**YGT episode 189**

You're listening to. You've got this episode one 89 yeah. 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 thought I would offer a little bit of an update about how things have been going with my new job because I have been getting a ton of questions from people about what this experience has been like because I just started this new job and then all of this stuff went down with Kovac 19.

So I thought I would offer a little bit of an update and share some of the things that I'm learning through this experience because it has been really, really interesting. So I'm, as I've record this, this is my 12th week of work, so I'm just about to hit my three month, um, anniversary of my start date.

And of those 12 weeks. Half of them have been remote. So I'm almost about to cross over into the threshold where I've been remote working for more time than I actually had in the office of when I started this job. Now, the biggest thing that's happened over the last, you know, five or six weeks, is that my job tasks have changed pretty significantly.

So I came in and the first couple of weeks, and I was really focused on setting up systems and goals, and a lot of those things got back-burnered about six weeks ago. And actually part of my team of 10 is now reporting elsewhere because there was a concerted effort to clear my plate for some current tasks and needs that the remainder of my team is working on.

And I was asked to really kind of focus in on those areas. And so even kind of the structure of my team has shifted a little bit, at least temporarily, to allow me to pivot more toward immediate faculty development needs. Now, this was something that was kind of in the realm of what I was hired to do and that I have a couple of instructional designers that report to me, and we were really going to be focused on some online course design efforts.

Um, but because I got pulled into a lot of academic continuity efforts on our campus, I ended up kind of being the lead on the website that we. Uh, developed on campus, our keep teaching website that has a growing set of resources. Um, I put together, um, or I kind of led the efforts to create 40 plus virtual trainings that happened right after we decided to go remote.

Um, as I've mentioned before on this show, we created an online community on academic continuity on mighty networks. And I'll link to that in the show notes. And then just this past week, um, within less than a week, we developed a four week online course design Institute. Now, a lot of the things that are kind of interesting about this is that before my role was really focused on K state online, and now my role has really shifted in some ways, at least temporarily, to supporting all of the faculty on campus in all of the remote, the remote teaching and the online teaching that they're doing.

So I still have a lot of meetings. This is something that did not change about my job. I went from about 35 to 40 meetings consistently per week to now I have about 25 to 30 meetings a week. Um, which has been a nice shift to kind of lower that number. Uh, but I still means I have a ton of time on zoom.

So I'm in and out of zoom, um, pretty much all day. And if you follow me on Instagram stories, you'll see him often posting that I have like seven zoom meetings or a zoom meetings each day. Um, that I'm kind of working my way through. And I'm sure this is an area where many of you can probably relate. Um, it's also been, I would say, a little bit challenging in, um, in this kind of pivot and shift in that I like to be pretty proactive and planful.

And that was really how I kind of entered into this space with this new job. And. I've shifted to really having to be very reactive and responsive, um, kind of to like immediate crisis mode situations. And that's been a little bit challenging. Um, and I think for all of us as we've kind of been in this situation, but I feel like just after the six week point, things are kind of starting to shift back to the proactive and planful side of things again.

Um, as we're kind of all settling into the idea that we could be remote working for quite some time. Um, and so I think that that's. Helpful to kind of get back to that place where we're not just kind of constantly reacting to new things. Now I also want to share how many silver linings have come out of this situation, because the more I think about it, the more I am finding kind of positive things, um, that have come out of this challenging time.

Um, and I don't want to kind of belittle how challenging it's been, but I also can definitely kind of look to the positive side and see a lot of good things that are coming out of it. So here are some examples of that. First of all, I feel like I had a good timing of having been with my team for six weeks before this all happened.

My partner and I have talked several times about how much more challenging this would have been if we had moved even two months later than when we did, and I didn't start my job until like early March instead of early February. You know, having six weeks where I was meeting with my team consistently, we were getting a lot of face to face time, both one-on-one and in small groups, and as a large group, it really helped me to get to know them.

