**CC\_S3E3**

Welcome to coach to coach a podcast dedicated to showcasing the power of coaching. I'm your host, dr Katie Linder, and I offer coaching to academics and higher education professionals to bring more ease to their lives and work. Before you dive into this episode. Here's a quick introduction to the structure of the show.

In each season of coach to coach, a new guest coach will come on the show to demonstrate a range of coaching tools and strategies. The first episode will offer you an introduction to the guest coach. Then I'll coach the guest and they'll coach me for the next six episodes and always on real topics and issues we're dealing with in our own lives.

Each season we'll end with a debrief episode where we'll talk about how the season went. And offer any updates on the topics covered in earlier episodes. It might make the most sense to start each season in the beginning and listen to the episodes in order this season. I'm delighted to introduce you to dr Kaitlin FOSS.

Caitlin is a certified weight and life coach who helps academics overcome their self sabotages of overeating and overdrinking. As a tenured psychology professor and department chair, she knows the unique demands of academic life. Now, onto the episode.

Hi Caitlin. How are you? Great. How are you doing Katie? I am good. And you're coaching me this week, so I'm going to go ahead and hand things over to you. Excellent. I'm so excited to be coaching you. I always start my sessions with, what would you like coaching on today, Katie? Okay, so I've been thinking about this and, um, I a couple of weeks back for folks who are.

Not following this kind of in real time. So as we were recording this a couple of weeks back, I started a new job and with the start of that new job, I kind of implemented a new system in terms of like managing my planner. I kind of moved it from paper to digital and I feel like now that I've been doing this for a couple of weeks, it's a good time to check in and kind of see what I like, what I don't like, what's working, what's not.

And I feel like I haven't had a lot of cognitive margin to do that just because there's been a lot going on. I've been juggling, you know, a lot of things with the new job. And, um, so I thought we would take this opportunity today to just kind of like reflect a little bit about what's working about that system.

Are there things that maybe I want to tweak or just good questions for me to be asking right now. so your digital planner, how you're planning your time in general, what that's looking like? Yes. Excellent. So where are you with it. Right now. So I basically, um, short, quick, short story is, uh, the, like the night before the tape, before I started my new job, I had a moment where I was like, I don't think I can handle all the meetings that are on my calendar.

And like handwriting notes. Like, I think this is just going to be too much for me. So I kind of literally overnight took my paper planner and note taking system and implemented it into a digital framework, and I'm using a product called notion. And a big reason for that was honestly, I was afraid, like I just thought like my hand is going to fall off.

Like I'm just not going to be able to take these notes like this is going to, it's going to just really push my capacity in terms of processing information. So, um, I've created a system where basically it implements a to do list, some kind of top priorities for the week. The, the full kind of, um. Layout of like a weekly planner where I can see things for each day of the week.

A note taking system where I have a template that I use for every meeting that I have that I need to take notes, that tells me who's in the meeting. Um, are there questions or to do items that come out of that meeting? Are there things I need to reference for that meeting in terms of documents. And then I'm also tracking some daily and weekly habits.

I'm doing some reflection at the end of each week, so there's kind of a diary entry piece to this as well. Um, so all of that, I've kind of housed in these like weekly layouts. Basically, I'm calling it a weekly plan. And so far I've been able to go in like on a Sunday night and kind of prep everything for the week, which gives me a nice window into what's happening over the next five to seven days.

Yeah. So with this weekly plan. Uh, is this something, it's digital now? How's that transition going for looking at your plan on a daily or hourly basis? So, um, it is something that I keep open in a, so it's in the cloud basically. Um, and so I keep it open in a tab, no matter where I am. It's either at home, opened in the stab, or it's at work open in the staff.

There's also an app that I can look at it on my phone and I'm using it in conjunction with like my digital calendar. So I haven't completely put like all of my. Um, calendar in here. I have a separate calendar that I'm watching as well on my phone and network. Um, but I, I basically went kind of cold Turkey with this.

I was like, I'm not even going to bring my paper planner to the office. Like I just completely left it behind and it was like trial by fire. I'm either going to make this work or it will go down in flames. And so far it seems to be generally working, but it is something that I, I am frequently referring to throughout the day because it has my to do list.

It has. The note taking kind of apparatus that I have in meeting, so my laptop goes with me everywhere. Um, so that I can be taking those notes as I go. Yeah. So would you came into this being afraid, like build to came out of fear, but now it's like a trial by fire. Okay. Let's see how this is going. And now it's like, it seems to be working.

Are we afraid of anything still? Oh, that's a good question. Um. I mean, I think if there is fear, it is kind of laying bare how much I have going on. Um, and there's a little fear in there probably about, just like, I'm juggling a lot of things and like I have a separate section, for example, for my admin.

Like I have an admin and I have a separate set of to do list for her. I have, you know, to do lists for me, I have to do lists that I'm tracking for things going on for personal, for business, for work. I mean like there's all these different things in there. So I think if there's any concern, it's just that there's a lot, like I, I've put a lot into this system just because I have a lot going on.

I feel like in some ways with the paper planner. It's not as if it wasn't a lot, but it was contained in a different way. Like I was only really looking at a week at a time. And in these weekly plans, I have taken my to do list and limited it just to this week. But, um, there are, there, I can go see the massive to do list if I want.

I can kind of look at these things in different angles and, Mmm. So that piece I think is a little bit. In some ways it's, it's too limiting to just look at things a week at a time because I have to be kind of looking ahead. So I'm relying on my calendar a little bit more for that. Like, do I have travel coming up or do I have something else that I need to be kind of planning ahead?

Sometimes I like to plan a couple of weeks in advance instead of just one week in advance. And so this is a little bit harder to do that because I basically just see one week on the screen at a time, but all the days are there, so I don't feel like I'm zeroing in. Too far to where I don't have kind of a view of the context of a particular week.

