

Ep #13: Overcoming Job Rejections with Dr. V



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sarah Michelle

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Welcome to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*, a show for new NPs and students that want to pass their board exam the first time and make that transition from RN to NP as seamless as possible. I'm your host Sarah Michelle. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

Hey friends. A few weeks ago I was hanging out in my Facebook community for new NPs and saw two or three posts back-to-back about the job hunt. And ultimately what it's like to deal with job rejection as a new NP. For some of you out there, this may be the first time you've been turned down for a job. And it can feel really difficult to overcome that hurdle and keep applying, and keep trying, and keep moving forward in search of that job opportunity that's really going to be the best fit for you.

So today I'm bringing Dr. V back on the show with me to discuss the ins and outs of the job hunt process, and how we can help you guys overcome some of these hurdles that are popping up along the way. And by the way, Dr. V was on episode two if you missed it. So that's another great episode to listen to if you're still actively on the job hunt or plan to jump into that here soon. With all that being said, welcome, Dr. V, I'm so happy to have you back on the show.

Dr. V: Thank you for having me back, I'm super excited to be here.

Sarah: Yeah, absolutely. I know how much value you can bring to the students and I really feel like you and I are both each other's like ultimate cheerleaders in this space. So I really felt like, you know, we can cheer lead for these students a little bit too, that might not be feeling so great right now on the job hunt. And maybe just give a little bit of guidance too about some of these harder topics.

Dr. V: Absolutely. I know that and I was also on those posts and I was like, "No."

Sarah: Your heart is breaking.

Dr. V: It really is, and you just feel like, gosh, you know. I'm so glad that you're doing this episode because I think this is going to be a really great

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resource for those that are still in the job hunt and just kind of feeling discouraged. And I'm really hoping to be, like you said, a cheerleader for the students that are just needing a little bit of a mindset shift and a little bit of insight.

Sarah: Absolutely. It's all perspective in the end, so hopefully by the end of this episode you all will be feeling really good about yourselves. What is some guidance just to kind of start us off with that you would give our listeners if they're applying to a lot of jobs but they're not really hearing back in the first place? So they haven't even gotten to the point of job rejection because they're not hearing back.

Dr. V: Yeah, I often look at it almost like diagnosing. Like when you diagnose, what's wrong, right? If I'm not hearing back, you know, from even applications then there's something going on in the way that you're presenting yourself, right? What is it? Is it that you need to maybe revise your resume?

Take a really deep look into it. Is it really representing yourself and highlighting it, making sure that it is actually tailored toward the positions that you're seeking. You definitely don't want to just send out a generic resume and hit the apply, apply, apply button. Because when you do that, you know, it shows. It shows.

So any time that you are looking for a job, you are looking at the actual organization, you're looking and making sure that you're intentional about your application, and you're really finding out what is it about them that I want to work, why I want to work there? And then add that into the resume.

Add about what your previous skills are, highlight those throughout your resume. And that is how I would really start when it comes to, you know, your job search strategy. Look at your resume, make sure that, you know, if you're a new grad that you have clinical experiences down in your resume. That's going to be the closest experience you have to your new role. Right?

You know, another thing is if you're finding out that let's say you've done that, you have your resume all done and polished, I think that it's really

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important to also consider reaching out to your network. You know, finding out if there's previous preceptors that you can reach out to, there's faculty, friends, maybe. All of them might have people that know people. And you know, at the end of the day it really is about who you know.

So if you're able to really reach out and find out who is hiring, find out if there's maybe upcoming hiring, not necessarily something that's posted, find those unposted positions. You know, and also get creative, right? Maybe even drop off your resume to people in person, right? Old school it, you know.

And I think that is how I would start. Especially if you're not hearing back, you really want to see what is it? How am I presenting myself? How can I do this a little bit differently because what I'm doing isn't working.

Sarah: Yes, most definitely take a deep dive into your process. And something I'm going to talk about in an upcoming episode with Amanda from Resume Rx is just the sheer importance of that personalization piece that you mentioned, and how incredibly valuable it is to employers to feel like they have a resume that's tailored to them.

And also take a look at where you're applying too. You know, if you're applying to the same generic like LinkedIn job post that 200 people are also applying to, maybe that's kind of the gap in your process too. And maybe you really do need to kind of take a step out and start to network, just like you said.

