**YGT episode 158**

You're listening to you've got this episode 158. 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 doctor Katie Linder. On this episode. I want to talk about the concept of overcoming overwhelm.

And if you are experiencing anything, like what I'm experiencing at the start of the new Academic Year, I would imagine you've had at least one moment where you felt a little bit overwhelmed already and I experience this moment just earlier this week when I had come back from traveling and I looked at my to do list and thought I'm really.

Sure, how all these things are going to get done and I had a few kind of key strategies that really helped me to overcome that and to really think about how I could move forward in a productive way. That wouldn't leave me feeling just completely overflowing in terms of my brain. So I'm going to offer you a few different strategies and hopefully one will work for you.

So the first one is what I'm kind of calling the data dump and this is basically when you kind of have a stream of Consciousness just dumping everything that's in your head onto a piece of paper and not worrying too much about how it's going to be categorized later on but just trying to get everything out of your head and onto the page and I think you could certainly do this as a form of.

You could just kind of right out here are the things that I am thinking about or here are the things that I'm concerned about or here are the things that I kind of think are on my to-do list for the next quarter or week or month, but really just trying to kind of get things out. I also think you could do this as just a list you take a piece of paper and just list all the things that you're thinking about.

Or you could do this on like a whiteboard and that is actually something I did earlier this week. I put each of the upcoming months September October November and December as categories on a big 4 by 6 white board in my office and then I just started listing what are the things that I know need to happen in each of these?

Now one of the things that you could do after you do this kind of data dump is to categorize it so I think there's a few different ways of doing that you could potentially think about it by months. Like I did kind of want a timeline perspective. You could also kind of put it into project buckets and this is something that I may be doing a little bit later this week is really just to looking at all the different projects on my plate and what are the next actions that I need to take with those.

What are some of the deadlines associated with the Milestones of those projects and really trying to help myself to see what can be done right now? What can be put off those kinds of things? And then I also think that you could potentially categorize the things on that list by priority. For example, you could put a star by the things that you feel like are they need to happen right now as in like today or in the next week because of some kind of level of urgency with those particular tasks.

You could also maybe highlight or Circle the things that you think could move to a future term or they don't need to happen kind of immediately right now. I think one of the challenges of feeling overwhelmed is you do have this sense of needing to do all the things right in this very moment. But when you can kind of put everything down on a piece of paper or on a whiteboard and then actually kind of process it you realize that there's actually quite a few things that can be moved or delayed and it's not going to be that big of a deal.

So part of it I think is just getting it from swirling around in your head. Onto a page where you can actually start to process and decide what to do. So that's strategy. Number one is just the data. Strategy number two is I think if you're feeling a little too overwhelmed for the data dump and this is another strategy that I've used and that is talking it out with someone else and I think this is especially helpful if you have someone in your life, that is pretty good about.

Either strategizing or taking notes and have them kind of write down the kinds of things that you're saying and help you to process what it is that you're thinking about those things by asking you questions, so they might be able to ask things about like, what is do when what's really stressing you out right now that would feel good.

If you could just get it off your plate are there certain things that you could delegate to someone else or that you could ask for help? In this has been something that I often use my partner for especially if I'm feeling overwhelmed with both work and things that are going on in our personal life and is usually as soon as I express that overwhelm, he will start to take things off my plate and he will say well I'll handle that or don't worry about that particular task and that allows me to kind of even just talking it out.

It's like a release valve where you're not feeling so stressed about the particular things that you were previously thinking. So I do think for this you have to find the right kind of person. You may already be thinking of someone in your life. Who would be a good fit for this. It could be a friend.

It could be a colleague but somebody who's really going to basically kind of help you process what's going on and help you make good decisions about how to move forward now, I do feel like I should say if you don't have someone like this in your life. This is sometimes when people use coaching for I do have clients who will have strategy meetings with me and they basically do this in the meeting.

They'll just kind of talk through. What's currently on their plate and then will categorize it prioritize it and start to think about what they should be doing next. So kind of if you don't have anyone else you can consider coaching as a potential possibility for this if you feel like it would be useful for you.

But I would also say that strategy number one the data dump. You don't necessarily need someone else. This is really just if you're someone who finds it really successful to talk about something or to verbally process something I think having a friend or colleague there to help you as is something that could be so.

To consider. Okay, so the third strategy is decluttering and this is something I also was working on this week. And this is basically the strategy of removing as much as you can as quickly as you can both from your to-do list, but also from your like physical environment, so I always when I kind of get to this feeling of overwhelm and I start to look around my house and I just want to start donating things.

I start to feel kind of overwhelmed by even the Clutter that's in my physical environment and cleaning things up or. You know even just decluttering a desk space or something like that. Can I think help things to feel less overwhelming? So one example of this that I think is probably kind of unique to me but it's a kind of clear example of what I mean here is I often have a couple dozen library books out at any given time I've talked about before I'm a huge Library user.

I love reading fiction. And so I'm constantly kind of cycling through multiple books every week. I go to the library a couple times a week and I pick up more. When I'm in this mode of feeling overwhelmed, I will often go to that stack and return like half the books. I might put a note in my Goodreads profile of what I want to read in the future just so I don't lose it if it was something that was kind of unique but I try to get that even that kind of clutter of like, I don't want to have to choose.

Between too many options, like let me just kind of remove the even possibility of being overwhelmed by all of those choices and just remove those things because I know that when I'm feeling overwhelmed, I'm not going to necessarily want to read a novel. I'm going to be wanting to kind of plow through things that are on my plate.

This is also a time when I will often go through my social media and curate it or I'll go through my podcast list and start cutting out the shows that I'm not really listening to right now and the idea of this is really just to. Move kind of the visual clutter or the other things that would be challenging for you in terms of making decisions.

So this could work in terms of like meal planning you kind of plan meals ahead of time so you don't have to think about it, but it could also really work in terms of even just cleaning up your house cleaning up your office over the last weekend. I recently cleaned out two of our Master closets. So I was definitely in this mode of wanting to feel like the environment around me felt.

We clean and clear of this clutter. So I think that this is a good strategy. If you're feeling overwhelmed to just say what can you have some control over right now are there spaces in your life, whether they be physical digital or otherwise that you can kind of start to curate those spaces in a way that's going to help you feel like they're less cluttered and a little bit more clean.

So these three strategies the data dump talking it out and decluttering were all things that I used within the last week or two when I was really starting to feel overwhelmed with the projects that were on my plate and I found them all to be effective but in different ways and I would imagine that there are probably other strategies that you could also use as well.

And if you are using them right now, I would love to hear about them. So let me know if you're using any particular strategies to overcome your feelings of overwhelm. You can always. Meet at contacted Katie linendoll work. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender. You can connect with me on Instagram @ KT underscore lender, and if you really want to slow things down you can always write me a letter at Katie lender PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon 97321.

Anyway, you want to contact me. I always love to hear from you and here's to all of us feeling a little bit less overwhelmed as we keep heading into this Academic Year. Thanks for listening. Thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie Linder dot work / podcasts.

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