**YGT episode 185**

You're listening to. You've got this episode one 85 welcome to, you've got this, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day to day demands of an academic life. I'm your host, dr Katie Linder. On this episode, I want to talk about staying grounded in uncertain times.

I know that all of us are probably having some disruption in our schedules at this point. Um, for the past week or so, I've been working remotely from home and my partner and I have both elected to basically stay inside. Um, we left our house once to go. Get a grocery pickup at our local Walmart. Um, but other than that, we have really been hunkering down.

And I've gotten some requests from people to talk about on the show, how to develop new routines in this changing time and in this set of uncertain circumstances. And so I thought we would talk a little bit today about some of the things that I'm doing, but I also want to really emphasize how important it is to find what works for you.

And to know that some of the things that work for other people may not be the things that are comforting for you. Now I think a really big, um, example of this is for the introverts out there, it may actually feel kind of comforting to be at home. It might actually feel better or a little bit of a relief to not have to engage with as many people.

Um, for the extroverts. You may be crawling the walls of your house and it may be really challenging for you to engage. Now, I also didn't realize until this last week how much it would stretch my introversion to constantly be on zoom. And you know, you would think that I'm in a kind of more controlled, comfortable environment in my home.

Um, but still I was seeing a lot of people throughout the day and these different zoom meetings, and that was almost as draining as if I was at work, going to the various meetings. So I think that even though I'm going to give, you know, a range of different things in today's episode, I would really encourage you to think about what are the things that can comfort you during this period of time.

So some of the things that I'm finding that really are working for me right now is a rest to some degree. And I'm trying to get a pretty good night's sleep each night. Um, I will admit it is really hard, uh, to turn my brain off. And even on the weekends I'm doing some work, um, just because things are coming up and I'm needing to be responsive.

And I think that, um, I noticed especially this last weekend, I was sleeping a lot. I was taking a lot of naps. I was. You know, if I felt tired, I would put myself back to bed. And I think part of it is probably the stress and anxiety of what we're all experiencing. And for me, that really manifests in physical tiredness, um, after it kind of builds up over time.

So I've really been trying to give into that. And especially since I can't take naps during the weekday, that's just not part of the schedule that I currently have. Um, I'm trying to go to bed early if I can on the weeknights and then also using the weekends to kind of get extra rest if I can. I also think that sometimes what can work is taking action and trying to find small things that you can do.

Um, now I want to be really clear that for some people this does not work. You know, I think there are some of us who really want to get in there and take action. I have a good friend who, um, has been donating to a local food bank and donating blood and like really trying to just . Be out there helping.

There are other people I know who feel completely paralyzed and don't want to do anything and are really distracted, are really just kind of Netflix, bingeing, and that's kind of all they can do right now. Both of those are fine. You know, everyone's kind of reacting to this and in different ways. I do think though that finding something that can be a bit of a distraction from a 24 hour news cycle, that at least right now feels pretty depressing.

Um, finding something that can kind of take your mind off of that, whether it's a book or I'm talking with a friend on zoom or making a phone call to a family member, or, you know, reading, um, something other than the news, uh, watching something on TV. All of those things I think can be helpful. So here are some other strategies though that have been working for me, and I consider these to be kind of micro strategies and maybe something will work for you.

So recently I had some unreal uninterrupted time on the weekend, and what I decided to do was to do things in threes. And this was inspired in part by Elise joy cripes recent book on goal setting. I can link to this in the show notes where she talks about a period of her life right after. Um, her husband was deployed and she had a young infant and she felt kind of overwhelmed.

And so she would just say, what is, what are the three things I want to do today? And really try to focus her energy on those things. And recently she brought this up in her Instagram stories and wanted to kind of encourage people to focus on this idea of three things. No, I don't necessarily feel like I can only focus on three things during the day right now, but I modify this to do things in threes.

So for example, this morning I got up and I thought, okay, I'm going to eat breakfast and I'm going to do my morning pages, and then I'm going to have a cup of tea. And so those are my three things that I kind of grouped together. And then once that was done, I, you know, picked the next three things that I was going to focus on.

And what it allows you to do is feel like you're being productive, but also that you have like these natural breaks that are built in after you finish those three things and you kind of move on to the next three things that you're going to focus on. And it also, I think, allows you to break down whatever is on your list into smaller pieces, which for me right now is important.

It feels kind of overwhelming to take on anything that feels really big. So when I think micro action you can do is to do things in threes. I also think now is a really good time to revisit priorities and goals and maybe rethink them. Some of our worlds have been kind of completely offended by this situation and things that we had originally thought were priorities for the year are just not really priorities anymore.

