**YGT episode 206**

Your listening to you've got this episode 206. 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 share some strategies for how to measure progress on longterm goals.

I think sometimes when we set longterm goals, it can be kind of de-motivating cause they just seem to go on for a long time and it maybe feels like we're not really chipping away at these longterm goals. And this is something that I really started thinking about a couple years back, like when I was working on my coach training a certification.

Yeah. And I just felt like it went on and on and on. I was trying to kind of figure out what are the ways that I can like check off some boxes with us or set some milestones or help myself to feel like I was really making progress. And now that I have my own coach training program, I think about this for the people who are participating in it, how can we really kind of set some milestones and help them think that they're, they are making progress in a way that feels.

Um, kind of measurable and observable. So when I think about these longterm goals, I think about things that are like six months or more to achieve them, um, or at least three to four months, something where you're really having to devote a pretty significant amount of time. So this could be, you know, getting a degree.

This could be, if you have like a longterm financial goal, um, this could be earning some kind of credential. Or completing a big project, like writing a book. I mean, there's lots of things that I think would be able to fall into this category. So some of the things that I'm including in this category for myself right now are my yoga teacher training, which started in June and will complete in, um, I think February of 20 may 21, uh, studying for my PMP credential, which I started to do over the summer.

And then I'll take an exam for that really towards the end of the calendar year. Um, my coach training accreditation, which is something that I've been working on for, uh, well over a year now and kind of starting to pull the pieces together. I need to apply for that in the spring of 2021. And it involves submit a lot of materials, a lot of facilitation notes.

Um, some recordings of people who've come through the training. There's a lot got involved in applying for that. Um, and it's been a really kind of long time coming. And then the other one I'll throw out there. That's kind of a longterm goal. That's kind of silly is ever since the start of the pandemic, I've started to grow out my hair because I have not had a chance to go to get it cut.

And I was supposed to get it cut early the weekend that we started, um, social distancing. And so it's been, um, since like mid March, um, that I have not been able to go into a salon. And I've had my partner cut up like an inch off the back a couple of times, just to kind of try to keep it roughly the same length.

Um, he is not a professional hairstylist. I can tell you that, but he's doing a pretty good job. Um, and so this is also something that I'm kind of measuring in some ways, because I know that it grows a certain amount every month or so. And as I'm able to kind of work through different hairstyles and think about like, what do I do with it now, as it's kind of in these awkward stages, every time you grow out a pixie cut, it's a little bit awkward.

Um, so that's actually kind of a longterm goal that is allowing me to see progress over time. Now with that one, one of the ways that I'm measuring that progress is through taking pictures because I can see a physical change that's happening in my hair over time. And I've actually been logging these pictures in one of my Instagram stories so that you can watch this growth if you're interested.

Uh, and now I'm to the point where I can actually kind of pull part of the hair back into like pink tails if I want to. So it's starting to actually feel different, you know, I'm starting to see that progress change over time. But let me talk about some other ways to measure progress on longterm goals.

Cause sometimes pictures are not really the right, uh, format for what we're working on. So I would say that it's really helpful for me to track change in smaller increments. So if I can think about this in terms of like weeks or months and really kind of break down, what do I need to do over a certain period time?

And then also really try to knowledge what got done in those smaller chunks of time. So one of the things that I did, for example, with my yoga teacher training is we got a syllabus, but the syllabus was just kind of a list of like modules and things that we needed to do. And it didn't have like check boxes or anything like that.

And so I ended up creating a, kind of a calendar space in notion, um, which has like, um, I'm trying to think of how to describe it. I basically like broke it out into each class period that I would have for my yoga teacher training. And then I listed the homework under each of those class periods, like the readings we had to do, or the videos we had to watch or pictures we had to look at like all the different kinds of things vault and I made them into check boxes so that I could literally check off as I was getting things done.

And then there's a way that you can create like a toggle within notion so that once you, you could have a list where you can like, see it, and then you can have a list where it like rolls up into a toggle. And so as I got each of the pieces done and like that particular class session was over, I would roll it up into the toggle.

So I could like visually see, that's done. Like it's been removed from my, my visual, um, Calendar that I've created here and I no longer have to worry about that. So it's kind of a way of like, just crossing things off a list. And because I wasn't really given one through my program, I created one. I felt like I really needed that.

So, um, that's one thing that I think has been really helpful for me is to really look at like each day of when I'm expected to, I have some things done and then each week, and then over time, I knew that each month of the program. Well, I was able to kind of see how this all are pieces were adding up and I was actually making progress and starting to learn over time.

Now, the other thing I would say that is a little less of a formal way of measuring, um, progress, but definitely is a meaningful way of measuring progress was kind of my level of anxiety about some of the things that I was being asked to do in this yoga teacher training program. So. For example, um, in the program we had to teach in front of a group, we had to design a segment, um, of a yoga sequence.

And then we had to teach it to a group and it was just for three or four minutes. Um, but queuing yoga is something I have not really done before, and I'm not really trained in, um, anything like choreography. And so I felt like this was a big hurdle for me to really try to figure this out and figure out how I could.

