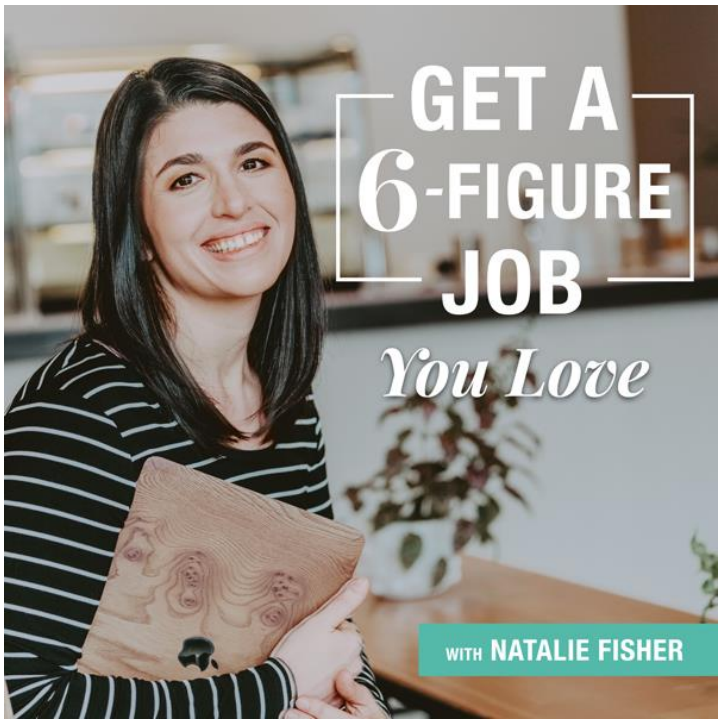
Ep #23: Surviving the Interview:
A Client Success Interview with Ciara



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Fisher

Get a 6-Figure Job You Love with Natalie Fisher

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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 welcome to the podcast this week. We have a very special guest with us, her name is Ciara. And she's going to be walking us through her journey of now being in an incredible role where she's going to be making a huge difference. And I'm going to let her introduce herself and tell us a little about what she does. Ciara, go ahead.

Ciara: Yeah. So I work in people and culture. I've been doing that for about three years now at a small travel company of about a 100 people. And I lost my job back in May when Covid hit and travel companies were having trouble surviving. And that put me back on the job market really for the first time ever. I've always had a fairly easy time finding work. I was a teacher initially in my career than I was working in sales where it was always very easy to find work in the travel business as long as you had a lot of travel experience behind you.

And so for the first time now I was looking for a new role in a new area and was petrified at the whole process of having to do that. And I think I had been kind of out of work for probably about three months I think before I came to you. And was yeah, just petrified by the whole process and was actually applying for work a little bit halfheartedly and feeling very relieved

when – I was feeling very relieved when companies didn't get back to me because that meant I didn't have to go and do the interview which was obviously very counterproductive and a waste of time.

Natalie: Yes. And so one of the things that I loved most about working with you was that you had a lot of really valuable experience and a lot of really valuable accomplishments but you weren't seeing those very clearly. And so looking from the outside you were able to kind of have the experience and have the capability to do the job. But in your head you weren't really seeing that super clearly.

So do you want to talk a little bit about how your journey began and where we started and kind of what you were thinking about your own experiences and what you were capable of in the beginning?

Ciara: Yeah. So yeah, I felt fairly confident in my ability to actually do my job. But was lacking a lot of confidence around how to kind of articulate my value, I guess, to other people and to sort of sell myself. And that's coming from somebody who used to be a salesperson.

Natalie: Yeah, you were the front counter person.

Ciara: So I don't have a problem selling other things. But then talking about myself was a different story. And I had been working for three years, just three years in this area of people and culture although I had another 15 years of experience in other areas. I just felt like I didn't have enough experience to get the roles that I wanted. I didn't know what kind of value I could bring to other companies. And I was just really worried about not knowing enough, or not being good enough, or…

Natalie: Not having all the answers.

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Ciara: Not having all the answers, not being perfect, yeah.

Natalie: Yeah, exactly. So, so many listeners will be able to relate to that for sure just everything you just said. I'm sure it's what people wake-up thinking about all the time, I don't know if I can. I don't know if I'm good enough. I don't know if I – what if I don't have all the answers? Always going to this worst case scenario. So how would you describe the process of kind of turning that around a bit where you kind of started to see maybe I don't have to have all the answers? Or maybe it's still possible for me even with these kind of crappy thoughts that you were having?

