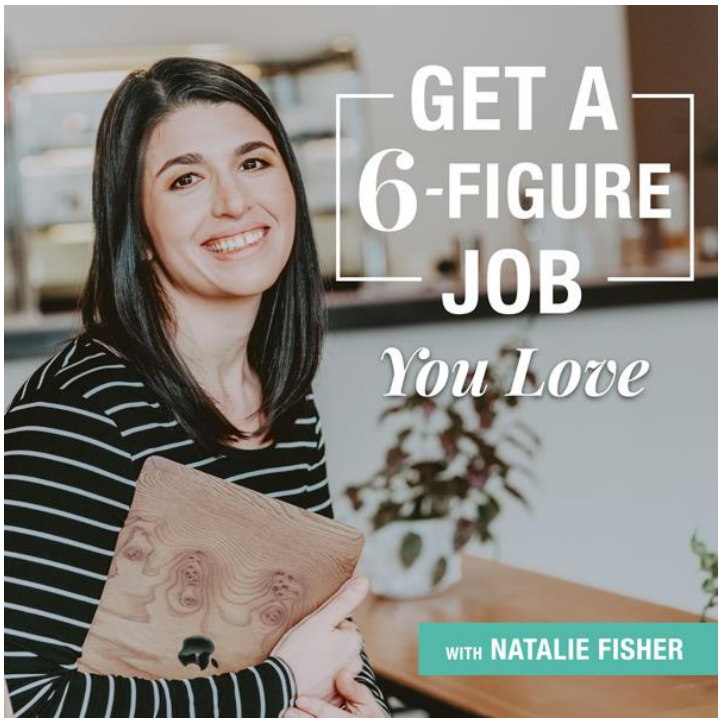
Ep #19: Showing Up Authentically:
A Client Success Interview with Danneta



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Fisher

Get a 6-Figure Job You Love with Natalie Fisher

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Welcome to this week's podcast. This is episode 19: Client Success Interview with Danneta.

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.

Hello, hello. And today I have a special treat for you. And this episode, we've been having so much fun over here at Natalie headquarters recording so many success interviews from all my clients. And it's just been an explosion of client after client just emailing being like, "I got the job. I have two offers. I've got the job." It's so exciting over here.

So today I'm bringing to you Danneta who has a lot to say about her before and after. She's one of my star clients. I say that about all of them and they're all pretty fantastic. But Danneta stands out in a very specific way because of her ability to be coached and her ability to take that coaching and apply it very, very quickly. And that's one of the things that sets apart my students who make the fastest progress is they're very, very willing to come and do the work and show up for it.

And listen to the end of this podcast episode because Danneta shares a quote that I think sums up why she was so successful. And why she's going to continue to be so successful with going from something that seemed really hard and impossible to then finally achieving it and being

able to be here and share and talk about it. And I'm so excited. We're having so much fun.

And if you want to be on my podcast then go on over to the Get Started page and sign up for the training. And if we end up working together there is a pretty good chance you're going to end up on this podcast if you want to. And I'm super looking forward to having all your successes accumulating and just sharing.

And I thank you all, especially Danneta for sharing all her wisdom and all her journey. Because I know it's so valuable to those of you who are in a position right now where you feel like it might be really hard, or you feel like it might be hopeless, or you feel like you've failed so many times. And so because of that, that's why I love sharing these stories because inspiration through other people who are showing you what is possible is going to reframe the way that you think about where you are right now.

So pay attention to Danneta, what she says, how she's explaining her mindset shifts and grab onto any pearls of wisdom that she shares. And listen to the end because that quote is really, really powerful. Alright, without further ado here is the interview with Danneta. Awesome. Bye.

Natalie: Hello, hello. So I am here today with my wonderful client, Danneta. And Danneta has achieved something really impressive, not just in terms of the results that we're going to talk about. But also just of her whole experience as far as changing her mindset and becoming kind of a more confident person around interviewing, and just experienced a lot of growth in a really short amount of time. So, Danneta, why don't you start by

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introducing yourself and telling us a little bit about what you do, why you love it and why you do what you do.

Danneta: Hi everyone. My name is Danneta and I am or I was an aspiring school principal but now I just got the good news that I have been offered an assistant principal job. And I'm here in Philadelphia and I'm just super excited because this has been a long time coming for me. I've been in education now for 25 years. I've had my administrator's certificate since 2008, so I've had it for a long time, been wanting to be a school principal for a very long time.

