**TWR - episode 90**

This episode of think right revised is brought to you by my virtual writing groups program a 12 week series of weekly group coaching meetings that will help you to stay accountable to your writing goals this upcoming term. Each virtual writing groups package includes 12 weekly meetings to private coaching sessions with me on topics of your choice access to my nine-part course on academic writing and Publishing and a lifetime membership to prolific my online community for academic writers. If you're ready to tackle your writing goals and have some fun along the way. I hope you'll join us groups for winter 2018 start the week of January 7th. So check out the program today. You can learn more about the upcoming virtual writing groups program or sign up to be notified about future offerings of the program at Katie lender dot work backslash virtual writing groups. You're listening to think right revised episode 90. Hey there, and welcome to think right revised a podcast that offers a peek behind the scenes of productive writing life. I'm your host. Dr. Katie Linder. On this episode. I'm offering a debrief of my winter retreat that I recently finished. And this was 11 days that I took off of my day job so that I could focus on some other writing and projects and I will link to the episode I recorded earlier that was talking about what I was hoping to get done during this Retreat and what some of my plans were but in this episode I wanted to tell you about. Actually got done and kind of walk you through day-to-day what this Retreat looked like for me and there was a lot on my plate. I was really ambitious about what I was hoping to get done and one of the kind of challenges of the retreat for me was like every day I had planned certain activities or to work on a certain project and all of the projects felt really important. So it wasn't like I had one big thing that I was going to be working on and then a lot of little things to pack around it. It felt like I had several like medium to. Things and everyday had something important. So even missing one day or getting off track was going to be a real problem if I wanted to stay up-to-date with the schedule. I'd created for myself. So one of the things that I did and I'd mention is on the previous episode was I kind of themed the days and I tried to break them into full days or half days of what I thought I would be able to accomplish on that particular day. If I was able to kind of break up the task that I had on the list for each of the projects. I was working on and so day one was all about kind of my coaching practice and launching into some editing for the next season of make your way which. Has launched a since I started doing that editing so it is coming. But the first day my big kind of to do that I checked off my list was I passed my final exam from the international coach Federation a so, I have not gotten official notification yet, but I am technically certified with coaching. So that's really exciting. And that was one of those things that I didn't putting off for a while. I actually got the kind of notification of how to take the exam in early November and I. I had to wait until I had kind of some brain space to devote to prepping for that exam and then taking it but I wanted to get it checked off pretty early in my retreat. So day one I did that and then I also edited and scheduled the entire fourth season of make your way on that first day so that took up a huge chunk of time, but it also felt really good to get that done. I felt like I had really kicked off The Retreat well, and I went to dinner with my partner that night just to kind of celebrate a good first day of the retreat. On the second day. I wanted to dive into some of the preparation for a new group coaching program that I want to launch and spoiler alert. I'm going to be talking about this next week on the podcast because it is kind of ready to go and I'm launching it in about a week, but I wanted to focus on this new group coaching program around radical self trust and for me that entailed finalizing the curriculum for that program finalizing the. For that program. I wasn't entirely sure what the activities were going to be. I wasn't sure what the content was going to be and I knew I would also eventually need to create a website and some other kind of back-end work to set up the course space where I was going to house the program. So on day two I was able to complete the curriculum for that program and the workbook which ended up being about 75 pages and I spent most of my morning hours and it's probably about. Five or six hours kind of getting that finalized so that felt huge to get that done. And then in the second half of that day, I think I took a break in the middle because that was a lot of work but in the second half of that day, I focused on overhauling the speaking page of my website, which was another big kind of to do that. I had on my list for this winter retreat. I've been wanting to Niche my speaking topics and to really make that part of my website more mobile-friendly and so it just needed kind of a complete overhaul. So if you go to kitty litter dot work speaking, you will see it looks completely different than what it did before and I also have changed my speaking topics significantly including really narrowing my keynoting to just focusing on radical self-trust and then there's lots of workshop and webinar topics. Other than that. So that got done on Day 2. So for day 1 and day 2. I was