**YGT episode 182**

You're listening to. You've got this episode one 82 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 creating monthly to do lists, and this goes really well with the concept of planning out a month in terms of your goals and what you're trying to move forward on.

And I know that's something I've mentioned in previous episodes where I've talked about how I use power sheets for that. But I've also gotten into the process in 2020 of looking ahead at my month and trying to put together a bit of a to do list of the things that I need to be focused on over the coming weeks.

Now this is a really different way I think, of looking at it to do list. Then what you might do for a quarter. Or for a week or for a day a month is kind of that really interesting sweet spot that lets you look ahead enough that you can really plan in a very realistic way of what that month is going to look like for you.

So I started doing this in January, and I'm actually posting my monthly to do lists to my blog this year so that people can kind of see what I'm doing and how I'm doing it. And I will link to some of those in the show notes in case you want to take a look. Um, but this is something that actually really helped me.

For example, in the month of February when I was starting my new job. Now. I knew I was going to be starting that job on February 3rd and I figured that it was going to be pretty busy and that there was gonna be a lot going on, that I was going to be pretty tired at the end of the day. And so what I ended up doing was really shaping that monthly to do list around the kinds of things.

That I knew I had to get done throughout the month. The kinds of habits and routines that I wanted to really stick to, so that monthly to do list was really about things like my regular workouts. It was things like getting my blogs posted, my podcast done, and other kind of larger meetings that were important for me that month.

Like I had a webinar that I was facilitating for another institution. Now that I'm turning into March, I feel like I can actually pull back a little bit and think about not just surviving the month, but other things that I might want to layer in on top of what I would normally do. Just kind of, anyway, so doing that kind of monthly to do list really gave me a little bit of a, a pausing moment, especially in February.

To say, okay, don't go overboard. In terms of what you can do, know that you're going to be kind of limited, especially cognitively this month. And what are the things that you really feel like are going to be manageable for you. Now for the month of March, I feel like I can give myself a little bit more room to breathe.

Um, I'm feeling a little more settled in at work. I have some really nice, uh, structures and systems that I've been using. I talked briefly before about notion and how I've been leveraging that. To make sure I'm, I'm kind of tackling and capturing all that you do use and uh, notes that I have as I'm going to different meetings and things.

And those kinds of systems are really allowing me to think bigger and broader about what it is that I want to focus on in the coming month. So let me talk a little bit about how potentially you can do this if this is something that might be of interest to you. So basically what I do is I try to keep a little bit of a a master task list now, and you may or may not have something like this yourself where you're kind of trying to track the kinds of things that are coming in addition to the things that are kind of on your plate right now.

I would encourage you to kind of think about what are the ways that you can build in a mass, a master task list into your structures. Because really what it allows you to do is get things off your brain and written down somewhere so that you're not kind of constantly worried about remembering those things.

And right now I'm really using notion as kind of an external brain. I'm downloading things there so I don't have to worry about it. So I might look at something like that when I'm thinking about my monthly to do list. I also might look at something where I'm trying to think about any recurring tasks that would be happening in that month.

Um, and this could be something that is part of like the bigger annual picture of what's going on. So, for example, in the month of March, I'm still getting some tax paperwork that I need to send to my accountant. And so I know that the month of March is going to be probably the close out of when I'm going to be getting a lot of that paperwork.

So all along I've been kind of scanning things and uploading them for her, but I want that to be on my monthly to do list that, you know, that's an annual thing that I need to be paying attention to for March, that I need to be uploading and kind of staying on top of getting her that tax paperwork. Now, there may be other things that are coming into your schedule as well for the month of March that are not recurring, or that would not typically be happening in that month of the year.

And you also want to be paying attention to those things as well. So, for example, I have. Uh, my mom coming to visit in April, and this will be her first time coming to Kansas and seeing our new house. And we have a guest room that we have been putting together to make sure that people who come to visit us have a place to stay.

So right now, that guest room has. A bed frame in it, but that bed frame does not have a mattress. Um, it does not have box Springs. It does not have any kind of, um, side tables or anything like that. And we also probably need to invest in, uh, the hardware to get, um, our shower curtain hung in the bathroom that accompanies that guest bedroom and probably some guest towels and things like that.