However, the interviewing process just totally scared the you know what out of me. And the fact that I was just always just so nervous about that process held me back all of those years, works out about 12 years that I've had my cert. I've always had the skill set, being a strong instructional leader, being a strong educator, knowing what it takes to be a great teacher, wanted to grow myself into leading others on a larger scale, so just a principal, the principal's role.

But let me tell you something, I was so horrible at interviewing. So this is where we are today. Now I can absolutely say thanks to Natalie, my coach, that I've actually sealed the deal. And I will be starting in my new role November 16th at a dream school here in the city of Philadelphia. If you know anything about Philadelphia, it's a large urban city and a large school district with a lot of, lot of schools.

Not too many Blue Ribbon Schools, which are your top tier schools, I've actually not only gotten a job, but I've actually sealed a deal and impressed the team at my new school which is a Blue Ribbon School, which is a top tier school. So I'm super excited about it.

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Natalie: Amazing. And thank you so much for saying that because I know that so many people listening can relate to that, knowing that you have the skills, and the capability, and the passion, and are completely capable of doing an amazing job. But just getting past that interviewing process can be so daunting and so frustrating, because you know. It's like if we could just skip the interview part it would be fine, right?

Danneta: Right. Natalie, listen, I prayed so many nights to say, I just want to be lucky, I just want to be that person where someone just discovers me and I can just skip all the way over the whole interview. And I just want them to be able to just see me being great at what I do day-to-day. And then they just say, "You know what? I want her." And I would have to skip the whole interview.

Natalie: Totally. And when I first met you, when we first started working together the way that you spoke about what you did, how knowledgeable you were, how you had already achieved so much in your current role. Even without having the authority you'd already made such strides in the school. I was like, "You were made for this. And the only thing getting in your way is your mindset around the interviewing process."

And I think that also something that happened to you, and this is something that happens to a lot of my clients too, they have a previous experience that really affected their confidence. So they have a bad interview experience, or maybe they have more than one and it really affects their confidence.

Danneta: Yes. And you know that's how I ended up going to your doorstep.

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Natalie: Yeah. So do you want to talk a little bit about that and how you shifted from having that bad experience to then moving forward into changing your mindset around interviewing?

Danneta: Sure. So how I landed on Natalie's doorstep is I had – the way the process goes in Philadelphia when you want to become a principal or an assistant principal. You have to get yourself into this talent pool first to even – before you even consider interviewing with the school. So I had to get myself on this list, this infamous list. So year after year, year after year I interviewed to try to get on this pool, try to get on this talent pool, and never ever, ever, ever made it.

So this last try which was back in March before we went on this lockdown or on virtual learning and teaching, I had an interview to get onto the pool. So I had this grueling experience where we had to – there's two parts. We had to do let's just say a face-to-face interview, like a conversation just with some principals. And then there is a part where you have to do some pre-work and present a case study that I had to work on. And then present to another group of principals.

Well, part two, I had these two principals where I had to present my case study and just going into it, I looked at them, they looked at me. They had on these serious faces and I'm like, oh boy, two men, oh, oh, shutting down. And the way that they looked, they were all serious. So I didn't – just from past experiences I did not have a PowerPoint presented – I mean ready to present because I didn't have a great experience when I did a PowerPoint before for this part.

Natalie: So even at that point you didn't feel prepared. What were your thoughts? Do you remember your thoughts when you walked into that scenario?

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Danneta: I felt like I was prepared. I came with a plan but it was just a paper plan. So I said, “Okay, let me not do the computer, let me just do the paper plan”, which is pretty much the same, but it’s just presenting it in a different way. So when I told them that, “Oh no, I don’t need to set up any PowerPoint, any computer or any technology.” I had my plan right here, so I handed it to them. And they looked down at it on there, it was just their whole demeanor, the energy in the room just really went right downhill.

So from there they said – so as I started to go through my plan they were so disengaged, you had one on his phone, one looking down tapping his finger, not even paying attention to me during this interview process. And I totally just was just trying to just get through it at that point. In my head they got to me and I was just wanting to get it over. And I said what I had to say and I was just like, “Okay, I’m finished.” And then they asked some questions. And at the end when I was finished they started questioning me and I was just not even into it at that point.

I was just literally answering the questions to just be done and out of there. So when I wrapped up and finished with the interview, I packed my things up all in a huff and a hizzy and was just like I just can’t believe I just had this experience. How rude these guys are. So I packed up my stuff, left the room, went to – there was a restroom across the hall from the interview room. And I went in and I had to just compose myself because I was pretty much almost in tears. And I’m in there getting myself together. I came out and there was one of the guys in the hallway waiting for me.

And he said, “Can we see you? We need to talk to you again.” So I was like oh gosh, Lord, they’re really going to tell me the nerve of me to want to be a principal.

