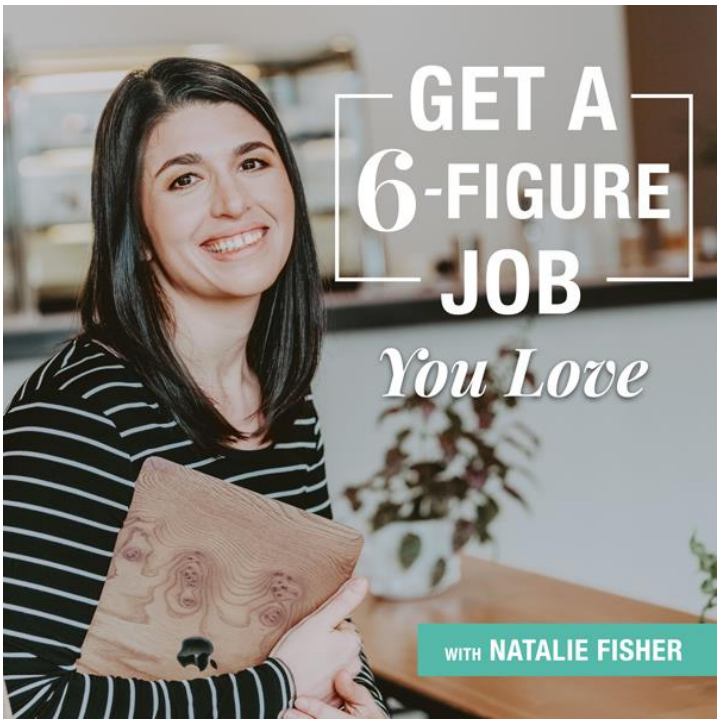
Ep #29: When Feedback is Not Available



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Natalie Fisher

Get a 6-Figure Job You Love with Natalie Fisher

This is the Get a 6-Figure Job You Love podcast, episode 29, when feedback is not available,

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 and your career. On this podcast, you will create real mindset shifts that will lead to big results and big changes in your career and your income. No fluff here. If you want to get a six-figure job you love and create real concrete results in your industry and make a real impact, you're in the right place. Are you ready? Let's go.

Welcome to the podcast this week, everyone. Today I'm talking about a topic that comes up a lot, and I'm going to show you how to navigate it in the best way. So feedback, when we can't get it, we seem to ask for it, but there's nothing we can really do to get it because it's just not something that is appropriate in certain situations for hiring managers, recruiters, or people to provide, especially in the honest way that we might like it, or that might actually be useful to us. Right? And feedback is a big topic in the workplace as well, like from your boss or from your coworkers and stuff and how we interpret the feedback and all that. But for this particular episode, I'm going to explain how to navigate when you really want to get feedback and you're not, and you're feeling frustrated and defeated. And you feel like if you could just get that feedback, then you'd be so much farther ahead. If you could just get that feedback, then things would be different for you. Right? So that's what I want to address here.

So we want the feedback. So what we try to do normally to get the feedback is we will ask, right? And sometimes we will get some non-answer, some fluffy answer, and sometimes we won't get anything. And sometimes very, very occasionally, we'll get a really helpful answer. But that's super, super rare. And so the reason why it doesn't work, why we're not able to get it is you probably know that as an HR person, we're advised not to be specific. Right? And it's because most people are not like you listening, right? There's the risk of them getting the company in trouble or suing the company or finding out later that they hired someone who didn't have that experience that they told you that you needed.

They don't want to give out information because it's more than their job is worse than if you put yourself in their shoes, because I've been in their shoes too, it's not easy. It's not an easy position to be in because it's hard for the person who probably maybe wants to give the feedback, right? I've been in that position lots of times where I want to give the feedback, which is probably why I ended up on the other side of this whole situation. So now I'm helping you versus helping the company hire. But being on that side is very difficult also for the HR person who maybe wants to really give the feedback to help this person, but can't risk it because we don't know what the person is going to do. And also

I've seen a lot of situations where just a side note story, we didn't hire somebody in one of my previous workplaces.

And then we had an open house because we had a new office and we opened up a new office. And so we kind of invited everybody to this open house and this candidate that we had turned down, that we did not select, he came to the open house and he got a little bit too drunk. And he was very vocal about how he thought it was very unfair that he was not hired and how had all the skills needed. And we didn't provide him specific feedback, but he was already really angry about it. And he already came and caused a disturbance. And people do a lot worse than that. Right? So it's just because it's more than the person's job is worth to really give you that honest feedback. And sometimes it's not even going to be useful to you. So sometimes it really and truly wasn't a fit and you wouldn't have been happy there.

