**YGT episode 209**

Your listening to you've got this episode 209. 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. Mmm. On this episode, I thought I would talk a little bit about a structure or strategy for making some big life decisions.

I have been hearing from a lot of my clients lately about revisiting kind of decisions that they've made or trying to make bigger decisions in the midst of what has been kind of a. Challenging year or just a year with a lot of unknowns or a lot of uncertainty. And we've been talking a lot about how do you make these big decisions when maybe there's still some unknowns and uncertainty as you move forward.

And when I think about these decisions, I'm thinking about things like trying to find a new job or moving to a new city or deciding whether or not to stay in a PhD program or for some people it's deciding whether or not to stay in a relationship. I mean, there's a lot of things that are happening. And so I wanted to propose kind of this, um, the structure that I've kind of run across in a few different ways, in a few different places.

And whenever that happens to me, I always think this is the universe telling me to podcast about it, or this is the universe. Tell me to blog about it. So I ran across this, um, a couple of weeks ago, Austin Kleon. Who's an artist online who blogs. He had this post about. Asking himself, if something enlarges his life or does it, does it diminish his life when he's trying to make a decision about something?

And I can track down and link to this post in the show notes. If you want to read the original one. And when I read this post, it made me remember another or thing that I had read. Um, a couple of weeks before that in Marie Forleo's book, everything is figureoutable. And we had read this book as part of the prolific reading group.

And she talks about, um, whether or not something is expansive or contracting. So kind of a similar thing to enlarging or diminishing. Is it expansive or contracting when you're thinking about this thing in your life? And then as I was talking with the prolific, uh, reading group members, uh, they were saying, well, it reminded them of Gretchen Rubin's statement about choosing the bigger life when you're trying to make a decision.

And what does it mean to you to choose the bigger life? All of these things kind of seem to connect in my mind. I don't know if they're connecting for you when you, when you hear all these things together, but this concept of. Trying to think about does this thing, or this person, or this situation or this experience, does it expand or contract, does it enlarge or diminish?

And I think another way to think about this, at least for me, is, does it feel energizing to me when I kind of think about the possibility of something, does it feel energizing or does it feel like something that would be kind of sucking my energy in a way that felt more negative or that it wouldn't be kind of contributing in a positive way to my life?

So I remember way back years ago, Gretchen Rubin talked about choosing the bigger life when she was trying to make a decision about whether or not to get a dog. And she was talking with her sister on the podcast. And I don't know if I can track down this episode, but I'll try to track down this episode where she talks about.

Making this decision and her sister really thought she was not going to do this because getting a dog it's like a whole other thing of cleaning after the dog and walking the dog and taking care of the dog and you know, all these things. And Gretchen Rubin said, when she really thought about it, she thought that this would be a bigger life.

This would be choosing the bigger life to bring this dog into her family. And that's why she decided to do it. So it can be kind of something that is a little bit unexpected sometimes I think when you're making these decisions and you're trying to decide, is this a bigger life or not? So I thought about a couple of the bigger decisions that I've made recently.

And if this kind of applies, if this structure would kind of apply. So I think about, for example, when I decided to do the yoga teacher training, and I think I talked about in the beginning, I was a little, a little bit nervous about doing that. Yeah. Because I hadn't been doing yoga all that long. Right. I had heard from some people that you really shouldn't go through the training until you have, you know, years of experience under your belt, but I just felt like I needed more kind of formal education around it.

And so I thought about, you know, is this something that enlarged my life. Or diminished my life and really fall, of course, on the former that it enlarged my life. It gave me all this information. It helped me to deepen my own practice. It helped me to solidify kind of more consistency with my practice.

And it gave me way more context and information about what I was doing, that it helped it to feel more meaningful to me when I was engaging in yoga. And then I thought, is it expansive or contracting? And I was like, well, this definitely felt more expansive. I felt like I expanded my knowledge. I felt like I expanded my experience.

I felt like I expanded my relationships with other people through doing this class. Um, and then. To the question of, is it energizing or not? Definitely was energizing. Like even though it took more of my time and I had to squeeze it into my schedule, I always got energy from doing that work and engaging in yoga, engaging in the learning.

So that was really, you know, something to me that I felt like it checked all those boxes. And when I think about incorporating yoga or the teaching of yoga into my life, into my business, That to me does feel like choosing the bigger life. Like it does feel like expanding the opportunities in front of me, of what I can do, of how I can work with my clients of the kinds of offerings that I can have in my business.

All of that feels more expansive. So to me, I kind of look at that and I think, okay. Yeah, like this, this makes sense to me. Now I can also put this, you know, apply it to other decisions that maybe I have said no to, um, in my life recently. So recently I was approached about writing a book and I don't currently have a book on my schedule right now.

I'm kind of taking a break. Um, I count my, uh, coach training guide as writing a book. And I just wrapped that up in December of, so it's been almost a year since I've been like actively working on a book and I was approached to work on a book. And I thought about, you know, is this something that is going to enlarge me or diminish me?

Is this something that feels expansive or contracting? And because I have written several books in the past, this doesn't necessarily feel like it's adding something. Kind of special to my life or my experience. And particularly because it was on a topic that I didn't really choose someone just thought I would be good at writing on that topic.

And I didn't really feel super passionate about that topic. It was something that I could write about it and I could feel pretty confident that I'd be able to do a good job, but I wasn't really excited about it. So when I think about, was that an energizing thing for me? No. Like, I, I wasn't really looking forward.

I, when I thought about it, I wasn't excited. It was definitely not like a hell. Yes. I mean, it was something that I was just kind of like, well, I guess I could do this. I guess I could add it in. When I think about, does it enlarge me or my wife? I didn't really feel like it did. I didn't feel like it added anything really special.

It was just kind of one more line that I'd have on my CV and the trade off of giving nine to 12 months of my life to research, write the book, you know, get all of that together. It didn't really feel like a trade off that I was willing to make. And when I think about, you know, would it be expansive or contracting the trade off of the time felt more contracting to me, it felt like I would be giving my time to something that I didn't really care about as much as I care about some of these other priorities that are happening in my life right now.

So choosing the bigger life felt like saying no to writing that book versus saying yes. Now I could think five to seven years ago in my career. I might have had the exact opposite reaction to it that you know, where somebody might've offered and said, can you write a book on this topic? And it would have felt enlarging, expansive, energizing.

Uh, it would have felt like choosing the bigger life and, and maybe that's why I wrote so many books over the last several years is because I felt that feeling, but my career has shifted. My priorities have shifted a little bit. Um, and just kind of where I'm at in terms of my own growth and professional development has evolved over time.

And with that maturation of my own kind of experience level and what I'm looking to do now, I don't necessarily make the same choices that I would have made five years ago. So that's the other thing that's kind of interesting about this particular set of questions is that you could ask yourself your past self, this set of questions and kind of do a little bit of like a retroactive check-in, but you can also use it to apply it forward and say, well, what does this mean for me?

Right now, or in the future of what are the kinds of things that are going to be energizing for me. So I really appreciate kind of this set of questions together is something energizing or not. Does it enlarge me or my life or diminish me or my life? Is it expansive or contracting when I think about it.

And does it feel to me at least right now, like I'm choosing the bigger life. So I would love to hear, if you can apply some with these questions to decisions that you're making, what does it mean to you right now to think about all of these different ways of kind of, um, categorizing the things that you might be deciding to do moving forward, 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 any way you contact me. I always love to hear from you, especially if these questions are kind of helpful or helping you to think through a big decision as you're trying to move it forward.

Thanks so much for listening.

Thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie linder.work/podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for listening.