Ciara: Yeah. I mean I think there was a small part of me that knew that from the beginning but it was being overshadowed by all this fear and this desire to be perfect and have all the answers. So my default mechanism was to prepare, and prepare, and prepare and try to get the right stories, and try to memorize, and try to predict I guess what I was going to be asked in the interview. Which of course you can't do completely, you can get some idea but there's always going to be questions that come that you don't know and can't plan for.

It took me a while, I mean I think I had to remind myself of the times in the past where I've been able to do things that I didn't feel fully confident about but they went okay. And I survived and it was alright. And I think I had to reframe it a little bit. I think in interviews you can often feel or I felt like they have all the power and I have none. And I kind of had to change that in my own mind to look at it more as like a peer-to-peer conversation. And that's part of that I'm coming in to help them with a problem that they have.

That's kind of what I got from your coaching was trying to reframe it and take the focus off of me and what I was worried about and put it more onto how can I help these people? What kind of impact do I think I might be able

to have on this business given the experience, and skills, and attitude that I bring? So that was a huge thing. I mean it took me time to get there.

But I think the first, you know, the very first interview that I went on it was really about trying to find that trust in myself, that I don't have to have all the answers. Let's just go in, let's trust myself, let's try to be present and deal with it as it comes. And that's all I wanted to do, that was really my aim of going through that first interview actually.

Natalie: Yeah. Excellent. So that's one thing that I kind of want to emphasize is the result that you got was going into that interview and just being able to focus on a different thing while you were there. So instead of where you were starting, which was they're going to be judging me and all those thoughts that were creating a lot of uncomfortable feelings and feelings of pressure, and nervousness, and tenseness.

You were able to refocus your thoughts not completely towards the other side of I can do this and it's going to be great. But more to the point of what can I offer? What do I have? And focusing more on them. So it was – it's not something that you snap your fingers and all of a sudden you become great at interviewing. It's a process and you kind of took that step, that first step from being petrified to going with this different mindset. To be able to then kind of open up and see the path afterwards.

And you said it took you some time but in the grand scheme of things it didn't actually take you very long. We haven't even finished working together yet and you are already in this amazing role which we'll talk more about. But in your head you think it took me some time. But in the grand scheme it didn't take you very long actually. So I just want to emphasize, the process is a step-by-step and this was kind of your first step, my first

interview. I'm going to take this mindset and were able to. So how did you feel after that first interview?

And I don't even think you had anything that threw you off because I remember asking you, "Did anything throw you off?" And you realized I could actually trust myself because I did actually know enough.

Ciara: Yeah. I think a couple of questions came up, that wasn't even a full interview, it was like a screening call. And I remember I was practicing this trust myself thing but I had still prepared for that interview. I was kind of doing both, preparing as much as possible but then at the last minute, the last day I'm like, okay, now let me just settle and try to relax and trust myself now. But I had done quite a lot of preparation for that one.

And I remember they were asking me questions that I wasn't actually answering. On some of them I wasn't actually answering the question they asked. I was answering the question I thought they were going to ask, the one I had prepared for. So it didn't quite fit and I knew it at the time as I was going through but I was like okay, whatever. I just let it go. I just kind of went with it, a couple of questions came up that I hadn't prepared for and I think I handled them okay.

And I came off it feeling pretty good about myself, not because I'd done amazingly well. I thought I did okay but that was really good for me and I was like okay. And it felt – I was okay with that. I was okay with that, I was okay. It was enough to make me feel I guess positive to go into another interview and be like okay, it wasn't perfect. I didn't do it perfectly but I'm okay. And it was actually good and I still kind of did, yeah, I did okay.

Natalie: You took a significant step forward from where you were before, right?

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Ciara: Exactly, yeah, [inaudible].

Natalie: And that's kind of like a milestone, yeah, the milestone result. So there's the milestone results and then your ultimate result I'm going to call them. So the results of going into an interview where you don't feel petrified, you're there and you're focused on different things and leave and be like okay that was good. I'm proud of myself for doing that, right?

Ciara: Yeah. And it gave me that little bit of confidence, that little step forward in confidence that I needed for the next time. And actually I did get a call back from that one, even though it wasn't perfect I did get the call back to go for a face-to-face. So it gave me enough confidence that walking into the face-to-face interview I was like okay, I feel a little bit more comfortable now with this.

Natalie: Yeah, absolutely. I was going to ask you, was that the one that you did end up getting called back and then, yeah? And also you are always going to be harder on yourself, that's something that we have talked about before on the podcast is we think being our own worse self-critics is something that is helpful or we're supposed to do. But in the end it doesn't really help us. Yeah, awesome, so that was kind of a good demonstration of the first step in the process.