Um, or they're just not something that's going to be able to happen. So a couple of examples of this. You know, in my business I have certain revenue goals and all of my speaking engagements are being canceled. Uh, that definitely affects the revenue from our business, and I completely understand why they're being canceled.

And part of me is relieved because I don't want to be traveling during this time. Um, but it has kind of real consequences for goals that I had for the year. And I have to kind of reflect. I think that and say, okay, so this is a disruption and what does it mean? And I don't want to set unrealistic goals that I can't meet.

So I'm thinking about that. The other thing I've really had been thinking about our goals that I have around health and wellness and working out, and for the past eight weeks or so, I have been slowly working my way up with a strength training program and with a run walk program. And every time I do one of those workouts, they get progressively harder.

Well, right now. I don't really feel like I'm in a, I'm in a place where I can do progressively harder things. Um, that actually is not kind of where my mind is at. I feel like because I'm feeling more physically tired, this is just not really the best approach. So what I decided to do was to completely reset both of those programs and go back to the beginning and work my way up again.

Now with the running program, I'm going to up my speed a little bit on my treadmill, and this was something I had considered doing before as well. So I'm going to focus more on the speed work and less on the distance. And then in the strength training program, I'm just feeling the need to do more familiar things.

And every time I go into a new week with a strength training program, I have to learn new exercises and that just doesn't feel good to me right now. So I'm basically just redoing those things and still keeping up the routine of the workout. But kind of reorganizing it in a way that feels more manageable for me right now.

So if you need to go back to your goals and your priorities and kind of rethink them, now's a really good time to do that. We know that we're probably gonna have another eight to 12 weeks minimum, if not longer, of doing this remote work of doing this social distancing. And because of that, it's a really good time to think about where do you want to be in two to three months time and what would that look like for your own goals and priorities.

I also think it's been really helpful for me during this time to find some comforting rituals. And for me right now that has been related to reading, I've been doing a ton of reading and also just drinking tea and having quiet moments in my house. And um, I had a bunch of books out from the library.

I've also checked out a bunch of eBooks and that's been really fun to browse through those and, and kind of get this pile of books starting to be whittled down. And also my partner and I recently, um, we had planned to install a hot water dispenser in our kitchen and we weren't able to get that done before we started practicing social distancing.

So instead we ordered a kettle online so that we can have, um, easy, hot water and we can start to, um, have that routine be part of our schedule. So finding those comforting rituals, whatever they may look like for you, I think can be really useful. I've also been focusing a lot on knowing what I can control and what I can't control.

And there are definitely things, I think a lot of the things in the news right now, I have no control over. I can do my own part and my partner and I can do, you know, what we think is right for us right now, which is like extreme social distancing of just staying inside our home. Um, but there are, you know, other things that I really have no control over.

I don't really have control over. How quickly this virus will spread in my community other than my own, you know, individual part that I play in that and I don't really have control over all the what ifs of what can happen next. And I was talking with my partner the other night and said, you know, what do you do instead of what a thing, cause he's not really a what if and kind of person.

And I tend to be a what if and kind of person and I tend to be a catastrophizer and this is partly due to my anxiety. So, um, we talked about that. Like what are some things that we can be thinking about instead of the what if scenarios, because I can go down some pretty dark paths when I start to do that.

And really the reality of it is I can't control those things. And so it doesn't really do me any good to put my energy into thinking about that. You can't plan for all the scenarios, especially where when we're in the middle of something that none of us have ever really experienced before. So I've really been focusing on what can I control and trying to let go of the things that I can't.

I also want to really give permission to find daily rhythms and not strict routines. And I think that, again, this is going to be different for everyone. Maybe some of you really need that structure team, and it's something that feels really good right now. Um, for me, I've really had to let that go. And I've really had to feel like, um, I can have kind of rhythms of things.

I certainly have kind of standing meetings every day and things like that that I attend that are more strict. Um, but in terms of like, when I eat lunch each day and when I, um, take breaks or walk away from my computer for a little while or try to get outside or whatever those things are, it's more of a rhythm than it is a routine.

And I think for right now, that's okay. I think that having, um, different routines when we're in new situations is absolutely required. Um, and that we are not going to be able to do exactly what it was that we were doing before just because we are in a completely different set of circumstances now.

Speaking of that, I've also been thinking about some new mantras that are helping me to kind of think through the situation. And one of them that I found really helpful is just to remind myself that this is a different set of circumstances, so I'm allowed to feel or act differently than I would have.