Yeah. Okay. We'll come back to that piece. But when you're thinking, I'm juggling a lot of things, right? And if we think about the model, we'd put this on the thought line. I know your brain wants to put it on the circumstance line, like, let me tell you all the things, Katelyn, this, this and that, and we couldn't put those on the circumstance line of.

What did it, what the thing is, each individual thing, but then you think I'm juggle juggling a lot of things. How does that feel. I mean, part of me is like I'm doing it like it's working, you know, like the juggle is happening. I don't feel like, I mean, one of, I think my major fears was that I would drop things, like I would not be able to keep track of the things I needed to do.

Anytime you start a new job, you're just like inundated with information and stuff that it's like you don't even know enough about where to put it. Like you don't know how to categorize it. So as I've gone to each meeting, I have these to do lists and I can just scrape them and basically put them in a spot where I know I'm not going to lose anything.

So I think that that's the piece, you know, of this that's working, is that I feel like even though there's a lot that I'm juggling. Nothing's getting dropped yet. Like I'm not getting to a place where I'm feeling like I'm losing information, which was one of the concerns I think I originally had with the paper note taking is I was just going to like have these notebooks filled with things and I was going to have to constantly be going back through them to try to figure out information.

So I feel like that's a piece of it. Um. I do definitely have a question of like, how long I can do this? I feel like I need to give it a couple more weeks to settle into this job to feel like, you know, I think two weeks is not enough time for me to kind of understand the normal level of what this job will be.

Um, because I'm still kind of picking up a lot of new things, but. It is. I would also say it's allowing me, at the end of the day, I'm leaving work on time, you know, like I'm not staying after. I'm not, I feel like things have a place I'm able to say like, I will tackle that tomorrow, or I will tackle that on Friday.

Like I, I'm not feeling like I'm having to overwork at my day job in order to get these things done. So I can go home and just work on my side business, what's taking up my evenings right now. But even being able to separate those things out, I can color code in the system. So there's a lot of ways for me to kind of slice and dice the things that are on my plate so that I can kind of analyze in the moment about how things are going and if I feel like there's balance there.

Hmm. Yeah. So what's the emotion that comes up? If you had to say one emotion from, I'm juggling a lot of things, what would it be.

I mean, the immediate word that comes to mind is one that I'm kind of testing, cause I'm not sure it's the one I want to associate with this. But for right now, the immediate word that comes to mind is pride. Like that I have not fallen off, you know, and I don't feel overwhelmed at this point. Like I, I feel like there's a lot, but for me there's a difference between having a lot and kind of having a system for that and being at a place where I'm like.

I don't know that I can do this. Um, I do feel like confident in my abilities and that this system is working. Um, but I would also say that, I mean, there's always going to be some kind of insecurity there too, of just like, I don't want to have a false sense of pride over this situation. It's been a couple of weeks.

There's all kinds of things that can happen, you know, that can throw a wrench into any kind of system. So I, I guess I want to have like a humble sense of pride, um, and not have it be. Leading me down the wrong pathway. that's interesting, right? Because when you think I'm juggling a lot of things, sometimes it generates the pride like, Oh, okay, this is feeling pretty good, but then there's the thought of like, well, but I might drop something.

Something might Dender up this. The plans I've made that seems to be, those seem to be the thoughts that bring up the fear yeah, I would say that that's true. What do you do when. The thoughts come in of like, I might drop, but I might drop something and you feel afraid. What do you do? Um, I kind of lead into the system.

I mean, I, I will go back and kind of look at the week and make sure that I do feel like I have a handle on, I'm not missing anything of like what's coming up. Um, and I mean, like for example, one day I've made this plan as we're talking, it's a Sunday. So I've gone through and I've kind of made the next week's template, and on Thursday of this week I have nine meetings, like almost back to back.

And there's one meeting in the middle of the day that is getting really crammed and it's actually a really important one. So it's already getting me thinking about, okay, what can I do to make sure that I'm on time to this meeting? And so it's kind of like leaning into the information and trying to say like, how can this help me to prepare for something that I know is coming that could be stressful.

But if I plan in advance, you know, I feel like it's something that I can handle a little bit more easily. So it's almost like little triggers you or warnings of what's coming up in the week. Um. So, I mean, I feel like I'm leaning into it and it's definitely not something where I'm avoiding it, where I'm like, Oh, this is scary.

I'm walking away. It's more like, Oh, this is scary. Let me look into this more, get more information that's going to like help me to make better decisions. Yeah. So in this case, you have that strategy to lean into the system when you're feeling afraid because you're thinking, I might drop something, but it gets, you don't get paralyzed from that fear.

They're like, Oh yeah, okay, let's go back and look and let's plan. Right? So this, let's go back. Let's go back and look and let's plan is something that's helping prevent future feelings for you. It's kind of like, okay, well, we're not going to be stressed on Thursday if we go in and plan now, where am I?

Some of that. Fall apart for you knowing your past patterns? Hm. Well, I think sometimes the plan is not enough. I mean like the plan is not like the magical elixir that stops you from worrying about something. Like you can have a plan and still be like, Oh, that's still not ideal. Like when I look at this Thursday schedule, I'm like.

Oh, I'm still probably going to be a little late to this and it's going to make me a little late to the next thing, and it's actually something that I would not have scheduled during the day. It's something I scheduled over my lunch hour and it actually was scheduled way back before I even knew that I was going to have this job.

So it's, it's will not happen again, basically, but I'm kind of dealing with the consequences of having to do this. Because my past self, you know, didn't have enough information basically to make a decision that would have kept this from happening. Um, so yeah, I mean, it's, it's one of those things that I think I'll probably worry about it up until the point when it's done.