Natalie: What do they want now? Yeah.

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Danneta: Yeah, what do they want with me now? So they called me in and they laid it out. They said, “Listen, you’ve obviously got what it takes. Seriously, this is your passion, this is what you want to do and this is how you show up.” And I was just like, “Okay, seriously, let me tell you guys the truth. This is what I really felt, your energy. Your energy deflated me.”

So one goes, “Seriously, you want your dream so bad to happen that you’re going to put it in the hands of someone else. We’re going to give you a few more minutes and you need to show up, and show up and show us what you’ve really got. Because if you really wanted this position you wouldn’t care how we showed up because it’s your passion and you don’t let anybody take your passion and your dream away from you. So we need for you – we’ve got some more questions for you.”

And I was like, “Seriously I’m ready because I know this stuff like the back of my hands. But it was you so come on let’s go, let’s do it.”

Natalie: I find that so fascinating, yeah, so fascinating the experience that you had because, well, first of all without that experience you wouldn’t have come to me. But on so many levels, first of all they were disengaged. And I remember we coached on this and we were like, “What if it was a test? What if they were literally testing you.” But I’ve got a lot of clients and I know that you’re not alone on this where the interviewer or the HR person or whoever it is, is not responsive. Maybe they are on their phone, maybe they’re looking around at another thing. Maybe they appeared distracted.

And then it’s up to you as a candidate how you show up. But if you haven’t been in an experience like that before then it’s only natural that you would get completely thrown off. And then what’s even more fascinating is that they would come back and then say, “What’s wrong with you? Why did you do that?” When really they were the ones who made the decision to

disengage and make you feel like you weren't being paid attention to. So it's super fascinating. And a lot was learned from that experience, wasn't it?

Danneta: Yeah. When I was like, "There's no way, this is it. I can't believe this has happened to me, why me?" And that's just the day, the next day didn't I call you? I found you on the internet and looked up you and looked up your stuff. And I called you and I gave you their story and I was like, "This is it. I want to be a principal and come on, I need coaching."

Natalie: That was the pivotal moment where you were like, "I am going to sort this out."

Danneta: Yes.

Natalie: Yeah. So I mean your experience was quite extreme and it was very emotionally heavy. But I know that a lot of people have had very similar experiences. So thank you so much for sharing that because I know that it will resonate with a lot of people, and especially when something like that happens it can be very, very difficult to recover from. Because you can start to think that if there is something wrong with you, or that you didn't something right. And it has nothing to do with your skills because your value and your ability to do the job were always the same.

It was just that – what we make those circumstances and what we make those events mean, it can then interfere with how you proceed in your career and what you're able to achieve.

Danneta: Exactly. And it makes you feel like am I not worthy of this? And this is not my, you know, I just felt so devalued. And I was just like, "You know what, this is just not meant to be." Even though I know I can do the job, obviously the universe is trying to tell me something different.

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Natalie: Yeah. And that's the pivotal moment where instead of believing that you were like, no, I'm going to figure this out no matter what. And then you took a different step and which is now fast forward to today you're in your assistant principal role from that time. But yeah, it's a very critical moment where something like that happens, either it's an interview experience like that or maybe somebody, like some of my clients have been laid off in the past.

Or any sort of experience that makes you feel so devalued that you can then choose to say, "It must not be meant to be. I'm not worthy. I can't do it." Versus, I'm going to figure this out, which is what you did, which is what now fast forward to today shows how you were able to reap the benefits of that. Because you were not willing to sit down and just be like okay, that's it, that must be it then, because there was something inside of you that was like, no, I was meant for this.

And I felt that right away when I met you. I was like, "You are meant to do this job. There is no way you're not doing this job in your life because this is what you were obviously born to do." So how do you think your thoughts changed about yourself? So you have this experience and then you had a few other experiences that were kind of, you know, that went better. And you started to kind of gain some confidence and feel a bit better, feel a bit differently about yourself and be more grounded in your own value and self-worth.

How do you think your mindset shifted from that experience to when you interviewed again after that and were able to show up a lot more confidently?

Danneta: So again, your coaching, and I'm not only just saying that because you're interviewing me. But one of the things I would spend so

much time on is the skill, the content, the areas, just the skill. Things that I already knew I could do with my eyes closed, at that point I would say, “Okay, let me read more articles on how to do something strange as I’m reading and ELA.” One of the pieces that I missed and I totally neglected was the other, so how I show up. So I was just like, “Why am I missing this piece?” I know these things because I’d coached teachers.

