**YGT episode 190**

You're listening to. You've got this episode one 90 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 talk a little bit about creating a project specific journal, and this is something that I've done recently as I have been engaging in a yoga practice.

Yes, I am doing daily yoga, which I've been wanting to do for a very long time, which feels very exciting. I'm three weeks in and I'm keeping a yoga journal has actually been a really helpful part of that process, but you could do a project specific journal on a ton of different kinds of things, and because this has been so helpful to me, I thought I would share some ideas of how this might be used in other ways.

In case you might want to start something like this yourself. So, first of all, what is it? What is a project specific journal? So when I think about this, I think it's about basically trying to corral reflections that you might have that are connected to a specific area of your life. So I would imagine that in some.

Cases, you may have already done this or it may be something you've thought about doing. So, for example, if you've ever kept a research journal, this would be a good example of this. Or like a dissertation journal when you were working on your dissertation. If you have kept a teaching journal, this might be a good example.

Um, or like if you've ever recorded any notes on like recipes that you've been making in a cookbook, that would be almost like a kind of cooking journal. Um, if you've ever tracked your exercise and how to kind of exercise journal, this would be maybe part of that. Um, but in this case, as I mentioned, I'm doing more of a yoga journal in the past, I've also done a coaching journal.

So this would also be something, um, that I could tie in with it as well. So there's lots of different ways to kind of think about this. If you were doing any kind of . Craft. I could see doing it with that as well, like if you were doing sewing or anything where you're kind of trying to do a deeper dive into something and really dedicate yourself to it.

I feel like sometimes doing these kinds of reflections, for me at least, they're a sign of my commitment to a particular thing that I'm wanting to kind of do that deeper dive and that deeper reflection. So I was thinking as I was coming up with this episode about the different purposes of why you might have a journal like this, and I feel like there's actually a bunch of different reasons, um, and you're not necessarily going to have all the reasons for that particular thing that you're doing, but it would probably fall into one of these categories.

The first one is just I think to document reflections, and this is typically, I think, how we think about journaling is it's just meant to document something that's happening and kind of how you're feeling about it. And at the very base level, that's what this could be. Just kind of making notes about how something is going over time.

I also think that sometimes the purpose is to go a step further than that to really try to document some kind of growth or change that's happening over time. And this would definitely be something if you were doing like an exercise journal or something like that, you might be trying to track, you know, is there more weight being added or are you going faster or your pace is picking up, or something along those lines with that kind of journal.

I also think that sometimes the purpose of this kind of reflection is just to collect a lot of information into one spot so that you kind of know where you're collecting it. So I think about like a research journal being that way. When I've kept a research journal in the past, it's not based on like a specific writing project.

All my projects coming into one place and it allows me to note reflections that I have that might cross over different projects and maybe they're kind of influencing each other. So there's some interesting stuff that can go on there. Um, I also think that these kinds of journals can be just a space for brainstorming.

If you're not quite ready to dive deeply into a project or you're kind of still at the phase where you're collecting ideas around it, then you could just collect all of your ideas into one space so that they're easy to find. And you can always refer back to them later or build off of them in different ways.

Another purpose I came up with was to note modifications, and I was thinking about this specifically in relationship to things like cooking journals or craft journals where you might like start with a recipe or a set of instructions from another. Person, and then for whatever reason, decided to modify that.

So in a recipe, you might decide to modify the ingredients or the amount of the ingredient, or in a kind of craft like sewing or knitting, you might decide to modify a color or a kind of fabric or a kind of sizing based on what you need. So I think that you can also be noting that once you get more mature into a particular project, you might be kind of tweaking it in particular ways that you would want to be noting.

Another purpose I think is to note questions or challenges with a project that you feel like need further exploration. So I see this a lot, particularly in research journaling where you might not know the response or the answer right then, but you want to keep thinking about it and maybe you want to do some further research in that area, but you don't want to forget about it in the meantime.

So you would just be kind of noting it down so that you could swing back around to it at a later time. And then the, the final purpose I was thinking of, and I'm sure there's many more than the ones I've mentioned here, but the final one that I thought of was if you're trying to document some kind of metric that would help you feel like you've, you've hit a milestone or you've had some level of success with something, it might be that you're trying to kind of.

Document those metrics of success in a particular way. So I could definitely see that with something like an exercise journal, um, or even a research journal. If you're documenting, like when something gets published or anything where you're like working with a particular timeline and you might want to be noting different milestones on that timeline.

I could see falling into that. So I think that when I was considering this yoga journal, I was thinking of it from a few different perspectives. I definitely wanted to document reflections. I think that part of that was certainly noting change over time because I expect this to be a longer term practice for me.

So it was interesting for me to think about what that would look like early in the practice versus like a couple of years from now. What would be the kinds of things that I would be saying. And I think I also wanted to have kind of everything in one spot. Um, I definitely was drawn to that idea of being able to collect a lot of information related to my yoga practice in one place and not be kind of looking around, um, to find that information.

So, and I could see, for example, if I was writing about yoga in my morning pages, for example, and then maybe I was blogging about it or podcasting about it. Like those things would be kind of spread out. But if I was keeping a yoga journal, I could be linking to those things. Or I could be kind of noting those things all in one spot and it would be kind of easier to collect them.

So I think once you have a sense of wanting to do this, and also thinking about kind of the why behind it, it's helpful to choose what it is that you actually want to. Reflect on or measure or document. And for me that question always comes down to kind of a simple one, which is what do you really care about when it comes to that thing?

So when I thought about this, what I really care about is I am looking for some consistency with this practice. So I thought I would want to note dates of when I was actually doing the practice. And because I'm in the very beginning stages of learning yoga, I'm, I'm choosing to go kind of pose by pose.

