**YGT episode 196**

you're listening to, you've got this episode one 96. 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 wanted to talk about a couple of things that I'm trying to kind of differentiate in my own mind, and that is projects versus life practices, and they're definitely connected and related.

So I'm kind of thinking through that too. But as I've been watching the response to the protests that are happening around the world at this point, and how people are kind of wrestling with what they want to do, kind of personally, in their own responses, I've seen a couple of different options of how people are responding.

One is kind of a project based approach and one is more of a life practice based approach. And it was really helpful for me to define the differences between these two things. And I thought it might be helpful for some of you to hear how I'm kind of distinguishing between them as well. So, um, when I think about projects, I'm really defining those things as having a distinct beginning and a distinct ending, and they can feel high stakes or kind of pressure filled.

And I'll give some examples in a moment that I think will explain what I mean here, but this idea of, you know, you have to do it right, or you have to do it within a certain amount of time can bring some pressure. They can also include, I think, short term investments of time and other resources where you're kind of deciding for a certain period of time, you're going to devote, um, you know, a lot of what you have either financially or other kinds of resources, like your time to that project.

And then I also think that projects can leave you with a sense of accomplishment or maybe even a sense of guilt depending on whether you finish it in the way you originally intended. So projects I think are really defined. You can put them in a box, you can kind of put a boundary around what that project is and kind of check it off that you were able to complete it.

So when I think about examples of different projects I've taken on, I think the books that I've written are, would count in this. Like they have a clear beginning and ending. Um, they're kind of high stakes. There's the short term commitment of my time and resources to get it done, uh, going on the job market.

Um, when I talked last year about doing our home renovations, I considered that to be a kind of project. And I think there's a lot of other things that I've talked about in this space, particularly around things like my creative. Retreats like websites that I've built, um, blend by design would be a great example of a project.

You know, things that I really kind of dove deep into for a relatively short period of time. And there was a lot of commitment there. So I think that the projects don't necessarily mean you're not committed, but that it is something you're kind of putting a box around. Now, when I talked about in my blog post from last week, um, and I can link to this in the show notes, if you haven't had a chance to look at it is how I felt like what I realized, you know, within the past week or so is I had put kind of antiracist work and social justice into a bit of a project category in my life.

And I really associated that work with grad school because when I was in grad school, studying women and gender studies, I, that was really when I was reading a lot about that, learning a lot about that. I was pretty active within that community. Um, and then when I left grad school and really shifted my career, I started to lose that.

I wasn't actively teaching it. I wasn't actively researching it. So a couple years out from grad school, I, it wasn't really as, um, a big part of my life as it was during those six years when I was doing my master's degree and my PhD. And what I've realized is that that's too bad like that that's actually something that I'm kind of really deeply regretting at this point that I hadn't continued that work.

And so that really got me thinking about this concept of a life practice and how it's different from a project. So, whereas I kind of said, well, I'm done with that. I've checked off that box. Now. I'm thinking. Maybe not so much, like maybe this is actually something that needs to be integrated in a different way.

So I also defined a life practice in this blog post, and I said that it's an ongoing space for learning. It requires consistent. And sometimes daily commitments, it includes longterm investments of time and resources. It can include low stakes and high stakes activities depending on what it is. And I think it's also tied to how we view our identities and it may also be connected or infused with our values when we choose something as a life practice.

Now there's a ton of things. I think that I've talked about in this space that I would put into this category that would be familiar to you. So for example, some of my dietary choices fall into this. I've been practicing veganism for almost 20 years. Um, and I don't talk about that a lot publicly, but it's definitely a daily consistent practice.

That's tied in with my values. That's tied in with my identity. I would also say my commitment to writing is a life choice or life practice. Um, because I do my morning pages, but also I almost always have a writing project on the go. And then also I would say things like creativity, my coaching practice, um, how I live out the values of radical self-trust, which I've talked about in a bunch of spaces.

And now this yoga practice that I'm starting to build, that is a daily practice is also coming into this for me. So I think it's actually really important. Um, at least for me to shift anti-racist work and social justice work into this category of life practice. But I will also admit that in the past week I've seen a lot of other people and I can certainly attest to this myself who feel completely overwhelmed by that idea.

And they're like, I don't even know where to. Start there's a lot of reading lists being passed around. There's a lot of, um, overwhelm I think. And people just feeling like, you know, it's, it's emotional work. And so it's feeling, um, scary to do this work. And it's also just feeling like it's taking a lot of energy to do this work.

And so what I wanted to talk about is how I'm integrating this work into things that I'm already doing. Because I think that when we think about this as like a total, 180 degree turn, that's not exactly what's happening. Um, I think we're really starting to think about life practices as integrating, you know, things that we care about into a lot of areas into our lives.

So let me give you some examples. The first example is I mentioned yoga and how I'm studying this. And I can't remember if I've mentioned on the podcast yet, but I did end up signing up for a yoga teacher training and I'm pretty excited about it. It was not exactly what I expected to be doing. Um, like immediately when I started doing this practice, but I found an online program that I I'm really kind of excited to learn from.

