

Ep #31: When You Don't Like Your First NP Job



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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 hey, my friends. Today I want to broach a tough topic with you. It's a topic that I feel like I am hearing about and seeing every day in my community for new nurse practitioners. And that is the topic of what in the world do you do if you don't super love that first nurse practitioner job?

It would be impossible for every nurse practitioner out there to find the perfect fit with their very first job opportunity and so in this episode I'm going to walk you through three questions to ask yourself if this is the case. And my guidance on the situation depending on where you're at.

So if this is you and the situation you're in currently, don't fret because you are far from alone and we can figure this out together. My biggest request in this episode is for you to be really transparent with yourself and answer these questions as honestly as possible. And so with that being said, let's jump into our first question here.

The very first thing you want to assess for yourself is this, and like I said I want you to be super honest with yourself with these questions. That's how you're going to get the most from this episode. Do you not like your nurse practitioner job because you are simply new and uncomfortable?

I feel like we all fall into this boat at one point or another because imposter syndrome can feel like you're being weighed down by a mountain, especially in the first year. So are you not liking your job because you feel like you might miss something? Are you not liking your job because you feel like you didn't have enough solid orientation time to get comfortable?

Whatever that situation looks like for you, I want to bring awareness to the fact that if this is you, it's probably because you are so accustomed to that team environment of being a registered nurse. Being a nurse practitioner can initially definitely feel pretty isolating in comparison to those traditional

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nursing roles depending on your work setup and the number of colleagues that are working alongside you.

And for those of you who are working as solo providers in a clinic, I feel like the imposter syndrome can feel truly overwhelming at first as you navigate what your role as a true provider looks like on your own. And so if this is you, my guidance to you is two-fold.

Number one, you need to be able to recognize that imposter syndrome is the true root of the issue. So many people have trouble pinpointing it. And when you're not aware of what the true issue is it can be really difficult to manage it appropriately.

And so dig deep, ask yourself, "Am I speaking negatively to myself at work? Am I thinking thoughts like I'm never going to be able to do this or I'm behind pace, how will I ever catch up et cetera.

Number two, now that we know what the issue actually is, let's try to stay really cognizant of it. When you start to have those negative thoughts how can we identify them and intercept them? For example, if you don't like your nurse practitioner job because you're afraid you might miss something, how can we beef up that knowledge base and ultimately your confidence?

Maybe it's having some extra resources on hand when you're practicing, like Epocrates or Medscape, or that five minute clinical consult. Maybe it's you giving yourself a little mental grace. There's not a single provider out there in any facet of the medical profession that truly knows it all. But you do have that education that's required to be in this position, we have to remember that. And you have already displayed that knowledge by passing your board exam.

Remember that board exam you took? You only had to score around a 70% to pass. They didn't expect you to know it all in order to be a safe provider. And so why are you expecting that of yourself?

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And I also want to be sure to point out that feeling a bit of imposter syndrome doesn't mean you're not doing a great job and that you're not a phenomenal nurse practitioner, it just simply means that for whatever reason you're lacking some confidence at this moment.

And so the wrap up of this question for you is to find ways to boost up that confidence and keep trying your best to show up as the very best provider that you can be. And eventually you will start to see that imposter syndrome fade away, just like you did when you were a new nurse not too long ago as well.

All right, so question number two, are you not happy because there are some major red flags going on? And these red flags can present themselves in a variety of ways. But basically, it's anything putting you in a position that you're not comfortable with for whatever reason.

I will never, and I do mean never, forget this Facebook post that I saw at the beginning of the year that absolutely broke my heart where a new nurse practitioner had accepted an urgent care position, I think for \$35 an hour, no benefits. She was a solo provider seeing 50 plus patients every day. She didn't get any orientation time and she was even responsible for cleaning the clinic at the end of every shift.

Every red flag possible was beaming out of her post. But she felt so pressured to take the opportunity just to get experience. When you are new you are going to have a unique set of needs and you are likely going to need some additional support and nurturing along the way in those first few months. And so we need to find you a position that can provide that for you.

As a whole, I think that is the biggest mishap new nurse practitioners make. They are so hungry to find that first position that many are willing to take anything presented to them. But like we talk about in my job hunt course, you deserve a job that really meets you where you're at and you don't have to take just anything out there to get experience.

And so if this question resonated with you let's talk about some action items that you can put into place even today. First and foremost, it is time

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to have an open dialogue and conversation with whoever it is that you are working for. You need to voice whatever your concerns are. And I know it's hard, but you've got to do it, and you need to see if there's a way to come to a middle ground solution.

Many people hear red flags and assume that quitting that job should be the first go to solution. But for me, in my eyes, quitting is only an option after you have tried to resolve the situation and you cannot come to an amicable agreement.

For example, let's say you feel like you need some more orientation time. Okay, how can you get that additional time and meet in the middle with your employer some way? And so after having that open discussion, trying to resolve it, if things aren't changing that's when it may be time to really start looking at taking another position.

And that's okay, it doesn't mean you're a failure. It doesn't mean you're a quitter. It just means you need something different. And you will have such a leg up for that second job that you go after because you will have clarity as to what you really need the next time around.

And then the last question here is a quicker one, but do you not like your job because you're with the wrong patient population or specialty? I have found a lot of people assume that transitioning from a registered nurse to a nurse practitioner in the same specialty will be an easier transition. And while for some that may be the case, these are two totally separate rolls with different requirements.

And so maybe a specialty you loved as a nurse, you don't love as a nurse practitioner and a provider. And the beauty of the world of being a nurse practitioner is you have boundless options for employment, truly. There are so many varieties of clinics, and practices, and work schedules and you can find something that would spark your interest more and make you excited to get up and go to work every day. It's out there, you just have to find it.

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And so if this is you, take some time to explore what you want from a job and what your most ideal patient population or specialty looks like. Spend some time thinking about who you think you would be happy working with.

For example, as a nurse I worked in pediatrics at one point, and I absolutely adored it in every way. But as a nurse practitioner I much preferred my sweet geriatric folks that need management of these chronic health conditions because that's what interests my brain.

And so a quick and great way to see what you like and what you don't is simply just to shadow. Shadowing, even for a day, can give you clear insights into what lights you up as a nurse practitioner so you can ultimately go find that dream job that you're searching for.

And so as I close out this quick little episode, I do want to be very sure to make the point once again that if you don't like your nurse practitioner job right now, that does not mean you won't be a great nurse practitioner or that you're not a great nurse practitioner already. We just need to take a look at your surroundings. We need to increase our awareness as to what is actually the problem here.

Is it that you're new and you need some time to build up that comfort zone and ultimately that confidence? Is it that you're in a tough position where there are red flags going on and you're not having your needs met? Or is it because you haven't found your right patient population or clinic yet and you just need to do some digging to find out what's next for you?

Whatever the case may be, you are a valuable part of this profession. And I want nothing more than for you to find and receive what you need to ultimately one day become a stress-free nurse practitioner and truly thrive in practice. You're never alone in this journey and I will always be rooting for you. And that's it for this week guys.

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

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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.