**YGT episode 159**

You're listening to you've got this episode 159. 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 talk about one of the mantras that I've been living by four.

Probably a couple of years now and that is you have to be able to say no to the good so that you can say yes to the really great and this is something I probably actually mentioned on the show previously and at one point I had this written on the whiteboard in my office. I'm really need to be reminded of this particular thing and.

I think that basically what happens is the further we go along in our careers the more opportunities come our way and these opportunities are really good. They're fun. They look like they would be good opportunities for us and this could be professional or personal but really I'm kind of talking more about the professional context here.

So you might have co-authorship opportunities or speaking opportunities or promotion opportunities or even get headhunted for another job and it really feels really good to be asked to do those kinds of things and to be asked to be an expert or to show up in a particular way that allows you to really share your gifts of knowledge or skills that you have.

But it can also be really challenging because these things start to add up and if you read my newsletter or follow my blog, you know that recently I talked about saying no to something and this was something that was a pretty big deal. It would have changed my day-to-day work quite a bit and it was a difficult decision to make and I think sometimes we don't talk about the nose as much as we talk about the yeses.

And so I wanted to address it here because this was a situation in which saying yes would have been saying yes to something good but not necessarily to something. A great and I really had to differentiate between those things for myself. I do think it's important to note. However that it is not always clear.

And it can be really hard to decide the difference between something good or something really great and you don't always know because maybe you haven't had the really great stuff come along yet and you don't always know what that's going to look like. Some people will say that if it's not a hell.

Yes, it's a hell no and I think sometimes it's not always clear. There's a lot of room in between hell. Yes, and he'll know and it's not always a black and white decision. So I wanted to share some ideas of things that I used to help make this decision, but also really starting to think about what are some strategies that you might be able to use if you find yourself in the situation where you're trying to decide between what's good.

And what's really great. So the first one is I'm sure advice you've heard in the past and that is to go with your gut. What was your kind of first initial reaction when you were offered the particular thing or the particular thing was put in front of you. Was it exciting to you? Was it scary to you?

Did you get that kind of feeling in your stomach? That was like, okay. This is this is a big deal or was it something where you thought like? Okay. This is interesting. You know, let me think about this. It wasn't kind of an immediate reaction that you had. The kind of think about that physical response and what can it tell you about what you think about that particular situation or what you feel about it.

The next thing I think is really important is to just talk it out with someone that you trust and somebody who maybe knows your career knows what you have experience in what maybe you want to gain experience in and talk it out with someone that can really ask you good question. And this is one of my favorite things about coaching is that you can talk with a coach and they can ask you really good questions.

And so I absolutely thought that out when I was trying to make my decision of who do I know that I could talk to you? That would ask me the right kinds of questions that I really need to hear. now when I did talk with that person one of the things they really pushed me to do and that I really.

Needed to do in the situation was to align my decision with my values and to think really carefully about what I wanted and how it aligned with what I considered to be really important in my life right now and the interesting thing that that can help you to think about is there might be something that gets put in front of you that even a year ago or two years ago you would have jumped at but now you're in a different place and you're not going to jump at that same kind of thing anymore.

So the idea of kind of recognizing how your values shift over time and mature as you get older and as your career gets a little bit older. These are all things that are really important and to understand that who you were is not necessarily who you are now. And the person who you are now might need things that are different than the person you were and that is almost a little bit sad in some ways because you are letting go kind of a previous identity and starting to think about how you may need different things.

You may need different professional development. You may need different mentors and that can be a difficult thing to kind of shift or transition into a new phase of your career. Then I think it's really important to do some visioning and so here are three different kinds of visioning that I recommend one is to consider the situation in front of you and ask yourself.

Okay, how can I envision myself two years from now having made the decision kind of one-way or having made the decision another way. How do I feel about that and kind of try to think about well, what would your life look like two years from now if you made that decision or if you didn't make that decision.

I also think it's important to Envision. What would your life look like tomorrow? Like would you wake up in the morning and regret that you had made the decision in one way or another and a really easy way to kind of Envision that which is the third way. I want to talk to you about. Is an exercise in coaching?

That's basically where you envision yourself walking through one of two doors or it can be more than two. If you have more than two choices in front of you and you assign a choice to a door and you literally kind of think in your own mind about what it would be like to walk over to the door make the decision open the door and walk through.

And when you go through this exercise or you have someone else help you go through this exercise. It can be really interesting because sometimes you have an immediate physical reaction when you make a certain choice and you realize that that's kind of, you know, going back to your gut that your gut is like no, this is not what I want or I would regret it if I made this choice or I would regret it if I didn't make the other choice and so you can start to get a little bit of a sense of what might be disappointing to you or what would be.

Kind of the rationale behind making some of your choices and is that rationale one that you really want to stand by? Is it something that's aligned with your values or sometimes we can make choices because we think it's what other people want or maybe what we should be doing. So one of the things that I quoted in my recent blog post about this topic was someone who wrote a book called the quarter life crisis and I will link to this in the show notes and one of the things he talks about in the book is that we can get really hung up.

On the concept of a career ladder and it can negatively impact our decision-making and that really stuck with me. It was a really important thing for me to read and to hear and to think about you know, we have to go our own way in terms of what works for us with our career decisions. And it's also really impacted how I work with my coaching clients because I do have several clients who come to me at mid-career and they're unhappy they've realized that their work is not fulfilling them in the ways that they would like.

And they want to go in a different direction, but they're afraid to do that. So I guess really what I want to talk about in this episode is. There's risk involved with saying no to the good so that you can say yes to the really great because you don't always know that they're really great is coming or what it will look like but I think you have to have faith in yourself in your capacity for kind of bringing the really great in your direction.

And also, you know, there is a patient's involved with waiting until you get to a point in your career where you know, what's really great for you. And that you don't have to kind of accept or settle for something. That doesn't feel really. So here's to all of us going our own way when it comes to our careers and to really thinking about making choices that feel meaningful to us and that allow us to do meaningful work.

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