So if you're having trouble getting over something, you feel really scared or really terrified to do something and then you have these little shifts and then you're able to go and do it even if it wasn't perfect or even if you didn't get the ultimate result right away. That is still a big win. And I think that what people don't do is they kind of discount them right away. When we worked together we were like, "Yeah, that is actually a big win for you." And that kind of gave you that kind of forward momentum of yeah, that was a

big win. That was a big deal for me. Even though I didn't get that offer right away it still counts towards the ultimate goal.

Ciara: Yeah. For me it was huge. For me it was huge because I was that scared and I had built up this big fear. And I think fear just grows, the longer you do nothing about it really the fear grows. And I knew I needed to step into that space. I knew I needed to actually go into the interviews and just try it out for me to gain that confidence. And so I knew that it was just a small step, for me it felt really huge actually.

Natalie: Yeah, exactly. And being able to see that and being able to be proud of yourself for that was a big part of what kept you going and ultimately to the ultimate result that you ended up getting. So it's important for people to see that because a lot of the times people will go. They'll build up the fear, the same thing, then they'll go and do it and they won't get it. And then they'll be like I knew I couldn't, I knew I wasn't good enough. I knew it wasn't going to work, instead of looking at it like you looked at which was that was a big deal, I did that and that's a huge step forward.

So I think that's how we need to be looking at all of our process when we're going through something, we're not just immediately going to get it right away and not to expect to. But just be like okay, all these steps count towards where I'm going and they're all meaningful, yeah.

Ciara: Yeah, exactly. And I think that was one of the things, one of the ways I approached it was it's all learning. It's all learning. And the only way I can kind of really get the learnings is by going out and doing it. And so that was always something that really helped change my mindset around it. It wasn't this big win or lose situation. It was like okay, this is learning, it's a step forward, it'll ultimately take me where I need to get to. But this might not be it and that's okay, but it's learning.

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Natalie: Perfect. Perfectly said, yeah. And that's so much more helpful than oh my God, I have to get this or it's the end of the world, not that people – that's a bit extreme. But people have versions of that in their head. And I know that this is also something that a lot of people resonate was that student mindset, and that need to prepare, and that feeling like you have to have everything prepared for a test. If you don't get an A on the test then you're a failure.

And I remember that we coached on that a lot which was the okay, you can prepare to a point but then after that you just have to go and have the experience. And that's going to be uncomfortable but that's part of it and there's no getting out of it. Can you talk a little bit about how you reconciled that in your mind and balanced that? Because I know that for one, you didn't prepare at all and then you still over-prepared and how you kind of balanced that in order to achieve the mindset that was required to ultimately get to where you ended up?

Ciara: Yeah. I mean I think in the end I was experimenting, because I was such an over-preparer I think I decided I need to experiment the other way completely and not really prepare. And just really again, trust that I know my stuff. I do know my stuff and one of the things I kept saying to myself, this is not rocket science. What I do is not rocket science. I have a good feeling around it. I know my stuff. I read a lot around it. I don't need to study up more for the interview. So let me just see how it goes when I don't prepare.

That's kind of what I did because I felt the biggest issue that was getting in my way again was this just not trusting myself, feeling like everybody else had all the answers and I didn't. But that wasn't true. And for me it was almost like experimenting or getting a bit playful a little bit with it. I think before one of the reasons I was so scared around it is I was putting a lot of

my own self-worth into the interview that if I failed at the interview I was a failure. And so I kind of had to strip that away I think and just be like if the interview's not successful it's not failure, it's learning.

And so let me just experiment with different ways and see what's effective, what works for me and what doesn't. And ultimately the not preparing thing actually worked kind of well. I mean I prepared to a degree in terms of researching the company and learning about their values and reflecting a little bit on my own experience. But not trying to write out all the questions I thought they were going to ask me and write out responses and do all that in detail stuff.

It was more just let me just reflect on the experiences I have that tie myself to this role. And then let me go in and just try to be present. Let me just try to be a normal human being like I would be on anybody else. Let me try to listen to them. Let me ask them questions as well. That was also really useful for me, not just sitting there waiting for them to ask me questions, let me try to make this more of a conversation because that also makes me feel more comfortable. And it changes the dynamic of the interview.

So asking them questions, just trying to be present, and engaged, and yeah, talk with them like it's a regular conversation, yeah.

