EP #255: how to get your employer to pay for skills training for you

Natalie Fisher: Hello, hello! Welcome to today's episode of the podcast. I've got a good friend, colleague, Kim. She is the host of her own podcast, which I'll let her introduce to you, and Kim, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and share your podcast?

Kim: Thanks, Natalie! So, my name is Kim Nichol, and I am the host of the New Manager Podcast. So, I help… I help new managers

Kim: With all the things that nobody tells you about when you first step into that leadership role.

Natalie Fisher: Fantastic. And today, we're talking about how to help peop- help people get their company to pay for professional development, or skills trainings.

Natalie Fisher: And I'm excited about this topic, I've got a lot to ask you about today, Kim, so I hope you're ready.

Kim: Yeah, this is seriously one of my favorite topics. I'm so glad that you reached out to have this conversation.

Natalie Fisher: Awesome. Okay, so let's start with, like, the problem that I see mostly with my people, and then you can kind of dive in and see where the gaps in thinking are. So, the problem that I see most of the time is people think that they have to get the… they have to get all these degrees and certifications before they can get hired.

Natalie Fisher: And sometimes that's true, sometimes it's not. Most of the time, I find people are already getting too many, and then they keep interviewing, and then it's still… they're still having some… they're still having the same problem, because it's not the degree or the certification that actually gets them hired. Do you have thoughts about this?

Kim: I think that is such a great point. I think, for me, I'm usually having conversations with people who, number one, do not even know

Kim: that their work might be happy to pay for them to get professional development, whether that's working with a coach, or taking a course, or, you know, or getting a degree or certificate. Sometimes it's just not even on their radar. And then the other piece is there's often a lot of reluctance

Kim: Or fear about making that ask.

Kim: And having conversations just to bring awareness of, yeah, like, your work might have budget for this, you're actually helping them.

Kim: By spending that money in the most effective way, and also helping people have the confidence to ask in a way where they're approaching it from a place of genuine.

Kim: You know, kind of grounded confidence, as opposed to feeling like, you know, they're a little kid asking an adult for permission to have something.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, yeah. And so, I see it usually, like,

Natalie Fisher: people don't want to… they feel like they have to pay for it themselves, right? And then…

Natalie Fisher: So you'll be able to bring a great perspective here, because you're… I'm assuming you're working with people who are already in the jobs, and they just didn't know about.

Kim: Yes. Yeah.

Natalie Fisher: And I'm working with people who are wanting to get into new jobs and thinking that these things are required beforehand. And so I'm seeing that this is not the case, because what happens with my clients is they'll… before they've come to me, they might go and get a certification and be like, okay, well, I was told I needed this PMP thing to… certification to get the job.

Natalie Fisher: So I went and got it. And then I interviewed, and then they said, no, no, no, but you need…

Natalie Fisher: Scrum Master now, and then they're like, okay, I'll go back and get that, and then they go that and get that, and they're like, oh, no, no, no, but we need Agile. And this could be with different companies, they're just getting different reasons told why they can't get the job, and it's not… it's because the root cause isn't because they're missing a certification.

Natalie Fisher: So, that's kind of where… where I see this, and I'm thinking, in my head, I'm like, okay, but you… the certification was never the problem.

Natalie Fisher: you… it was interview skills, kind of the stuff that I teach about value creation, value… communicating your value to get into the role, and then when you get into the role, then you can make a really good case for why you need that, or why you want that, or even, like, negotiating it as part of your starting salary. Have you ever heard of that?

Kim: Yeah, absolutely. Especially even just the question when you're interviewing, find out what kind of professional development do they do? You know, some organizations have really robust internal programs, and it's part of their culture.

Kim: Other programs, you know, other companies or organizations, it's not so much of the norm. And other places say, yeah, we will give you this much budget, you know, every employee gets this much budget a year, and you can spend it any way you want on your professional development. I think it's just good to ask how that works.

Kim: In the organization.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, absolutely. And so, do you have any, like, advice on how to make the ask, or how to make the pitch, or, like, more around the mindset of, like, what it takes to start doing that?

