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[00:00:00] From the coach to coach a podcast dedicated to showcasing the power of coaching. I'm your host, dr. Katie Linder, and I have 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 we'll offer you an introduction to the game 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 [00:01:00] beginning and listen to the episodes in order this season, I'm delighted to introduce you to dr.

Danielle Barkley, a higher education professional and coach in training. Danielle currently works as a career and professional development educator at the university of British Columbia, where she specializes in supporting students at the masters and PhD level. Coaching gifts, Danielle, the opportunity to engage in career conversations with a wider audience, including mid-career professionals, career changers, and anyone wondering what their best life could look like.

Hi Danielle. It is so good to see you and talk with you today. It's great to see you as well. Katie and I am excited because this is our first coaching session and I am coaching you. So what is the topic that you're coming with today? So today's session. I would love to do some coaching around the topic of professional development, what it means, how to harness it, how I should be thinking about it at this particular point in my career.

Okay. And what is making this kind of top of mind for you? I think [00:02:00] the fact that it kind of, if it comes up in a cyclical way or it sort of comes to the surface every so often I'll sort of get emails or, or get prompts that we can think about professional development, that if we have requests around professional development, we can be putting those in.

And I always feel like I draw a blank when those type of moments come up and then I'm left with sort of this lingering sense of like, are there opportunities I'm missing out on how do other people use these opportunities? Um, and also just some curiosity around perhaps like, why is it when professional development comes up?

I find myself. Not really having a lot of ideas to turn to, because I think of myself as generally someone who can't up with ideas or possibilities or likes to work in that space. So I find it interesting that there just doesn't seem to be a lot that that's innately fruitful there for me. That is really interesting.

Okay. So, um, when do you think about this session and our time [00:03:00] together today, what would be helpful at how come for you when it comes to thinking about professional development and how to harness it right now at this stage of your career? I would love to have one specific. Area or possibility that I could follow up on or, or dig into more, uh, whether that's a website I go to, or a suggestion of what professional development could look like, just sort of something to start moving that conversation forward a little bit, or to continue some exploration around.

Okay, sounds good. So, um, what I'm hearing from you, Danielle, is we're going to focus on professional development in this session. Um, maybe coming up with some definitions for it and how to harness it right now in this stage of your career with our ultimate goal of coming up with a specific area or possibility for you to follow up on after our session today.

That's great. And I love the way you framed that as a definition, I love a good definition. And I think actually part of that, the stickiness around this for me [00:04:00] is, and maybe a place for us to spend some time in the conversation is the lack of kind of having a clear concept or a framework in my mind is that making it hard for me to generate those possibilities problems.

Okay, sounds good. I love a good definition too. So why don't we start there? When you think about professional development, what are some things that you associate with it or that it looks like to you? When you think about that category? So on one hand, I think national development makes sense in the context of like learning a tool or learning a pretty finite skill.

So if someone, if their software system got upgraded and they were going to take a course to learn about the new version or they were being onboarded to a particular project and they had to use a particular. Tool or learn how to run focus groups or something like that. Like, to me, that pretty clearly meets the idea of professional development.

There's a new skill [00:05:00] involved in your role and you are learning that skill so you can apply it. So I think that's the first place. It goes to the second sort of thing that crops up for me around professional development is sort of a. I guess the idea of like the more personal development, the individual growth, that's a little bit less concrete.

So maybe conversations like that, having difficult conversations workshop or that how to work with a workers from different generations workshop, where it's not white, as concrete as I will now learn how to use the software because my job requires it. But it's an, it's an investment in yourself, um, in learning again, a different range of techniques that you might bring forward into your work.

Those are kind of the two buckets that come up. I love that concept of an investment in yourself. What are some investments in yourself, Danielle, that you've made in the past that you felt really paid off? [00:06:00] So that's a great question. I mean, my first instinct is to say education, um, and I've spent a long time in school and it seems to me that there's something interesting around the relationship between education and professional development and the thought has crossed my mind of like, Am I just in some sort of rebellion around, I've been in school for so long, I'm not doing anymore.

So I think that there might be something there. It'd be interesting for me to think about that relationship between is doing a whole degree different from doing a sort of standalone PD course. I'm sorry. Remind me what the question was. We fire ban off on that tangent about, uh, investments in yourself that you've made in the past.

That feels significant to you. Yeah. And I think there's actually also something around a bit of resistance that in my mind, I think investment often involves the plan, right? Like you, you [00:07:00] sort of often, and maybe there's another way that you can help me see this. But I think my gut reaction is that if you're investing in something, you have an idea of a direction.

And I think I have more of a. An attachment to a narrative around things just happen. They happen spontaneously. They happen organically. I don't have a particular idea of where I'd like to see myself professionally in five years. I sort of have a desire to let opportunities happen. So I think actually even that language of investment, there's a tension for me around if I'm investing, am I boxing myself in?

Am I getting. Invested in a story of where I hope to end up or where I think I'll end up in the future. And I think there's something around kind of, how can professional developments still work with spontaneity or work with kind of an organic unfolding of career direction? [00:08:00] What is the role of unfolding Ben in your career thus far?

I mean, I think the whole fact that I ended up up in the work that I'm doing, um, has been unplanned and, uh, work in it. So I was training to be a faculty member. Essentially. I was doing a PhD with the expectation of eventually becoming a faculty member. I started. Volunteering, uh, to work in a student services role.

