You're listening to You've Got This, episode 393.

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 share some of the things that have helped me to reboot my daily journaling practice.

Now, a little bit of background on this one.

I had stopped regularly journaling every day around the middle of the summer last year.

And I can't really pinpoint why it fell off like it just did.

And I think sometimes routines and habits like this, practices like reflective writing, they can just come and go when we need them.

So I didn't, you know, put a lot of effort into trying to figure out why it stopped.

But I will say before that point of it stopping, I had been journaling daily like morning pages for years.

This is like all I think I started way back when I was like in Oregon.

So it's probably been, I don't know, five, six years, maybe more that I was doing this like regular journaling practice.

So I have been practicing a lot of self-compassion this year in general.

It's something that I've been really focused on.

And so I applied it to this habit as well.

I didn't want to, you know, kind of berate myself for not getting back to this journaling practice.

I did want to release, you know, my expectations for the daily pages.

And so I decided to just keep up with my five-year journal, which is basically like a sentence or two every day.

And then you can see what you wrote in previous years.

I can link to this five-year journal in the show notes just in case you want to see what it looks like.

But I basically allowed that to be my journaling practice and I let go of like this other kind of daily journaling.

However, the challenge was I really missed it.

And so I added it back into my 24 goals for 2024 list to kind of get back into the regular practice because this is a routine that I really love and it did feel like something was missing.

And so I wanted to see how it would show up this year if I didn't put pressure on myself to start it at a particular time or in a particular kind of way.

So as I record this episode, I've been doing daily journaling again for a little over a month.

And I'm actually often journaling like twice a day.

Sometimes I'll do it in the morning before I go to work and then again at the end of the day.

And so I thought I would share what has helped me to reboot this practice almost a year after it fell off in hopes that maybe there are some principles here that if you're trying to reboot a practice routine or habit, maybe it would help you as well.

So the first thing that I did was I decided to change the format of my journaling.

So I had been using a consistent type of notebook for several years.

And for some reason, I just was not feeling it anymore.

And I think part of it was the size of this notebook, it initially was like convenient for me to carry around, but then it started to feel really small.

And I felt like I was trying to kind of like cram in a bunch of reflective writing and like very small print.

And it was one of those like dot grid notebooks.

And so it was hard to stay like organized in terms of what I was writing.

And so I basically decided if I'm going to reboot this, let me try a new journal.

And I ended up finding one that has lines on its pages that are a little bit kind of thicker.

And so I don't feel like I'm having to like, write really small to cram in a bunch of things into this journal.

And it gave me kind of a new format to work with.

And so the day that this new journal arrived in the mail, which was a Sunday, I went ahead and got started.

And I will go ahead and link to the new journal that I'm using in the show notes in case you're interested in checking it out.

It's very basic.

I chose a different color as well.

My old journal was black, this one is blue.

And the other thing I like about it is it is a lay flat journal.

So it's it's got kind of a hard cover to it.

But when you open it up in the middle, it lays flat.

My old journal notebook did not have that.

So I was always like wrestling with the margins.

And so this one is a lot easier to use.

So one of the fun things about taking a break from a habit routine or practice is that you can actually like think, what do I want to change about that thing?

Or what was I not liking about it before that I want to like adjust or modify.

So I definitely did that in terms of the format of what I was using to do the actual journaling.

Now, the second thing I did was I didn't give myself any parameters around the length or the timing of my journaling.

So I like to try and do a minimum of a page each day, but I'm not requiring that of myself.

And I used to do three morning pages.

And I'm just giving that up.

Like that's not necessarily what I'm trying to do.

So sometimes I journal in the morning.

Other times I use it as a way to wind down from the day.

I also sometimes journal a couple times a day, depending on what's going on.

So having that kind of set aside where I don't have a specific thing I'm trying to accomplish with a journaling has been really, really helpful too.

The third thing that I think has been really helpful for me is I keep the journal in a couple of places in my house where I'm going to see it regularly.

Now I have found in the past when I start up a new habit or routine, one thing that will often make it fail for me is I just forget to do it.

And that's not necessarily because I don't want to, but I'm not used to it.

I'm not used to having it in my schedule.

And so keeping the journal out where I can see it has actually helped a lot.

Now I basically carry around like this small pile that I carry around my house.

It has my Kindle, it has my iPad mini, my phone.

So having the journal just part of that stack means that it ends up next to me in my reading chair.

It ends up next to me on my nightstand.

And I always have it where I'm like visually seeing it.

And that helps me to remember to actually journal as well.

Now the fourth thing that I think has also been really helpful for me is I'm not giving myself any parameters on what I want to write about.

So I have often used journaling in the past as a kind of processing tool and I just kind of debrief my day or write about whatever's top of mind for me.

The other day we had a prolific creative retreat and I wrote down my list of to-do items in my journal.

So I think that I want to keep it pretty free form in terms of what I'm using it for.

But I will give an example that in this past month I have been working through a health issue that required a medical diagnosis to get treatment.

And this was due to some symptoms that started in mid July.

It's been going on for a while.

And I was writing about this a lot and trying to kind of process what was going on.

Now I want to pause and say I'm completely fine.

I did have some testing.

I got a diagnosis.

There's a clear plan for treatment.

Like I'm completely fine.

But there was a period of time where it was unclear what it was.

And I think we've all had these situations where it's like something's going on but you don't know what it is.

And it kind of freaks you out.

Like you're not sure you know how serious it is or if it's going to be an issue.

And this was impacting like my schedule, my routines.

It still is a little bit as I'm like working through the treatment.

But it was really wonderful to have journaling to process the different steps of that as it was happening.

And to name the emotions I was feeling throughout.

I will admit sometimes I tend to just push through without a pause to kind of like check in with myself and my emotions.

Sometimes I just want to like keep going and figure out you know a solution to something or problem solve something.

And so having the journal as a way to kind of go back and forth with myself and to really kind of like express concern or express even just like frustration about the timing of like how long this was taking to figure out.

Like those kinds of things were really helpful for me.

Now I also think it's important to note that during the time that I was getting back to journaling it also happened to be a time where I was taking a break from my normal therapy schedule.

So due to vacation timing and summer schedules for my therapist and myself it just made sense to take some time off for like the last month or so.

So I do kind of wonder if the journaling was well timed during the period of that break.

I'm also curious to see if I'll continue it as regularly once the therapy starts back up again.

Maybe it's a way for me to actually get weaned off of therapy as to have this like reflective practice.

Like I'm not sure.

So these are all good things for me to just be like paying attention to and thinking about.

So all that to say so far I'm really pleased with the regularity of this habit coming back into my life.

It has been such a pleasure to get back to journaling without pressure and without parameters.

And I'm really excited to be back to journaling as we head into fall and winter.

I feel like when the weather turns cold all I want is cozy activities like journaling and those seasons of the year.

So I'm really looking forward to that as well.

I'm very curious if you have any habits or routines that you are working on getting back to.

You can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.com to let me know.

I always love to hear from you.

Thanks for listening.

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