You're listening to You've Got This, episode 417.

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 ask you the question of where do you find fun in your work?

Now, there's a lot of things right now that don't necessarily feel fun around us that are trying to steal our energy and attention and focus.

And I think it's actually really important to ground ourselves in things like fun and enjoyment, the bright spots that we have, and also the things that we're just grateful for that we look forward to each day in different parts of our work.

So I thought I would talk a little bit about where I am finding fun in my work right now.

And these are things that I am finding to be just an anchor for myself as I'm dealing with a lot of turbulence and just uncertainty that is kind of floating around me.

So I broke this into three categories.

The fun that I have in my day job, the fun that I have in my side business, and also some areas that are kind of personal areas of fun, but sometimes they feel a little bit like work.

So in my day job, I definitely have fun whenever I am learning something new.

And lately, what I've been kind of playing around with is some stuff around AI because we have these AI working groups that we're running on our campus.

And they're focused on teaching and learning and research and admin and operations.

And we're really trying to just understand what are the different possibilities of AI for our institution.

And now not everybody is on board.

You know, I think I should just mention there's a huge spectrum of people in terms of people who are like loving it and they're evangelists and then people who just are absolutely against it.

But this is an area that in order to kind of support that wide spectrum, I feel like I need to do a deeper dive to kind of understand it myself.

So I've been learning some kind of new things about it, which has been really interesting to me.

The other thing that I find really fun in my day to day work is when I'm working with a solid team.

And right now I'm actually in the middle of a project where we're implementing a bunch of different recommendations that came out of this 18 month working group on my campus that I co-led.

And I brought in a team of people, a project manager and a change manager and a communications person and one of my colleagues who's kind of co-leading it with me.

And we meet on a weekly basis to kind of move this project forward.

And it is just warming my project manager heart to have this group come together.

And they're so good at what they do individually and as a team.

And it really is making the project feel like it is doable despite the fact that it is just incredibly complicated and it involves at least a year's worth of activities just to kind of get it launched.

And it's just been really helpful to have that kind of group to meet with regularly and to talk through, you know, all the complexity and make sure we're just checking the boxes on the things that we need to move forward.

The other thing that I find really fun in my day to day work is when I can do coach-like activities.

Now, I do not coach as part of my day job, like I don't have clients or anything like that, but I do use coach-like activities to support my staff and also to facilitate things like meetings and working groups and just make sure that we have like clear agendas and I'm asking like the right reflective questions that I'm holding people accountable and myself accountable in ways that are really important.

And so that's always really fun when I can bring like a coaching tool or like a coaching presence into the kind of work that I do.

I also find when I have the opportunity to do writing tasks at work to be really fun.

I love writing.

It's something that I do personally.

It's something that I do professionally.

Obviously, I journal, you know, there's all these different kinds of ways that I built writing into my life and it's really hard to fit writing in during weeks where I have like a ton of different meetings and I don't have a lot of like deep work time.

So when I can do writing tasks in the midst of my day to day work, that feels like extra fun.

A couple other things in my day to day work that I find fun.

One is definitely connecting with colleagues on walking meetings.

We are definitely in the midst of fall spring here in Denver right now and we've actually had some days in the sixties and it is so wonderful to take a walk in the middle of the day and just catch up with someone, kind of hear what's going on with them.

And I definitely love learning about my colleagues interests and passions, both personally and professionally.

So these walking meetings are obviously getting things done, you know, that we need to talk about and kind of work through, but it's also a great way just to kind of get to know someone a little bit, which I really enjoy as well.

Okay, let's talk about a side business fun.

This is my second category of things that I was kind of thinking through and the first one is not going to surprise you.

It is definitely coaching.

I find coaching to be incredibly fun.

This is why I built a coach training business.

I think that it is so, um, it kind of just requires you to have like spontaneity and creativity and you see direct results in coaching sessions with clients who come in like completely frazzled, completely overwhelmed, and they leave with like a plan and they know what they're going to do.

And it is just so satisfying to be able to help people with that.

I also find coaching to just be an incredibly creative, um, practice because you're always thinking of like new tools and new ways to kind of support clients.

You never know what a client is going to bring into a session.

And so you're like generating questions on the fly and like trying to figure out what's going to help them.

So all of that is just incredibly fun.

I also really love ideating on new possible products and services.

And one of my side quests this year, um, which I mentioned in like early January as I'm thinking about my goals is to work on a new product for my business.

And I started working on it and I had kind of a plan of what I was going to do.

And again, this will not surprise you.

It turned from like one thing into like three things.

And, and even this morning in my mind, I was like, maybe there's a fourth thing there too.

Like I'm, I'm trying to kind of map it out before I start it and it just continues to grow and what it shows me is how excited I am about this particular concept and what I'm trying to kind of impart, you know, through this particular product that I'm trying to create.

Um, and so that's been really fun to just kind of explore that.

