You're listening to You've Got This, episode 405.

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 offer some reflective questions for making a four-year plan.

Now, this is definitely for those of you who might have felt a little bit disheartened by the election news, and you may be trying to figure out what might keep you motivated and on track in the midst of what could be a distracting or even difficult period of years.

But I would also just say I love multi-year planning, and I like to talk about it every once in a while.

And I think that tying it to an event like an election or administration can actually work really well because it has a really clear start point and a really clear end point.

And I've definitely talked about three to five-year planning in the past, and that four-year planning is right in that sweet spot of the middle there.

So today's episode is really about documenting projects and goals that may already be on your list for the next four years, or to create new projects and goals that will help you come out on the other side in a better place than where you are now.

Now, I do want to note that I recently talked about the concept of guaranteed goals, which are the things that if you invest your time and energy in, you will definitely see results.

And I'll link to that episode in the show notes in case you want to return to that as part of a conversation around this larger four-year plan.

But today, I want to offer four reflective questions that you can ask yourself to help create a plan for the next four years.

And I'm also going to offer my own responses to those questions as well.

So the first question is, what accomplishments or milestones are already on your map for the next four years?

So you may already have projects in motion that will come to fruition in this period of time.

And there could also be some more personal milestones that you want to note, like you might have a milestone birthday, or a child that's graduating from high school, or something along those lines.

So for me, the next four years includes some longer-term projects, like publishing an edited collection on coaching and higher education, which I've mentioned here before, paying off my mortgage, which you know you all have heard me working toward this for many, many years.

But it should happen within this four-year period of time.

And also completing the 2,500 coaching experience hours that I need to apply for the final level of credentialing with the International Coaching Federation as a master certified coach.

This is their highest level of credential.

And all of these things should be able to happen in the next four years based on how I've planned to chip away at them each year.

Now when I think about these long-term goals, two of which I've been working toward for three to four plus years already, and in the case of my coaching hours, it's closer to like eight years that I've been working toward that, it's actually really exciting to think that they're going to wrap up in the next four years.

And it's super motivating to see these long-term investments of my time and resources paying off in very tangible ways.

Now the second question is, how do you want to be different between now and four years from now?

And this question really gets to, I think, habits or other areas that you might want to invest in that could be identity-based.

They could be tied to learning something new.

It could also be about a mindset shift or about a shift you want to make in your life or your career more broadly.

So for me, a main personal goal I have for the next four years is to continue my movement practices in a way that's a little bit more intentional to build strength and also to build my capacity to run longer distances.

Now I really like when my movement practices can be a little bit more meditative and I'd like my running practice to get to that place.

And right now I will say it's not.

Right now it feels pretty strenuous for me to be running on a regular basis.

And I'd like to kind of build that up hopefully to a point where it's not feeling as hard as it feels right now.

Now I'm not planning to set a goal to like run a marathon or anything, although, you know, never say never, who knows what's in the cards for the future.

But I do want to think about what this means to achieve in terms of how my current routines and habits might change.

And in four years, just as a note, I'll be in my mid forties.

So building strength also just feels like a good goal for the stage of my life.

Now a more professional goal that I have for the next four years is to deepen my experience in strategy and planning.

Now this has been a part of my work that I've really enjoyed and I'd like to think more about how I can grow in that particular area.

And I already have several credentials that are kind of tied to this.

So I don't think that's the direction that this will take, but I do want to be open about what it could look like in my professional life, both at work and in my business.

And I definitely think that the launch of the PM by design training sessions is certainly one move that was going in this direction.

Now the third question is what are aspirations that feel like stretch goals for the next four years?

And these might be things that you don't actually have a plan to complete, but that you have a bit of a dream to pursue.

And maybe you want to use this time to kind of dig in in a particular kind of way.

So for me, I've been thinking about a new YouTube channel that's more content based.

So different than my current channel where I talk about books and reading, and I'll be sharing more about this in my 2025 goals.

So kind of a spoiler alert here, but I have some things to learn related to this project.

I also have some specific metrics and goals that I want to tie to it.

And I have a couple other things too, kind of in the background of my business in particular that I'm not sure what they're meant to be.

Like I've had a title for something in my mind for a long time, but I'm not sure if it's like a book or a program or a podcast.

And I'm kind of just like pinning that to see if I can get some clarity on it in the next four years and see like what that might look like.

So just kind of noting that there's an aspiration there that doesn't feel clear to me yet.

Okay.

The other thing that I've wanted to do for a really long time is to write a full length fiction manuscript.

Now I've started and stopped several in multiple different genres.

And so it's definitely a stretch goal for the next several years to see if I can make that into a more concrete goal and then follow through on it.

But I also think it would just be super fun.

So that's something that I'm kind of looking forward to.

And then the fourth and final question to ask yourself is what will it look like to live out your values in the next four years?

So how do you want to take specific steps to align your core values with your day to day actions, your goals, and your projects?

And if you aren't sure what your core values are, I'll link to a podcast episode where I offer some guidance in terms of how to identify them.

Now for me, I have five core values that I've identified and I've talked about these probably in different places and spaces, but here are some ideas about how they might show up for me in the next four years.

One is a value around radical self-trust.

And this value really includes embracing my uniqueness as my strength and staying loyal to my own needs.

So one area here is definitely paying off my mortgage.

And then I would say another area is kind of playful experimentation with things like writing fiction.

So it's kind of built into some of the goals I've already talked about.

I have another value of creativity and I think between the YouTube project and some writing projects, this one is definitely covered.

I have a recovery and self-care value and I'm guessing that I'll be engaging with the news a lot less in the next four years as a form of kind of just setting a boundary for myself.

But I will keep up my reading practices and I do plan to deepen my movement practices as forms of just kind of like self-care and kind of stress relief.

I have a fourth value of alignment.

And as part of this value, I really like to lean into providing systems and order and support and solutions for what I think of as like chaotic and overwhelming situations and experiences for people, including myself.

And I'm guessing I'll have plenty of opportunity to live this out in the coming years.

And then my final value is around holding space.

And this I think is definitely represented in working toward my next coaching credential and what that will look like.

So of course, I would love to hear if a four-year plan is a strategy that you plan to utilize.

You can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.com to share your ideas.

As you know, I always love to hear from you.

Thanks for listening.

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