Verbally, explain what people were supposed to be doing with their bodies in a way that would make sense to them. And so in the beginning, I was really nervous about this and I was assigned to do it later in the course, the course started in June and I didn't have to do this until the end of August. And I was really relieved because I thought, well, you know, by that point, maybe I'll feel more comfortable.

And lo and behold, by the time I had to do this, I, I had been able to see other people do it. Um, and so I was able to see kind of demonstrations of what it looked like. I did feel a lot more confident in my ability to queue because I had been. Studying queuing. Um, during the whole time that we were starting to prepare for this.

And by the time we got to the night where I was giving this, um, demonstration, I had prepared it. Like I had written out my cue. I knew what I wanted to say. I had a sense of the sequencing and I just, I had this moment where I remembered like, yeah, I wrote, I was nervous about this in the beginning, but by the time I got here, I felt like I'd built up enough of the skills that I could do it.

Now, this is very similar for me. I remember way back in my grad school days, I had the same kind of feeling about my district. about my candidacy exams, and I had these moments where I was like, I don't know if I'm gonna be able to do those things, but by the time I got there, I had the skills, I had the confidence I needed to complete the things.

So it, for me, it's kind of an argument and like not worrying too much about that stuff in the beginning. Cause eventually you get the skills you need to, to get there. But I would also say that I feel like, um, that is, um, that is kind of a meaningful measurement for me of my own learning that I started out in a space where I felt.

Like, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to do it or I was really nervous about it. And then by the time I got there, I could see a noticeable difference in my abilities and in my confidence level, when it came to that task. The other thing I would say that really helps me, that's kind of tied in with that example is creating milestones.

Um, and then celebrating those milestones. So that could be something that's done, you know, quarterly or monthly, depending on the length of the project or the thing that you're, um, trying to kind of measure progress on. But for me, like achieving that, that assignment. Yeah. And like completing that queuing assignment was a big milestone.

Like that felt like a really important thing for me to check off. Um, and there were other milestones. Kind of assignment related within the yoga teacher training. That also felt that way to me. So when I had to take pictures of myself in certain poses and submit them, um, that felt like a big deal. Um, because it just putting yourself out there with a group of strangers that you don't really know.

Um, and this is a group of people that are incredibly talented. There's a lot of dancers. There's a lot of people who have excelled. Experience with yoga and choreography in ways that I do not. And so there's a lot to learn from those people, but there's also definitely a level of intimidation when you go into it group like that.

Um, and so just as I was completing those things, I really celebrated them and I kind of patted myself on the back and said, good job. Like you're making progress on this. You're moving, moving it forward. And that felt really good. And then the last thing I think that helps me in terms of measuring progress on longterm goals is to try to divide tasks into smaller chunks and then really assign when they're going to happen.

So I recently did this thinking about my PMP credential exam, and I was thinking about from now until the end of November, how am I going to study for this. And I know that the studying is going to involve primarily two things. One is reading information, um, from the kind of knowledge guide that, um, the, the organization that does the PMP exam puts out.

And then the other thing is to take practice exams. And each exam I think is several hours long that I would need to practice with. So that really does involve some scheduling. I need to think about when is it possible for me to do that so that I have enough time that I can actually kind of replicate the feeling of doing the exam in real life and get a sense of how well would I do, and then I need to score it and all of that.

So there's going to take some time. So I, I went ahead and kind of. Thought through, well, what is my calendar for that? What is my timeline for that? How can I really divide that out? And now I have a plan of when exactly I'm going to be doing that studying, what am I going to take the practice? And that even, even that plan is helping me to feel more confident about taking the exam at the end of November.

So being able to divide things into smaller chunks rather than just saying, well, I'm studying for the exam and that's kind of big and nebulous and like, who knows what that means? Now I can say, well, I'm studying for the exam, but this week I'm focusing on these chapters and then I'm ending the week with this practice exam.

So I know exactly what it is that I'm supposed to be doing within that period of time. So those are some examples. I think of how to measure progress on longer term goals. And I would love to hear if you have other ideas for how to do this. I think that especially right now, when things are feeling a little strange, um, during this covert pandemic period, it's kind of nice to have longer term goals.

It's actually been really motivating for me to be able to look at some things and say, okay, Yes. Like I'm actively working towards something that feels good to me right now. Um, and I know that not everybody is in a place where they feel like they can do that, whether cognitively, you know, emotionally or mentally.

Um, and, and I get that. I mean, I think that this is just, uh, it's a change challenging time, and we're all kind of dealing with it in different ways. But I do feel like having kind of these longer term goals, it allows me to see time is passing and, um, that is something right now for me, at least that feels very important.

So I would love to hear if you have any longterm goals that you're working toward and how you're measuring progress on those, you can always email me at hello at dr. Katie linder.com. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore Linder, and you can connect with me on Instagram at Katie underscore Linder.

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Thanks for listening. Mmm.