Natalie: Yeah. And I remember you asked me about that, you were like, "How do I make it a conversation? Or how can I change the dynamic?" And it's absolutely possible especially if you're interviewing with a company who you would want to work with, normally is going to be friendly. They're not going to say, "No, you can't ask questions." Like I joke and I'm like, "There's no questions police, you can ask questions whenever feels natural to ask questions."

And so yeah, it's totally possible and so you did a really good job of that and made you feel more comfortable, which probably made them feel more comfortable too because when you're more at ease, they're going to be more in tune and more at ease with you. And the way that it's done is just you don't have to sit around and wait for them to ask, if you answer something and then you're like, "Yeah, and by the way, what about this?" Or if something comes to mind and you can just have a conversation like you're talking with your coworkers. And then it just kind of changes the whole dynamic.

Yeah, and then as far as the preparing thing, just to go back to that for one second, when they – you did have this thing where you were preparing for a long time and that was your MO. And then you had already prepared so much that your stories you already knew them, you already knew the answers to these questions. And there was a point where it didn't really have any increased advantage to prepare that stuff anymore because you already knew it. Then the work was trusting yourself and being like I know I can recall the answers when I need them. That was the actual work.

So you embraced that and something that you did really well too was just embracing the discomfort being like, yeah, maybe this is going to be a bit uncomfortable but I have to do it. This is the work. This is my next step. There's nothing else to do, preparing for more time isn't going to help me, right?

Ciara: Yeah. And I think one of the things that you said that helped me as well was like, you know, because it's uncomfortable being unemployed anyway. And you would say to me, "Look, it's already uncomfortable, so this is, you know, it's uncomfortable either way. You can either go out and do this stuff and it's going to be uncomfortable or you can sit at home and

not do it and it's also going to be uncomfortable." And so I was like, "Okay, you're right."

Natalie: Yeah, so then you took that.

Ciara: It does feel crappy either way. So let me do something where at least I'm moving forward and doing something about it, yeah.

Natalie: Yeah. And you did that really well, every opportunity to lean into discomfort you went for it and you did it because you mentioned you said you did feel confident in your abilities. But I do know that you had some limiting thoughts around your abilities about thinking that other people might be better, or that they might have more experience, or that they might have done the same job in multiple companies before.

Therefore that made them more desirable and things like that. So you still had to kind of become aware of those thoughts and the fact that they were holding you back. And then kind of see yourself in a new light, seeing yourself in a way where you really had value to offer. Can you talk a little bit about how you feel about your value now?

Ciara: Yeah, I mean I think it's true that I don't maybe have as much experience as other people. But the experience that I do have was very intense and I was responsible at my last company for building up the people and culture team from scratch. And I know that the value I bring to any company, I know that I will work hard at any company to understand what I need to do and figure out how to do it even if I haven't got the experience behind me.

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So I think in terms of my own value, I think about it in terms of my initiative, and my creativity, and my curiosity, and my ability to, I guess, figure things out more than anything else.

Natalie: Yeah, exactly. So you had to kind of draw on that, the experience from the past did not equal your capability in the future and all those unique characteristics that you would bring to the role. And also just your personality, which you were able to in the end let shine through the interview as well which I think had a big factor on why you were hired where you ended up being hired at.

So yeah, just that's a good different perspective to bring to light. It's not all about the experience. I mean you had enough experience to get an interview, that's all that really was required. And then after that it's not about the experience anymore, it's about all the other things. So what do you think was the main factor that shifted in your mindset or if there was more than one?

Ciara: Well, I think it was this issue of trust in myself and in my capability. And just dropping that need to be perfect, realizing that it's okay to not have all the answers. And that actually as you said, the interview's not just about having the answers. Skills are part of it and having maybe some stories is part of it. But it's also about your connection, and your likeability, and your personality, and your attitude, and your passion for what you do, which in the job that I ended up getting I was really passionate about that. And I think that did come through in the interview.

And again it wasn't a perfect interview, but I think – I thought about it as well and you said this to me, put myself in their shoes. And I actually have been in their shoes because I was a Head of People and Culture. I used to hire people. I used to be in the other seat. And what you're also looking for

in the person that you're interviewing is, yeah, their passion, their curiosity, their drive, their potential, all of those things. And do I want to work with this person day in and day out?

So in addition to having some of the right skills and experience there's all these other things as well. And I know that they count a lot and you'd rather, you know, I would rather have somebody on my team that has all those qualities than somebody that's an expert a 100% at what they do but doesn't really connect with people or relate to people in the right way. Especially in the role that I do, maybe it's not as important but the relationships I build with people are really important in my job. And that has to be strong as well.