I'm, I'm really wanting to kind of learn a particular pose or posture before I move on to something else. And so that means I've been noting that each day. Like, what am I really focusing in on? Um, in terms of what I'm learning. And then I also wanted to note some emotions around each daily practice. So I'm picking three emotion words.

And then, um, I also anticipated, and this is, this has been true, that I'm not just learning about yoga through videos or things like that through my own practice and watching demonstrations, but I'm also reading about it. I'm listening to some podcasts about it and I'm doing kind of a deeper dive into the practice through a range of mediums.

And so I wanted to note that as well. So that's something that I'm keeping track of as if I'm doing a reading or listening to a podcast, um, related to it or any other way where I'm kind of learning that I think should be noted. And then one last thing that I was kind of interested in is if I had like a takeaway from the practice of that day, something that was kind of sticking with me that I thought, you know, I had kind of, that had come to me through the practice.

So in addition to those kind of consistent things, the other thing that I thought would be helpful for me was to have a set of consistent questions that I was asking myself about the practice. And so this is kind of the journaling part. The first part is kind of just the metrics that I'm measuring. And the second part is more about the reflective writing piece.

So I gave myself five questions. The first one is just what went well on that day with the practice. The second one was if there was anything challenging for me. The third is what am I still thinking about related to the practice? The fourth is what am I learning about the practice of yoga? And then the fifth one is what am I learning about myself as I'm engaging in the practice of yoga?

Now I think that you could certainly do more free form journaling. Um, and I do that every day and my morning pages practice. But I felt like with this, I needed a little bit of structure around it. And I think anytime where you're new to something, this is a good way to go, like more structure versus less.

I could see the opposite argument there too, but for me, I felt like I needed more structure. So I layered in these questions and I just go in and I answer these questions every day. Now because I have this level of consistency with what I'm doing and the journaling. I chose to do it digitally because I felt like, um, I didn't necessarily want to create like a written template that I would be writing out in a notebook or something like that each day.

Um, I ended up using notion and for the first part of the metrics that I mentioned where I'm noting like the date, the poses, the emotions, the readings, I put that into a database in notion, which is basically a table. And then within that table, I have a thing I can click and it gives me the template ID questions that I'm asking myself to do, the written reflection on each day.

So it's basically kind of all in one spot, and I've just called it yoga journal in my, in my notion set of things that I keep in notion. And I've talked about notion a little bit before. I know it's a little bit challenging to hear about it in the abstract, but if you are in there, basically know that I've created a database and within that database, our entries and those entries are where I'm putting the reflective writing.

So that to me has been really helpful because it's an easy way to build that routine into my practice. I typically, um, um. Doing the yoga in the morning, um, after my morning pages, and then I do a quick, like 10 minute check in with the journal right after I'm done. That allows me to kind of debrief what I just did, and then I go about my day.

So it's a relatively quick thing for me to do. I'm not like laboring over it. I would say I'm probably writing for each of those questions. A couple of sentences, maybe a little bit more. I mean, this is not like pages and pages. It's just kind of like quick thoughts about what I'm thinking about. And I would imagine over time I might go back and look at some of those thoughts and I'm especially interested in, in how I feel about yoga right now.

When it's a pretty fledgling practice and I don't really know a whole lot about it, and I'm still really deepening my understanding of the purpose behind yoga and how to really do it with integrity and intention and purpose. Um, I think that once I get a little bit stronger in the practice, it's going to be different in terms of how I'm going to feel about it.

So I'm kind of curious to see that growth over time. But for now, there is also this kind of motivating factor of I'm trying to do it daily. So far, so good. I'm doing it daily. I'm, I'm almost to three weeks of daily yoga practice, and that has allowed me to really have that kind of motivation of not wanting to end the streak, um, because I am on a streak right now of that daily practice, and I'm really trying to build it as a

Bigger kind of lifetime habit. And, um, this is the longest I've ever gone with this yoga practice. I've, I've dabbled it with it in the past. And really what's helped me initially is the focus on individual poses and postures rather than trying to do full sequences every day. So in the month of may, as I record this, we're toward the end of April and the month of may, I will go into doing full sequences every day, but in the month of April, every day, I just picked a couple of poses and postures in a foundations of yoga series.

I'm on a yoga with Adrian's YouTube channel. I will link to this in the show notes in case anyone's interested. And I just did one to two videos a day, really focused in on that particular, um, yoga pose. And that was really helpful. It was a good, strong foundation for me, and I felt like it was a way to ease myself in without feeling too much pressure.

And that really worked in terms of getting me started with it. Um, so I will share that in case anybody wants to check it out. I'm also gonna link in the show notes to a recent blog post I wrote on documentation. Um, cause I mentioned my yoga journal in there as well. And I can also link to a recent blog post I did with my yoga schedule in it because I have laid out a more.

Specific yoga schedule that I've even gotten more specific with. Um, in notion, I've kind of built out this plan for myself to help me kind of develop this as a, a larger practice. And, um, so I will link to all of that initial notes in case you want to learn a little bit more. I do anticipate talking about this more in the future.

I want to wait until I have a few months under my belt to really talk about what I'm learning through it. Um, but I can say that it is highly impactful. It is probably, you know, one of the. Best habits I have in terms of like, it's not a lot of time in my day, but it really impacts my day. And I definitely like the combination of doing it kind of in, um, sequence with my morning pages journaling.

It's been really working well with that. So stay tuned if you're interested in hearing a little bit more, um, about what that yoga practice is looking like, I'm happy to share more in the future. So if you are interested, um. In doing a project specific journal, I would love to hear about it. Or if you're already doing one and it's really working for you, I would love to hear about that too.

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 Linder, any way you contact me. I always love to hear from you and I would love to hear if this is something you've built into your life as well.

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