You are listening to, you've got this episode 339. 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 thought I would talk a little bit about outsourcing.

Now, as you have heard in recent episodes, I am doing a much, uh, kind of deeper reflection on time management and how I'm kind of using my time, devoting my time to different projects, prioritizing even narrowing down, you know, what I'm focusing on, and outsourcing is an important part of that. And, In this episode, I thought I would include some things that I currently outsource, but also some things I'm kind of dreaming about outsourcing, wishing I could outsource, um, because it, it does give me a better sense of the kinds of priorities and, and things that maybe I wanna give more time to, but I'm struggling to give more time to.

So, um, I thought it would be kind of interesting to, to talk through this and of course to challenge you to think about what might you outsource, if. If you could. So I actually think that outsourcing is an incredible way of getting back time, and in some cases also really relieving stress. This is something that I try to think about when I'm choosing, you know, what I wanna outsource and what I don't.

I want to think about what is going to positively benefit me. Um, in a way that is, um, it, it may be even more important than like, the cost of what I'm paying for the outsourcing is like, what is the benefit that I'm getting back? So here are some things I'm currently outsourcing that would kind of fall into these categories of, of giving me back time or, or relieving stress.

The first thing is cleaning my house. I'm really bad at making time for this. This is something I have never been good at. Never been good at kind of getting, getting, um, time set aside to do this Well, I certainly think I'm capable of it, like most of us probably are. But, you know, on a daily basis, this is not something that's on my mind.

I feel like my brain is filled with other kinds of things that I would prefer to be thinking about. So I really do love that on a daily basis, I can just really worry about like dishes, a little bit of laundry, but not much else. We have a service that comes to our house couple times a month to clean.

And this is, uh, a huge weight off my mind to, to have this happen and, and I really appreciate it. Now a second thing that I outsource is anything related to tax preparation. Now this is something that I have done pretty much my whole life. I had a family member do my taxes when I was a teenager, and my partner and I have basically had accounting support since we got married.

Um, so I have really never done my own taxes. Now I find this to be a huge stress relief for myself and I'm, I'm sure I'm getting a ton of time back as well. And the primary reason that I have chosen to kind of, um, do this type of outsourcing is I think I'm the kind of person that would experience a lot of anxiety if I did my own taxes.

Um, I would feel like I needed to research, like every little tax code change and try to be on top of all of it. And, you know, outsourcing, this is a major gift to my sanity. So I feel like this is one of those things that it's completely worth it to me. And when we decided to add on, you know, our l l c, the business that I run on the side, um, having someone to kind of focus on that in addition to our personal taxes.

Not that our taxes are all that complicated. I mean, I, I don't mean to imply that we have this like, incredibly complicated financial situation cuz we actually don't. But, um, for me I think it would feel overly complicated and it would, it would be very stressful for me. So this one is a, a big, um, Gift to me that I don't have to focus on this.

Now a third thing that, um, I outsource is yard work. Now I know some people really enjoy being outside and gardening and, you know, working in their yards, and my partner and I both happen to have seasonal allergies and we find being outside. Around plants and grass and things that are growing out of the earth to be misery inducing.

Uh, it has always been this way and I do take seasonal allergy medication, but it does not necessarily help this situation. And I will also admit that I just don't like bugs. I never have, uh, all kinds of bugs. Anything that crawls or flies, I just don't enjoy. So, uh, we did find a local service that cuts our lawn a couple times a month, and when it's the right, you know, season, they might trim back some other plants as needed.

Um, this is also, uh, we have a service that, that does kind of our sprinkler system and, and make sure that that's kind of like functional. Um, and if we ever decided to do more extensive landscaping, I am sure that we would hire that out as well. So this is something that, um, again, it, it feels like a major gift to give to myself that I don't really have to think about anything outside of my house in terms of like the maintenance that I need to worry about, uh, with our landscaping.

So as you can see from each of these examples, I gained back quite a bit of time from outsourcing these tasks to other people. But also you'll hear that these are things I don't enjoy. I, I really have tried to choose things that are not only beneficial to my, my time, but that I don't necessarily want to be doing these things.