And I know it’s all about mindset, and how you show up. You can be very skilled but if you don’t show up a certain way especially when it comes to leading schools. It’s all about having charisma and passion. And I had all these things and I just wasn’t showing up as myself because the fear would just take over, and that’s what would have happened.

Natalie: Yeah. So you think that was the fearful thoughts of like I’m not worthy or what if they’re thinking this? Or what were some of those fearful thoughts that took over?

Danneta: Well, a lot to do with speaking. And am I saying this sentence correct? Or am I saying the right thing when it comes to, you know, you get an interview for a teacher or any education job is usually based on storytelling. So it was just like am I telling enough of the story? But I didn’t really know how to tell my stories with impact to show some type of…

Natalie: That really showed the impact of what you were doing.

Danneta: The impact of it all. I had so many great stories. And also what they want to know is how do you learn? What did you learn from these stories? And what was the outcome of these stories whether they be positive or negative? There is a lesson in every story. So I guess I wasn’t really showing up in that way, because I was just trying to be too perfect. I

wanted to have all the answers. So I just over-thought, trying to just show up just as this perfect being.

So instead of just leading with my natural personality, I was literally in my head the whole time worrying about what they thought of what I said. Was my story the right story? Did I give the right word to describe it. And so I was totally in my head.

Natalie: Yeah. So just a lot of second guessing, am I doing it right? Am I saying what they want? Am I saying the exact right perfect thing? When really all that you had to do was show up as you had been at your job and talking about the things that you'd done and sharing facts about things that you've done. Because you have all the credentials, all the experience, you had everything that was required, it was just about bridging that gap between knowing that in your heart and then just being able to freely talk about it without worrying about judgment from other people.

Danneta: Right. And the passion, my passion wasn't showing through because you had to have a love and passion for children. And I wasn't showing up that way because I was just so in my head about – if someone on the panel would be interviewing me and they made a certain face. That was it, that was the end of me.

Natalie: Yeah. That's very, very not unusual for that to happen, especially when we're not aware of it. So in that moment we think oh my God, they don't like me. This isn't going to work. And then the rest of the interview can be sabotaged just by one look that someone makes or one comment someone makes, that we can take the wrong way or something. So you're easily thrown off when you're not grounded in your own confidence and your own ability. Yeah, awesome, okay.

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So let's fast forward to today and what has shifted now as far as your interviewing mindset goes and how you think about interviewing now?

Danneta: So I've been interviewing a lot and what I notice, I had the most successful feeling when I was finished with the interview, when I just showed up as myself. And when I just started showing up as myself and just having a conversation. I mentally started to prepare myself before the interview. I said, "I'm not going to call this an interview, this is a meeting." This is something that I do every day all day. I have conversations with a bunch of stakeholders all day every day in my role. So this is no different. You're just having a conversation.

Natalie: Yeah, so just rephrasing what the interview means, it's a conversation, whether or not you're the right fit.

Danneta: Yeah, a conversation, and about yourself, and the job. And you're telling stories about yourself. Who tells you stories better than you? Nobody. So once I'd started to just start blowing and just thinking that way, this is just a conversation. I love having conversations especially about myself. So my school, and my kids, and my teachers, and my experience, so this is what it became. And guess what, Natalie, the shift happened. I started to have fun.

Natalie: I love that so much.

Danneta: Can you believe me?

Natalie: That was the biggest win even. If you can have fun in an interview then you have made it for the rest of your career because you are no longer afraid. You're now looking forward to it.

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Danneta: My goodness, I said me, it became just like I was looking forward. I'm showing up early and I'm just ready to logon. And literally I was just so excited to hear, to get the questions, come on. I wanted to just start showing off. And I made them laugh. They would crack up at me. And this is me, this is me naturally telling my little jokes. I said to one of them, the question was, "Tell me about yourself." And I was just like, okay, I knew my audience. I had two parents on this team – selection team. And I said, "You know what?" I had to include that I'm a mother of a 25 year old.

And I'd be one to joke, "Don't let the skin fool you. Yes, I do have a 25 year old." You know what I mean? And that's how I would be at work, talking to my people, my parents. And they cracked up when I said, they was probably like, "No, she didn't just say this to an interviewer." Yes, I did.

Natalie: And that's what so many people are afraid to do because they think that it's supposed to be this polished, buttoned up scenario where you have to appear perfect. But really they want you to be you because that's who they're going to be working with, so we want to listen to you.

Danneta: Especially if I end up at an elementary school with a bunch of little people. Well, that's all about having fun with them, right?