What about if someone applies and then they get that dreaded return email that says, you know, "We decided we're not hiring right now. But we're going to hold on to your resume." What do you think the follow up on that should look like?

Dr. V: You know, I think when they say that they're not hiring right now, a lot of times it means they're not hiring right now. Right? I wouldn't hold out too much hope for those types of positions, I really wouldn't.

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If I was still on the job hunt in maybe three months or so I would still reach out and maybe even just keep in contact and just say, “Hey, just reaching out. Hope all is good, you know, I really had a great time interviewing, and was wondering what the status is on any positions that might be opening up soon.”

So every so often, I would probably recommend every three months if you're still on the job hunt and still very interested to reach out. But as far as, you know, holding out hope and waiting to continue to pursue that position, I would not do that.

Sarah: Yeah, and it really depends on how much you want that job too, if you're going to continue to follow up behind that when they say, you know, “We've got your resume, and we're kind of holding on to you.” But just like you said, you don't want to hold out hope for something that may or may not be coming too.

Dr. V: Exactly.

Sarah: You don't want to delay your job process and you not apply to other jobs because of this hope that something's coming.

Dr. V: Yes, exactly, exactly. And, you know, again, it's just about reaching out, keeping in contact. It's always a good idea to keep in contact.

As you may know, I was a previous APP manager and we would have these amazing candidates that, you know, we knew that were out of state and maybe we weren't hiring at the time, but they would keep reaching out. And that's just one of those recommendations. If you really want to be somewhere don't stop your job search, but continue that relationship, even if it's just, you know, touch base every few months or so.

Sarah: Yeah, I think there's something to be said for really putting yourself out there with these employers too and maintaining that consistency along the way of if you're applying for a job and you got an interview, and then kind of following up behind that point too.

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Dr. V: Yep, exactly.

Sarah: Now, I know something that we've discussed before is that every interview should kind of be viewed as a learning opportunity. So can you maybe elaborate on that a little bit more for our listeners?

Dr. V: Yeah, you know, so I'll tell you a quick story. When I first started interviewing, I was horrible at it. You know, I'm not sure if I mentioned this on episode two of the podcast but I went and I was like, "I'm not very good at this. And I really need to get better." So I would go on interviews for jobs that I knew I didn't want.

And, you know, my job strategy back then was really to practice and to really just, for one, network. Right? You start to get to know the network and maybe there is an opportunity that I thought I didn't want. But then after learning more about it, it actually ended up, you know, could have been something I did want.

But you know, interviewing is a skill and the more that you do it, the better you get. So you're learning each and every time you do it how to get better at it, right? You often leave the interview and you're like self-evaluating. You're like, "How did I feel about that? Did I answer that right?" Right? And then you learn for next time, "Okay, I could probably answer this a little bit better." Right?

You know, I think that every experience, whether it's good or bad, I mean, especially if you bombed the interview then, you know, okay, you bombed it. But how can I get better from that? What did I do? Maybe I wasn't prepared for the types of questions. Maybe I need to practice a little bit more. When you're feeling less confident about something, then maybe there's something to really dig deep into. What is it about that I'm not as confident in? And how can I get more confident in that?

Sarah: Interviewing is 100% a skill in every way. And I love that you bring up doing interviews just to get that experience too because I actually did that with teaching jobs. Because a teaching style interview is so different than a nursing interview. And so I really wanted these teaching jobs, but I

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was really struggling like, what would they even ask me here? Like I don't even have any perspective.

And I actually applied to as many jobs as I possibly could just to build up that experience so when that dream job came along, I was able to go in that interview and really execute.

Dr. V: Awesome. And you did, right?

Sarah: Yeah.

Dr. V: Because you really put in the work and I think that's the message here, is put in the work. Don't just hit the apply button. You definitely want to put some intention behind all of this because at the end of the day you want quality not just anything that comes your way.

Sarah: And just really deep dive into yourself too and what you can improve on. Which I know it can be hard to think about what you personally can improve on, we all have our own little ego just a little bit. But there are always things out there to work on.

Dr. V: For sure.

Sarah: Now, is there anything that you feel like you see consistently with your students that's holding them back on the job hunt?

Dr. V: Yeah, number one, I think it's mindset. You know, often when I get on calls with my clients it's, you know, "Oh, the job market is really hard where I'm at. You know, there's no jobs, or I'm not getting callbacks." Things like that. And, you know, I feel like a lot of the problem there is really mindset, right?