And I know that sometimes that's hard to hear at the time, but a lot of the times that is true and it saved you from being in a situation where you'd really didn't fit in. So that's why, and we just can't get the feedback, right? So it doesn't work. We can keep asking, and I do recommend that you do keep asking, and I'm going to explain to how your chances are highest to get some feedback. But if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. And that's totally something that we can still succeed in spite of. Right? So what you need to do is first, step one is accept that the feedback is not going to be readily available for you and that it's okay. Because once we can accept that, then we're not making the feedback responsible for you succeeding or not. Right? It's not anybody's responsibility to give you feedback, right?

Because if that were the case, then you are screwed. It's like, "Okay, well I can't get feedback. So I don't know what I did wrong. Therefore I don't know." And you're in this space of like, I don't know. And when you're in the space of I don't know what I'm doing wrong, I don't know what I'm doing wrong, you're kind of cutting off all answers to what is going to make you better every time. Right? Because there's always things that you can do to improve. And even if you did give the best interview ever, and you still didn't get the job, that doesn't mean that even the best feedback could have helped you. Right? Because we just don't know what could have happened there. So step one, what you need to do is first accept that the feedback is not going to be readily available and that you can have a process for asking.

And I'll explain to you how to do that in the best way. However, don't make the feedback responsible for you succeeding. So let's say we know we're never going to get feedback ever. Now what? And it's completely up to you to figure this out on your own. Now what? That gives all the power back to you and completely makes it totally fine, the feedback is hard to get, it's not a problem. You're going to be able to figure this out, and I'm going to help you do that. So that's the first thing. The second thing is you can still ask because there is a small, small chance that you might get something helpful from opening up that

conversation. So the way that you need to ask is by completely understanding that it's hard for them to give it to you and ask with, try to appeal to their compassionate side.

And so even if it's something as simple as saying, "Look, I understand it's difficult for you to give out feedback. I only ask with the intent of making myself a stronger candidate in the future. If there was any information that you could give me, I would appreciate it from the bottom of my heart. If not, I completely understand." So that's appealing to the compassionate side of the person who might be giving you the feedback. And if they can at all give you anything they will probably want to anyway. But it'll be just for legal reasons, difficult depending on what it was. So that's a way that you can ask. And if they still don't or they still can't, again, not a problem, your success is not dependent upon their feedback and you will be able to figure it out no matter what. That has to be your attitude.

Otherwise, you'll just be like at the mercy of, "I don't know, they don't tell me. I don't know." Right? And when you're in that space, you're definitely not getting where you want to go. You're not any closer. You're just kind of swimming in this space of, I don't know and it's not really my fault because they can't tell me. And so you're kind of just giving them all the power. And when that happens, then you end up not where you want to be. So when I record these podcasts, I'm always thinking what's going to be most helpful to the listener. What's going to be most helpful to you. And this is like the main fundamental thing. It's like, your success is not dependent on their feedback. I mean, I could validate it and say, "Yeah, I totally think they should be giving feedback. It's really hard. This is wrong." But that's not helpful to you. Right?

And even if I do think that, I totally get what it's like to be in the shoes of an HR person wanting to give feedback and can't. So it's just kind of not helpful for us to keep expecting it and keep wanting it and keep thinking that it's very unfair that we don't get it. Right? So let's just say we don't get it. Now what? Okay? So that's out of the way.

Second thing that you need to do is be very honest with yourself. So say you are just doing a self evaluation, right? So there's ways to evaluate yourself with lots of things that you can ask yourself. Right? And a lot of the times, when I'm doing these evaluations with my clients, they will know things that they would have liked to have tweaked, or they would like to do better next time. And this way it brings everything back to you.

So you might've had a better answer to a question next time, or you might've forgotten to ask something or you might've known that you were in a very nervous energy. You might've known that you didn't connect very well with the person. You might've known that you kind of rambled on for too long when you needed to give a concise answer. Right? So a lot of the times we're not even giving ourselves that credit for knowing what we already know, because we are

outsourcing that responsibility to someone else to give us the answers. In this case, especially, they have to be found within ourselves because that's where all the responsibility and all the power lies is back to you. So when this is the case, do a self evaluation, right?

So this is what I go through with my clients and I'm very good at pinpointing, okay, this sounds like this is what went wrong. And I'll ask them some more questions and I'll get some more information. And then I'll find out that they were in people-pleasing mode or they were trying to do this, or they didn't convey the value, they missed out a really important detail of the story. Right? So do a self evaluation and ask yourself, what is it that you really feel you could have done better? For yourself, right? This is the only way that you will get better at every interview. So if you go to five interviews and you do a very, very detailed evaluation of yourself afterwards, you go to another, there is no way that you were in the same place you were when you started. So that's what you need to do is the second thing. Okay?