Natalie: Yeah, exactly. And so what was it that you – was there a particular thought or a moment where you consciously were like I get to just be me, and if they like me, great, and if they don't, great? Or how do you think you navigated around that? Because I know a lot of people are afraid to let their personality shine through because they're afraid of being judged.

Danneta: Well, when, during this one interview, which actually is the school that I ended up getting. When the principal had to jump in to the interview

and said, “Guys, we have other people to interview, come on.” Because they could not stop, it’s like they couldn’t get enough of me.

Natalie: Yeah, because they were having so much fun with you.

Danneta: So much fun, I was just like this magnet. And you know what? That’s me, my life, people get – even at work, and the relationships that I have at work and outside, I just have that type of magnetic personality that needed to come through and it did. And it was just like they were just like so – it was again, a conversation. And he had to interrupt and say, “Hello, we’ve got other people. Miss Grant do you have any more questions for us?”

Natalie: And also when you can show up fully as yourself, let your full personality shine through and they love it, and they get along with you so well. It’s such an indicator that it’s like the perfect fit for you. And if you had showed up like that and it hadn’t have gone as well, it would have been an indicator that it wasn’t the best fit for you. So either way I really strongly advocate for what you did, which is just let yourself be you because that’s how you’re going to be when you’re on the job. And that’s how you’re going to be when you’re most successful and working in your own zone of genius.

But I know it’s difficult for a lot of people to do that because they think that we need to show up a certain way in the interview. But that’s a myth, and you’ve just proven that right there.

Danneta: And another thing too, I can be that comfortable because as far as the instructional leader piece, I’m very strong already in that area. So of course I’m not trying to say that they only have questions just about just me and who I am. They had some instructional questions, they gave me case

studies and I could, again, I live that. So I was able to answer those questions very well. So I'm not trying to undermine not being skilled, right?

Natalie: No, I think that's a good point that you make because just being skilled is good. But if you're up against somebody who's just skilled but also they get along with really well, they're going to likely gravitate to the person that is both, that is a good fit and is skilled. And we had no doubts about you being skilled from the beginning.

That's why I was saying you were made for the job, you had all the skills, all the competencies, more than you even needed. And how you spoke about having been in the same role for a long time and even working as an assistant principal, not with the full title, but working ahead with the leadership skills constantly in that growth mindset. Always knowing that that's where you were headed also had a lot to do with building your skills, so your skills and your concrete hard skills were always there.

But it's with the ability to express your personality. That the combination of your skills and being able to connect on a personal level is the magic formula that worked really well especially for you, but also just your ability to relax and be like I know my stuff, I actually do know my stuff. And not having anything to hide or any specific way that you needed to be, how we often get caught into that so yeah.

So if you would have to say it was one thing that shifted your ability to interview from going from before. Where you were scared of interviewing, didn't know what to say, were trying to second guess yourself all the time, get it right to I'm totally myself and I know exactly how to speak, how to tell my story, I'm excited to. What would you say was the defining factor in the middle?

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Danneta: When I learned to – what's the word I used with you, disassociate myself during that time? And I don't want to confuse people with that word.

Natalie: Yeah, like unattached?

Danneta: Yeah. Just showing up not as – before I felt like I was just really anxious because I just wanted it so bad, this time I was more relaxed. I was like if it doesn't happen it's just not meant to be. You know what I mean? Because I made it into the pool and that's good. But at the end of the day it's just not meant to be, I wasn't as anxious.

Natalie: Yeah, or this particular one wasn't meant to be but there would be another one that would work out, yeah.

Danneta: And just keeping that positive mindset to it all. You know what I mean? Natalie, versus you know what happened to be back in April, there was a hiring freeze, I was on a roll. And I just still had to keep my positive mindset. This is just a temporary setback. I'm not going to kick myself down. I'm not going to be there; I'm going to continue with my positive mindset and my growth mindset.

Natalie: Yeah, absolutely, yeah. So the principle I think you're talking about is the high intention, low attachment. So you went in there with a high intention to show them what you were capable of, be very present, do your very best but you were unattached to the outcome, which is something that's very difficult for people to grasp. Because people can be very attached to the outcome without really realizing it, and so that was very articulate of you to say that, disassociated.

But I think what you meant was unattached, but having that really high intention to show up as your best and release all the self-judgment, or the self-doubt that you might have had from the previous interview and just be like I'm just going to do my very best. And what you had was really incredible because of all the experience that you'd gone through.

And being willing to put yourself forward for the interviews even when they didn't work out, or even when there was a hiring freeze, or even when something got cancelled at the last minute. You were still moving forward and being like, "Well, if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out but I'm still in it for the end result."

