you're putting in your focus on how to show them and how to communicate to them in the way that accurately showcases your value.

So you're spending time thinking about the problems that the organization wants to solve by hiring for this role. And you're living into that role, whether it be at the organization you're interviewing or another one. You're living into it ahead of time by having a grasp of the problems they want to solve, why they want to hire for that role, and how you're going to talk about it in a way that is irresistible to them. You understand that it's inevitable that someone is going to see your value and take you up on it.

You have no qualms about walking away from a job that is not going to pay you very well, because you know the value that you offer is intact. And it's just a matter of finding the right match. You know that you're sufficient in yourself and your capabilities and you can interview without being attached to the outcome. You focus on asking them really good questions to determine how you can communicate your value in the interview, so that you can understand exactly what they need and exactly what you would bring to the table.

You focus on enquiring what the real problems are in great detail so that you can present how you help. You want to be creating results and your

questions and how you show up demonstrates that to them. You confidently share your stories, even about the times you've made mistakes and failed because you know that your ability to bring value doesn't change because you made a mistake or messed up. You're a human and you can talk about it in even a proud way. It's possible to be very proud of the times you failed because of how you handled the failure.

You're now focusing on up-leveling and selling yourself, so now you can actually focus on this instead of worrying about not being good enough. So you're focusing on showing them instead of just telling them. You're focusing on demonstrating and showcasing in different ways. Trying and failing, maybe sometimes you do get rejected, but you're looking at it like a scientist. You're like, okay, so this is what I did. Next time what do I want to do to showcase this value more specifically? Maybe I need to figure out what the problem is a little bit more.

You're looking at it very specifically. So there's no questions about your value now. Now it's just how are you going to showcase it better and better each time. So it's like you know what you're doing, you're confident of that. It's just a matter of showing them, communicating it to them in a way that they understand.

Something that I did very fast, I think, and it came very natural to me was able to tell them about all the things I had done. And I had no qualms about just bragging. I guess to me it felt like bragging but I didn't mind. It was like, yeah, I planned an entire company event for 70 people while we were moving offices at the same time. And I mean I feel pretty proud of that and I don't have any qualms about talking about it. But that kind of came naturally to me I think because I did have a lot of praise. So a lot of people told me that and a lot of people said how good of a job I had done.

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And I mean I didn't do it all myself, I delegated, I had a team. But ultimately I organized it all to make it happen. So when you're in the self-doubt phase you might have done amazing things even better than that. But you're like, "But it wasn't me, I didn't really do anything." You've got to own your part of it. And so in order to get to the confidence phase you do have to be real with what you did, which is why a key question is what would have happened if you were not there? Probably things would have gone a bit differently.

So when you're out of the confidence phase you have no qualms about how you're going to produce value for them. It's just about whether or not you're the right match to their particular organization or for this particular opportunity, and whether you're the best fit for this particular team for example. You know that if it's not this opportunity it'll just be the next one. And if it's not that one then it'll just be the next one.

You're not worried about it not happening because you already know your own value. It's just a matter of working through the process of understanding how to present your value, sell yourself and find the right match. So that's what confidence looks like.

And then the fifth stage is where you are just a natural boss. And this is where you're at a 100% job security because you provide the job security for yourself by going through these phases and understanding your own value. So you no longer have fear of interviewing, you look forward to it. You feel confident in your bones and you honestly know that if they don't hire you, you're legitimately confused about it, why wouldn't they? You can't wait to tell them your stories, even the ones where you made a mistake or failed. You treat it like a conversation.

You feel like you're on an equal playing field. You know that they need you as much or more than you need them, or as much or more than you just

need a job. Because you're looking for the right opportunity, not just anyone, so you know that they need you. You're not interested if it's not the right fit, you already know ahead of time what you're looking for in a position. You automatically in your head are thinking things like do I like them? What do I think of how they're doing this? Do I like the environment? Do I like these people? What's my feeling about this?