Kim: Yeah, %. So the first thing is to realize that very often, there is budget set aside.

Kim: for this, and if that's true, then you are truly helping them make the best use of that money, and you're also approaching this as a leader. Like, you're identifying a need.

Kim: You have researched a solution, and now you are coming prepared with your best recommendation about why this is the correct solution. So the first mindset is you're not asking for professional development because there is something deficient about you.

Kim: And I see this sometimes with managers, because a lot of people get promoted to a manager role, and they've never had training in managing people.

Kim: And they start to realize, oh, there are all these skills that I would like to have, that I would like to take a course or work with a coach on, and then they fear, but if I'm asking for professional development.

Kim: does that signal that I am not capable of this job? Like, that's one of the big fears. And so, the first mindset is actually realizing, no, that's not what you're signaling. You're actually signaling, when you ask for professional development.

Kim: That you are being proactive, that you are self-motivated and self-driven to take the initiative, that you are tracking your own

Kim: You know, your own professional career path.

Kim: That you're not gonna wait for somebody else to do that for you. And especially when you identify, out of all of the different

Kim: possible professional development skills trainings there are. You have taken the time to identify the specific one that you would like the most.

Kim: And you are then going to your manager, or to your HR business partner, and you're saying, here's a specific thing that I want.

Kim: Here's why I want it, right? Maybe it's because the timing fits really well, maybe the price point is good, maybe there's some kind of other, you know, benefit to that specific one that you are asking for.

Kim: You're giving them reasons to say yes to you, and you're really presenting yourself as someone who is taking responsibility and really thinking ahead, thinking big picture.

Natalie Fisher: It's also an easy way to let your organization invest in you.

Kim: Because, especially what I've been seeing lately is that sometimes organizations, they don't have the resources to give you a pay increase, although, I mean, you never know, they might, if you ask and you build that ask up.

Kim: But sometimes they'll… they might say, well, you know, we can't give you a raise, or we can't give you a bonus, but we can give you money for this professional development and growth, because that will directly affect

Kim: Your ability to do great work for us here.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, and that's exactly what I was thinking about, because I did an ask of my own when I was in admin, and I moved up, so I… my story is that I was a perception in admin, and I moved to HR manager through the ranks in years' time, and one of the things that I did consistently was ask for training. I was like, okay, I need some recruitment training, because I can see how that will directly cut the costs of all the recruiters, because then I can do that part.

Natalie Fisher: And then I ended up hiring an assistant who helped me with that, and it was, like, making it really clear, like, we could save this much money per year if this was brought in-house.

Kim: Yeah, because the people, you know, your boss or the HR people, they might not be able to connect those dots.

Kim: Because they're not looking at that part of the business.

Kim: the way that you are. Yeah. So, the fact that you're raising that is also… it's just a very positive signal about your value and about the way you're contributing to your organization's success.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, absolutely. And I think that a big part of it is making that very clear as far as… and, like, one of the big things that I did was… and sometimes it didn't work, like, sometimes I would go and I'd be like, okay, they weren't really on board with it, or they were like, yeah, yeah, we'll talk about that later. Like, it wasn't, like, an immediate yes, and so I had to kind of go back and be like, okay.

Natalie Fisher: But they're not seeing how much this is gonna save. Like, maybe I didn't say it clearly enough, like, this is exactly what, like, the benefits that we can expect to see if I can get this training.

Kim: Absolutely, and what I also tell my students and clients is the goal is not to get a yes every time. The goal is to become the person who asks, because the more comfortable you are asking, the more yeses you are going to get.

Natalie Fisher: And when they say no, you are still getting so much value and insight out of that no. You're also creating a record.

Kim: Right? So this might be then a conversation you bring up in your next performance review, or when the budget is getting set for the coming year, and you say, you know, I had asked for this training last year, we weren't able to make it work. Before we commit to our budget in the coming year.