pretty happy to get all of those things checked off my list. They all felt like kind of big projects. They were all multi-hour projects that took a lot of time. So then on day 3 I wanted to dive into content calendaring and I wanted to do this kind of early in the week because I had a meeting scheduled for day 5 with a consultant that I hired to help me figure out some marketing for my first quarter of the business and I knew that having my content kind of figured out and as well as my larger schedule for services and. Would really help with that meeting. So on day three I kind of created my quarter One content calendar for the blog and the podcast so that I knew what I would was going to be talking about the first three months of the year and I also created a master schedule of 2019 programs and services and this is really helpful for me because I do work full-time to have all of the dates of what I'm going to be doing the writing groups what I'm going to be doing the group coaching offerings if there are other things I'm planning on launching throughout the year. What is the rough schedule of when I plan for that to happen and that also included planning and scheduling all of the 2019 events for prolific because I do to live events every month for that community of academic writers and I'm actually going to be sharing about that event calendar a little bit later on think right revised. So stay tuned for that. And then the other thing I did this day was I kind of prepped weekly posts that I put into the prolific community and then I also scheduled into the prolific Community all of those events for the entire year so that people can start perusing them and rsvp'ing for those events. So that was kind of my morning was working a lot on the content calendar and trying to figure out what that first quarter of the year was really going to look like and it took quite a bit of time. Then I took a break in the middle of the day and I came back and in the latter part of the day. I worked on my email list switch. This is a huge thing also for my business and I had just been kind of I think adding lists as I went along I use MailChimp and this is not something I felt super confident in terms of knowing how to use the tool and at the end of 2018 they added in a tagging feature. Which would allow me to kind of merge all of my list together and tag people and then use those tags to send out specific messages. So, for example, I have a list of people who get my monthly email. I have another list of people who get my weekly blog post email. I get another I have another list of people who get reminders about things like how to Academia webinars because they're registered for that. All of my programs have these lists that I've created and I tag people and there are a lot of people who are on multiple of these. Less because they've engaged in multiple programs and I had a lot of duplicates because of this and so I spent several hours basically merging these lists together cleaning them up so that I don't have any duplicates anymore and setting up some other emailing systems through teacher e which is my course platform to make sure that my automated emails would all continue to work and this was really scary for me because a lot of these lists had automated emails attached to them and my worst nightmare was that I was going to. Arthas process and like randomly accidentally email a bunch of people as I was moving these lists around and I have not heard from anyone that that happened. I did turn off all the automations before I started but it was really kind of nerve-racking to go in there and work with all these different lists and I ended up merging 31 different lists down to 8, so it was huge in terms of simplifying my process and that felt really really good. Okay, so Dave for I planned as kind of a day off this happened to be Christmas and I knew I was going to be visiting some family. So I spent the morning doing some podcast prep for the week and kind of finalizing my 2019 goals and intentions and spending some time reflecting on that. But the majority of that day was spent with family and that actually fell in a really good place in the retreat because I had had three really solid days of work and a lot of these days. Try not to work during these Retreats more than eight hours a day. And usually it's a lot less than that, especially if I'm heavily writing but in this Retreat period it was definitely more. I felt like I was getting in 10 and sometimes 12-hour days depending on the projects. I was working on and I was really enjoying the work but it was definitely starting to wear on me a little bit. And so having this day where I could get out of the house and go visit with family was really nice. Okay, so Dave five I felt like was kind of a little bit of a continuation of this rest day because I shifted Focus completely and I clean my house from top to bottom. So rather than working on any of these other projects. I knew one of the things I wanted to do when I was home was to do some really kind of deep cleaning of my. So I worked on that for the first part of the day and I scheduled that in that way because the second part of the day I had someone coming over to help me with my marketing for the first quarter of 2019. So I wanted my house to be clean for that for having a visitor over but also I just worked really well to kind of spend the morning working on that and then spend the afternoon. In basically like a three-hour meeting where we planned out all