When you're operating from a scarcity mindset meaning you think all the jobs are taken, or that there's no jobs out there for you, then it's going to be so much harder for abundance to come your way, right? So if you operate from an abundance mindset, meaning there are jobs out there, the right one is coming my way, it's just about the opportunity, it's about the process.

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Then things really do end up coming your way. You're coming in with a more positive mindset.

And I'm not saying that, you know, it's not difficult. I'm not saying that there isn't a lot of competition. But what I am saying is that the way that you approach these problems in life, and in interviewing, and really anything, right, you really want to come in with a positive mindset of when the right job comes for me, when it's the right opportunity, then the door will open.

And really, that's kind of how I've gone through my whole career. You know, there's been interviews that I have gone into thinking, "Oh my God, I got that job." And, you know, everybody told me I was going to get the job. And boom, the door closed, and I didn't get the job.

And of course, I was heartbroken. And of course I was, you know, like, "I can't believe it. And this is craziness." You know, all of that, right? Because you go through all of these different things, you know, in your mind of what went wrong when everything was going right, right?

I know, a lot of my students have been there, right? They've been on these interviews where they 100% thought they got it, and then they ended up not, right?

So when that happens, you know, I look back at those types of opportunities that I thought were opening the door for me and I found that, you know, that would have been a horrible job for me. You know, that was not the right step for me because something else opened up that really ended up being right for me. That ended up giving me a different experience. That ended up something that I didn't even think of, right?

But of course you give yourself the time to, "Okay, I'm going to have my own little pity party, fine, whatever." But you can't stay there, right? You know, you've just can't stay there. It's fine to be upset, it's fine to really, you know, get a little bit discouraged. It's only natural for us.

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But I think that it's quickly really realizing and kind of getting back up and saying, "No, I'm not going to live here, I'm going to now move forward and I'm going to live from a place of abundance."

Sarah: I think like every other word you said, I was like secretly saying to myself like, "Mm-hmm, mm-hmm." So I want y'all to hear me loud and clear, like mindset is everything. I think I've had three Instagram stories in the last week alone where I'm like, "Y'all, mindset is everything." And you really have to come at this process with a mindset of abundance, just like you talked about, and really kind of almost manifest yourself into whatever that job is going to be the right fit for you is.

And, you know, I think it also boils down to your thoughts kind of create your actions and ultimately your results in your life. And that never means that you have to stifle your feelings down, but we really have to work through those negative thoughts to be able to come out on the other side.

Dr. V: Absolutely.

Sarah: Now, what would you say to those people who have applied, they've interviewed, and then they really got the dreaded phone call or email saying that they've been rejected? Is there any like guidance that you would give them during this difficult time? Because you can feel your feelings, we just want to work on your thoughts.

Dr. V: Yeah, yeah, for sure. You know, I think when you have multiple rejections when it comes to interviewing, I think, one, just consider your approach to interviewing. You know, maybe even doing some interview coaching or more practicing.

I think it's always a great thing to try to set yourself apart. So that's the way to approach an interview is really, what is it about you that you are, you know, you're selling yourself, right, as a team member.

So how can I really set myself apart? How can I make an impression that lasts? You know, and what is unique about me that really is going to serve in this position, right? What is it about my background? What is it about my

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personality that would really benefit the organization that I am interviewing with. And talk about that in your interviews, make sure that you do that during your interview so that they can connect with you, right?

I don't know how many times it's happened, I don't know how many times I've heard that, you know, people who might have the best qualifications may not always get the job because maybe the next person that, you know, is interviewing has a great personality, they were able to connect.

And at the end of the day people are looking for teammates, right? Who do they want to work with? Who are they going to get along with? Who's going to be open to feedback? Who are they going to want to teach, right?

So if you can really try to don't let anxiety and your nerves get the best of you, try to show your personality. Try to show, you know, yourself as a teammate. And I think that once you're able to connect with them on a better level, then you can really make that lasting impression.

And then also for new graduates, I think it's also important to discuss, you know, why it's really a benefit to have a new graduate NP, right? Sell that to them. Because that may be the reason that you're hearing the nos. "Oh, we went with somebody that had experience."