Natalie: Yeah, absolutely. And yeah, as I said I think it – or as I was thinking I think it is more important especially in your job. And the fact that you had all this, you're like, "Yeah, I am actually really likeable. I do actually get along really well with people. I do actually have all these things to bring to the table." But you forgot about them because you were concerned about being judged, concerned about not being enough.

And it's like well, when you're not focusing on that anymore you can actually let them see who you really are. Because sometimes they, if you're going in there over-rehearsed and really some people when I'm coaching them I'll ask, we'll be practicing an interview story or something. And I'll be like, "So what would you say if they asked you this?" And they immediately go into this robot mode. And I'm like, "Wait a second, where is the person I was just talking to?"

Ciara: But that's the funny thing though because when I was – before I connected with you I was looking online, I was watching YouTube, I was

Googling these things, trying to find out what are the answers I should be saying.

And it just felt like everybody online that was giving advice on this stuff was giving you kind of an overly rehearsed answer following, always following the STAR method and always doing this. And it didn't feel natural to me and I think I was trying to emulate those answers. And it didn't feel right for me. It didn't feel right for me at all. And so I had to just find my own way with it I think a little bit.

Natalie: Yeah, exactly. And that's something that I think that a lot of people look at and that's why, because I've come across this a lot. People are like, "But I have to say it perfectly. I have to have this exact answer right." And they miss the whole part. They miss the whole mindset piece, whether they're not thinking – you could say the right words but not say them in the right way, or not be relaxed, or not be genuine. And the words won't land in the same way.

So the words don't matter as much at all and that's where a lot of people they don't really teach about that, or they just want to give – because what people want is a script. They're like, "Give me the script, tell me what to say and then I'll get the job." And it's like well, if that worked then everyone would have jobs because there's lots of scripts everywhere.

So just missing these key components of digging a bit deeper to see okay, what is really the reason why you're not being successful here? And so really uncovering that with everybody's specific mindset is going to be a bit different. And they're going to have different blockers which is why coaching is so useful. So getting to the bottom of them and just being like, "Okay, this is how I'm going to think about it that's going to work for me.

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And then I'm going to show up in the interview and I'm going to be natural, and authentic, and passionate." And they get to see who you really are.

Ciara: Exactly. Because I'd much rather be unsuccessful being who I really am than trying to be somebody else.

Natalie: Exactly, yeah. And that's something that again, we get rejected, we're like oh no, there's something wrong with us. And yeah, I love that you said that actually because I was thinking about this. I wrote an article for Vault and it was looking at rejection two different ways. One, the scientist, the scientist if they get rejected they'll be like, "Interesting, I wonder what – my hypothesis was that this worked how I answered these things but it didn't so let's see why it didn't work."

Two, the artist would be like, an artist is all about having unique and honest expression and there's no right or wrong way to do art. They might be like, "Well, they didn't appreciate my unique art, that's okay, it just means it's good art because not everybody likes it." Good art has strong opinions. And then we try to change ourselves to try to fit in a box. And then we end up making it all about the fact that we're not good enough and it's never about that. So having those realizations.

Yeah, so if you were to share some nuggets of wisdom with listeners about what you think that they could change in their mindset or be open to, just be open to if they're feeling really nothing is working for them right now and they're not able to kind of progress, what would you share?

Ciara: You mean in the interview process?

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Natalie: Yeah, if they're getting stuck in the interview process which is a really common problem, getting called for interviews and then going through them and then not having the success.

Ciara: Yeah. Well, first thing I would say is it's all learning. And I heard this quote recently where it's like, you're not, because sometimes I think it can feel like if you're going for interviews and it's not successful you can feel like you're starting from scratch again. And I heard this just, this quote recently where it's like, "You're not starting from scratch, you're starting from experience."

And so if you're going into it and you're reflecting on it afterwards and you're understanding what you did well, what you might want to do differently the next time which is the process you kind of took me through after each interview. I mean I genuinely believe they will ultimately get you where you need to be. And yeah, I mean I think it's a process. And for me, I think it was just about continuing to do it, continuing to do it and not, again, trying not to let my self-worth or my value ride on it.

It was just learning about myself more and more with each interview, which is useful no matter what.

Natalie: Absolutely. What a great way to look at it for sure.

Ciara: Yeah. And again letting go. For me it was about letting go of that need to be perfect. So I think if anybody's thinking that they need it to be perfect, it doesn't need to be perfect, you just need to trust yourself enough that you can go in there and be yourself, and be present. And engage with the people across the table from you or across the Zoom from you as it is today.

