**YGT episode 163**

You're listening to you've got this episode 163. 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 answer a listener question talking about workplace drama.

And this question comes in from Jonathan who says I've been following ygt for a few months now and it's been such an encouragement to me. My question how do you deal with work tension drama issues? I do not have time for this. Do you ignore it or address it? First of all, I want to thank you Jonathan for sending in this question because it is such a good one and I want to say I'm sorry that you're dealing with workplace drama.

And tension and issues. It's such a common thing that we all do need to address at some point in our careers. And for other people who may be listening who are also dealing with this again, you know, not super fun. So I did respond to Jonathan via email and I wanted to share some of the things that I said to him.

As possible considerations for thinking about this kind of drama and I do think that one of the kind of biggest challenges about dealing with tension or other kinds of drama in the workplace is that it's often so much rooted in human emotions saying for those of us who are easily distracted by that kind of thing.

It can be a real challenge to try to. Juggle work and kind of putting our heads down and doing all the things we need to do with some of these other contextual things that are happening around the outer edges of our work lives. So here are some of the things that I mentioned to Jonathan as possible recommendations for ways to consider moving forward.

So one of the questions he asked was do you address it or do you just ignore it? And the first thing that I asked him to kind of consider is whether or not addressing it is actually going to solve anything and improve the situation and sometimes when it comes to workplace tension, it's better to just.

Leave it alone and knowing that you know, if you do raise it or try to fix it, sometimes it can actually just make it worse. It's hard to know sometimes but you might want to just sit down and kind of think about the pros and cons of actually saying something versus or kind of acting on it versus just ignoring it and seeing if it's going to kind of simmer down and resolve itself, basically.

So that number one might be to just say is it something that can be ignored now, the the challenge of actually ignoring it is a thing in itself, but it's important to decide if you want to address it head-on or if you just want to let it go. The next thing I asked him to consider is how long you actually have to deal with the issue before it potentially resolves itself.

So recently for example, I was talking with a coaching client who is dealing with a supervisor that was really challenging for them. But they knew that that Supervisor was going to be stepping down in about five months. And so they were kind of coming up with coping mechanisms and plans for the short-term to kind of deal with this person knowing that this is not a forever situation.

Now that is a very different thing than if you're dealing with a challenging supervisor who you know is not going to be stepping down anytime soon. And you really do need to think kind of long-term about, you know, your own situation if this is a good context for you if you need to maybe move on or if you need to address it in a different kind of way.

And so the time frame of kind of what you're dealing with I think is important. The other thing to consider too is contextual factors. Like if there's a lot of stress or strain going on because of a particular time period within your work. So for example, Many of us have fall conference schedules and lots of travel and this can cause some extra strain not everyone is in the office all the time people are stressed because they're Doing last-minute preparations.

They're trying to squeeze in meetings and other kinds of things in the midst of lots of other responsibilities. So it's possible that there are also certain times of the year where you're going to see extra tension extra drama, and it may just be helpful to know. This is a shorter-term situation and this will kind of resolve itself.

Once everyone has a chance to go on holiday break and kind of take a breather and come back feeling a little bit. The other thing to consider if you decide in particular to either address the situation or to leave it alone is whether or not you have the support structures to get you through either decision.

So if you decide to address it, you might consider engaging with your human resources department or if you have an ombuds person on campus that could be someone else to kind of help you work through a workplace tension situation or if you decide not to address it do you have. People that you can talk to to relieve the pressure of kind of dealing with this whether that's a friend a partner potentially a therapist.

Do you have the support structure? You need to move forward in the way that you are choosing to and in a lot of tension, it can be really challenging even think through that because there's a lot you're dealing with. And you're trying to make kind of the best decision and so talking it out with someone that you trust.

I think can be really helpful. It's also helpful if you can find someone who's been through a similar situation before to kind of get their input on how best to move forward. The other question I think that's really important to consider when it comes to workplace drama or tension is the impact the situation is having on your physical mental or emotional health.

So for example, are you losing sleep because of the situation are you really distracted to the point where you're not able to get your work? Done. Are you having panic attacks? Are you feeling like physical symptoms that say you don't want to go into work, you know because this particular situation is happening and this could be you know, any of those things that are kind of- indications on your physical mental or.