Kim: what do you think? Is it possible to… to set the funds aside for that training coming up? So, just because you get a no in the moment, it's not a failure. You really are just getting more insight and more information and documenting your ambition and desire for growth.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's something that people… like, I've had clients, they go and ask for a raise or something, and they don't get it, and then immediately think, oh, I did something wrong, I don't deserve it, or…

Natalie Fisher: things like that. And that's just a mistake that… because it has nothing to do with them, I'm sure.

Kim: Absolutely, and I think this is one of the things with professional development specifically, it's really…

Kim: Like, it's a very invisible…

Kim: kind of benefit, you know, because you don't always see what your colleagues are asking for, you don't always see what they're getting approval for, so it's easy to either believe that it doesn't exist when it actually does.

Kim: Or you might misattribute the no to yourself personally, when it might be more a reflection of the organizational state.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah. And what would you say are some, like…

Natalie Fisher: some things that people could say directly, like some examples that they could use in their pitch. Does anything come to mind?

Kim: Yeah, I mean, the simple framework is identify what you want to ask for, and be really clear for yourself about why you're choosing that thing. Remembering that when you're going to make your pitch, like, so the first thing is identify what you want. The second thing is identify who you are going to ask.

Kim: It might be your direct manager, it might be, your HR partner, it might be, you know, you might have an organizational, you know, someone who's specifically tasked with professional development.

Kim: So you want to figure out who you're going to ask, and then you want to think through when you're going to make that ask. Is it as part of a regular one-on-one cadence?

Kim: Maybe you're going to plan to bring it up at your performance review, maybe you need to schedule a special meeting to talk about this specific thing, like, what are the timing considerations?

Kim: And then make a plan to follow through. Because sometimes we have the plan, and it makes sense intellectually.

Kim: But then our feelings get in the way, and we get nervous, or we, you know… So create that path of following through. And one other thing that's important to remember is that when you are pitching whoever, whether it's your boss, or whether it's the HR business partner.

Kim: Remember that you're not just pitching for their approval, you're giving them the information that they will need to advocate on your behalf to whoever they might need to get a sign-off.

Kim: So they might need… they might be supportive. They might say, that's a great idea, but now I'm going to need to bring it to finance, and I'm going to have to provide a compelling reason to the finance guy. So when you're pitching, think about it as you're equipping that person.

Kim: To promote and get.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Kim: The next level of approval for the thing that you want.

Natalie Fisher: That's so good, too, because I talk about, different… the different types of people, and how different things resonate with them. So the HR person might be like, oh yeah, that sounds great, but, like, the finance person cares about different things.

Natalie Fisher: So…

Kim: So, like… Yeah.

Natalie Fisher: What do you think, like, the HR person would care about versus what the finance person cares about more? How do you pitch that differently?

Kim: Absolutely. It is about understanding, kind of, what is the… what is the multi-level value of you having this experience. And I think… I'll share one example with you.

Kim: I had a client, and she worked for a small startup, so number one, there was no HR person. They weren't big enough to have someone dedicated to that, and there was no professional development budget.

Natalie Fisher: Like, that just did not exist.

Kim: So she felt very uncomfortable asking for something that there was no precedent for it happening.

Kim: And she went to the CEO founder.

Kim: Knowing that his two biggest, like, things that he cared about were time and money. He wants everything to happen fast, and everything to happen was very, very money-conscious.

Kim: the spend.

Kim: But she also knew that they were growing, and that they were planning to hire several more people, and her fear was that she was going to be ill-prepared to deal with the sudden influx of new staff.

Kim: So she went, and she said, okay, I know this person cares about time, and I know that they care about money. So she's like, here's this course that I want to take.

Kim: It's gonna cost this much money. This is why this is the course I want, and why this is gonna be a good use of my time and money.

Kim: Because if I learn these things now, then I will be better prepared when we do all this hiring in months, and then those people can hit the ground running, will spend less time with the onboarding, because I'll be more prepared.

Kim: And, you know, it won't take a lot of time to do this course because of how it's structured. So she really presented it in a way that was in line with the things he cared about.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Kim: And once he was able to see that, and he's like, oh, the thing you want, it matches the thing that I want.