Maybe in another set of circumstances. And part of that is just kind of giving myself permission to feel what I need to feel to respond in the way that I think is best and to understand that I have never been in this situation before. And so I don't really know how to respond to all the things that I'm experiencing or that I'm feeling.

And so it's just kind of opening up that set of circumstances of how I'm going to respond. By saying that I get to think about it in new ways. I get to be creative in my response to some degree because I've not experienced this before. Another thing that I think is kind of fun to do in this kind of set of uncertain times is to find small treats, to find things that you might really enjoy and that feel good to you.

And for some of us, this might be tied to the concept of remote working. Like, for example, I get to go to work in my yoga pants and my slippers, which I've really been enjoying. And some people say, you know, you really need to dress up and, you know, put on your professional clothes. And I certainly do from the waist up, but I want to be comfortable.

And that's one of the kind of benefits I think of remote working is you get to wear comfortable clothes. Um, I also have really been enjoying making more complicated lunches in the middle of the day. And believe me, I'm not a chef. So more complicated for me is like assembling a salad or something that just would have been a little bit harder for me to do when I was at work.

So I'm really been enjoying that. And then, um, over the weekend, this past weekend, my partner and I decided to sign up for the streaming service, acorn TV, which is, um, a British service that has a lot of British mysteries. And that's something that he and I really, really enjoy. And so I was like, let's try this out.

Like, this will be kind of a fun thing that'll infuse some new shows into our, our TV watching schedule, and maybe we'll find a couple of new things that we really enjoy. So those were small treats for me this week. The last thing that I would say, um, for now of the things that I've been kind of thinking about is the importance of paying attention to our emotions and our feelings and allowing ourselves to feel the feelings.

There's a lot going on. Um, and I, even this past week when my partner and I went out to pick up groceries at Walmart. We made the really specific decision to park outside to have someone bring the groceries out. We were really careful about how we handled what was given to us. We were sanitizing things before we brought them into the house.

Like we were very careful about how we dealt with all the things that were kind of outside of our home, and it was really hard to go to Walmart and to see a really full parking lot. And to see crowds of people in the grocery stores, to see people driving around like it was a normal day. Um, and there were just way more people, uh, out running around than I thought there would be.

And a couple of days later, we did get the first case of, uh, Covin 19 in our County. And then we also got some restrictions around, um, large group gatherings and things like that. But I did, you know, as we were driving around and we stopped by the pharmacy and a couple of other. Errands, you know, we, and we were basically trying to stay away from everyone.

And I, I had these feelings of anger of just like, why is, why is no one understanding what they're supposed to be doing right now? Like the, this is not the time to go to Walmart and, and be there with all these other people. You know, like, we need to be kind of careful about crowds and, you know, all the things that we've been hearing around social distancing.

And I think my partner and I were both just a little bit shocked at how many people were out and about. And then I had to kind of step back and say, you know, everybody's dealing with this in really different ways. And some people need a sense of normalcy to feel like this is a situation that's going to be okay.

And I think that, you know, in this situation, I'm going to feel just very differently than other people are going to feel. And it's because of my background and my set of circumstances and all kinds of other things that are going to impact my feelings and emotions. And we all have that unique constellation.

So it's important, I think, to pay attention to that, to know what are the things that you're kind of sensitive to right now, to know the things that are going to comfort you right now when things feel uncertain and scary. So all that to say we're in this together and I'm probably feeling all the things that you're feeling and I'm also having this sense of uncertainty and it is disruptive.

That's kind of the bottom line. This is a very disruptive time and I think we're all going to be doing the best we can. And, um, I'm glad to have this community. I'm glad to be connecting with many of you on social media and via email and I would always encourage you to contact me if you need a little bit of a motivation or an uplifting, um, response.

I'm here for that so you can always email me@helloatdrkatielinder.com. You can tweet to me at Katie, double underscore Linder. You can connect with me on Instagram at Katie underscore lender, and you can write me a letter at PO box 1973 in Manhattan, Kansas, six six five Oh two I will admit that I am not checking the PO box right now because of social distancing, but at some point I will go there and I will look forward to seeing various letters and things that you have sent to me and I will respond to every single one.

So in this set of uncertain times, what I do have complete certainty about is this community, our kindness towards each other and our ability to support one another even when we're having our own set of uncertain circumstances. Thanks so much for listening. thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie linder.work/podcasts if you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes.

Thanks for listening.