But if you're able to really set that apart, and that's the elephant in the room, right? You know, "Oh, I'm a new grad." And definitely I wouldn't go and like harp on that, you know, and use that as a main, "I'm a new grad and I need a lot." And you know, you definitely don't want that to be the number one thing you talk about.

But you want to say, "Look, I'm a new graduate, I'm eager to learn. I don't have any bad habits yet. I'm driven for success in this role, right, I am driven, I want to be successful. And I really want to learn from a team that's willing to, you know, be a part of that and Invest in me."

So, you know, I think it's, again, part of it is mindset, you know, definitely getting back up. And then also it's one of those diagnosis things, diagnose

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what is it that, you know, is going on? What is it about my interviewing that needs a little bit of help and TLC?

Also consider portfolios are also a way, I think we've talked about this before, always bring your portfolio, set yourself apart. People don't do this. And I really think it's important, that is a wonderful way to set yourself apart. It shows that you are willing to go above and beyond. And that's what people want to see. You know, something that gives them a lasting impression, "Oh, that girl brought a portfolio, and she created all these, it was beautiful, and I actually kept it."

You know, I don't know how many times I've heard my clients say that, you know, "Oh, the interviewers kept my portfolio." I mean, how cool is that, right? That is definitely going to, you know, make a lasting impression.

Sarah: I love that connection piece that you bring up like during the interview process, because that's actually how I interview and hire as well.

Because one of my very first hires, I remember talking to my husband, I was like, "Well, there's this person and they meet all the qualifications, and they have all these great things on their resume. But this other person I interviewed, I felt like we just connected. And so even if she doesn't have X, Y, and Z, I think those are things that can be trained and kind of learned along the way. And I think we're going to vibe really well together."

And so I made a hiring decision just based off my gut and not anything else. And it has worked out beautifully for me. So definitely be making those connections in interviews.

Dr. V: Yes.

Sarah: And I also kind of want to pause here too, and say, you know, getting rejected from a job is not a reflection on your self-worth. And it doesn't mean that you're never going to find a job or anything like that. I feel like I've seen that circulating on my page too. It just really means that you haven't found your right fit yet. And that's totally okay because there's plenty of jobs out there, and we're going to find that next best job for you.

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Dr. V: 100%.

Sarah: Now, what do you feel like are some action steps that our listeners can take while they're applying for jobs to kind of keep themselves up to date and maybe keep some momentum of a job hunt process? Just for some people, you know, it can be kind of long and drawn out.

Dr. V: Yeah, so I always recommend keeping yourself current. Especially when, you know, there is a longer process, sometimes it's anywhere from three to six months or maybe more. And if that's the case, that's okay, you definitely want to show to the interviewers, once you are interviewing, you know, what you've done in that process.

So keeping yourself current, whether doing continuing education, I always recommend that. And I would be a part of AANP. They're a great organization that advocates for nurse practitioners, and they have free CEUs in their website and you could do things that are common to the diagnosis, common diagnosis that you'll see in primary care, family medicine. I mean, especially the types of jobs that you're looking for.

So let's say it's family medicine. You know, obesity management is going to be a good one, you know, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension. All of those are going to be great to take and continue to keep yourself updated. But then also take those certifications, right, certificates and put them in your portfolio and leverage that in your interview, right? And say, look, you know, I've been maybe out for six months, you know, for whatever reason, whether it be family reasons or whatever. If that's the case I have been keeping myself current. Here are the specialties that I've done some extra education in. So definitely do that, put it in your portfolio, leverage it in your interviews.

And here's a question I also get, should I do skills workshops? Right, where you're doing like suturing or EKGs things like that. And my recommendation for that is wait until you have an actual job offer because let's say in this job search time and maybe it's six months or so, and I start

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this skills workshop, three-day skills workshop now, I'm going to forget what I did in six months, right?

Sarah: Yes.

Dr. V: And the job that I might get might not even do suturing, right? Or they may not even do splinting in that primary care. And that's what you spent, sometimes it's thousands of dollars, or invested a lot of time in there to do those skills.

So my recommendation is always talk about that in your interview and say, "Hey, you know, what are your common procedures that you perform here? I would be definitely willing to go to a skills workshop, you know, if that was something that is needed." So you can always do that later once you have an offer and you understand exactly what procedures or skills are required for that position.