Like, I, it's going to be something that will be on my mind in part because there's not a whole lot I can do. Like I, I know it's not an ideal situation and it will continue to not be an ideal situation until it's over. Um, yeah. So why worry about it.

Well, that's what I do, Kaitlin. That's my pass pattern. Um, I would say, you know, there's definitely a part of me that I had this conversation with myself today. I've just like prep for it and let it go, you know, like it is what it is. Um, and I think that there is definitely. Part of me that can sometimes do that, but given the cognitive load I have right now, I'm a little taxed in terms of that ability to kind of have that self control around worry.

So, um, part of me letting it go is just letting that go, like from a kind of better perspective of like, I'm not going to be able to be in the kind of most ideal state of mind right now. Um, and that's okay. Like I'm kind of giving myself a pass on that. I think in other circumstances when I'm, I'm not dealing with so many new things and I'm not kind of in a new schedule and, and having kind of this cognitive load, I would be.

Maybe more open to letting that worry go. So, um, for the most part though. The worry, like especially this week is very centered on that thing. I'm not really worried about other things. Um, and in general, the past couple of weeks, I haven't had a lot of worry. Um, the work is not keeping me up at night, you know, like there isn't anything like that.

Although I have noticed that I've been dreaming at least twice about my to do list in notion, I think, because I'm just in it all the time. So it's like unconsciously part of my. Mental space when I go to sleep. Um, so there have been a couple of times where I've dreamed about it and I thought, okay, this is probably telling me I'm a little too much into the system right now.

Yeah. If we think about worry sometimes as a chew toy for our brain, right? It's like, let me chew on this over here because I know what to do with this really well, like maybe even the notion system right now, we can try this on. Maybe the notion system is like, well, this is something I know what to do about.

I know how to plan and I know how to like map this out and if I go spend time thinking here, I feel better. I definitely think that's true in a new environment. You know, this is allowing me to feel like I have more control, um, and that I am not missing things and that I know where things are. And I was thinking about this the other day that, um, I'm getting energy, I think, from using this system because I do know where things are.

Whereas in a new job, you don't know where anything is. Like you're trying to find files, you're trying to find. You know, all kinds of things that like, you just don't know where things are like, and you're being oriented to a lot of new other kinds of systems. So I definitely think that's true, that this is a space for me almost to come and like rest a little bit because it's like, I know what this is.

These are my systems. They feel familiar to me. I can check these boxes off, you know, like, and, and the things I'm checking off are meaningful. It's not just kind of like random to dues, like they're contributing to larger projects that I feel really good about. Um, but it is definitely a more comfortable space for me.

What's interesting about that is if we think about worry is also sometimes an indulgent and indulgent emotion that it's something we go to. It's kind of uncomfortable. Nobody's like, yeah, sign me up for worry today. It's uncomfortable, but it's safer. It's a chew toy security blanket of like, I know this space, but sometimes we're there because we're avoiding other emotions.

I think that could be true. Yeah. Are there any emotions that you feel like you're avoiding from your work week, this new job?

I mean, I definitely think, I don't know if it's avoiding, but. There's just the feeling of overwhelm. Like I think I'm trying to stay in a place where I'm feeling ahead of slightly ahead. It's kind of like when you're taking pain medication, you got to stay ahead of the pain. I feel like I'm trying to stay ahead of the overwhelm.

Um, and so far it's working. There is very little margin right now. Um, and I am trying to.

For, I think the short term anyway, if these first several weeks stay ahead is if I can, um, even when that margin is smaller than what I would like. Um, so I would love to have more time to read novels and to do some of these other things and I think I will eventually get there. But for right now, it's like I get to the end of the week and I don't have much capacity for like putting anything else into my brain.

Hmm. Like it's just full. Like I and I, in this, uh, system, I've set up, I have the option of putting like emotions down for each day and for each week and to just kind of say, what am I associating with these things? And kind of a diary like setting and almost every day full brain has been one of the emotions I'm putting in there.

So it's, it's the difference for me between kind of overwhelm and being at capacity. And I feel like I'm running at capacity right now. And that's not a longterm thing that I would like to have. Um, so that I would say I'm not avoiding overwhelm, but I'm actively working to kind of stay slightly ahead of it.

Um, because I do feel like that will just make me less effective if I'm starting to feel like I'm underwater. Yeah. Which overwhelm could also go into the category of indulgent emotions. Yeah. Because it doesn't have that strategic byproducts. Like once you feel overwhelmed, you shut down. I would guess. I like you shut down and then nothing's happening from feeling overwhelmed.

You don't, you're not taking productive action. You're not doing the things that you want to do. Once you reach that overwhelmed place, so worry for you then is a safer space than the overwhelm of like, well, we're just going to shut down if we're overwhelmed, but if we're worried, we at least go look at notion.

We go look at our plan and try to tweak things. Yeah, absolutely. It is a more productive space or it feels like a more productive space. Um, and it reminds me of like James Claire's concept in atomic habits, he differentiates between motion and action. And the worry is just the emotion. It's just the thinking and the processing and, and the, you know.

Planning, but the action is actually going and doing the thing. So yeah, the overwhelm does not lead to action. I do feel like sometimes the worry can lead to action cause I'm like, well what can I do that would make me feel better here? You know? Or that would make me feel like I'm clearing a pathway to get to a space that feels more positive.

Hmm. Yeah. And your brain thinks like, Oh worry right now I have, I have time to worry that will help us do things. Rather than like when you have more time on your schedule, it's like, Oh, then I can let worry go. It's almost counterintuitive of, wait a minute. When you're at margin and you have all these things on your plate, that's when your brain goes to worry rather than when you have more free time on your schedule.