So there are things that I need to be pulling together for her visit in March because she's coming in early April. And I'm wanting to think ahead about how I can do that now so that I'm not kind of rushing around at the last minute, pulling those things together. So that would be a good example of something that I don't anticipate that she'll be coming every year around this time, but at least for this year, I need to plan that she's coming around this time period.

So there's a nice combination of things that are happening that are more recurring throughout the year, things that are happening that you want to be just attentive to. If they're coming up in the next several weeks or the month after this one that you want to be planning for that. And then you may also have some kind of smaller tasks that are going on that you think, Oh, I really want to get these done in week one or week two, and you can kind of spread them out over the course of the month.

Now, the other thing that I think is kind of special about the monthly planning, particularly for March, is that it is the last month of the first quarter of the year. So if you are someone who does quarterly planning, it might actually have some special meaning to you to do a monthly to do list in March, because you might have certain things you're trying to get done in quarter one.

Now, this is something that is also on my mind because it definitely gives me an opportunity to go back and look at my annual goals and think about the things that I was actually trying to get done in the first quarter of the year and make some decisions about if I still think I can do that or if I need to be moving some of these things into the remainder of the year.

Now, this is something that's actually been really helped by a setup that I've put into notion where I've written down all of my, um, eight goals that I have for the year. And these are ones that I shared earlier on the podcast. And then I've put kind of to do lists under each of those goals. So what does it actually mean to accomplish those?

What are some of the tasks that I have associated with each of those goals? And what I did when I set it up in notion is I broke it out by quarter. And I took the tasks and I said, okay, which of these, for these eight goals do I want to do in the first quarter of the year? Well, now that it's March, it means that I really have to look at that and say, was it reasonable for me to include these things in the first quarter of the year?

How much of this was actually able to get done? Are there other things that I want to move maybe to quarter two or later in the year? And it also gives you a really good opportunity to check in with my overall goals and see if they're still making sense. Now, if you remember, I was setting those goals pre starting the new job at the very tail end of the year, and a lot has changed now that I'm in the new job.

So it's a really good opportunity, I think at the end of quarter one, as you're working on that monthly to do list, to think about. Is anything needing to be revisited, revised, added to or changed in any kind of way that would make it more aligned with where you're headed. Now, the other thing that I really try to pay attention to when I'm building a monthly to do list is, are there things on that list that I think are fun?

Are there things on that list that I can look forward to? And then I'm really going to enjoy in the coming month? And, um, so those kinds of things for me in March include a couple of travel trips. Um, this'll be my first travel of 2020. And I have one for work, which has me going to a couple of different cities, and then I have a second trip later in the month.

That's a speaking engagement trip. And, um, those things are always ones that I look forward to because I'm, the first one is a conference where you get to see some old friends. Uh, the second one is. The speaking engagement where I get to meet some new folks and engage with faculty on a campus, and I always really enjoy doing that.

So those are a couple of things that I have coming up in March that are also going to take some planning and then I'm going to have to think about, I'm a little bit more in terms of what my goals are for those trips and anything that I need to get done ahead of time, like the slide decks and the handouts and things for the trip that's happening later on in the month.

So I hope that gives you some ideas about what it might look like to create a monthly to do list. This is something that I do Mark in my calendar because I feel like months can kind of sneak up on us that transition from one month to another, and it can be a really important thing to just set aside even an hour of time to look at the coming month.

Really think deeply about those two dues that you want to be. Getting done over the next 30 days or so, and what they will really do in terms of moving the needle on bigger goals that you have. What is the alignment between the bigger priorities you have in your life and the kinds of things you're putting on that monthly to do list.

So of course, I would love to hear if you are making these kinds of to do lists and the power that they have for you in your life. You can always email me@helloatdrkatielinder.com you can tweet to me at Katie double underscore Linder. You can connect with me on Instagram at Katie underscore lender, and you can always write me a letter at PO box 1973 in Manhattan, Kansas six six five zero two anyway, you contact me.

I always love to hear from you and I hope you have a great month coming up. . 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.work/podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes.

Thanks for listening.