And I think that that is what is one of the more helpful components of outsourcing, um, is that you can exchange value with someone else who is kind of willing or able to do the kinds of things that you don't necessarily want to do. Now there are other things that I wish I could outsource as well, although I don't see them happening anytime soon.

So this is very much like wishful thinking on my part. But I do think it's kind of helpful, uh, as an exercise to think about the kinds of things that you wish you could outsource. So the first one, and this one really came up for me in this past week, is work reading. Now, you know, I love to read and I.

Carve out a lot of time in my life to do reading, but I feel like some of the industry reports that are connected to my portfolio at work, and these would be things like related to online learning, workforce readiness, the future of higher ed, you know, all those kinds of things. They just continue to proliferate.

Like every time I turn around, there is another report that I'm supposed to be reading about, you know, the, the regional workforce development impacts in Colorado or. Um, how AI is impacting the future of higher education. I mean, like, there's always something, and I would love to get like a summary of these industry reports that are piling up on my desk from someone else who can give me like a couple of things that, you know, they think are kind of meaningful or useful for me to look at.

The challenge is it's hard for someone else to give me that information cuz they're not in my head and they, they don't know all my projects and they don't know all the kinds of things that I'm kind of thinking about and trying to make connections between. So, alas, I just need to find a time to fit this reading into the other tasks I have on my plate, um, because I do see these reports literally piling up on my desk.

Now the second thing I would love to outsource is cooking. Now, I can imagine that you might think this one seems more reasonable to outsource, given that we have all of these like delivery services and you can get like food kits to put things together. But I have found that given the many, many dietary restrictions that my partner and I have, I feel like I would need a personal chef to really feel like I could trust the food that was being prepared because there's so many things that, um, or actually, I mean less so for me, but kind of dangerous for my partner, um, to have around.

And so, uh, I don't see a personal chef happening for us anytime soon. And so what I do instead is really just have basically assembly models for my food. I do bulk food prep on the weekends. I eat pretty much the same thing on a regular basis. I'm just trying to make sure it's nutritious. So I have a, a smoothie option that I do in the morning.

Now. Um, I've gotten back to smoothies. Now that the weather is a little bit warmer, I do a soup option for lunch, which is like filled with vegetables. Um, and then in the evening it's kind of like open, like what, what I have for dinner. Um, but sometimes to get a little more variety or just to have this kind of taken off my brain and, and off my my time, I would love to have someone else be cooking.

Okay. A third area that I wish that I could outsource are some of the tasks that I have on my list that would probably fall to like a personal assistant. Now I have an assistant at work who handles my calendar and who's an incredible support to me, um, on a daily basis. But these are other kinds of things like finding a new dentist or scheduling doctor's appointments.

Like these are the things I would never give to an assistant that I have at work. But I would love to have kind of a personal assistant on the side that tackles some of these things. And, and what I've found is that these are the kinds of things that tend to just get like deprioritized when there's a lot going on.

So I, I feel like in some ways this is like a personal assistant for self-care, but I don't think that's gonna be in the cards for me. So I, it's a really good example of how this kind of exercise. When you think about what you wish you could outsource, it helps you identify the kinds of things you wish you just had more time for.

And that can sometimes lead to maybe a reprioritization of where your energy and your time is going. Um, now I think that. When it comes to some of these, cooking is a great example. I feel like I have actually limited this down, like whittled it down to the smallest amount of time that I can give to this.

Um, but for some of the other things like work reading, I actually think I would really enjoy diving into some of these reports, but I start to feel like they're encroaching, you know, on other things I need to get done or maybe the other things I need to get done are encroaching on these reports. And that's really tough when you feel like your time is kind of competing.

Um, with each other, you know, in terms of your tasks and, and they're kind of like in these knockdown, drag out fights of like, who's gonna get your time and energy with all the things that are on your list. But this exercise does kind of let you see what are the kinds of things that are floating to the top of your mind, like immediately.

And sometimes I would guess that you wish for things to be outsourced that actually could be outsourced, um, if you give it enough kind of creative thought. So I'm curious, what are the kinds of things that you currently outsource and what do you dream of outsourcing? You can email me at hello dr katie linder.com to let me know what is coming up for you as you think through this exercise, because as you well know, I always love to hear from you.

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