It's like, Oh, I can let worry go then. Yeah, I would agree with that. How much time are you spending worrying? A week right now, do you think. I would actually say very little. This has been the first thing that has come up where I'm like actively concerned. Um, and in part I would say just because I have had a lot of things to do just this weekend that I felt like I needed to check off.

I've already kind of moved some things off my plate. Um, but I will be prepping for this meeting after, after our call today, and just kind of getting to a place where I feel more comfortable with what I'm doing. Um, and. Part of it is just not having had time yet to actively plan for, it's a presentation, so I need to put a slide deck together and, and that kind of thing.

Um, but I do feel like for the most part, because things have been so full, I just have not been able to worry. Like there hasn't been any margin for that. So maybe it's a good sign that I have a little bit of margin because worry is cropping up. Who knows? There you go. Something to watch this week, for sure.

For sure. So what else is working about your notion system here? Um, I definitely think I have built in some reflective activities to it that are working well, um, and that are kind of reminding me to do that emotion work at the end of the day. And I'm noting, you know, like a highlight or something that was kind of challenging or, um, I'm also tracking what I'm reading, so that's helping me to make sure I'm building in time for that.

Um, I also think that the, there is a habit tracking element that I've built in that's helping me to see patterns in the week and what I'm kind of really sticking to and what I'm not in terms of habits right now. Um, and then I would also say the task list and really limiting it to just this week and being kind of like really centered in on, don't worry about what's coming.

Like, just focus on this week like this. These are the things that are kind of on your plate. Um, that's a helpful thing too, to really kind of narrow in and not be super focused about, you know, flipping through the planner to the future. It's like what's just look at the now. Um, it's kind of encouraging my current self.

Or maybe my future self to trust my current self in terms of how I'm assigning tasks that I'm not, I have enough experience with what I know I have capacity for and kind of how long it will take me to do things that I can put tasks into certain timeframes that I feel confident about. And I think that's the piece too about this notion system that's working is I've implemented things that I've learned over time that work well for me.

And I've taken those principles and I've put them into this digital format. So in some ways it feels familiar. It doesn't feel completely new because I'm used to doing some of this stuff just in a different modality. And when you do find yourself trying to look ahead, can you catch yourself. When that happens, do you realize you're doing it?

I think that right now when I'm doing it, it's usually pretty intentional because it's often, I don't really do it in notion. I do it in the calendar. Like I'll have to look and be like, okay, when am I traveling again? Like, cause a question will come up or something will happen that like triggers me to look into the future to make a decision or something like that.

Um. And honestly, I'm kind of taking it day by day to the point where like I was talking with someone and she's like, Oh, we're meeting tomorrow. And I said, Oh, is that tomorrow? Like I like, I hadn't even looked. I mean, it was like I am focused on today on today's meetings and taking notes and learning what I need to learn today.

Um, and then at the end of the day, I kind of glance at the next day and see what's coming up. So in some ways, like I am way more limited in scope than I think I would've been in the past. Um, and again, maybe that this will change in the coming weeks, but for right now, that capacity is like, I'm at it, I'm at it.

So I really can just kind of focus on right now and then see what comes next at the appropriate time. Where is the margin going to come from? In the future weeks? Oh, that's a good question. I mean, my hope is I'm starting to try to build some in during my lunch hour, um, and do some like fun reading. Um, and that's happened a few days in the week where I haven't felt like I'm actually actively choosing.

Not to go clear out my email, not to. It's like, you know, I need to give myself that little break. And I think that the weather here right now is very cold, so as it gets warmer and I take a walk or do something like that, there's going to be some margin there. Um, I also think that I am starting to allow more margin.

Um. So living in the middle of the country now and there's more small talk here. It's a different culture and that's another area where I'm allowing more margin. I think I'm used to just like coming in and doing the thing, and there's a lot of just like checking in and talking, and I have an admin and I can like.

You know, check in throughout the day about how things are going and like, so there's margin, I think coming in there too, around just like that social space. Um, and I have 10 people who I engage with throughout the day who are on my team. And so that's a lot of, um. There's a lot of room there, I think to build in some margin and to not just be like getting straight to work, um, and, and figuring out what we need to do next.

So that's part of it. Um, I do think that at some point I will probably adjust my evening schedule. Um, it's feeling pretty full right now. I have reserved, uh, Friday nights as like nights with my partner, so that's feeling good in terms of margin. Um, and I'm having, I have more room on the weekends. Um, I have appointments with clients, but I have a little bit of flexibility in terms of other things that I want to get done.

But I will say that that evening time is a tough one. Um, because I'm used to not having work during the evenings and my client load has just picked up and there's some other things that we launched this year in the business that have kind of required that evening time. They get taken up a little bit more.

And it may be at some point, I just have to transition my clients to weekend appointments or you know, something along those lines to just try to kind of open up some of that time. Um, I am not willing to change my bedtimes and like getting up in the morning time. So this is not a situation where like I'm sacrificing sleep.

Um, but it is a situation where. I'm sacrificing some time with my partner, like at the end of the day, and that is feeling, that's starting to feel, there's some strain there for me of just like, I don't want to be doing this forever. Like I need to build in a little more time. . How will you know when it's time to make that decision?

I think in my head, I've kind of said, let's give this February, like I, you know, like I started or in early February and I'm like, let me just give this four weeks and kind of see how it goes. And at that point I think I would feel a little more settled into the job and have a sense of kind of what the situation was there.

Also because it is the beginning of the year. January is just that. It's a time where you pick up more coaching clients because people are just like, Oh, new year I need coaching. And so part of me too is kind of waiting to see if my client load kind of evens out a little bit because of that. So quarter one in some ways is kind of like, okay, let's just kind of see how this goes.