Sarah: I definitely agree with the skills pieces later. Because I had a student who did, it was a suturing workshop. It was like a two-day thing that she did and then she ended up going into I believe, like medical esthetics. And so suturing isn't really going to be something that she needs to do day in and day out.

Dr. V: Exactly.

Sarah: And so there could have been better ways to have spent that time and obviously spent that money too.

Dr. V: For sure.

Sarah: Now, what are your thoughts on new nurse practitioners in particular kind of just taking any job out there to get experience? Like, do you feel like that's a good move?

Dr. V: No.

Sarah: I know, I'm like screaming like, "No, no, no, no."

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Dr. V: No, no, no. Again, this goes back to people operating from a place of scarcity, right? I mean it's, you know, just I'll take anything. And I think what happens is that they get into these contracts, or they get into these positions that they convince themselves, "I can do anything for a year."

And the truth is, no, you can't. You know, and you shouldn't because you spent a lot of time, a lot of energy investing into your brand-new license as a provider, and you want to provide safe care. And if you are just taking any job, that's not going to set you up for success, and you haven't really vetted that, then you could get yourself in really, really big trouble. And you definitely don't want to, you know, and I think we've all heard of these horror stories, right, of the very first NP job where, you know, like me.

I don't know if I talked about this, I lasted three months in my first NP job, three months. And it was because I didn't ask the right questions. I didn't know what red flags to look out for. And now this is something that I actually teach in my interview coaching is, you know, what are the red flags to look out for? What are the things that I need to know so that I can find an organization that's going to be committed to my success, and walk alongside me, and make sure that they're supporting me through this transition?

Because, you know, we all know transitioning from RN to NP is a huge transition. And I think it's really important to have people around you that are going to support you and not bring you down.

Because we're going to do enough of that, we're going to do enough of tearing ourselves apart. You know, we're our worst critics, us as nurses, we just are. You know, we're in it because we really want to help people. And when we are in a new role, remember how it's like to be a brand-new nurse, right? You're terrified, and you've got all these insecurities and all this anxiety, all of that's going to come back, right?

So you want to definitely set yourself up for a place that is going to give you the resources, and walk alongside you, and make sure that there are

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people there that are going to support this huge growth that you're going to have in your first year.

So, you know, you also want to make sure that you are finding a position that is going to value you, right? That you're not going to be undervalued. You know, and now you're bringing a higher set of value, right, to any position as a nurse practitioner.

So I think just set yourself up for success. I can go on and on about this. And I do, I go on and on about this. I've got questions to ask during interviews in my interview coaching. And so, you know, if you want more information definitely reach out. But I think definitely do not just take any job that comes along. Make sure that you interview them while they're interviewing you as well.

Sarah: Yes, the answer to that question is a huge resounding no. Well, and you got to think too, when you're a new provider like that all those imposter syndrome feelings that you were having as a new nurse are amplified to a whole new level now because you're a provider and you have up leveled. And so there's a lot of expectation that comes behind that too.

So you're already going to be uncomfortable. We don't want to put a bad job on top of it.

Dr. V: Exactly.

Sarah: You really want to find what works for you. Like I say that over and over, but I want to make sure you guys here it. Like find what works best for you, and there's going to be that place out there for you too.

Dr. V: 100%.

Sarah: Dr. V I love you so much in every way. If our listeners did not listen to episode two quite yet, how can they get into contact with you? Like where can they find you?

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Dr. V: Yeah, absolutely. So you can find me on Instagram @theclinicianlife, on my website is www.theclinicianlife.com. And on Facebook it's facebook.com/theclinicianlife. And I'm on all of those platforms.

Sarah: And she is very easily accessible which I am thankful for because we chat all the time. But thank you so, so much for coming on the show today and I'm sure I'll be asking you back again sometime soon.

Dr. V: Awesome. Thank you so much for having me. It's always a blast.

Sarah: And everybody out there listening, I'll talk to you next week.

It's finally that time friends. It's time for our Medelita gift card giveaways. So many of you were excited to get your hands on a brand-new white coat. And our two winners are Shana Hart and Jesse Atkins. A major congrats to both of you and you'll be receiving all the details through email soon.

As an extra bonus, friends, if you're looking for support no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in, I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*. If you want more information about the different types of support we offer to students and new NPs, visit stressfreenp.com. See you next week.