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Natalie: Yeah, those are great. And also that brought up for me about how – and this happens to everybody too, and I always like to talk about each person's experience with it. When somebody says something to you that de-motivates you and I know that you had that experience with a recruiter who had said something to you when we first started working together about, that really de-motivated you. And I mean this happens to everybody.

So it's just so interesting just to give other people listening a heads up too, somebody says something to you and you could take it to heart and make it mean something. And we can look at Ciara now after what this recruiter said and see that obviously it didn't mean anything. But at the time it really seemed like a big deal. Do you want to talk about that for a minute?

Ciara: Yeah. So I guess, yeah, one of the routes that's worked for me before actually is just getting jobs through recruiters which has been pretty successful. And so this time around I did the same thing, I called a couple of recruiters. I applied for a job through a recruitment agency and then I called up afterwards to follow up on it.

And when I spoke to the recruiter she was like, "Do you know the people applying for this role have 10 years of experience. It's a really challenging interview process. I'm looking at your CV, all you have, I mean I know you've done these other things before but ultimately all you have is three years experience." Completely discounting, well, first of all completely discounting the 15 years of experience that I'd had before I went into people and culture doing other things. And not really looking at the quality of that experience over the past three years either.

She wasn't really asking anything to get to know me, she was judging me purely on the basis of what was, I guess there on my CV and just made me feel like shit. And it really brought me down for a good couple of days I

think before I – I think I had a session with you and kind of talked through it. And you said, “Yeah, that’s totally normal, that happens. And I wanted to warn you about that.” And I felt a lot better. But yeah, for two days I did nothing after that because I felt so crap about myself.

And now I’ve gone into a role earning a good bit more than what she was quoting me I would be able to earn. And in the type of role that makes me way happier than anything she would have put me into. I think she was really just trying to put me into a little box and shoehorn me into a certain role at a certain company. And it just totally deflated and de-motivated me.

Natalie: Yeah, absolutely. And that happens so often too because they are just looking at it from one perspective. They’re looking to fill a role. They’re looking for these sponsors. If it doesn’t say 10 years experience then they’re not interested. And I think you mentioned the word ‘narrow minded’ which I agreed with. I think that it is a really narrow minded way to look at it. But it also isn’t true, what she said wasn’t true. And the reason why you felt like shit for those two days was because a part of you believed that maybe what she was saying was true.

And so when we can take things that other people say to us and not believe them, immediately be like, “Okay, well, that’s that one person’s opinion or whatever.” We don’t have to get in our own heads about it and actually stop, because I’ve talked to people who – somebody had said something to them and they have given up on their entire dream because somebody said, “You’re never going to be able to do that.”

And this is one person, one person’s opinion who has one experience who’s looking for – they have one agenda. And they’re going to go off and live their life and not even give you a second thought. And yet you’ve given them so much of your time and energy based on what they said thinking

that it could be true, that it's just really sad to see. So now we can fast forward and of course look back and be like yeah, there was no ounce of truth in what she was saying.

So it's just good to go through that and be able to give other people the perspective of when other people say things to you, you get to choose if you believe it or not and what you're going to do with it. And yeah, there's a metaphor that I like to use, it's like, would you let someone come into your living room and take a dump and then leave? And it's like well of course not. But people do that in our brain all the time.

Ciara: It's so true. It's so true.

Natalie: Yeah. So it was good that you were able to work through that and see that. And now if anyone says something, now in the future you can take that learning with you and if someone says something to you that really makes you feel bad you can question it. And be like is that really true? Do they really know me? Do they really understand me? Probably not just from looking at your résumé, so yeah.

And then I wanted to talk about your successful interview and why do you think you were able to be successful? I think a big part of it was you were at the point where you were now showcasing your personality and you were being human and you had your, you know, you were aware of the value that you were bringing. But I want to hear your thoughts on what you think made that interview successful?

Ciara: I think from the beginning when I saw the job ad and I researched the company it just felt like such a great fit for me. It felt completely aligned with who I am and my values and my, yeah, my whole belief system around people and culture. So it felt like such a great fit from the beginning. I knew

the job ad spoke to my soul which sounds kind of funny. But it was a really well written job ad and I just thought I'm perfect for this. And I felt really confident in myself. And I shared it with everyone I knew and they were all like, "Yeah, this is so you, you need to go for this."

