

# Ep #71: Greatest Hits #5: Level Up Your Résumé with Veronica Sampayo



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sarah Michelle**

## **Ep #71: Greatest Hits #5: Level Up Your Résumé with Veronica Sampayo**

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 everyone, it's me, Sarah Michelle. Today we are going to be starting a string of episodes over the next few weeks of our greatest hits. So our greatest hits are our top 5 most listened to episodes by students and new nurse practitioners that have helped you along your real deal nurse practitioner journey as I'm currently out taking maternity leave.

But once we get through these greatest hits episodes we will go back to our normal schedule and cadence of all the good things that you guys have come to expect from this podcast. So I'll be talking to you live soon.

Hey friends, this is Sarah Michelle with an episode of *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*. Today we're going to be talking to my wonderful friend Veronica Sampayo, affectionately known as Dr. V., who is essentially the resume polishing and interviewing guru. She's the founder and creator for *The Clinician Life* as well as a personal friend of mine after she actually redid my own resume last year.

Sarah: Dr. V., I am so happy to have you on the show today and pick your brain a little bit regarding all the ins and outs of interviewing and landing that first NP job. Which I know is a topic that weighs heavily in the minds of many of our students. So why don't you just start off by telling our listeners a little about you and your nursing background before we really deep dive into your consulting business but also your interview and expertise.

Dr. V.: First, thank you so much for having me on your show today. I love what you're doing to help our community level up their careers in a stress-free way.

I'm Dr. V., I'm an actively practicing nurse practitioner with a DNP. I started my nursing career in 2008 working in oncology. And I went to grad school in 2013. I chose the BSN to DNP program at the University of South Florida

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because they had the dual concentration track where I would get prepared to take my adult-gerontology, primary care, and oncology NP certification.

I graduated in 2016 where things went a little differently than I expected and I found myself in my first NP job in primary care. I hated that and I gave my notice after three months of working there, which we can get into that story a little bit later.

But then I found a job in oncology where that's exactly where I wanted to be. I loved that job and was really able to work both independently and collaboratively. The organization I worked for was growing really fast and wanted to have a leadership structure for APPs, or advanced practice providers. There was an opportunity to take on a leadership position as an APP manager where I would be responsible for over 80 APPs spread throughout five different hospitals and seven different specialties.

I worked as an APP manager for a little over a year until I found myself unable to do the things that I had envisioned for the job. It was in that job that I grew my love for coaching and professional development. So, you know, that's the reason that The Clinician Life was created. You know, I took what I learned and started the business.

I also work currently as an endocrine NP part time where I can still keep up my license and my love for patient care.

Sarah: I literally had no idea that you were also an oncology nurse because that's where I spent almost all of my time. So no wonder we've always gotten along so well, because we're on that same wavelength. That's awesome.

Dr. V.: Absolutely.

Sarah: Now, how did you kind of transition into this whole world of polishing resumes and offering new nurse practitioners guidance on the job search process? Like what kind of inspired you to go into that realm?

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Dr. V.: Yeah, well I found that there was a gap in knowledge in the transition from RN to NP. You know, in my APP job I would find myself consulting with new grads frequently as they would seek me out and ask advice on how to move forward in their job search.

So, you know, when I started my business, really, I started because I knew NPs needed this guidance. You know, schools are busy teaching the clinical aspect of practice and preparing students to be safe practitioners. You know, I teach the professional aspect of practice to prepare nurse practitioners for a healthy and productive career.

Sarah: [Inaudible], right?

Dr. V.: Yes.

Sarah: I think a lot of people kind of get into it a little bit and they're not really sure of themselves and they're not really sure of what kind of got them to this point. And so they kind of have to re-figure things out a little bit. So it's really nice to have a helping hand along the way too.

Dr. V: Absolutely.

Sarah: Now, why do you kind of feel like interviewing is a skill that's important enough for you to commit your time and your energy into consulting about? Do you feel like that's something that's a deficit for new nurse practitioners?

Dr. V.: Absolutely. You know, I think there's a big difference in interviewing from an RN and interviewing as an NP. A lot of nurses that I talk to, you know, really haven't had a lot of experience even interviewing as an RN. So, when they transition into the NP job search, I think there's just a gap in knowledge.

I think it's important for nurse practitioners to know the value that they bring and they should learn how to effectively showcase that value in an interview. You know, I would really have great nurses that would bomb

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interviews because of letting their nerves get the best of them or not preparing properly for the interview. And it's my goal and vision to have all NPs show up as the valuable members of the healthcare team they are. And I'm committed to helping them do that.