Natalie Fisher: Yes, like, what's in it for him was really clear.

Kim: Absolutely.

Natalie Fisher: Like, if we're talking about, like, a few thousand dollars, probably, in most circumstances for professional development, like, it's different than going to ask for something that's, like, a few hundred dollars, would you say? Or let's just, like, knowing…

Kim: totally depends on the organization, because there are some organizations, and, you know, their policy is every employee has $to spend, and all you have to do is submit this form and tell us why it connects to your, you know, your KPIs and your actual business function.

Kim: Like, for some organizations, it's a real easy sign-off. For others, you know, it just really depends.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Natalie Fisher: So, when your client went to go ask for this, when you were talking about that story, I was like, oh, I wonder how much that actually cost, because then… because I'm thinking about it in numbers, like, if she… if it… let's say it cost $could she show how she was gonna easily be able to save $on the other side of it?

Kim: Well, here's what's really cool about it. So, the actual course was a few hundred dollars, but she still pitched it like it was, you know, this really big thing.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kim: But the cool, cool thing that came out of it was after she got the approval, the conversation did not stop there.

Natalie Fisher: Mmm.

Kim: what happened after was she went to the CEO, she's like, you know, thank you so much, I'm, you know, really looking forward to this course, it's gonna be really great. And she said, but you know what? I shouldn't be the only one in our company

Kim: That gets professional development.

Natalie Fisher: Mmm.

Kim: I think we're at the stage in our organization's growth where we should think about making some kind of policy about how we as an organization support the growth and development of people, especially if we want them to stay. And that conversation turned into a decision to give everyone a $budget

Kim: To spend however they wanted, as long as it was related to their professional development and training and the skills that they needed at their job.

Kim: And I love that story, because it also really points to the fact that when you advocate for yourself, you're also planting seeds to advocate for others in your organization that can create a benefit far beyond that one thing that you are asking for.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, yeah. My mind's going to, like…

Natalie Fisher: how to show the other side of how much… like, if it's a few hundred dollars and you can save, like, even a few hours on onboarding, or put some system in place that's, like, so easy, like, for it to pay for itself, then it's, like, a no-brainer for the CEO to say yes to that.

Natalie Fisher: And then, like, make sense for him to then have seen a successful experience with that, and be like, yeah, let's, like, let's double, triple that, let's get everybody doing that same kind of result.

Kim: And a lot of… and a lot of that, too, it really just depends on the specific value set.

Kim: of leadership. Like, some leaders, they're just already really bought in on, yeah, of course we want you to always be getting better. Like, that's really good for us. We're now getting an upskilled, you know, an up-skilled team.

Kim: And we love seeing people, you know, invest and get better, because that's just good for us. But you will also encounter leadership and organizational culture that is not like that.

Kim: And if you are in that kind of organization, what I always tell with my students is, you want to be really clear if that's true. So if you're getting the no, and you're realizing, yeah, they're not going to actually budge on this.

Kim: That's good information for you to have about where you are, and about maybe if you want to stay there, or if you want to start thinking beyond. And do not wait for your organization to approve your growth.

Kim: In order to get that growth for yourself. Because ultimately, like, your career is in your hands, and you still have to make decisions about what will help you at work and beyond.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, absolutely. So you would advise looking at going somewhere else, or just considering where you are, instead of, like, trying to change the things in place?

Kim: I think that's always an option, right? Like, we don't want to be delusional about, like, oh… because I think sometimes we do this. We think, well, they've said no, but I just need to try harder.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Kim: Or I just need to be better. Maybe, but maybe you just work in an organization where the culture is always such that they're not… that's just not the kind.

Natalie Fisher: of organized.

Kim: that it is, which is okay, but just be really clear about that for yourself. And as you're continuing to see, you know, hmm, I wonder if I can influence, I wonder if I can shift this.

Natalie Fisher: Hmm.

Kim: Of course. But also, do not hobble yourself.

Kim: By waiting to get the approval or the change in the organization.