And I think that in itself, feeling such a close alignment with something, which I hadn't really felt in anything that I'd looked at before. It was more about me trying to fit into what they wanted. This one really felt like a great fit for me. Yeah, and so that made it that much easier I think, going into the interview process, feeling like I didn't need to be anybody else but who I am because actually they are a reflection. It felt like they were a reflection already of who I was. So now I just needed to kind of show up and yeah, show them what I can do basically.

Natalie: Yeah. And I do resonate with that too, a lot of my clients will be like, "Yes, I was really aligned with the role and I think that's why I got it." So they were kind of having thoughts like yeah, this is me. I'm perfect for this. I want this and I would do a great job here. But also you had to have the confidence that you were the right person too. Because you could see that same exact job ad and be like, "Oh my God, I really, really want this but what if I'm not good enough for it?" And show up totally differently.

So how do you think you showed up that made you be able to connect in the right way and show your value and yourself in the right way to be able to land the role? Because you could still be perfect for it and not get it, that's happened with people in the past because they're aligned with the role and they think they are but then they don't have the mindset to support that.

Ciara: Well, I guess alongside the alignment I mean I did have a lot of the skills they were looking for. And I think my collective experience was really

useful. It wasn't just drawing on the experience I had in my last three years of my career. I'm going to be delivering workshops and I was a teacher for a number of years, so it's drawing on that. And I worked in sales for a few years and this is like the company I'm working for now is a consultancy so you're working with clients. And so there were a number of different skills that I've built over my career that I felt I had to offer.

I knew that I had value to offer outside of a traditional candidate maybe, because I have had a varied career and I maybe see things in a different way. And they're kind of out of the box thinking, they're not a very traditional kind of company. And that's again that kind of reflecting of my varied experience.

Natalie: You were looking at the job description in that way of okay, this is what I can offer, this is what I have. Because you could have just as easily been like, well, I've never worked with different clients before. I've never done this specific thing before, easily could have thought that, which is also something that people do when they look at the job descriptions. And so that gets easy, you just had this automatic way of looking at it now. But you could have just as easily gone to the opposite and found everything that you couldn't do.

So the fact that you looked at it in that way and had that attitude towards it, it definitely helped you go in there with that self-confidence and that mindset of I can help and I am completely able to offer what they need. So I just wanted to point that out because now your thoughts have become automatic which is amazing.

But there was a clear difference to you before and you now where now you're like yeah, now I'm looking at what I need to look at that's going to serve me the best in getting what I want. Versus before where you were

looking at the things that were not helpful and wondering what can I do to get unstuck or get out of this? And I think you just progressed really quickly, so I want to give you props for that. But you're not also just like slowing down to realize being yeah I am looking at things in the way that serves me the best now.

Ciara: Yeah. I mean, yeah, don't get me wrong I definitely had that feeling with a number of other jobs where I would just look at it and then break it down and talk myself out of it. Why are all the reasons I can't do this or I don't match exactly what they have on the job description. So I, yeah, definitely had a number of those experiences as well and yeah.

Natalie: Yeah. And I think that just being able to keep looking and keep your eye out for what you want, like you mentioned at the beginning about having that mindset of I'd be lucky to have an opportunity. I'd be lucky to have any job versus I have value to offer and I'm looking for the right thing for me also creates that feeling of equality of yeah, they're just as lucky to have me than I am to be hired there. And it's a good match kind of thing because you also used a lot of that stuff along the way as clarity for what you really wanted, right?

Ciara: Yeah, definitely. I just didn't really expect to find what I wanted so closely, but then I did, yeah.

Natalie: Yeah. And actually thinking about that back to some of our conversations I think that you did that work as well, that mental work of clarifying what you really wanted because we had conversations about what parts of HR you really were passionate about, what you enjoyed working on the most. And using the opportunities along the way that maybe didn't work out, or using the job descriptions that you saw as data and

information to clarify what it is you really want, because when we know what we really want then we're going to be able to see it when it shows up.

So yeah, I think you deserve credit for attracting that too with all that stuff that you identified as we were going along the path to get there. So yeah and how is your new job so far?

Ciara: Yeah, it's really good, I'm still on-boarding, so there's still a lot to learn and I think we've already been talking about this. But I still am finding some of those thoughts that came into the initial interview process now coming into my job in terms of wondering if I'm good enough. Having that bit of imposter syndrome feeling now that I'm in the role, I'm like oh my God, there's a lot of new stuff for me. And I'm trying to catch those thoughts now and change those thoughts and have a healthier mindset towards it.