And the third thing is you need to step it up. So imagining all the candidates are just doing the same things, they're going in there, they're answering questions, they're starting to ask some questions, they're engaging. But imagine they're just kind of doing the bare minimum for an interview, which is mostly just answering the questions, right? So if you were to step it up and find a way to really convey your value in a way that no one else really has thought of doing, no one else has done, how could you stand out and ask yourself that question? So I've had a lot of clients do this in super creative ways. And so I asked them these questions and they come up with these answers themselves and they're really able to come up with some super creative things. So one of my clients, for example, she created a PowerPoint marketing plan for the marketing director position that she was going for.

They did not ask her to do that. And she really impressed them and they were really thrilled by the work that she put into this plan, and they got excited about her plan and they brought her on. For example, one of my clients doing technical work, he had noticed that he'd been going to a lot of interviews and they had got him to do a white boarding exercise where he had to do a demonstration of something. And in one of the interviews, he was not asked to do that. And so I suggested I'm like, if he feels he's really strong in that area, he could just propose to do that for them anyway and show them anyway. And that was able to move him forward because they were able to see things that they wouldn't have been able to see from him otherwise. Another example is you can create a portfolio of anything that you've been doing, right?

So even if you are not a graphic designer, because for graphic designers, it's very common. It's like, we want your portfolio upfront before we interview you. Right? But for other positions, it's not, or maybe for writing positions, they want to see writing samples or whatever. You can figure out a way to show them a portfolio of you and your skills in a creative manner. Right? That's something

that some of my clients have done. Another super creative thing that one of my clients did was she had people call the hiring manager and offer references for her and tell the hiring manager why they needed to hire her because of their experience. And she was able to get the job from that. And it's just incredible how many ways that my clients have been creative in coming up with these things that they can do when they are thinking in the manner of what answers do I have, what could I come up with?

What could I do instead of, "I don't know, they're just not telling me what I did wrong. So I don't know. I'm just going to go back and do it again, I guess, but I don't know if it's going to work out. I hope it does, but I don't really know because I'm not getting feedback." Right? So you can't access those creative thinking skills that you have when you're that space of, I don't know. Right? So that's the third thing.

So I'll recap. The first thing you need to do is accept that feedback is not going to be there. You can ask for it in the way that I explained, to get the highest chance of getting something. But if you don't get it, then you don't get it. And to tell you, because this might be helpful for you. It's always going to be some derivative of you didn't connect with them. Like on a personal level, on a social level, they didn't feel the need to want to keep interacting with you. They didn't feel drawn to you, your energy, or you didn't convey the value strongly enough for them and you didn't tell strong stories that really captured them, or that really made them believe that you were the person.

It's going to be something along those lines. It wasn't you didn't connect with them or you didn't show the value strongly enough. And it's totally okay. It's totally okay that you went to that interview and didn't get the job. It doesn't define you. It doesn't mean anything about you. So part of being a human is we get to just try that again. We get to be like, okay, what worked? What didn't? What do I want to do differently? So the first thing, accepting feedback's not available, accepting that you take all responsibility for your results and your success, and no matter what, you're going to figure it out and it's up to you.

Secondly, do a really honest self-evaluation. Do not underestimate the power of what that gives you. You self evaluate, you know more than you think you do. So ask yourself, what do I know about how I did and ask yourself the questions that I just proposed. Thirdly, ask yourself how you can step it up, how you can stand out with what you have with your skills, with your personality. And it can't be something that depends on somebody else. It has to be something that you can do, that is directly within your control. And I promise you, there are hundreds of things you can do. There is no limit to the creativity that my clients have had. They impress me every day.

All right, why this works? It works because you're no longer waffling in the fact that it's unfair that you're not getting feedback. You accept it and you're now working on creating what you need to create in order to get the result that you

want. Brings the responsibility completely back to you. Therefore it brings the control completely back to you. It opens up your brain to come up with all the necessary ways that you could do this differently in order to get the result that you want. The skills you're going to need in order to do this. You're going to need creativity, you're going to need resourcefulness, you're going to need determination, you're going to need to be curious. So you're going to need to start thinking from a different part of your brain and accessing different ways of thinking.

So if it's on a scale and on the beginning part of the scale is the one, and this is where a lot of people are, they're just kind of like, "Well, I don't know. Nobody's telling me." They're kind of outsourcing the responsibility to the people that are not able to give them the feedback and that we know leads you nowhere. Right? We know that it gets you to the point where you're just going on interview after interview after interview kind of absolving yourself to, "Well, probably not going to get this one either because I didn't get the last ones." So that is just the perpetual thing that you create for yourself because that's your idea of what is really happening. It's like you reporting the news, "Well, I don't know. They don't tell me. I don't know."