of my Twitter and Instagram Focus for the first well actually all of 2019, but then we got into a little bit more detail for the first quarter of the Year. And that felt awesome. It was also a little bit scary because that I knew I had to draft all the posts and we didn't get into that. We really just kind of strategically planned when different launch dates were and what were the kinds of things I would want to focus on and I think you're really going to see this. Selected in a lot of the social media if you're following me on different accounts, particularly Twitter and Instagram. I've really kind of overhauled that a little bit in terms of how I'm structuring what I'm marketing when so that was a really good investment to bring this person in and that's kind of how I ended almost like the halfway point of the retreat was really solid work and then some planning happening in the latter Parts. All right, so day6 after I'd had a little bit of. Could have rest period of getting out of my house visiting with family doing a bunch of cleaning and kind of Switching gears. I went back to my computer and day6 was devoted to edits for my alternative academic careers. And I can already tell you that kind of shifting gears for this felt a little weird because I had spent the previous afternoon focused really thinking about social media and part of me really wanted to skip this day and or kind of shift things around and just use social media writing on day 6 and not work on the alternative academics manuscript, but I knew that my co-authors were kind of depending on me. So what ended up happening that actually made this work was I woke up like super early. I think my brain was just like really on high alert from the strategic planning from the day before and so I woke up at like three in the morning and I couldn't get back to sleep. So I got up and I got my laptop and I drafted like the entire quarter one of my social media posts for Twitter in like three hours and it was a little over 100 posts and it that made me actually feel. Really cleared out so that I could work on the alternative academic manuscript for the rest of the day. So after I finish those posts I slept for a few more hours then I got up and had a really leisurely morning and then kind of started working toward working on the the book edits and I've definitely talked about before and this was no different how when you get to the end of a book you start to feel a little bit more fear. It's a little harder to get yourself to work on that project and that was definitely the case here. So I started really slow. I posted in prolific that I was going to be working on it to kind of hold myself accountable and then I just kind of worked chapter by chapter and and got as many edits done as I could wrap that up to give it a final read and send it back to my co-authors that day. So day 6 was all about book edits, and I'm really happy to have that checked off my list. All right. So day 7 the morning was devoted to some client meetings that I already had scheduled for coaching. And then also we had a webinar on planning for a productive year through prolific. So my morning was kind of gone those events ran from 9 to noon and I knew that I was going to have to do some follow-up after those events sending recordings to my coaching clients posting the video and prolific things like that. And so the afternoon I feel like got. Shot I had a plan of what I was going to do and I ended up moving it around. I ran some errands. I went got some groceries. I mailed off a little by Design workbook an order had come in for that and then my partner and I went and met with someone who's going to help us think about doing a kitchen remodel and so I felt like some things really got checked off that afternoon, but it was definitely another kind of afternoon off and that worked out pretty well because it came a couple of days after my last break. All right. So on day eight this was my kind of social media day. My plan for this day was to start kind of putting posts into Edgar and start scheduling things and I got kind of sidetracked by working on the launch page and the marketing page for the new group coaching program that I'm working on so that got done that day instead, but it took a ton of time and I also was. Well to work on the course space for that for making sure that participants have a place to go with they register. I edited the workbook for that and I got some monthly emails drafted as well. So a lot of kind of editing work and some email drafting work on this day and I felt really good about getting the group the group coaching program stuff launched because I knew my email for my monthly email was going to go out and like another day or two. Really needed to announce that there and so I needed to get some of the stuff done. So I was feeling a little bit under deadline. So I got that done and I moved the Social Media stuff to the following day on day 9 where I scheduled all those quarter one posts that I had written for Twitter into Edgar and I also did some client website work and building a website for a client right now. So that got a lot of day 9. That was the big project for that day. I did finish my 90th book of the year in terms of what I was reading and it was one of my certains journals. So that was really fun. And then I also just made a bunch of miscellaneous website updates for my own website because I was already kind of digging around with my client site and I was just kind of in the mode of