Danneta: Totally out of my control. And then the disassociation piece that I meant too was disassociating from those people in front of me, their movements. I don't even see you. I'm really talking, it's like when you have to give a speech to a large group. You know what I mean? You can't just pay attention, you just have to kind of see, not that you don't make eye contact. But you just have to see past all of that and just continue being who you are.

Natalie: And focusing – a very good point that you made, focusing on what you can control and their reaction is out of your control. Their reaction doesn't mean anything about you. It's about what you can control and how you show up that you put all your focus in. And that's why you were able to show up the way that you did in such a successful manner. Amazing.

So what nugget of information would you want someone to walk away with who is having the same feelings that you were at the beginning where they're terrified of interviewing, maybe they've had a bad experience? What would you want them to know?

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Danneta: Natalie, for a long time I was that person. And I don't want to undermine their feelings in any way. But just being there for so many years, when I tell you I used to get sick in the stomach. I used to want just run and just hang onto a rock. I totally understand that, but if they could only work on one, being in touch with those feelings, learning to do certain exercises, doing breathing exercises, during and before the interview. It's really psychological, and in everything that I'm saying in this interview with you about just learning to disassociate.

You control what you can control. You can control what you say and how you show up. And you want to show up as your best self. This is your only opportunity to showcase you yourself and tell your story. So what I'm saying is just work on all of those things, breathing. When you find yourself getting a little nervous in the interview, guess what, take a deep breath and just continue. And even if you have to play mind games with yourself like I did. Instead of calling it an interview, call it a meeting. This is something that I'm sure you guys, they do anyway. They've done at that point.

And you want to show up as your true authentic self, if that's this person that you have to be anyway in the job. You can't – that fake until you make it is bull crap.

Natalie: Absolutely, totally agree with that, yeah.

Danneta: So just show up as your authentic self.

Natalie: And I'm just thinking it's such a gift that now this school is going to have you working as the assistant principal and all of the things that we worked on and coached on together. I was so inspired by your passion to make an impact with the students and all the things that you're going to be able to do in this role. And I can't imagine that not being a thing because of

a fear of interviewing. And I just want to say that it's so admirable that you – because it was a journey. You had to go through a lot of obstacles to get to this point.

There was a long time where you felt stuck. And getting to the point where now you get to make this impact is going to open up so much more for so many more students. And you're going to have the opportunity to touch the lives of so many more students and impact them because you went through this and conquered your fear. So it's such a beautiful thing to be able to be a part of and witness, and see.

Maybe you did all of the work but I was so happy to be there with you and kind of shine a light on the things that you weren't seeing, because you were so caught up in the second guessing, and which is normal. We're humans and that's what we do.

But for the listeners out there who are listening, it's just really important that you see that there's one thing that's getting in the way of you having a bigger impact and doing what you really love and were meant to do. There is a reason why you were meant to be an assistant principal, and in the future, a principal, and take your journey. There's a reason why you want to do that. It's because you're meant to do it.

Danneta: Yes. Absolutely. And I can't wait to share the great news with you, because…

Natalie: Tell me what they said when they called you to offer you the position.

Danneta: Yes. So me, little me, okay, so in Philadelphia you interview with the principal and the school team. But it's not the ultimate their decision to

choose you. There's another piece, you have to interview again now with what they call the assistant sup, the boss of the whole region. So you now have to – I had to interview with him. So you make it through that round with the school team and they pass on two names to the assistant sup.

So I had my interview with the assistant sup. After the interview, you know, I interviewed. And he called me a few days later and he called me personally and said, "Congratulations, I want to let you know that you got the position and we're going to offer you the position." And then he just started to talk, he said, "But I just have to let you know something." And I was like, "What?"

He said, "In all the years, I've been in education for 50 years," he said. "In all the years I've been principals and superintendents and everything. And all of the interviews that I've done, yours was the most perfect interview that I have experienced. Your interview was perfect. When we went through the score, perfect, never ever, ever did I have someone interview as perfectly as you did." And I said, "What?" I couldn't even tell you what I said to him.

Natalie: I don't even know what to say.

Danneta: No, not even that. I don't even remember what I said. But for him to say, "The most perfect." He said, "It was damn near perfect, a 100%."

Natalie: It's so ironic too because when you were trying to be perfect and trying to think of the right things, that's when you're not, that's when you don't think of the right things. When you're leaning into being yourself then you get that feedback that your interview was perfect, ironic.

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Danneta: He was like, “All the domains, the leadership domains, perfect, perfect, you got perfect.” And I was just like, “Thank you. It’s been a long time coming, sir, thank you so much.”

