**TWR - episode 97**

This episode of think right revised is brought to you by my virtual writing groups program a series of weekly group coaching meetings that will help you stay accountable to your writing goals this upcoming term. Each virtual writing groups package includes weekly meetings 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 are ready to tackle your writing goals and have some fun along the way. I hope you'll join us. Groups for spring 2019 start the week of April 1st. 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 Linder dot work.

Backslash virtual - writings - groups.

You're listening to think right revised episode 97. 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 doctor Katie Lynn. In this episode. I want to talk about storing your writing records. And this is something that came up for me recently because I had to temporarily move offices to another building on my campus while my current building is being renovated and this meant I had to go through a bunch of my files and see what was in there and what are the kinds of things that maybe I should be not keeping and to give you a sense I had probably.

If you think about like a lateral file drawer the ones that are kind of wide I had two full drawers of that and then I had in terms of the more like vertical file drawers a couple drawers like that. So, I mean I would say I probably had hundreds of file folders that I needed to go through. And I'll be honest right now.

Some of them just got put into boxes and put into storage, but I thought I could also use this experience to go through at least some of the things that I had and to try to decide what I really needed to keep and what I didn't and this really got me thinking about what we store and why we store it and whether or not we should be so some of the stuff that I had in these files included things like old drafts.

I am someone when I'm working on especially a larger writing project. I will often print it out at various stages and kind of hand write notes about what I want to change in that project. And so that means I would have like piles of drafts all the way back to like my dissertation of things that I was making notes and changes on and of course, I keep all of those old drafts in digital form as well.

But there's just something about those those handwritten notes. So I file a lot. That away. I also had just other kinds of notes that I filed away when I was working on a project or a do Grant or something like that. I would just make notes to myself about what I thought it should be at different stages.

I had a lot of travel files so conference programs and notes that I had taken at conferences copies of the PowerPoint slides that I had presented with my notes on them. And then also a lot of surprisingly I was really surprised by this a lot of paper copies of readings. So when I would work on an article, sometimes I would print out, you know, like a stack of things to read and a lot of that ended up in my files as well.

And then I just had a lot of. Copies of old papers like I I had papers that I had like an author print of and so I would just kind of keep that in my files as well. So. There are probably other things that are in those files, but those were kind of the big categories for me. And I also this really got me thinking about you know, why am I storing these things and one of the things I realized was it had been kind of pounded into me in grad school that I really needed to keep especially things like conference programs as evidence that I had actually gone and presented there.

And this was before people were really doing online programs and some conferences. Keep kind of that archival record of past years of when people have presented and so it was definitely this idea of you needed to have some way of proving that you had been there and that you had spoken in case anyone questioning that in the future.

So I thought that was kind of an interesting reason once I really got to thinking about it because it is one of those rationales that's kind of based in fear. And also you could go to the conference organizers and say do you have a past issue of the program that I could use, you know, if you were ever in a situation where you had to prove that but it was interesting that I kind of remembered that and then of course you keep some of these things as evidence of your research and that you didn't, you know do anything.

Untoward with your data or you know like that you have records of the data and the revisions that you made and that this is your work and in case there's ever any kind of question. Now some data just gets destroyed because of IRB purposes or other kinds of reasons, you know, there's a certain time limit on on certain kinds of data, but I realized that you know, a lot of the reason I was keeping some of this stuff even notes from books that I have written that are now published in out there was in case.

Some reason I had to go back and and justify something or you know, find a note or something along those lines. So both of those kind of evidential reasons are really rooted in fear that I'm going to get called out in some kind of way which has never happened. No one has ever questioned anything about my work, but I thought that was kind of interesting now, of course the other reason for storing all of this stuff and probably the strongest reason is nostalgia.

And I often really enjoy the process of working on my projects, especially my book projects. And so I like having this stuff. I like, you know, having a little file box that has all my notes and drafts and things from you know, my second book or my third book and there's just something really nice about having that stuff.

Now this this kind of nostalgia rationale really did surprise me because when it comes to most things in my life, I do consider myself pretty minimalist, you know, I'm willing to kind of donate things that are not serving me anymore, and I don't typically horde or keep things, but when it comes to my writing I really do and it's hard for me to let things go and I've got writing pieces from like my college days my undergraduate days that I have files that.

Is kept and so again, this was a really nice opportunity for me to think about should I be digitizing that stuff like what do I do with those kinds of things because I'm not really looking at them. I'm not really going back and reading them. I'm just keeping them and it's making me feel good to know that they're there.