It helped them to get to know me and I feel like we had a lot of really good communication strategies already happening before all this happened. So that to me has felt like a huge blessing that I, I did not start my job in a different set of time, timing or circumstance where I didn't have. Um, a chance to even meet them in person.

So I'm really grateful for that. I also feel like through this experience, I have been able to meet a lot of people that I wouldn't have otherwise, and particularly through the work that I've been involved with on the academic continuity working group that eventually grew to a group of like 50 people, and at least initially for about a week, week and a half, we were meeting in person on campus before we decided to take everything remote.

And so I had a chance to like. At face-to-face meet people from all over campus. Um, different deans, uh, people who are working in our library system, people who are working on all different parts of our teaching and learning endeavor. You know, I was really able to engage with a lot of different folks and I feel like I had been having a lot of meetings.

Just to kind of get to know people. But those were very much ongoing, and I hadn't had a chance to complete all of those meetings yet before this happened. So it was kind of a very rapid introduction to a bunch of people at once. Um, and there was some silver linings for that too. I would also say one of the positives for me in this experience has been that, um, I think sometimes when you go into a new job, it takes a while for people to understand, you know, who you are, what you do well, what your strengths are.

And I felt like in this situation, I got to stretch some leadership muscles a lot more quickly than I would have otherwise. Um. Basically what happened was when all of this started on our campus, and I think this is probably true for many of you as well, it was spring break. And so a lot of people were on leave.

And because of that I was kind of pushed into doing some things or kind of space open to maybe I should say for me to do some things that might have otherwise fallen to other people and they weren't there. And so I kind of just was slotted in to take on some responsibilities and it was a great way for me to.

Illustrate my ability to think strategically, to be able to really execute on a vision and get things done. And I think that that's just not something that would happened. Um, if I had not been kind of in that situation in that moment. So that was kind of an interesting, um, kind of positive side effect I think of what happened.

Also, I think during this time there is just been a ton of creative problem solving and that's kind of my happy place. Um, and I think it's really helpful for people to see. How I process information and come up with potential solutions and kind of work through pros and cons of different things and can kind of forecast and think ahead.

You know, this has been kind of a proving ground for a lot of that. And, um, so that's been helpful, I think, to be able to demonstrate those things. And then the last thing I would say that's been a huge silver lining is I've really learned a lot about the structures of the institution for things like communication and decision making.

And I've really figured out who the players are. And I think that, again, when you're first coming into a new job. It can be kind of tough to find out who those people are and what their relationships are to each other. And it's a lot of mapping, kind of in your own mind about what are the connections and the politics and things like that.

And I think in this situation, I was able to pick up those things relatively quickly because I could see the chain of command, I could see how decisions were being made and how they were being communicated. And I got to know like the players involved very, very quickly. So I would also say that during this period of about 12 weeks now, um, there's definitely been a couple of really key lessons that I've learned.

And the first one I would say is just. You'd never know kind of the pathway and that you're on in terms of your career and where it's going to lead you. Like you can't kind of know in the moment, like what, how what you're doing right now could potentially be impactful in the future. So a really good example of this was.

You know, 10 years ago I was doing a lot of work in course in curriculum design, and this is around the time that I wrote my book on blended course design and that course and curriculum design background and the faculty development background that I have, especially around rapidly creating programming that totally helped me in this situation.

I cannot even describe how. Helpful it was to be able to walk into some of these meetings with a lot of confidence in my ability to do this stuff because I had done it before and I knew what I was talking about. I knew what the resources were. I knew the landscape of this work, and it really kind of was a good affirmation of the fact that I had invested in those skills earlier in my career.

And I also felt like it was an affirmation that I have landed in the right job because I was able to make a meaningful contribution. And there were certain things I was able to do in the last five to six weeks that other people just weren't available to do, or they didn't have the background or the skills or the knowledge to do some of these things.