Natalie Fisher: Before deciding, okay, like, maybe next time I want to work for an organization that is really into growth. Or maybe I need to make sure that I always set budget aside.

Kim: for my own self, knowing I probably won't get support.

Kim: From the organization.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, and it's making me think of a bunch of stuff, too, because it's like, how do you know? Because when I did my requests in the beginning, I did get no's, and then I went back, and I got really good at making the process, like, really beneficial, like, I developed a process.

Natalie Fisher: to do it for myself, because I did it multiple times, but, like, I could have just thought, oh, they're just not gonna approve that, right? Like, I could have just easily thought, no, it's just not gonna happen, and just not continued to ask.

Natalie Fisher: So, like, how did you say that someone would know if it's just not in the organization, they're just not gonna ever do it, or it is you, and you haven't presented the case properly?

Kim: So, you look to the data, and so the data means, how many asks did I make, and how many different ways did I ask?

Natalie Fisher: Mmm.

Kim: Right? So if you make one ask and you get a no, that's not really enough data to be able to know what it is. Right? But having that mindset of, okay, I'm gonna try a few things.

Kim: I'm gonna be really curious. I want to find out what kind of organization do I work in. I want to find out, you know, maybe there is another way I can approach this. Or sometimes what happens is you have a change in upper management, and now your current leader is gone, you've got a new leader, and they have a totally different philosophy.

Kim: And now, all of a sudden, things have changed, just because of who is now in that seat. And you could not have predicted it, but that is your current reality. So having this kind of curiosity and this data mindset of, let's find out what we can find out.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Kim: Is what I would say.

Natalie Fisher: Because, like you said, you won't necessarily know who else is getting approved for what, and unless there's a strict policy, or just, like, an open policy in place that people know about, like, you wouldn't necessarily know about it. So, if those things are not data that you have access to, then you have to rely on your own data, and so asking once, obviously, not enough times.

Natalie Fisher: How many times would you say, in how many different ways, roughly, would you say, like, okay, I've tried, like, times, and it's like, just, this organization just isn't gonna support it?

Kim: You know what? It would be false to choose a specific number, because it really just depends. Like, it depends on you, your life situation, your organization, your organization situation. But, you know, I think it's, like, this idea that career is a very dynamic

Kim: thing. Like, it's not static. I think… I feel like now, even compared to or years ago, I feel like every industry is going through all kinds of different…

Kim: Change and uncertainty, which both can create lots of room for opportunity, right?

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, yeah.

Kim: you know, kind of having this constant curiosity. And also, sometimes I think we forget, in an organization, that we can also get information by talking to other people.

Kim: So if you're feeling like you're always hitting a brick wall in your ask, you can always, you know, is there a peer or someone that you can go to and say, hey, I just need a real clear gut check? I've been asking and advocating

Kim: for myself to get this professional development, and I'm honestly not clear if it's because I'm asking in the wrong way, or if it's just not gonna happen.

Kim: And you can get the perspective of someone who is a little bit outside, who might be able to shine a light and offer an insight that can help you understand what's happening here.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah. And how do you feel about being, like, really direct with leaders, and just being, like…

Kim: It totally depends.

Natalie Fisher: three times, and it doesn't seem like it's getting through. Is this ever gonna happen, or is there… like, I like asking questions like, what would it take to be able to make this happen, or things like that, like…

Kim: Yeah, I mean, it totally depends, you know, power dynamics are real, and so I always advise, you know, be mindful of the kind of leader and the kind of culture that you're working with, because…

Natalie Fisher: You know that best, like, you know what you can say best. I mean…

Kim: Absolutely.

Natalie Fisher: I've worked in some situations where I've just… their directness has really worked well for me with that, and then kind of walk away with something I can actually do something about, kind of.

Kim: Yeah, and there's also, you know, the way that we ask can affect the way that people respond, right? So, if it's, you know, from this place of, like, come on, I've asked times, what's it gonna take?