So I guess yeah, it's a process that's going to continue because those thoughts creep in, in different areas, in different ways and yeah, I'm very grateful that I still have you as my coach to kind of carry on working through those. But yeah, the job is going well. It's a very supportive team, a very collaborative team. It still feels like a great fit. But it's uncomfortable, it's uncomfortable because it's new and it's a challenge. And it's taking me out of my comfort zone. And on the one hand that's very exciting. On the other hand it's scary.

But I know it's going to lead to growth for me and it's all of those reasons, the variety, the challenge, the learnings that I wanted to get the job in the first place.

Natalie: Exactly, yeah. It's ultimately what we want. Yeah, I remember one of our conversations we were talking about if you're not uncomfortable and if it's too easy then you wouldn't be happy with that either because you'd be

like well, I need to grow. Something I hear from people so often is, “There’s no more room for me to grow in my position so I need to leave or I need to find somewhere where I can grow.” Because as humans we’re supposed to grow and we’re supposed to evolve. And we’re going to be looking for those opportunities.

And then it’s just like battling our brain on okay, it’s uncomfortable to grow but it’s also uncomfortable to stay still like you were saying before. It’s also uncomfortable to not grow because we want to grow. So embracing that and growing in the way that we want to, you’re doing something that you love and you’re passionate about. And there’s no better way to grow than to be offering your value and stepping up in a way that serves others while you’re growing.

Ciara: Yeah, exactly. And this is what I try to bring it back to is the impact I can have on other people, on other organizations because now I’m working in this consultancy where we’re helping to help startups and scale-ups grow successfully by putting their people first. Which is something I’m super passionate about and has the power to impact a lot of people in very positive ways And so that’s where I’m trying to keep the focus and think less about me and all my insecurities around my capabilities. And trust that I will be able to do it.

And if I don’t know how to do it, I’ll figure it out and keep the focus on, yeah, the impact I can have on [inaudible].

Natalie: Yeah. And also the fact that you know so much more than they do anyway because you’ve been three years of intense experience, the passion, the time you’ve spent thinking about these problems that they’re having. You have so much more to contribute than they do because that’s not where their focus is every day. So even if you – there’s no way you

wouldn't have something new or something to offer because of just the sheer facts of the situation so yeah.

Ciara: Yeah, exactly.

Natalie: Yeah. Well, that's amazing. So I'm so happy for you in your new role and I'm excited to continue working with you and I'm so proud of you. And yeah, is there anything else you wanted to add to, any final thoughts?

Ciara: No. I mean just to thank you. No, just a thank you to you for getting me where I am right now. I mean I've still have a ways to go, don't get me wrong. I feel like this is a working progress. But to think three months ago, I mean it's basically three months I think since I contacted you and really started job hunting for real. And now here I am two weeks into a job that I never thought I would get in the middle of a pandemic. And it's crazy. I can't quite believe it at the moment. And I kind of want to say I was just lucky. But I know there was, yeah, there was a process to get me here.

And it happened to come rather quickly and maybe there was a lucky component to that, I'm sure there was. But thank you for keeping me on track, holding my hand through it and making me feel better on those days where other people were bringing down. Because that's a huge part of it is just maintaining that resilience a little bit through that process.

Natalie: Yeah. Well, thank you for your thank you. So I would love to take all the credit but really it was you. And I mean I find it like this coach client relationship is kind of fun because it's like you did the work, but I know that I gave you tools, and support, and guidance along the way. But I know that you had to show up and do the uncomfortable work anyway. So it's kind of this win/win situation because I love to see you succeed and you ultimately

are able to now see what you're capable of and able to do a lot more because now you've built the confidence in creating these results.

And yeah, I mean it is tempting to think that there was some sort of luck involved in it. And I think that along the way we kind of dissect the successes. So it's really important to go back and be like, "Okay, well, what created the success?" I'll always be like, "How did you create that result?" Because I believe everything is within your control. But yeah, I think that you don't give yourself enough credit sometimes. So that's something that we're working on celebrating and giving yourself enough credit.

Ciara: A working progress like I said.

Natalie: Yeah, always, the work is never done for me either so totally. And yeah, so I think that's all, those are all the questions I had for you. Thank you so much for generously sharing with everybody your experience. I know they're going to get a lot out of this. And yeah, I am looking forward to maybe having you on again one day when you're even at your next level of your career.

Ciara: Let's see. Let's see.

Natalie: Let's see [inaudible]. Okay.

Ciara: Thanks Natalie.

Natalie: Bye.

Ciara: Alright, goodbye.

Ep #23: Surviving the Interview:
A Client Success Interview with Ciara

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