So I was thinking a little bit about how to keep from hoarding some of the stuff like as if I were to kind of start now what are some of the things that I might do to process this these documents so that they don't end up in paper files that I never look at it again and and kind of stopped the process now whatever I decide to do with the the stuff that's already there is kind of a different situation, but I can also make some decisions about going forward and how I want to process this.

So I came up with a few different things that I think will be helpful. What is just a process in the moment. So if I like come back from a conference, for example, I can look at what I have with me and rather than just kind of, you know, put it into a paper file, which is typically what I do. I just kind of collect all of my notes and the program and you know, sometimes even my name tag, which makes like no sense and I would put it into a file just because it's kind of the easiest thing to do to get it, you know out of sight out of mind, you know filed away.

Maybe I need to not do that. Maybe I need to recycle it or you know, make a note in my CV in that moment that I presented at this place. And this is what I presented and this is my co-presenter or you know, whatever information I want to include there and then actually just recycle the information.

And also I think if there were things in my notes that I was wanting to remember or act on then I could actually put those things in my planner or add things to my to do list about connecting with a colleague or reading a certain article that came up in a presentation. I saw or something along those lines so processing in the moment, I think could be really useful.

The other thing I came up with was to process at the end of a project. So maybe there are certain key drafts that I want to keep paper copies of for whatever reason or notes or articles, but in all likelihood I can probably recycle a lot of the stuff that I worked through in terms of process and I think that this is one of the challenges for me is I associate a lot of writing with brain work with processing information.

And I know that my books won't get to the place where they are in a finished State without me writing out a lot of ideas and thoughts. So it's I think it's hard for me to get rid of that because it seems like it's part of the process for me. And I know it's like not in my brain anymore. So if I want to remember those things, I really do have to go to the written notations or the written documents, but going at the end of a project and kind of saying what of this is really valuable that I might want to reference in the future and are there things here that I could.

Ahead and recycle or even scan and put into a digital form. And then the other thing I think Could Happen depending on kind of the the structures of your writing or that just kind of timeline of your work is to process at the end of a year and to just take your files and at the end of a year or.

Piles of paper or whatever it is that you have and decide at that point. So December is often a slower time in my office would be a great time to kind of go through my files and figure out what do I actually need to keep what do I not need to keep and just like any kind of decluttering the longer you go and the more cycles of decluttering that you do usually the more you're willing to get rid of because you've kind of sat with it for a little while and thought about is it time for me to let this go and the farther away you get in years or months from a project the more.

Knowing you might be to recycle something or to Let It Go. So as you're thinking about those processing times, you know, these are the kinds of questions that I would ask and I would ask myself these questions. Could I be storing something digitally is the first question, you know, could I scan something or is it already stored digitally?

Is it something that I can already access? That is on a website or it's a journal article that I can download again, you know, like I don't need to keep a paper copy of it. I also want to know will I really need this in the future. Is this something that when I really think about it, is it something that I would access again and if the answer is yes, I might ask myself why and and could it be stored digitally if that is the case that I need to come back to it.

I also would want to ask why do I really want to keep? I definitely think that Marie kondo question of does this spark Joy like, is there a rationale that is a positive rationale about why I really want to keep those notes what they mean to me. That's something that I think is important to ask as well.

Now some of you may be thinking or or asking why don't I just take digital notes and and not have all this paper around and I do take some digital modes, especially with my research team. We do a lot on Google Docs and things like that. But and now I do take a lot of notes in my planner and I store my planners that is something else that I do keep planners from previous years and I do go back to them to look at timelines and things from different projects, but I do.

Take a fair amount of notes and things like notebooks and research journaling and things like that and it's the way that I kind of grew up as a writer in some ways and it's definitely part of my process and I do a lot of handwritten note taking and meetings and things like that. So maybe eventually I'll get to a place where I'm doing more of that digitally and not needing to kind of store some of these paper notes and files, but I also am a huge believer in you need to do writing the way that works for you.

And this is definitely one of those things that is part of my kind of Habitual patterns. Now, it doesn't mean it can't change but and this is definitely getting me to think about that. But for now, I definitely want to keep some of those handwritten note taking practices as well. So, of course, I would love to hear from you about what you're storing when it comes to your writing records how you're storing it how you're making those decisions.

You can always email me a contact at Katie Linder dot work. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore Linder. Or you can connect with me on Instagram @ KD underscore Linder and of course, you can always write me a letter which I will probably file and keep based on this episode. You can write to me address to Katie Linder at PO Box.

1621, Albany, Oregon nine seven three two one. Thanks so much for listening to this episode. Thanks for listening to this episode of think 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 live 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 Linder dot work / podcast. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for listening.