And maybe they could have got figured it out, but it wouldn't have been as efficient and in times of crisis and kind of this reactive mode. We're trying to do things as quickly as possible and with as much quality as possible. So that was something that I, a lesson that I'm kind of taking away is that sometimes you kind of follow this trajectory of your pathway and you're not kind of sure why you're building up a skill here or there.

And then sometimes it just kind of like slammed you in the face of like, yep, that was why you learn that thing 10 years ago was so that right now you could be offering this unique contribution in this moment. The other set of skills that I would say really tied into that is coaching skills, strategic thinking, and planning skills, and definitely acknowledge of organizational development.

All of those things are really affirmed for me during this past six week period of. You know, my ability to lead in particular ways and provide vision in particular ways has a lot to do with the kinds of skills and things that I've been building up over a long period of time. And, um, so there was, it was a very confidence building to be kind of thrown into a position as to pivot very quickly in a different direction and to be able to do it and to be able to do it with confidence felt really good.

The second lesson that I've really taken away and that I've been pondering so much in the past couple of weeks in particular. Um, and you're going to hear this come up in I think the seventh episode of the third season of coach to coach. And that'll be out, um, starting in may, but you'll hear that episode later in June.

It's all about kind of remote work and how I'm feeling about it. And, um, so the second lesson learned is really around the fact that, um, if it wasn't clear that I'm an introvert, it's super clear. Now, I definitely, um, have seen all of the ways that remote work is. Actually a really good fit for me. And I saw a quote the other day online that really fit the situation and it said, I can be heartbroken for the world, but still joyful about my personal situation.

And that to me, I think has really represented the tension that I've been feeling during this whole period, which is obviously this is not a great situation. And the thing that brought us to being remote working is, is horrible. At the same time. Remote work is such a kind of comfortable space for me to be in.

I've loved this time working from home, and so I've really been trying to balance, you know, understanding that this is a tough situation for a lot of people and I can still also feel really positively about what's happening for me in on kind of a personal level with getting this time in my home where I can really focus and have like a flexible schedule.

That's really been the thing that I've needed for my own mental health. You know, during this time. It's also, I think, been a really strong reminder when I'm working from home, that I have a lot of capacity for disciplined and focused work when I am in my home. And this is something I've known for a long time.

Um, but I've never in my entire career had an opportunity to remote work for this length of time. And so it's an interesting opportunity just to kind of see what it's like to do this kind of work from home. Um, and. The balance that I've been able to achieve during this time has also just been an incredible gift.

Um, and I will always remember at least this, this kind of remote work period, I think in a pretty positive light because I've been able to have that balance. I've been able to, um, create space for myself to do things that feel really healthy, even in the midst of something that feels really challenging.

Um, so this is something I'm kind of still wrestling with and still kind of thinking about in terms of, you know, what does it mean for me longterm as a worker? Um, given the fact that I still work at a campus and, um, I eventually will have to go back to the office and, and maybe I can negotiate some remote work, but, um, this has been something that has been a huge takeaway for me during this period of, um, this.

The level of productivity and creativity that I can have when I'm kind of separated out and I have that alone time has been really, really crucial. So that's a little bit of an update of how things have been going. I would say in general, they've been going pretty well. I mean, given kind of a lot of the challenges of the current situation and the shift in the role that I'm playing and kind of a lot of the pivoting that I've been doing actually feel really good.

I feel like I haven't been asked to do anything that I wasn't kind of prepared to do from like past experiences in my career. Um, and that again feels like a really big affirmation. So I would also love to hear how things are going for you right now, and you can always email me@helloatdrkatielinder.com you can also tweet to me at Katie double underscore Linder, or you can connect with me on Instagram at Katie underscore lender.

And over on Instagram is where I'm sharing a lot of the day to day of what my remote work looks like. So I would love for you to join me over there. I appreciate all of your inquiries about how things have been going with this new job and I hope this update was fun to listen to. Thanks so much 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.work/podcasts if you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for listening.