March is a heavy travel period for me and that's going to disrupt everything. So. I feel like April is kind of a level setting where I'll be able to kind of make some decisions. Um, so yeah, I feel like in my head I'm like, February is kind of a, the letting everything settle in the job March has got the crazy travel.

And so once I get through quarter one, that's going to be a good reflective time to be thinking about, especially those schedule adjustments in terms of the evening time. Right. So is there anything that's not working about notion and the calendar system right now for the month of February? Hmm.

Have it on the screen behind me. So I'm kind of glancing through it.

I have felt like, and this may be something about just kind of building in for my schedule. The way that I have it set up right now is I have these templates that I'm doing for these meetings throughout the week, but I am juggling probably between 25 and 30 meetings every week. Right now. And it's a lot like it's a lot of note taking and every meeting has to do items that come out of them.

So what I'm trying to do is at the end of each day, go through all the meeting notes and kind of scrape out the, to do items and add them to the task list that I have in kind of a separate area and, or just put them into like, I have daytime to do lists that I can add things to. Um, but I do feel like kind of by the end of the week.

I need to reserve some time on Friday afternoon to do that for like the entire week. And it allows me to basically like close out that week so I don't have to refer back to it because it's like I've taken everything and I've implemented it into the to do list that will go into the next week or it will go into a future week.

Um, and I've kind of like processed. The information that came in that week and I can just kind of set it aside and move forward. I feel like sometimes by the end of the week, I don't have, that's a margin area that I need to work on is making sure that there's that time and maybe even not at Friday afternoon cause I'm pretty tired by that point.

Like it's just, I'm fatigued, like I'm mentally fatigued and physically fatigued. So sometime maybe early in the afternoon on Friday, if I can squeeze in a little bit of time to just like do that processing. Um, otherwise I feel like it gets pushed to Monday morning and then it's, then it's like I don't have a clean start cause I'm still kinda trying to figure out the stuff from the previous week.

So that's something that's, that's a little bit on my mind. Yeah. That's, um, at the life coach school, we call it Friday hour done. So it's part of Monday hour one. You're doing your planning like what you did on Sunday for getting ready for the week, or you do it Monday morning and then it's like at the end of the week, there has to be that time to process and reflect.

So you can say, Oh, here's what I did. Here's those to do lists, items that still need to move. Look at what happened this week. Now this week is closed. Yeah. I definitely think that's something that. Even, I mean, I don't, because I have access to notion all the time, like it's not just something I have at work.

This is something I could do on a Sunday. Um, and I think for at least one of the last few weeks I did because as I was opening up the next week and kind of preparing the templates, I was like, okay, let me just close out this other stuff. But I prefer not to do it on the weekends. You know? I think that it's something I really need to build into my work week.

And. I'm trying really hard not to bring work home. Um, and I have been pretty successful thus far of not taking reading home or not feeling like I have to work outside of those typical eight hours. Um, so yeah, that's something that I definitely want to build in, I think on a Friday and not let it eat into the weekend.

So is this something that can happen this Friday for you? That's a good question. Let me go to this week's plan. I just built. And I, I mean, I think that it, one of the things that I want to try to kind of keep reminding myself, yes, it can definitely happen this Friday. Um, and I'm going to write it in right now to close out.

Notion notes. This is the first Friday that, um, I actually have a wide open day basically, um, the first day since I've been there that I have like one meeting. I don't anticipate that that will stay that way. Um, but yeah, I'm looking forward to having some Fridays that are a little bit more clear. It also makes me kind of wonder about the culture of the work environment.

Like is this something where Fridays are a little bit lower? Um. Capacity in terms of meetings and things like that, which would be great. Um, because it would allow me to process and do some things at the end of the week. All right. So something to experiment with, closing out notion notes on Friday. Yeah.

Still part of the work week. What else is coming up with near notion plan? That was something we uncovered that may be something to tweak. Yeah. I think that that would be helpful. Um, let's see.

I do think that. I don't know that it's something to tweak, but it is something that I've noticed that I split my spread. Basically. If you think about like a planner having a spread. I split the columns for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday into a morning, daytime, evening. Um, so that I could really have a sense of what's going on because I consider daytime work.

You know, like, that's like my, my day job morning is like my morning routine after work is often doing some stuff for the side business. And then I actually have created a space to, for my admin and their vendor that daytime part. What it is helping me to see more consistently. And I'm not sure I would've noticed it if I hadn't done it this way, is the amount of evening work that I'm doing.

And so that has been really helpful to signal to me that this is consistent. Like I'm going into my third week basically of every night having like two to three hours of work after work. Um, and. The, the thing that I think is helpful about seeing it on this spread is that even though that's work. It doesn't always feel like work.

And so I don't always log it as work in my mind because it's just, it's energizing, like doing coach training or working with clients or whatever. Um, sometimes the paperwork feels like work. Um, but I'm doing that. But this is actually really helping me to say like, no, you are working, you know more than you normally would and um, you need to be paying attention to that.

It's also kind of forcing me to build in the self care time on the weekends or in other spaces, or to find those cracks in the schedule where it's like, okay, I can run an errand or I can do something that would feel a little bit more relaxing. Um. So it's not something that's not working, but it's definitely something that's like calling my attention in a different way than I think if I was using a paper system, I don't know that that would be as apparent to me as how it's laid out in this digital.

Okay. And because you've mentioned the another places, I know you talked about. Having that workout routine, is that part of your morning routine or is it something you're still building in? Yeah, that is, um, it, thank goodness that has been something that has remained stable throughout this whole period.

So right now, my morning routine includes morning pages, which is a form of journaling and then some kind of workout. And I do those workouts six out of seven days a week, and they alternate between strength training and, um, like a run walk plan that I'm doing right now. And that has been. That has held incredibly steady.