Of course, taking into consideration everything that we've talked about so far about showing your value and interviewing effectively, but you're also taking care of yourself and asking, what do I want? Versus in the self-doubtful phase you're just like I really hope they like me. You're not concerned with that they think of you because you're there to figure out if you're the right fit. If they like you, great, if they don't like you, also great, you're not worried either way. You're just there to figure that out.

You know your value inside and out, you know your potential and your capability, which means that you know your particular strengths and aren't afraid to be transparent if something isn't your strong suit that they ask you about.

So just a side note example, if you're interviewing for a marketing position, say you're interviewing for a marketing manager and they say to you, "We were hoping that you would write some of our blog content. How would you like to do that?" Say your strength isn't writing and you know that that wouldn't be the best use of your time as the manager. So instead of saying, "Yeah, of course I would love to." That's what a self-doubtful candidate would do because they're like, well, I know I don't like writing that much but I'd better say I'll do it otherwise they might not like me.

A natural boss candidate would say, "Honestly that's not my strong suit, but I would be happy to outsource that and get that taken care of. I know how we can do that so we'll get great content up on the blog. I don't think it's in

my best use of time to write the content myself." So a little bit of a risk but that's your truth and they're going to appreciate that. And that's going to mean that you're going to end up in a position that's the right fit for you versus a position where you're doing things that you don't feel are the best use of your time and you don't enjoy, so just a side note example.

You use being a human as a strength when they do ask you about a mistake or a failure, the story that you tell, you emphasize the learning. And maybe you can even laugh about it when it's appropriate. You're in a space of complete sufficiency as if you had multiple job offers on the table because you know that inevitably you're going to be able to get someone to hire you for a great role. It's just a matter of connecting with the right people and conducting the interviews.

You feel equal to the employer as if you are the one there to help them. You see interviewing as you making them an offer. And when you think of it that way you are more masterful at asking questions and figuring out exactly what they need so that you can present your past, present and future story in a way that matches up with what they need.

You feel solidly grounded in your own value regardless of your experience and qualifications, if you're there for an interview you know it's for a reason. You are confident that you can get someone to hire you, it's just a matter of finding the person and the organization who needs what you have to offer and who is willing to pay you what you're asking.

If you lost your job tomorrow you'd be like, no problem, what's next? You'd have no doubts that you're going to be able to find an even better position at a higher salary. And this has now happened to two of my clients in the pandemic where they were laid off. And with the right coaching and the right thinking, and going through these phases they were able to land even better positions.

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When you get an offer you're not surprised. You're weighing the quality of the offer and seeing if it's really the best offer for you at this point in your career. You don't feel like you need to be validated by someone else. And you know that it's a 100% done.

And so a fun thing to share, my mentor, one of my mentors, her name is Simone Soul and she helps coaches. She shared this analogy with me. She attributes it to signing up new clients. But I'm going to attribute it to interviewing. It's like this, it's like dating. Interviewing is exactly like dating. Unlike how it looks, most of the work that contributes to success is internal, figuring out who are you. No, really, who are you? What do you want?

Are you solid on that? If one hasn't done the work to get solid on that one will struggle with both love and career. Then you just show up and be as authentically and powerfully you as you can be. You're not pitching, or manipulating, or convincing, or supplicating. You are looking for the people who already want you, so efficient. And when they see you there is that recognition, where have you been? You're the one I have been waiting for.

How can you take steps today to show up more authentically with the value that you already have to find your ideal opportunity? So beautifully put. So that's the work that I do with my clients is helping them identify exactly where their value is, talking about it in a way that feels effortlessly possible to move through these phases.

So that's what I have for you today my friends. Thank you so much for listening and I will talk to you next time. Bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of Get a 6-Figure Job You Love podcast. If you're ready to dive deeper into your career mindset and start creating bigger, more impactful results in your career join me at www.nataliefisher.ca/getstarted. I'll see you over there.