And then a 10 on this scale, to go to the other extreme, is okay, that information's not available. What am I going to do? And you write out all the things you're going to do and you keep thinking about it. So if you don't have an answer right now, that's okay. Quite often, I don't have answers immediately for my problems, but you give your brain that information to chew on. You're like, "Okay, what am I going to do about this? How am I going to get creative and resourceful in figuring this out? How am I going to word my request for feedback so it's more likely that I might get some? Who could I talk to about it? What else could I do? What other ideas could I get? What else could I present?" And we know it's possible for you. If one person in your situation has achieved what you want to achieve in the world, you can do that too. Totally. Right? It's just the way that you are thinking. So that is the steps.

And then I wanted to just cover a few caveats to where you might not get the job because of something completely out of your control anyway. So I have heard of the most bizarre situations happening. And of course, they can't tell you as a candidate because it's just not something they would do. So there could be completely crazy situations going on within the organization. So they could be handling their own internal issue. That could be their software had a major bug and they had to put all their resources into fix that and they had the pause the hiring for now, they had their own legal issue. I've heard of, in some cases, hiring managers having lawsuit issues with staff and that position got put on hold or canceled, organization restructured, maybe the CEO's son was hired instead at the last minute. We have no idea. So literally that stuff could be happening, the position could be put on hold and really it doesn't have anything to do with you at all. And they're not probably going to tell you that. So that's a possibility.

And then generally, it's going to come down to you didn't connect properly on a social, personal level. You didn't give the value, show the value strongly enough. It's going to be one of those two things are under that umbrella of those two things, which when we work together, I really help you to get really clear on. Or, you did do a really good job of everything, you did connect with them, you did present your skills and value really well, but somebody else just did it better. And that's where there's growth for you in your opportunity to step it up or very possibly, you could go to another interview and you could be the best candidate in that situation. So sometimes we are so quick to beat ourselves up, tell ourselves we should have done it better and that we're failures and that we suck and that we should've known that answer, but we didn't. We blew that opportunity. We don't want to go on another one, afraid to go back out there.

Well first of all, beating yourself up is never useful. Secondly, sometimes it's completely unnecessary because all those things are not true. So you always want to practice compassion with yourself, kindness to yourself, knowing that you are a human and that you are always available to improve, step it up and look at what you did and look at how you can improve on it. So there's never anything gone wrong here when we don't get the job, it's completely okay. And there's always an opportunity to go deeper with the work to explore, to master this process even farther. And this process applies to anything you're trying to accomplish in your life.

So I really like the job hunt process, the career transition process, because it's very clearly defined. It's like, okay, when I am in my new job, making this amount of money, I have been successful here. And then you can move to the next thing you want to complete and make successful in your career. And this process allows you to grow so much as a human and allows you to grow as a professional and in your life in other areas too, because it's a challenge that really changes us and challenges us to step up to the next level. And a lot of people stay really safe because they don't want to go through this, right? They stay in the job that keeps them safe, where they feel like they're buying into that myth of I'm just lucky to be here. I'm lucky to have a paycheck and a job. When deep down, they know that they want to get better and they want to make more money and do something else at a higher level where they know they're truly capable.

And then lastly, if you are showing up as your true, authentic self, and you honestly believe you put your best self forward, you were acting as your true, authentic self, you stepped it up as much as you possibly could, and they still did not move forward with you, there is no shame in that. Because at that point, it probably means that in order for you to get that job, you would have had to have changed something fundamentally about who you are. And if you had to do that, then would that really be the place for you? So there's also that to keep in mind. If you're not hired and you were really showing up as yourself, then first of all, props for you for being your real self in the interview, because a lot of

people are already trying to pretend to be someone they're not, and still not getting the job, even though they're pretending to be someone they're not.

So if you're showing up authentically as you and you don't get the job, and you're really proud of everything that you did and everything that you showed them, then you can just give yourself validation for that and move forward. Again, with the dating analogy, it's like you don't want to be a match for everyone and you're not going to be. So in some cases, it just wasn't a right fit for you. And you just didn't know that. Another thing I like to think about is it was always going to happen that way. We just didn't know it yet.

So thank you for listening my friends. I hope this was really helpful to you. Cheers to taking responsibility for your own results and stepping it up in every situation, using it as an opportunity to step it up. All right, my friends, thank you so much for listening. I will talk to you next week.

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