And I'm excited to formalize that study. So one of the things that I'm doing though, as I'm going to be engaging in that more formal study is I've purchased a couple of resources that are helping me to think about social justice and yoga and how those things are connected. And also I'm doing my own kind of analysis on the side of yoga and its relationship to cultural appropriation, because this is a real concern, um, within the yoga community and for people outside of the yoga community as well.

So I'm kind of integrating that into my study of yoga. That's already happening. I'm also integrating just more books by authors of color and authors who are representing other diverse categories into my normal fiction reading. And again, this is relatively easy for me to do. There are so many options in the genres that I really enjoy that this is, you know, not a big deal for me to kind of be a little bit more intentional about how I'm doing this.

I did take a moment to talk with my team, uh, at work to really think about the relationship between what we do and anti-racism and social justice work with our faculty and with our students. And this was something that really actually gave me an opportunity as a new person in the community where I live.

I've only been here five months or so to really learn from them about resources and organizations that they're already involved with. Trainings and other things that they've already done, um, and concerns that they have as we move forward. Um, in some of these areas about gaps that we really need to think about, or, um, resources that we need to be considering as we move forward.

Uh, this past week, I also talked with my coach training participants about anti-racist coaching practices, and we'll be talking about implicit bias and other social justice topics that are really important to our work in serving diverse clients from a range of backgrounds. So again, this is already things that are happening in my life.

I'm already leading this coach training program. And it makes complete sense that I would be kind of more explicit in that program about some of these underlying values that I think were already there. But now I'm just calling out, you know, definitionally. What are we talking about when we talk about these kinds of topics?

I did decide also this past week to really make an intentional decision, to follow more diverse accounts on social media. And what I really realized is, and this is kind of common sense, but I think it's a good reminder for us all, is that the algorithms are really showing us. What we, what they think we want to see.

And so if we're not following diverse accounts, whatever that means to you, you're not going to be getting, you know, suggestions for other accounts that are also diverse. And so as I'm following accounts anyway, around coaching, yoga, veganism, podcasting, other topics that I'm kind of interested in, I'm just making a point to do a little bit of extra looking around to make sure that the algorithm is.

Showing me things that are actually diverse and that are really showing me the range of what's out there. Um, and so that's again, not taking a ton of time, but really, um, increasing my awareness of some of the issues and what a range of people are posting about right now. Um, another thing that I was able to build in and really integrate, um, is into our budget, my partner, and I had a conversation and decided to make a monthly donation to a social justice organization.

And we decided intentionally to do a recurring donation because we know, um, I think all of us know that after situations. That are of national or international importance. There can be a bump in donations, but then those donations kind of go away. And so we really wanted to do a recurring monthly donation and then we'll have quarterly conversations about if we want to increase that or change the organization or add another organization.

But it also really led us to having some really good conversations about how we're living out our values through what we're giving to and the actions that we're taking. So some really good conversations about that. And again, these are conversations we should be having anyway. So this is just a great excuse to have that conversation on a consistent basis.

And then the last thing that I thought of in terms of just that kind of integrative work is I'm a podcast listener, as you all know. And I added some podcasts on topics related to race and social justice into my feed, and I'm carving out time to listen to them. And because I listen to podcasts anyway, You know, this is again a relatively easy thing for me to do.

Um, but a really impactful thing. So a few that are at the top of my list are 16, 19 by the New York times, uh, code switch by NPR and pod save the people from crooked media. Um, there's a bunch more. Um, and I think that as you start to look again, the algorithm kind of shows you different options. Um, right now, Apple podcasts does have a section on black lives matter.

So you can easily find, um, kind of topics and podcasts that are related to that. If that's something that you're interested in as well. So I list all of those things. Certainly not to get any kind of Pat on the back, but really to show you that there are ways to take action and live your values related to anti-racist work and social justice in ways that are very integrative to what we're already doing.

And that it doesn't have to feel like I'm turning it into a project. It could certainly involve, you know, taking a class or joining a book group or something along those lines. But I think that can also really involve these micro-actions, um, that are again, really contributing in a meaningful way to my day to day activities.

They're serving as a reminder to me about the importance of these kinds of topics and actions in my own life. And they're exposing me to a lot of different perspectives on these, um, social justice and anti-racist topics. So I would, I would love to hear if this is something that is kind of resonating with you, and you're also thinking about your own life practices.

And what does it mean? Um, to think about something as a project versus a life practice, you can always email me at hello at dr. Katie linder.com. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore Linder. You can connect with me on Instagram at Katie underscore Linder. And I would just love to hear what this looks like in your life, as you're thinking about these topics.

And as you're thinking about other life practices that are important to you and how you can integrate them into your day to day. Thanks for listening. Thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie linder.work/podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and, or reviewing the show in iTunes.

Thanks for listening.