I also love rabbit holing on a new project and I think you all know what I mean by rabbit holing where you just start like a little bit of research and all of a sudden it just kind of opens this door to like, you know, YouTube videos and podcast episodes and you know, tutorials and other things you're kind of looking at.

And when I can kind of get into that flow state where I'm really kind of doing that deep dive, um, it really just, my brain feels so happy when it's in that place where I can just kind of do that exploration.

So that's always really fun when I get to do that.

Kind of tied in with that concept is I love in my side business when I get to create in a flow state and this is something that I would, I set aside specific time for kind of like my day job.

It's not easy to kind of carve out hours and hours of time, you know, for myself to, to do this kind of flow state work.

But when I do like a creative retreat or I set aside some time or I'm like taking time off work, you know, during my summer vacation, when I can really kind of just let myself go, it's like you turn the creative faucet on like full blast.

Um, that's something that I find incredibly enjoyable and fun.

Now I think, you know, from following along with this podcast for a long time, something else that I find really fun is strategic planning and mapping tasks.

And some of the topics that I've even recently talked about, about kind of pre-planning tasks in my task management system and really trying to understand what is going to help me in my future self to get everything done and juggle everything that I have going on.

I can honestly say right now I am feeling just slightly, you know, um, ahead of being underwater.

You know, I just talked with my partner the other day and I said, you know, if I end up getting sick, this is not going to be good.

Like I'm really just like getting things done just in time.

And I was thinking about this and I was thinking about kind of my systems that I've created for myself this year and I would be completely underwater without those systems.

Like it's very clear to me that if I didn't have this kind of level of granularity in my tasks telling me what to do at any given moment, I would be completely underwater and I would not be able to achieve the level of productivity that I have right now.

So it's not something that I can operate at all the time, but it does make me glad that I find strategic planning and mapping tasks to be fun because I have to do that in order to kind of achieve what I'm doing.

Similar to my day job.

Um, of course I love learning new skills.

This is something that I recently podcasted about in terms of like revisiting old topics for new knowledge.

I really do love to watch tutorial videos and like try out new things and see what's working and what's not working.

And I'm even starting to kind of play around with my processes for like how I edit podcasts and things like that and kind of learn new software.

And I always enjoy that kind of thing.

So that's something I would add to my list.

And then the last thing I added to this list is really exploring other people's content for inspiration.

And I have a blog post that I'm going to be releasing soon that is talking about kind of where I'm finding inspiration.

I will link to it in the show notes for this episode.

And I have recently stumbled across a couple of really good books, um, a really interesting YouTube channel.

Like I really just love to see what other people are putting out there, not necessarily so I can kind of emulate it exactly, but I really like to just kind of expand my understanding of what's possible in some of these different content realms that I create in.

And so that's always really fun for me.

So the last category that I gave myself here was the personal category.

And I have a few areas that I'm also finding fun, but they do sometimes feel like work.

And one of them is definitely exercise.

So I am right now in a pretty consistent movement practice in the mornings.

Um, I, I do movement before I go to work.

And so one of the things that I find kind of fun is trying out harder workouts to just see what my capacity is and how it's changed over time.

So I'm doing this 5k plan right now, and I will tell you some of these workouts that I get into.

I'm not sure I'm going to be able to do this.

And then by the time I finish it, I'm like, wow, that was really hard, but I feel good because I was able to complete it.

And so kind of challenging myself to do some of those harder workouts.

And then the other kind of piece of that that's helpful for me and that I find fun is rotating different kinds of workouts for variety.

So I really do need to not get into a rut.

You know, when it comes to exercise for me, that is kind of the, uh, the thing that does not motivate me to keep going.

And so in order to stay motivated, I like to try different things.

And so I have, you know, the bike, the row, the tread, but I also have, I think I mentioned on the podcast, like a rebounder, which is like a mini trampoline.

Um, I have all kinds of different things that I try to do just to kind of rotate and keep that feeling fun for me.

And then the last one is kind of like a catch all for my personal life and that I'm really challenging myself to maintain consistent habits in a number of areas that I know are kind of helping me to stay anchored, grounded, stabilized in the midst of a time of uncertainty.

And this is everything from things like movement practices to my reading, to, um, some of the subscription challenge side quest stuff that I gave for myself to do this year, um, to even just like food prep, like what are the things that I can do that serve as kind of an anchor and the familiarity of those things and the consistency of those things allows me to have fun.

It kind of allows me to free up that part of my brain that is not worrying about those areas.

And so that's been something that's been really important to me as well.

So I would love to hear where are you finding fun in your work?

I know it can be hard to pull some of these things out right now, but I think it's really important and you can always email me.

I would love to hear from you at hello@drkadylinder.com and I do hope that you can kind of find these bright spots and ground yourself in them in the weeks and months to come.

Thanks so much for listening.

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