And the good thing about that is it is kind of forcing me to do, for example, meal prep on Sundays because I don't want to be meal prepping in the morning. I like, my morning is like sacred time. That is like non-negotiable. Um, and, and I've actually been able to really figure out schedule wise, you know, when do I need to get up in order to do this whole routine?

And between the journaling and the working out and kind of the getting ready for the day, it's almost two and a half full hours. Um, and so that's something that's been really important for me to realize just in terms of how much time I need to build in for that to happen. Um, I don't feel like I have a lot of margin in the morning.

I mean, it is pretty heavily structured in terms of like, I need this much amount of time to journal this much amount of time to work out. I need deep breakfast, I need to get ready. And then I leave. I mean, like there's not like extra room in there. But, um, yes, so far that has been a really successful part of this that, um, I do feel like that routine is really stable right now.

So it's interesting that you have a schedule that you want, especially in the mornings and you're working on the evening piece of it. But the language, especially when we started, involves a lot of things like squeezing things in or there's a lot on my plate. I don't have margin full brain. Right. Taxing.

All of this language sounds a little bit different than when you go to look at your spread? Well, I would say that it's one of those things right now where everything has a place, but there's not a lot of wiggle room. So it's all getting fit in except for maybe some of the reading and like the more leisurely things that I would like to be doing that I find more relaxing.

Um. And even like, I can give an example last Friday, so I do this date night with my partner and he's like, do you wanna watch a movie? And I was like, I honestly don't feel like I could cognitively handle following a movie. So we ended up watching movie trailers because I was like, this is what I can handle right now is like a three minute synopsis of a story.

Like that's all I can do. So again, I feel like that will change over time, but like, it's like I'm squeezing it in, but it's not always optimal in terms of what's happening. And I think that. It feels like, for example, if I don't do food prep for the week today, I'm not sure when it will happen. Hmm. In order for me to like get to bed on time, like I've got to do this stuff like a head of time.

So it's, it's really. Testing and I, and I feel like I'm, I'm doing okay on that test right now of like my abilities to do organization and planning and strategic thinking, but I can throw those to be like my superpowers. So it's like my superpowers are in play a hundred percent of the time with this schedule because I constantly have to be like on the ball about like, what am I doing this stuff?

Because if I don't do it now, it will not get done. And so for the things that I find important. Like that. That is the stuff that it's like, it's there, but I'm having to be really careful and thoughtful. Um, or it will fall off like, and that feels kind of tenuous right now because the schedule is kind of packed in a certain kind of way.

And, but that's going to change. I hope so. Well, March will definitely be different with the travel. Right? Right. And I do feel like April, like it's like there will be some release of the pressure. I feel like right now it's like there's, um. Whenever you start something new, like, of course I want to be successful.

I don't feel like I'm holding myself to a crazy standard, but I am trying to operate at my highest level of ability. And so I think that that is definitely leading to some of the fatigue and to trying to kind of get things, you know? Right. Not in a perfectionist way, but just in a like. There's like puzzle pieces and they all fit in a particular fashion, and I've got to get the fit, you know, pretty close to right each week in order to get everything to fit into the puzzle.

Um, but yeah, it is helping me to even see, because I can adjust things like my scheduling system for clients. That's something that maybe the spring would get adjusted so that I could like take another evening off, for example, and just like not have, you know, clients scheduled during that time. Like those are the kinds of things I'm starting to think about.

Well, what if this is your new way of living? I definitely think if this was my new way of living, um.

I would not want this to be my new way of living. And I would say the biggest reason is I am feeling the lack of time with my partner at night. Um, because we don't always see each other in the morning before I leave. And so for me to come home, throw down some dinner, go straight into client meetings and maybe have like 20 minutes with him before I go to bed, like that is not okay, is a longterm calendar.

Um, and especially when the weekends are taken up by various client meetings and things like. That would basically give us like Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings, um, to be together. And those are the times when I'm the most exhausted. So to me, that really doesn't feel fair to either one of us. And so I definitely see this current situation as more of a short term, um, situation that I'm kind of allowing to happen.

Um, and I'm watching it pretty carefully because I, I do not think this is a long term. Um. I think I, I don't think I can operate at capacity like this for a long term. Yeah. So, you know, it's not your ideal. What's a way to, um, like be in the present moment with this rather than sometimes when we go down the, this is temporary, this, I got to get through this.

I got to push through this a little bit and then it will be better. On the other side. We're missing the chance to be like, Oh, I can still feel centered and grounded and calm in the middle while I'm here. I definitely think I've been able to find some really positive moments. Um, for example, in the mornings, like I'm listening to a new podcast and I'm really enjoying and I'm still finding time to do some of that fun reading, you know, during the middle of the day.

Um, and. I really am. When I do have time with my partner, very focused on that time. Um, and trying to not be distracted. Like my phone is not out. You know, like if we're going to dinner, like I'm very focused in on what we're talking about. Um, but I think the challenge of that is like that all of that focus takes energy.

Like, and at some point you run out, like you just don't have any more energy to give. So I think that, um, being in the moment notion, in some ways, it's really helping me to do that because of the note taking piece of what I've built into this, that every meeting I'm taking notes and I'm looking for opportunities for.

What are the questions I have here? What are the things I don't understand? What do I need to check in with someone about later? What are the two to do or action items that are coming out of this? Um, and I also have a similar kind of thing that I do with my clients when I'm meeting with them. Like there's no taking that happens there too.