Sarah: Yeah, absolutely. And I think we really kind of have to stop and know a little bit too, that being an RN and being a nurse practitioner, those are two totally different job markets. And I think people anticipate them kind of being the same. But they are like totally different ends of the spectrum and you need to prepare a lot differently to be adequate when you do get into that interview or you do submit that resume or whatever that looks like.

Dr. V.: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Sarah: Now, a resource that you provide to your clients is that document called the five tips to making a lasting impression. So can you just kind of walk me through a brief overview of what that looks like for your clients. And I do want to point out here I really appreciate you giving our listeners and students today some insider knowledge about one of your very best paid resources.

Dr. V.: Yeah, absolutely. So I provide my clients with this interview preparation guide that really helps them get their next steps correct, you know, in their interviews and get them prepared for interviews. So, we can start with just number one, you know.

The first part of preparing is researching. You know I always recommend that you go onto the organization's website, learn about their mission and vision, and really reflect on how that mission and vision aligns with your own personal mission and vision. So that, you know, when they're asking you questions you already know a little bit about them so that you can really speak to what they're doing and what they hope to do and align yourself with what they're doing.

Number two, I would say is practice. And, you know, I know it sounds kind of silly but you want to practice the common interview questions. Many

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interviews in healthcare are shifting toward behavioral questions, so you will want to have those stories about how you handled certain situations at the forefront of your mind. Think about how those stories align with what they are looking for in an employee.

So, you know, whether it be recording yourself on practicing those questions or maybe having another colleague ask those questions, but have somebody that's able to really give you feedback on, you know, your answers and really give you constructive feedback on how you sound and if you're sticking to the question and answering it properly.

Number three is attire. Think about the 10-year version of you, you know. What does he or she look like? Go to the interview representing him or her and really show up there feeling confident that you're looking professional and looking good. Now, you want to avoid tight clothing, make sure that it's pressed and clean of pet hair, things like that. You know, I think it's just, you would be surprised on what I've seen for interviews in the past. I mean, people have come in flip-flops, I've seen people with tight clothes, very revealing.

So, you know, I think it's really important. I've had somebody ask me is it okay if I show up in my scrubs? So, I'm like, what do you say? No, it's not okay. It's not okay guys.

So, number four is questions. And this is really probably the most important part of preparation, is employers are going to expect you to have questions about the perspective job. They often ask you at the end of the interview, "Is there anything more you would like to know about the organization or the position?" So be sure to prepare a set of questions that reflects your preparation and research on the organization. You will want to learn more about how those specific skills and talents can be utilized to meet their goals and vision for the future.

So, you know, there are certain questions that you're going to ask about the position to make sure that your vision aligns with theirs. But there's also

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going to be questions you're going to ask before you actually accept a position. Right? So you don't want to really ask about benefits or pay in an interview unless they really bring that up, right? If they go there, then definitely it's appropriate. But try to tailor your questions for them about how you are going to fit into that position as a nurse practitioner, what their expectations are of you.

You know, especially if you're a new grad, right? Is there going to be an orientation? And what does that look like? If your state requires a collaborating physician are you going to meet that collaborating physician in the interview, right? Are they there or are your coworkers there? Is there another nurse practitioner in the practice? Those are all going to be really important because at this point, you're going to start to see those red flags, right? You know, what red flags are there?

Another question to ask is if you feel like this is a position that you really want to move forward with, ask the question, be bold and shadow. See if there's a way that you can shadow. There is so much information that you can get just by being a fly on the wall for an hour. So I think asking those questions will really help in getting your expectations set and then their expectations of you as well.

So, number five I would say is interview day, right? What do you bring on interview day? I think it's really important to present yourself in an organized fashion on interview day. You don't want to be digging around a large bag or be caught without extra copies of your resume.

Make sure to bring extra copies of your professionally written resume, including one for yourself, your clinician portfolio, and a clean notebook. If you don't have your resume professionally written it's imperative that you have someone else at least look at it and proofread it. Someone else because they're someone else's eyes that maybe you're not seeing because you're the one that wrote it. But if somebody else can just get a good look at it and make sure that it's free of errors, free of grammatical errors, and misspellings then you're going to be in good shape.

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You know, I go deeper into those five tips, but really those are the foundation for an interview and really preparing yourself so that you show up representing your best self.

Sarah: Yeah, absolutely. You know, I definitely think practice is key, as much as people will hate to hear that. Along with just being prepared and kind of walking into it with the right mindset too. Which I know is something that me and you have talked a lot about as well.

