You're listening to You've Got This, episode 400.

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 check in to see how you're doing in the midst of the middle of the term.

Maybe not all of you are quite there in your academic calendar, but I've been talking with a lot of folks who are feeling the pressure and stress at being at the midpoint of the term at my own institution we just entered into week 8.

I am feeling it too, and I thought I might share some of the ways that I'm combating the slump of energy that can happen in the middle of the academic term and also what I'm doing to boost myself to try to end the term strong.

There's a few different things I'm trying, and maybe one of these will work for you too.

So first, I am really, really conscious of my self-talk to make sure that I'm staying positive even when things are getting stressful.

So in particular, one of the things I'm doing is making sure that I'm recognizing any important wins, big or small, in my life because maybe there's other things that are not going great, so I want to make sure that I'm recognizing the wins.

So here are some of the things that I've given myself a pat on the back for lately, just as some examples.

One is I've been consistent with a run/walk workout schedule for the past month or so.

This is like a combo of jogging and running and walking, and I'm heading into week five of that.

Getting back to regular workouts really helps my stress overall, so I'm trying to acknowledge how I'm showing up in that space.

I'm also doing a great job with getting to bed on time, which is before 9pm for me.

I took time one weekend to watch a movie with my partner, which we had not done in a while.

I also took a day off work and ran errands with my partner, including an important errand that he had been putting off that he needed my help with, and that was really satisfying for both of us.

I'm also staying on top of laundry and dishes.

These are two domestic tasks that help me to feel more in control at home.

I am on track to complete my 24 goals for 2024.

I got my COVID vaccine and flu shot earlier this fall, which is making me feel much better about attending a couple of conferences that I have coming up.

I have given myself margin to complete tasks in a larger time window when I'm feeling overwhelmed.

And let's see, even when stressed, I'm choosing kindness.

I'm doing my best to do that.

And I have been consistently meal prepping, so I have options to choose that are healthy for me to eat.

I am starting to get some signups for my 2025 programming around project management, which is really exciting to see with three months left of 2024.

And I would just say in general, I'm giving myself a pat on the back for listening really carefully to myself to see what I need mentally, emotionally, and physically, and trying to respond accordingly.

So the first part of my response to being in this kind of like middle of the term slump is to make sure I'm kind of talking to myself and celebrating and honoring wins and talking myself in a positive way.

So that is helping to give me energy.

Now the other thing I think is helpful is to have some go to mantras that are more positive when things are feeling stressful.

And I thought I would share just some of my favorites and there are so many out there.

You can easily do like a Google search to find different things.

But my favorite thing about mantras is that they're short, they're sweet.

They would fit on like a post-it note or, you know, somewhere that is like something you can take with you and it can be really helpful.

So here are some of my favorite mantras right now in this moment.

Doing the best you can is enough.

Little steps add up to big results.

One step at a time.

Getting extra rest helps you to be at your best.

It's okay to ask for help when you need it.

Your future self is cheering you on.

Your past self is so proud of you.

You have everything you need right now.

You are making good choices.

You are prioritizing the right things.

So whatever mantra is going to be a good fit for you, it can actually be very telling to kind of pick the mantra that is like what you need to hear right now because it can give you a good sense of your headspace.

Now the third strategy I have, first one is positive self-talk.

Second one is mantras.

The third strategy is I like to try to help other people.

This is something that when I am stressed, it helps me to feel better if I can help others.

So in the middle of the term, I like to just do simple things.

One is just to check in with my colleagues.

I find that when I can be useful to others, even just to offer an ear to hear about challenges that they are experiencing, to troubleshoot something, to brainstorm something with them, to read a draft of something and give feedback, whatever it is that is kind of hanging up my colleague with a particular situation they are dealing with, it can be helpful for my own mood when I reach out and see if I can help my colleague.

I feel like there are so many opportunities for that that in the midst of kind of the middle of the term, we all can get really busy or we can feel really harried or we can feel very stressed and we can kind of forget that there may be some opportunities for us to help other people just in the same way that we might want to be helped in our own kind of stressful situation.

So that is something that I try to remember to do and it kind of gets my mind off of my own issues and stress when I can reach out and I can help other people.

So that's strategy number three.

The fourth strategy is very tied to energy and this is that I'm leaning into exercise pretty consistently to try to keep my energy up.

And I feel like especially if you have like work travel or other things that you're doing, it can be so easy to fall off of exercise or movement practices as the weather gets colder.

You know, just different things can happen in the fall in particular, I think that can just like have this fall off, not to mention, you know, cold flu season, like you might get sick and it's really hard to keep up a movement practice.

I have found that even small amounts of exercise or movement helped me.

So even when I can't do like a full on workout, maybe I don't have the time, I try to do a workout in the morning if I can, and then also to take a midday walk when my schedule allows.

And I find that even like a 10 minute walk can be enough to allow yourself to just kind of get some energy boost, you know, like in the middle of the day or something along those lines.

What has also been super helpful for me is the run walk plan that I'm using gives me pre scheduled workouts.

So I know exactly what I'm supposed to do.

I do them roughly every other day.

And on the days that I'm not doing those, I do something else like the bike or the row or yoga or something different.

But I have kind of this set schedule of what I'm trying to get done.

And that really helps me to one, know exactly what I'm supposed to do.

So I don't have to think about it and to give the satisfaction of checking the box of moving forward in that run, walk schedule in a way that feels really positive for me.

Now the other thing I like to do sometimes if I can is combine number three and number four in that I try to check in with my colleague and maybe invite them to do a walking meeting so that we can walk and talk together.

The other thing that I have found myself doing recently, and this depends on where I am, is if I have a colleague give me a call like after hours and I have the ability to like walk around while I'm taking the call.

If I am on the phone with someone, for example, I will kind of take a walk while I'm on the phone rather than sit down and be off my feet.

And I think that again, there's something about movement that helps me to process conversations and to engage, I think in a more energized way when I'm talking with colleagues, even if it's at the tail end of a day or it's after hours.

And that is something that I just find really helpful.

So that fourth strategy is really just to try to use movement to keep your energy up, whatever that might look like for you, even if it's in relatively small amounts.

Now I'm sure there are many, many, many other strategies that we could potentially talk about for this midterm slump.

I would love to know if there are things you are engaging in to combat this.

You can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.com.

I always love to hear from you and I would love to hear your strategies as well.

Thanks for listening.

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