working on that so I got that going. Okay, so this leads me to the last couple days of the retreat and that is day 10. I went on a walk for the first time for the whole retreat in the morning. And this is kind of horrible if me I'm trying not to be super self judgmental about it, but I powered through so much work in this Retreat. It was not really a priority for me to get up and go walking in the mornings. I was spending all of my willpower getting this work done and so by the end. I was starting to feel a little bit, you know loose about that because I had gotten so much done. So I spent my first part of the morning on day 10 going for a walk which felt great we had another meeting with the person who's going to help us renovate our kitchen. So that happened and I started the planning for a bunch of Instagram posts and for me that involves creating kind of the grid structure and there's a little bit of design work there. So a lot of that got done on day ten I did. I didn't work on captioning anything or the text pieces of that but just the design work and then that was another day to kind of take a break. I spent the rest of the afternoon and Aaron's a lot of grocery shopping and kind of starting to think about food prep for going back to work. So that was what I was able to do on day 10. And that brings me to day 11 the final day that I had and you can see that I was starting to kind of Peter out a little bit in terms of the amount of work that I'm doing towards the end and that was definitely intentional. I hit the retreat super hard in the beginning because part of me was afraid that if I took a break in the beginning I wouldn't be able to come back out of that. I knew that I needed to kind of keep that momentum up and power through as much as I could. So on day 11, the focus was getting the. Great, Instagram posts captioned and scheduled and that took quite a bit of time. I did spend my morning of that day kind of scheduling that while watching the Rose Parade. Because it was the first of January and then I spent the rest of the day devoted to podcasting recording and getting stuff ready for as much as I could like. Maybe the first two weeks of January which was recording about six episodes and I had to do some editing for different intros and outros and some add recording for the show. So all of that happened on that final day and a few other little things as well like folding some laundry and getting. Things ready for going back to work. So I have to say overall. I feel like when it came to this this Retreat I think of it more as a creative Retreat than a writing Retreat this year, even though I did do quite a bit of writing between editing the book and the social media writing and a lot of the website copy that I had to create the workbook for my new group coaching program. All of that was a lot of writing but there was definitely some design work and other creative work thrown in there as well. I feel like I. Lee killed it this year. I was a little concerned about how much I had on my plate whether I was going to be able to do it. I definitely don't know that I would schedule this much for a future Retreat. I think I like I said, I was super ambitious but I kind of was like if I don't do it now, when is it going to get done? And I know that at least part of my spring is a pretty heavy travel period and so I think I just let that kind of nervousness about getting the stuff finished. I let that kind of motivate me and I don't feel exhausted. I feel like I feel pretty energized at the end of this Retreat, which is a good sign. I was able to get a significant rest. I definitely took naps on some days. I do wish I'd been able to get in a little more exercise. But I also kind of understand why that didn't happen in terms of really trying to manage my willpower. I did a lot of really hard things over this Retreat and things that I was kind of scared to do or had been putting off for a little while and so to cram them all into one period I knew I really needed a lot of willpower to be able to power through and get things done. So I definitely kept up with updating folks on my Instagram account through my Instagram stories throughout this entire Retreat and I saved a story called 2018 Retreat if you want to take a look you can kind of see some visual updates of what I was working on throughout this period and of course, I would love to hear what you were able to do over your winter break whether it was get a ton of rest or if you were able to do a little bit of work or a little bit of both. I would love to hear about that so you can contact me by email at contacted Katie Leonard artwork. You can also reach out to me on Twitter at Katie double underscore lender or connect with me on Instagram KD underscore lender. Would love to hear from you there as well. Thanks so much for checking in with us episode and for following along with my progress with this creative retreat. Thanks for listening to this episode of thank right revised show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie lender dot work podcasts. Think right revised is part of the radical self-trust podcast Channel a collection of content dedicated to helping you seek self-knowledge nurture your superpowers playfully experiment leave your core values with intention practice loving kindness towards yourself and others and settle into your life's purpose learn more about the rst channel at Katie lunar dot work podcast. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for listening