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kim: Let all of our resentment pour through. That probably will not help us. But if it's from this genuine place of, okay, I'm really curious, you know, I know that other people have had approval for other kinds of professional development. I was really surprised that my requests have been declined. I'm trying to understand

Kim: You know, what would it take, or is there something else?

Natalie Fisher: Let's go.

Kim: on.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Kim: You know, that would help me understand, kind of, what the timeline is, or what I need to be working on. I think if you approach it from a direct, collaborative way, you can get more information.

Natalie Fisher: Absolutely.

Natalie Fisher: reboot that contrast, because it's so important. Like, the way the words can be the same, and the tone can be totally different, and then it can just create a totally different dynamic, so…

Kim: Absolutely.

Kim: Yeah.

Kim: Yeah. And I… and it's making me think, too, you know, I worked with someone, and she spent, I think, like, … to months lining everything up to be able to work with me.

Kim: Because she knew that her organization's budget for professional development was not going to fully cover the cost of private coaching with me.

Kim: But she also knew that sometimes there were exceptions. And so she took… she was so strategic about this, you know, understanding, kind of, what's the… what's the policy.

Kim: But when are there exceptions? And when does she want to start bringing this up, and start planting the seeds in her conversations, and timing the budget, and doing everything within her power to influence the outcome that she wanted?

Kim: And in the end, she was successful. And she was successfully able to get her work to approve more budget than was the policy.

Kim: And was able to get the thing that she wanted, you know? But it did take some time, and she knew she was going to get some no's up front, but that was part of her overall strategy and plan.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, and I think that comes down to, like, playing the long game and being willing to not give up, and just almost being prepared for that adversity ahead of time.

Kim: Yeah.

Natalie Fisher: seeing it through. So, yeah, well, congratulations to your client, that's awesome, that's a good story.

Natalie Fisher: So, if you don't ask for it, or you don't get it, and then you decide you're gonna go on your own to get it,

Natalie Fisher: I feel like there's benefits either way, and that it's still stuff you put on your resume, you're… you're… you can, like, ask for more money in the next job that you get, or the next position that you get, so…

Natalie Fisher: Do you see people doing that a lot? Like, just being like, okay, I'm gonna do… I'm just gonna pay for it myself, or…

Natalie Fisher: Do you think people are more likely to be like, I'll just wait for the company to pay for it, and if they don't, then I guess I just don't do it?

Kim: I see both, and it depends. I've also seen people pay for it themselves, and then they go back to their work, and they say, you know, I paid out of pocket for this, and I'm wondering if I can get reimbursed.

Kim: And then having their work reimburse them, even after they've paid for it themselves. Which is always really cool, because they usually were… did not expect

Kim: to get, you know, reimbursed for that. But one of the reasons why I've seen people not ask their work, or decide to go on their own, is sometimes when the work is paying for it, your work wants some kind of report, or some kind of, you know, show us the evidence that this is making a difference. And for some people, especially with leadership coaching, sometimes it can be very personal.

Kim: And it can also be more expansive than your specific role. We're actually talking big picture about your career. And so for sometimes, some folks just want that feeling of absolute confidentiality and privacy.

Natalie Fisher: Oh.

Kim: Where it just feels like, I don't want to have to talk to my boss about what I am learning in this course, or what I'm doing in my coaching. I just want to have that time be for me, and I want it to not, you know, I want to feel zero obligation.

Natalie Fisher: To show to my work.

Kim: To prove that I'm growing.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, fair.

Kim: So, that's what some people do. But, you know, but others will just, you know, choose to do it for themselves. They'll say, you know, if my work will pay for it, great, but if not, this matters to me anyways, so I'll do it.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, yeah. And how soon after someone starts do you think that it's appropriate to ask for?

Kim: I think it's a… I think it's a great conversation to have, in the onboarding stage, because that's also where you're learning just how do things work here.

Kim: So, you're going to want to ask, what is the performance review process? What is the timing and cycle of that? You know, because you… if, you know, if the performance review process is happening next month.

Kim: And you're days in. That's gonna look really different than if it's, you know, months from now. So when you're first getting oriented, I feel like professional development is one of those baseline questions. Your first question is just to understand, how does this work here?