Natalie: Wow, that’s incredible feedback to receive. And also just the fact that you were showing up as yourself, it was just like a perfect fit.

Danneta: I had no idea.

Natalie: It’s so awesome and inspiring. Amazing.

Danneta: The interview with the big boss, of the boss of the bosses, I didn’t even get nervous before the interview.

Natalie: Okay. Why do you think you didn’t get nervous at all?

Danneta: I just said it’s just a conversation. What is he going to ask me? It’s just a conversation. If I don’t know how to answer whatever he’s going to ask me, I don’t know how to answer it anyway. You know how to pull things in and talk, literally I was just like wow. And I was so impressed with myself that I didn’t even get nervous beforehand. I just did my little breathing exercises and came and sat and waited and interviewed, I had a conversation.

Natalie: Yeah. Well, I mean getting nervous is because of the thoughts that we have about something not working out or something that we’re predicting. That’s why nervousness comes about. And I think that with you, you were so grounded already in your qualifications, your abilities. And the fact that you were being yourself and you were unattached to the outcome, probably helped you to be like well, you know what, whatever happens, happens. I’m just going to show up as my best self.

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And that's ultimately the key to success because either way you're going to get the result that you wanted or you're going to continue on and get the result that you wanted later on. But either way you're going to be committed to the result which is why you were successful. But you did go through your trials and tribulations to get here, so it was very well deserved. Nobody deserves it more, right?

Danneta: Right. And you know another thing too, I think I was just super proud of myself just for making it this far. So I had that confidence just because – I never even imagined that I would even get that far. Even if I didn't get the position, I had the confidence to know that I could get this far. So it was just like that boosted my confidence as well.

Natalie: And all of this experience and everything that you went through is going to make you an even better leader, having gone through all this. Because everybody has to go through their trials and tribulations at some point, everybody goes through failure. Everybody goes through experiences that are not so pleasant.

And now you get to kind of look back on this, reflect on it and see where you made the shifts and help others, including the students and the faculty that you're going to be mentoring and helping, and all that's going to contribute to your ability to make an impact with the school in the future as well, so [inaudible].

Danneta: And a word that I used a lot through my coaching with you was humbling.

Natalie: I remember that, yeah, and I thought you – that was something that you really took to heart, when somebody gave you feedback you were really – listened to that feedback and really took it to heart. And was like,

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"Okay, is that something I need to work on? Is that true? Okay, let's fix that or let's take a look at that." Which I think is something super important, that also made you the great leader that you are is because you are always thinking about how can I grow? Instead of getting defensive and being like, I didn't do that or that's not what I meant.

You're like, "Okay, let's take a look at that, how could I grow?" Which is something that I'm sure that people will be able to see and make them more comfortable to work with you too, they're like, "Okay, well, she's human too, she understands." And it just kind of makes you somebody that people are comfortable to be around. Somebody people want to talk to. Somebody people don't want to interview other people, they just want to keep talking to you.

So embracing that part as well which is something that I know a lot of people have a hard time is with embracing that it's okay to be human. One thing I was curious about, did they ask you about a time that you made a mistake or when something didn't go your way or anything like that?

Danneta: Absolutely. And it was on every one of my interviews about – something about – they more so phrased it when you got pushback from let's say a teacher, which is the sort of type of question, yeah. And I just went straight into my coaching when I went in too fast, wanting to be a know it all. And I just thought I knew what was best for the teacher and it totally backfired on me. Remember that story?

Natalie: Yeah.

Danneta: I just felt, I taught their grade before, I taught it for 10 years and I'm the best at what I do. I'm supposed to be the coach. And my principal was like, "Come on, you need to go and coach her or help her." And I went

in as a know it all and it totally backfired on me. So that was the sort of one of the stories that I told.

Natalie: Yeah. And so I love that story because it's kind of showing this is how I was, I realized that I was wrong or I was approaching it in a way that wasn't working. So I looked at that and then I did it this way and this worked better. And now I'm a better person because of it. I was humbled, how you like to say it.

And a lot of people are afraid to talk about their mistakes. They don't want to talk about a time they made a mistake or a time that they screwed something up because they're afraid it's going to hurt their interview. Or they're afraid someone's going to have a judgment about it. And so just going on what we were talking about earlier is you're willing to just embrace being human, embrace being humbled, being willing to be humbled.

And just being like, "Yeah, I was wrong about that", just releases all the tension and also just makes people – makes you somebody that people want to work with because they're like, "Okay, well, obviously she saw that that wasn't working so she changed it." And there's no tension there. There's no issues. It's very difficult to have an issue with somebody who's just really open and open to feedback like that, so a great example of that as well.