I know some of that stuff sounds really simple, but seriously, you know, even just doing that is really going to put you ahead of that next applicant. And you always want to be that next step ahead to hopefully get that job.

And definitely to your point too about no scrubs, you are not looking for a nursing job, you are looking for a professional nurse practitioner job and so you don't want to come in, even in the mindset of being an RN anymore because you need to go ahead and be in that mindset of, "I am in this new professional role, I have these new expectations, I have all this new stuff." And you kind of want to start to leave the nursing part behind a little bit. I mean not entirely, but just a little bit.

Dr. V.: Right, right, right. It's time to level up.

Sarah: Yeah, exactly. That's the perfect way to put it. Let's level up a little bit, let's kind of figure ourselves out a little bit.

Dr. V.: Right, exactly. Going back to practicing, I think it's important for people to have muscle memory when practicing. You know, it's one thing to have your answers in your head, it's another thing to say them out loud. And one thing that you and I talked about is for me, I can ramble and sometimes if I'm not prepared enough then I'll just go off on a different tangent, especially if I'm nervous.

So, you know, being able to really prepare yourself by saying it out loud and then, you know, listening to yourself back or getting some feedback



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you're like, "Okay, how can I say that better?" And then keep going until it's perfected in the way that you want to say it.

Sarah: Yeah, absolutely. And there's pretty much no way around being nervous either. Even when I do an interview in a place, I literally did clinicals in this place for nine months, I knew the doctor, I knew the nurse practitioner, I knew the PA. And I walked in there to interview and I was so nervous. So definitely just walk in prepared for that and have everything ready to go so that way you can kind of stomp on those nerves a little bit and then really shine in your interview.

Dr. V.: Absolutely. And, you know, something that really helped me in my first interviews is having a portfolio. What I did with my DNP project, I actually ended up publishing it and I won an award for it. So I printed all of that out, I created my professional portfolio and I brought that to my interviews. And, you know, when I started having that imposter syndrome or feeling like I wasn't adequate enough just even having that as my crutch it's like, "You know what? I am accomplished, I've come a long way and I'm going to show you what I've done."

So I felt like having my portfolio and really like representing myself with it, because it's also something tangible that they can look at. It's not just me telling you I'm a great team member here are some reviews of my previous team members, of different awards that I've won, or my previous manager's reviews of me, things like that. So definitely reducing the amount of nerves by any means possible is going to set you up for success. Whether it be practicing, preparation, bringing your portfolio, all of that is going to help.

Sarah: Yeah, whatever it is that makes you feel like the real deal. Like the real deal nurse practitioner.

Dr V.: Exactly.

Sarah: That's what you want to do. And I love that you mentioned having something tangible too, because that's something I talk about in the review course space too. Like having something tangible scores to go off of before

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you walk into your exam just because it makes you feel so good. It's a little confidence boost for you.

Dr. V.: Exactly, exactly.

Sarah: Now what is something, Dr. V., that you feel is unique to you that you can offer to perspective students about the interviewing process?

Dr. V.: Yeah, you know, I think because I've been on the other side of interviewing, I have a unique perspective of what employers are looking for. You know, I'm always rooting for NPs when they're achieving their dreams and goal. You know, I work with NPs on mindset shifting, giving them insight on the employer perspective, and really encouraging them throughout the transition.

I've seen how different types of providers interview, I've seen how administrators interview, I know what is important to them, I know what key words to say and what kind of perks their ear. So I think that is my unique perspective when I'm talking to clients and really just helping them get insight onto what employers are looking for.

Sarah: Yeah, and I've actually interviewed people as well, so I have that unique perspective and it is very interesting to see the different types of interviews that walk in.

Dr. V.: Yes, absolutely.

Sarah; Yeah, there's almost some interviews you can't mentally prepare for, even from the other side of things. Now, do you feel like it's obvious when a new nurse practitioner comes into an interview unprepared? Like what are maybe some of those dead giveaways?

Dr. V: Oh, my goodness, yes. So, for one when they show up without extra copies of their resume it's a dead giveaway. It's offensive, I don't know why I get so offended but I get offended. You know, just because it's like don't assume that these interviewers have the time to print it out, you know? So

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come in prepared, showing that you have everything in front of you. And also, you know, when they bring a copy for themselves. Just that alone really says a lot.

Or when they say things like, “Why do you want to work here?” They might say something like, “I just want to start practicing. I just want to get the experience as a nurse practitioner, this is a dream of mine.” I think that when you’re answering questions you really want to tailor your answers to the employer, right? Why is it that specifically that job that you want to work there?