Natalie Fisher: How does professional development work here? Are there internal programs and resources?

Kim: Is there a specific person I should talk with about it, or will that be my manager? Is there, you know, any budget or timing considerations I should know about as I'm planning?

Kim: the year. You know, you probably won't come in and say, okay, like, I've started, I'd really like to get my master's in, you know, X, Y, and Z. Like, that might not really be a fit, but you can do the information gathering and start figuring out who

Kim: who you'll want to talk to, how it works, what the timing is. Just gather all that information, and also that will help your manager to know that this is on your radar, that this is something that you care about.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, and I feel like even in the interview, like you said, if you've left an organization that doesn't provide it or support it, then in your next job, you want to make sure that's something that is considered, and you can even ask in the interview those… some of those questions that you mentioned. Maybe not all of it.

Natalie Fisher: But, yeah.

Natalie Fisher: Is there anything else you feel like people should know about this topic?

Kim: I will just say that the practice of asking for professional development is also the practice of self-advocacy.

Kim: Where you are identifying something that you want, and you are advocating on your own behalf for it. And I've generally found that self-advocacy is such, you know, it's something most people need to get better at.

Kim: We tend to be really good at advocating for others. We speak up for our family, our friends, our colleagues, we tend to do that very easily.

Natalie Fisher: But first…

Kim: many reasons. A lot of folks have a hard time asking for things for themselves. And if you think about it, the skill of self-advocacy, that's also how you get a raise, that's how you get a bonus, that's how you get a promotion.

Kim: And those, you don't want the first time you practice asking for something to be in one of those very, very high-stakes situations. So think about and realize that

Kim: When you're asking for professional development, that is a lower stakes Form of self-advocacy practice.

Kim: And it will help you become more prepared and equipped when you are asking for a raise, when you are having conversations about a bonus, or about a promotion, or about something else that you want. So, I think when you see it as part of this bigger picture.

Kim: I… it becomes easier.

Natalie Fisher: to do.

Kim: Yeah, and it's also a win-win, it's such an easy win-win.

Kim: Absolutely.

Natalie Fisher: Awesome.

Natalie Fisher: Awesome. So, I'll just do a little… a bit of a recap, maybe we'll find some more stuff, but, before we wrap up, so…

Natalie Fisher: you talked about the fears that people have in asking, why, like… did you mention how to kind of overcome those fears? I guess you gave the mindset of how to kind of think about it in a way where it wasn't so scary. They might already have the budget, it's probably already something they're open to.

Natalie Fisher: What people usually try to do if they… if they get a no. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Kim: Just realize a no is not a problem, and no is information.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, great, great answer. And then, the results that you get from… from asking, either way, whether you get a yes or no, what are those results?

Kim: Yeah, I mean, you might be surprised by all the yeses you get. I have had a number of clients say, I did not realize there was so much available for me if only I asked for it. So, you know, you want…

Natalie Fisher: ask for?

Kim: You want to be a person who asks for things.

Natalie Fisher: They can't say yes.

Kim: Until you ask.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah.

Kim: They'll make it easy for them to say yes to you.

Natalie Fisher: Awesome.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, so…

Natalie Fisher: really good conversation, really good information that you provided. I love the simplicity that you brought to the table of, like, how simple and clean this can be. And yeah, tell us about… tell us a little bit more about what you do and where people can find you.

Kim: Yeah, so I am a coach, I work with leaders, I work with humans, and you can find me on, my website, kimnichol.com. You can find me on LinkedIn, I post there, especially about work stuff.

Kim: And of course, you can find me at The New Manager Podcast. If you work with humans, this will help make your life easier.

Natalie Fisher: If you work with humans, I love that.

Natalie Fisher: Amazing! Okay, well, thank you so much! It was a great conversation, I think it'll bring a lot of value to people, and appreciate you being on the show.

Kim: Oh, thanks for having me, Natalie.

Natalie Fisher: Yeah, you're so welcome.