So I feel like in some ways it's, the only reason why I'm able to kind of keep up with the cognitive tasks is because I have these kinds of systems to fall back on. Um. So it is, there's definitely a lot of living in the moment. Um, even though I'm planning, even though I'm kind of looking ahead, I definitely think that when I'm in these meetings, I'm focused and I'm engaged in present.

so what's going to throw a wrench in February? What could throw a wrench? Definitely if I were to get sick. Um, but at this point, uh, I. Well, I don't know if that's true, actually. I mean, I would just move stuff around like I don't, it kind of is what it is. If I, if I was sick, I think I would take, take that advantage and just like peel and do what I needed to do.

Um, I definitely think that it's more of a, it would be more of a challenge if I were to hit a wall. And just like kind of run out if, if my cup gets like completely empty or you know, in that bottom 25%, like that's going to be a real problem. And I think that's the part I've really been trying to stay, um, present and paying attention to is I can operate at capacity.

But for only so long. And then I've got to step back and like refill that cup. And one of the things I was noticing, um, in some of my journaling over this past week was I'm struggling. Like the introvert part of me is struggling cause I'm just around people all the time. And there's a lot of small talk right now as I'm getting to know people.

And I don't really have, because I have an admin who's kind of right outside my office. I don't, I'm not alone very often. Um, because when I am in the office, I need to be talking with her and, and we're processing information. Um, and then when I'm home, I'm feeling that pressure to be with my partner. So I, that morning time of the workout and the journaling is really some of my only solitude time during the week.

And it is very precious. So I think that if that got disrupted somehow, like if I didn't feel like I could do those morning sessions or I needed more sleep or whatever, um, I've been really stringent about holding myself to that morning routine. I think in part because it's the only time that I have to really recharge in that solitude.

So that could throw a wrench, I think is if I lost that time. Um, and I wasn't able to really have that time by myself. The traveling in March might actually be a recharge for me in some ways, because I spend more time alone in hotel rooms, you know, and I'm able to be on my own a little bit when I need to be.

Um, so right now that's definitely one of the challenges of the current schedule. So what would be warning signs that that's about to happen? That you'd lose that morning time? You're not able to refill your cup. I definitely think when I get low, I'm in terms of energy or like the solitude time. Um, it affects my patience level.

I'm a lot more irritable. Um, I start to get short with people, especially my partner. Unfortunately, he gets the brunt of it. I can usually control it when I'm with people, like at work. Um, but then at the end of the day, I'll just like. Unload, like I just won't be able to, to handle it anymore. And I think that sometimes at work, um, and I'm sure we all experienced this, there is this level of performance and politeness and, you know, just trying to kind of hold those kinds of things in check even when we're frustrated or even when something has happened.

And, um, so I, there were a couple of times this past week where I really, I did hit a wall and I was really feeling that. And. Um, I, I recovered from it, I think through having some solitude time. Um, but also I do get a lot of good energy from coaching. So I think that's part of what is working about the evening schedule is that it is energizing even though it's more work.

Um, but yeah, I think that the solitude time is, over the past couple of years, I've just realized how important it is for me to build that in. Hmm. . Yeah. So those feelings of ear irritation, frustration, stress, like sometimes they follow us around for a little bit because they're like, Hey, I just really need to be felt.

So right now, sometimes they come out in the evenings, like as uh, on the action line of your talking to your partner and unloading on your partner. But what are ways you could also just tap in and allow those feelings as they start to rise up pre hitting the wall.

This is a good question cause I did have a time last week where like I had kind of one of those days where I like woke up on the wrong side of the bed, like, and it like started in the morning and it just got worse as the day went on. And it was hard because I was in the new environment. I did not really feel like there was a way for me to release that.

And so I just kind of. It did get released at the end of the day with my partner like that. And I did tell him, I was like, this is what's happening right now. Like, and I do not have a safe space to do this. And so I'm unloading and I don't think this will be more than like 24 hours of a period of time.

But like. Let me do this. Like I've got it. There's like a release valve that I need to kind of let go of, and then I was better, you know, like it was one of those things, but I, and that was, that was unusual. That was a highly unusual situation for me, where I felt like it was not something that was in my control and where I was actively doing things throughout the day to turn it around and they weren't working.

Um, and so I think that for the most part. I am able to kind of acknowledge what's going on and to kind of feel the feelings and almost like a self coaching, you know, I can ask myself some reflective questions and kind of process what's going on. And in that situation, when I was journaling about it, I was just like, this is rough.

Like, this is a rough day. And I'm just calling it like, I'm not as effective today. I, you know, like for whatever reason, like this is just, um, I'm not. You know, and maybe it is hitting a little bit of a wall from the first week of work or whatever, like, you know, like I just had to kind of call it for what it was.

So, um, yeah, I think sometimes in those situations, like I will go for a walk or I will, you know, try to, um, tap time alone, like to just kind of process something if I need to. What was the feeling from that day? Um, there was a lot of emotions tied up into it. Um, definitely feeling depleted. Mmm. There was a lot of, uh, I was irritable.

I was, um. Maybe even angry. I mean, like there might've been just like, I mean, it was very unusual, like I said, um, and even in the moment I was like, what is going on here? Like, what's like, I was kind of taken aback by it and I think it, it fell on a Tuesday and it was after that first week of work and then I had to push through the weekend to get a bunch of things done.

And it was one of those things where it's like. The first night that you miss a night asleep. It doesn't affect you as much, but that second day is when it really hits you. That's what I felt like happened is like. I kind of thought that everything was going along. And then I like hit that day where I was like, Nope, I'm actually really more depleted than I thought.

And it kind of hit rock bottom. So, you know, all those feelings that come with rock bottom of like, you know, not being able to pull yourself out of that feeling. Um, and you just kinda like survive it and try to get a good night's sleep and, and recover, you know, in whatever way you can. So yeah, there were a lot of things wrapped up in it, but it was definitely not something where I felt.