So, you know, it’s important because when you’re giving generic answers then they’re not going to really see you as a team member. You want them to see you as a team member because, specifically for new grads, right? All new grads pretty much bring the same things to the table as far as education, right? Everybody’s, you know, got their master’s degree and the baseline knowledge. Now, you want to make sure that you tailor what it is specifically that you have so that you can prepare those answers when they ask you.

So, yeah, there’s definitely always dead giveaways, for example even just the way that they prepare and the way that they look, you know, and they present themselves.

Sarah: I think you made a good point too; you don’t want to be too broad. You really want to stand out in that interview, you don’t really want to fit into the rest by being generic and providing those generic answers. And so I really encourage the people listening today to definitely think about what you’re going to say in the interview to stand out a little bit and to kind of like just be above the rest in a certain way.

Now, if you could go back to your days of being a brand-new nurse practitioner, what is the one thing you wish you knew about the interviewing process back then?

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Dr. V.: Yeah, you know, I wish I would have known to ask better questions. I wish I would have known about the red flags to look out for. You know, as I get to meet more and more NPs around the country, I start to realize how much NP guidance and coaching is needed.

NPs need to have mentors that are looking out for them and helping them through these big professional decisions. I wish I would have had a mentor or a coach to help prepare me.

So, you know, really those red flags when looking for a job. I mean, especially now in this pandemic there's a lot of people trying to take advantage of nurse practitioners and unfortunately nurse practitioners are getting into contracts that are completely unreasonable. They are, I think, flat out illegal for them to even present. So, really just having somebody look out for you and your career I think is really important.

So that's why I love what you do Sarah. I think that what you do is really helping coach, guide, and really building a community of others that are supporting each other and I think that's critical.

Sarah: Yeah, I think having that support being a brand-new grad is 100% needed in every way. I kind of found out during my own job search I wish I had known some of those red flags. Like I wish I had had someone to turn to to be like, "What do you think about this contract?" Or, "What do you think about, like they said this about billing, is this okay?" Those sorts of things. Because it took me a little bit longer to figure it out. And because of that I missed out on some jobs along the way because I was hung up a little bit because I was like, "Well this job sounds okay but I'm not 100% on it." And so then you kind of get into that rabbit hole.

Dr. V.: Exactly. Exactly.

Sarah: And I really want to use this podcast too, to help people learn from my own mishaps and other people's mishaps. Because we've made these mistakes now, so you don't have to make these mistakes and you kind of learn from us in a way.

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Dr. V.: Exactly, yep.

Sarah: And then last but not least here, you know, what would be your biggest takeaway message about the interview process as a whole? What do you really hope that new nurse practitioners will take away from this podcast between us?

Dr. V.: I truly want your listeners to know how much value they bring to organizations. Every nurse has a unique value proposition and I feel that if you can tap into that and show that to your interviewers, you're golden. You know, if they prepare and position themselves for success, you know, the nurse practitioner prepares and positions themselves for success I believe any and all goals are achievable.

Sarah: I totally agree with that. I think we, as nurse practitioners are so driven and so ambitious to even be at this point, we can really achieve anything that we want to as long as we dedicate ourselves to it.

And so that's kind of why I created that new Facebook community too, just for new nurse practitioners because I hate for people to end up out of the profession inadvertently in the beginning stages just because they are kind of lost about these kinds of things and how do I interview? And how do I polish my resume? And contract negotiations, you know, all that good stuff.

Dr. V.: Exactly. I love that.

Sarah: Now, where can our listeners connect with you best moving forward? And I just want to throw a little aside out here, you know, I can personally attest to her skills, like I mentioned earlier, because she's the one who did my professional resume when I was on the job hunt. So I can vouch for you guys, she is 100% the real deal.

Dr. V.: Aw, thank you for that Sarah. Folks can find me on my website, [theclinicianlife.com](http://theclinicianlife.com), on Instagram @theclinicianlife, and on Facebook [facebook.com/theclinicianlife](https://facebook.com/theclinicianlife).

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Sarah: And she's very easy to get a hold of as well. She's not someone you're going to email and not hear back from. Because that happens a little bit too with these types of services.

Dr. V.: Yeah. Yeah, definitely, I strive to contact everybody that contacts me. So, for sure.

Sarah: Thank you so much for being on the show by the way. And offering all your insights, and advice and guidance, all the good stuff.

Dr. V.: Absolutely, thank you so much for having me.

Sarah: And if you guys want to check her out, I'll definitely put all of her links in the show notes too. So, I'll talk to you soon Dr. V.

Dr. V.: Thanks.

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](https://stressfreenp.com). See you next week.