Emotional health those could be signs that you really do need to remove yourself from the situation as best you can and again this is not always easy, especially if you want to stay at the same institution or you're in a position where you know you it's not easy for you to move jobs, but even sometimes just trying to avoid a particular person or removing yourself.

From you know a committee or you know, whatever it maybe that would allow you to kind of give yourself some distance from the tension. I think is a helpful thing. The other thing to consider is if you're feeling the tension and drama, it's also possible other people are feeling it as well. And they're also wanting to deescalate it or resolve it or get it to go away and so sometimes it just takes one person starting.

Take small actions to try to resolve those kinds of situations and then other people kind of follow in kind because they're trying to also get out of what is probably an uncomfortable thing for many people. The other thing that I think is really important and this really goes back to my radical self-trust framework that I've talked about quite a bit is to consider what your gut is telling you in a particular situation whether or not it's telling you to ignore it or to act on it, whether it's telling you that it's really harmful for you to be in that situation or you know, this is a short-term thing that you can put up with radical self-trust is really about.

Listening to you and responding to your own needs and so it's important to listen to how you're feeling and what you think is really going to be a good situation for you in terms of whether that's removing yourself taking action to try to make a situation better. So what I want to also offer some potential feedback on is if you do decide to take action with something and this is I think a really challenging decision to make there are a lot of factors and variables and clearly.

I don't know the situation that Jonathan is talking about I'm really responding based in kind of vague and Abstract ways because I think these considerations could apply to lots of different situation. But I think it's important to think through kind of the longer-term potential outcomes of addressing a situation head on whether that's reporting something or just saying something out loud making a comment, you know, trying to change a situation you do want to think about the potential Fallout of that, but I also think that.

Brooding whatever that response is in your own experience can also be very helpful. So for example, if you were to approach a co-worker about a situation that you feel, you know, as a lot of drama attention, you might say. So, you know, I understand there's this is a complicated matter. I don't mean to meddle in this but it is really distracting me from doing my work and I'm wondering if we can come to a resolution or I'm wondering if there are something that can change that would allow me to kind of remove myself from this.

Or to not be experiencing it and kind of such an intense way and it's not necessarily saying the problem itself needs to be fixed. It's really just expressing that it's affecting you in a way that is feeling kind of negative and in some cases. I think people don't really realize that that's happening.

They may not realize that their actions or a particular situation is really starting to affect either you or kind of the culture of the organization in a negative way. And sometimes we feel very isolated in our experiences and then we might start to chat with other people and realize we're not alone, you know other people are feeling some of these tensions as well and may also not be wanting to deal with the drama.

Now the one thing I do want to kind of caution to avoid in situations like this where there's tension or drama is to do things that might escalate the tension or drama because if it is something you don't want to deal with you want to be careful that you're not kind of adding fuel to that fire. So for example, one of the the biggest accelerants I think is Gossip.

And going behind closed doors talking about these things, you know ruminating on them and there's one kind of side of this which is basically just processing information with colleagues and kind of trying to figure out what to do, but I think we all know when we cross the line into just. Talking and talking and talking and not really coming to a resolution and really we're just trying to make ourselves feel better or we're trying to have an outlet where we can get out emotions and that isn't always I think the best in terms of like longer-term Cycles because sometimes we end up saying things we regret sometimes we work ourselves up even more into a bit of a tizzy and so trying to find ways to deescalate a situation versus accelerating it is going to be really important.

Now that doesn't mean that you don't talk about it with anyone. It doesn't mean that you're not finding the support structures that you need, but I think that we've all been in situations in the workplace where things can get a little bit gossipy you start to see more exclusionary behavior and it can create you know, a lie ships where people are on different sides and all of those things.

I think don't always serve the situation to try to resolve it in a way where everyone is coming to a better place. So I want to thank Jonathan again for sending in this question. I think it's a really good one. Of course, there are all kinds of variables that I did not get into today and I did not, you know talk about a specific situation, but hopefully some of these considerations are ones that might be useful for you.

If you do have a follow-up question about this, of course, I would love to hear it. You can always email me at hello at dr. Katie lynda.com. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender. You can connect with me on Instagram @ KT underscore lender. Or you can always write me a letter at Katie lender PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon nine seven, three two one.

Anyway, you contact me. I always love to hear from you. 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. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes.

Thanks for listening.