I've been very careful about self judgment throughout this process because starting new things is hard, you know? And I know it's hard. And so I'm trying to be really kind. Um, and so in that moment I was just like, there was not judgment. There was just like, you're clearly dealing with something. And like.

What do you need? You know, like, let's try to give you something that you can like, turn this around in a way that's going to feel better. Um, and by the end of the night, I had, that was the night that I had coach training and it did really turn it around and I felt like I got back to myself. But what you're making me realize as I'm talking through this is I think the core emotion was, this does not feel like me.

like this is not how I would normally react to things. I do not feel like myself in this day. Like this is just not, I'm normally a pretty positive person, so it was just like, this is, this feels very foreign to me to be having these emotions and be kind of hitting this rock bottom. Yeah. Which brings us back to this idea of keeping track of when those days happen.

Right. They were probably building. And it all centered on that Tuesday. Like you said, you woke up on the wrong side of the bed and it just started to go downhill and end up at rock bottom by the end of the day, free coach training, but still it's like, Oh, can we see these waves coming? Because that's part of what your brain is afraid of that, wait, this is working right now and we have a lot of things, but we're at capacity capacity.

What if we have another Tuesday. Like last Tuesday. well, if we hit the wall again, yeah, it's possible. I mean, I think that it's so rare that that happens to me. If I had that happen more than once in a month long period, for example, it would be an immediate red flag. Um, even the first time was like, okay, red flag.

Like we're, we're backing off like. And I wouldn't say I made like major changes based on that, but it was definitely like I was paying a lot of attention, um, that week then to how I was feeling and what I needed to do. And, um, I, I'm curious to see actually how this next week starts out just because of that.

Um, and if I'm in a. If I'm kind of getting to that place again, um, and how that feels, how Tuesday kind of shows up. Um, so it'll be interesting to see. Yeah. But it'll all be tracked in notion that only you will be able to see the patterns here. Yeah, absolutely. That's part of the benefit of it. Yeah. Yeah.

So you've got things that are working really well. A lot of it's working really well. Sometimes we've got worry that comes up. Sometimes we feel like we're pulling, we're trying to avoid the overwhelm. But now you've got, um, that plan for Friday margin time. What else is coming up for you of how you're feeling about notion and how it's going to work this week?

So I do have my weekly spread of in front of me. And as you were kind of talking through that, um, I'm realizing that one thing. That's both helpful for me, but also kind of challenging is I have this note taking template that I'm using for each meeting and part of my prep of notion at the beginning of every week is to pre.

Fill in those templates basically, and to say like, these are the meetings I have on each day so that when I go into them, I'm just clicking the button and taking the notes. Like I'm not like creating the template as I go. Um, and the good thing about it is it allows me to see ahead of time, like, Oh, I have nine meetings where I'm taking notes on Thursday, you know, like, and that's kind of a full situation.

Um, and it's helpful for me to plan ahead, but what I'm realizing now is I feel like I look at that spread and it's just a lot, like when I look at each day, I mean, there's 18, 19, 26 meetings right now on my week where I'm taking notes. And. That I think is, I need to think about that because it just like the visual of it, it, I already feel like I'm starting the week with like this, this mindset of like, okay, we got to power through this.

You know, like there's 26 meetings on your calendar, go and. You know, it's almost like running a marathon every day of like getting through all these things. Um, and that's not really how I want to be feeling about my week. You know, I don't necessarily want to be feeling like I'm starting the week at this full-on run just to get through everything and then collapsing on Friday after I have my last meeting.

So that is definitely. Part of the circumstance of being new to this job, I will not have this amount every week. Um, but even just the way I have it laid out, I'm wondering if I need to show more margin in between the meetings or somehow make a note like, cause they're, they're just kind of stacked like one right on top of the other.

And just the visual of that, I think is a little bit challenging for me. Well, there's, even how you're thinking about it, right? Your brain goes automatically to, it's a lot. 26 meetings on the calendar is the circumstance, but around, you know, on the spread 26 meetings and your brain's like, that's a lot.

There's probably somebody listening that has 40 meetings this week is like, wish I only had 26 right, right. So it's disconnect the thought that's like, it's a lot for me and be like, Oh, there's 26 meetings I could think about. These meetings in a different way. Yeah. I definitely would like to do a little bit of a mindset shift around that.

And that might be something that I think about this week is these are in some ways, these meetings or opportunities. So that might be another way to think about it is like, what are the opportunities I'm going to have this week, um, to learn new things, to engage with people, you know, like that, that is something that I can really look forward to.

Yeah. These meetings are opportunities that when you think like, I'm juggling a lot of things and you feel the pride, right. Type of tapping back into that rather than, there's a lot of meetings and I got to power through. Right. Getting on the verge of overwhelm. Yeah, absolutely. Yes. And then you'll be able to play it like you're going to automatically play with the visual piece of it.

That's part of who you are. Yes, yes, yes. Well, and that was part of why I wanted to check in, was like to really have a moment to say like, what is working here? And this is helping me to see that there is a lot that is, that is functioning well. Um, and I, I, this is one of those things, I think when you do this kind of digital spread, that you do play with it and you do need to tweak it and personalize it.

So yeah, this is really helpful to think through. Awesome. Well, I'm sure we're all going to want to see the spread, especially as it evolves. Are you sharing templates? Are you, I can do that. I can share a visual in the show notes for folks who are like, what is she even talking about? What is this notion? I do something and I thought about creating a little video for people to, cause I have talked about it and if you spaces, and I'm sure people are like, I don't understand what this means.

Um. But there are some YouTube videos and stuff that are out there, and I can post some of those in the show notes too, for people who want wanting to learn a little bit more about the system. Excellent. Well, we'll be all, I'll be excited to hear how notion evolves for you, Katie. Awesome. Thanks so much, Caitlin.

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