Danneta: And what was threaded throughout all of most of my answers was relationships, relationship building, mutual respect. Anything to do with relationships I made sure I pulled in, because that's very important in what we do in education, building those relationships, those meaningful, trusting relationships. And I totally ruined it with that example that I gave, went in, thought I knew it all, wanted to take over her class pretty much. It didn't work for the relationship, it didn't work for the trust, so that's [inaudible].

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Natalie: Yeah. And knowing, and that was part of your journey, part of getting where you are was willing to get it wrong sometimes, willing to screw up and go and do something that didn't work and being able to talk about that. And being able to be like I understand why it didn't work now. And now this is how I approach it and this is what does work.

And making that a strength versus a weakness and because we're all human and we all do have times when we approach something in the wrong way and it doesn't work. And trying to cover it up or not, wanting to talk about it openly just creates more of a problem than just openly talking about it because we all have it, so yeah. And also honing in on the fact that you knew that relationships was a strength of yours, from all the learning that you did and from all the times that you…

Because I remember we also had conversations about how you said, "I said this and some people didn't like it. Or I made a decision and it was unpopular." And how you dealt with all of that, and being able to be the person who's like, "Yeah, I understand that not everything I do is always going to succeed. But I can be proud of how I take the feedback and what I learned from it and how I move forward from it."

Danneta: And then some of the mistakes took years just to rebuild those relationships back up for them to trust me. You know what I'm saying? And I talked to you about those situations with this [inaudible] grade team. It took years of rebuilding those relationships with that particular grade team. But I was going to do the work.

Natalie: Yeah, I do remember that, yeah. And it just goes to show that there's nothing that you can't recover from. So whatever it was that you said back then and however it was that you acted, as long as you're willing

to be a human and come back with a new approach, there's really very little, if anything, that can't be recovered from.

Danneta: No. Because I approach it genuine, and getting respect, you and you just have to be very genuine and vulnerable.

Natalie: And we change a lot, especially you, who's always in the growth mindset of okay, I want to fix this, making the decision of okay, I want to repair this. This is what I want my outcome to be and then working towards it. Then it's definitely something that's going to happen. It's when we kind of give up on it subconsciously and are like it's not going to work then. That's when we kind of close off all the opportunities.

But that is something about you that will mean that you always succeed in what you want to do, is that you're always open to it and you're always willing to keep going to find the answer and do the next thing that's going to work. So, amazing. Well, is there anything else you would like to add? I think I've asked all of my questions and I think you've given everybody a really good picture of your journey. And it's been very inspiring so far. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Danneta: Yes, one thing, one more thing. So I want to leave them with this quote. Knowing a craft alone doesn't make you great. Being coachable is what makes you great.

Natalie: So good. So good.

Danneta: And I feel that where my growth has come, being coachable.

Natalie: So good, yeah. Me too, yeah, I mean that's where I attribute everything of mine too, is being coachable, yeah. I'm going to cry. Thank

you, that was amazing. I haven't ever – do you know who said that or is it an anonymous one?

Danneta: So I'm in this assistant principal's group and one of the assistant principals said it in my group the other morning. In my classes we have these Saturday morning classes.

Natalie: Amazing. And yeah, and one other thing I'll add is I remember that you, when we worked together I showed you some of the coaching tools that I use and then we broke them down. And you were so eager to learn about these coaching tools so that you could go and take them to others and coach others as well as taking the knowledge yourself. And so I feel like you kind of got a double lesson, because you got coached yourself and then you learned how to coach so that you could go and be more effective as a coach yourself, which I thought was very smart of you.

Danneta: Coach and moves, I'm always watching people, especially coaches, not only coaches in education. My son works in NFL and he works for Houston Texans. And I even read his leadership books, because we share the same Kindle account, he has a lot of books on coaching and leadership in that field. So I'm always coach and moves, I watch the moves of people. And I watched you and how you coached me and I would go and use it.

Natalie: I noticed that, none of my other clients have done that before. So I was noticing that. I was just like she's getting double for her investment here because she's learning how to be a coach and she's taking the coaching and absolutely, yeah. So yeah, I thought that was pretty smart. Amazing. Alright, well, thank you so much for that amazing quote, it's a great place to leave it. I know our listeners are going to be so inspired and so happy to hear your story. And it was an absolute honor to work with you.

And thank you so much. And maybe in the future we'll have you on again when you're a principal and doing other big things in the world.

Danneta: Yeah, use me, I love it.

Natalie: Alright, okay, bye.

Danneta: Alright, bye bye.

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