And that sort of through the, I built through the work, I hate happenstance about the opportunity to do gradually led to me building that skillset and realizing that was the path I wanted to be on. So I think there is something around perhaps a, a sense that firstly, that the professional development I thought I was doing didn't end up.

Aligning with where I ended up being. And not that I consider it a waste, but that there was a bit of a misalignment there. And in fact, I think almost, I wonder if there's a [00:09:00] sense that had, I thought I'm on this particular track, I'm going to do professional development. That seems to match with that. I would have not gone off and done this sort of seemingly random thing, which ended up being incredibly important for where I ended up.

Hmm. Okay. So what are the signs or signals to you, Danielle, that something is aligned and that you should go in that direction?

Yes, sir. And this is probably something that, that needs some, some interrogation and some development has been, and I think this is another layer of professional development for me, that it's the thing other people tell you. It should do that. It seems to me in, in most roles there is, or certainly was my experience during my time.

I was say graduate students, that there were things that people said, Oh, go and do this. And this will help you later on. Um, there, wasn't a way of consensus about what those things were, but there were usually sort of [00:10:00] advocates. And then I think in my. Current role, part of also the lack of clarity. I think it's been me maybe looking for that moment of someone saying here are the things that you should.

Do there's definitely been suggestions of different things. And for some reason, I often feel like those don't quite resonate with what I'm looking for. And I think I'm sort of at the place where I don't want alignment to solely rest on other people's perception of what makes sense. And yet at the same time, I think there's that stickiness around then?

How do I generate these ideas? If not through. Other people's suggestions or other people's recommendations. So what are you looking for Danielle? That is the million dollar question. I think, I think I'm looking [00:11:00] for something. That will satisfy an ex expectation. That seems to be part of the narrative around how careers work that people do this professional development.

And I will say also being in the higher ed stays, I think there's a particular emphasis on learning and love of learning. And I'm, you know, often around people who are maybe even going back to school or in school part time. So I think, yeah, there's a desire to kind of satisfy an expectation. And kind of have our response when people say like, Oh, what does PD look like for you?

It almost sort of reminds me of, sometimes you'll hear people talk about like the feeling of feeling pressured to have a hobby that when people say like, Oh, what do you do? Something that you could kind of concretely point to that is easy to understand and sort of feels like it checks that box. And yet that seems at odds with that notion of what professional development should be doing.

[00:12:00] Which is deeper, more authentic, more, more of that investment in yourself. Um, and I think I'm feeling that tension between what is something that sort of checks that box that is a sort of easy to digest. Here's my professional development thing. And then the thing that actually feels meaningful or engaging for me,

So I'm curious, Danielle, what are you drawn to right now, maybe with kind of a, a curious attitude or like a playful attitude that you just wish you could maybe know a little bit more about it and have it in your life more. That's a good question. What can I drawn to? And I think I also tend to get stuck on the notion of.

Does it relate enough to my job. So I will make sure to put that to one side, because I have had a few conversations about people saying, Oh, I'm doing this. And I've sort of said, you know, how do you swing that [00:13:00] as professional development? They're like, well, it's an investment in myself. So it is inherently.

I think I'm. I'm quite interested in the H R side of how work happens, especially in the private sector. I find with the population I work with, not that I could never know everything, but I think there's often quite specific questions around how hiring happens, how recruiting happens. And I do have. A bit of a sense of that, that I've gleaned from various conversations, but in a, in a perfect world, I would like to have a much deeper understanding of like, if someone was being trained to be a human resources professional for a company, what do they actually get taught?

Um, or sort of what's some of their core expectations. To see how that shows up for how high rating and then even managing on the job works. I would love to know more about that as something that supports [00:14:00] my students. And then the other thing that I often find myself kind of wondering about, and I don't know how practical this is, but like the in class experience or the educational experience of being trained as an engineer or a scientist, I work a lot with engineers and scientists and I've sort of.

I had the privilege of learning a lot about those disciplines and their worldview and how they create and transmit knowledge. But I still sometimes think like if I just audited, this is not a practical plan, but if I just audited an undergrad, civil engineering degree, how much more would I know and how much better would I be able to work with that population?

Hmm. Okay. So you're kind of two interesting things here. One on the HR side of hiring and recruiting. And then the second one about the in classics being trained as an engineering scientist, and as you were talking, you were kind of backing off of some of that already to say this isn't practical, but this is kind of what I'm interested in.

Um, [00:15:00] setting aside practical. what are you really hoping to learn with those experiences that would be kind of add to your current career path or professional understanding of yourself?

It's interesting because both of those things are very deeply rooted in a sort of service ethic. Right? Those are actually, we've been talking about this notion of investment and those would be very much investments in being able to give. Maybe better answers or more information to some of the clients that I work with in that sense?

I don't know. No, they are actually investments in myself as a professional. I mean, they are in terms of building my knowledge and satisfy my curiosity, but I think that they are. I don't want to use the word reactive, but reactive [00:16:00] is a bit, the word that comes up for me, like the notion that if someone has a question about, you know, how they can anticipate negotiating their salary, or they're trying to understand how versatile one major might be over the other, did I want to have really good and information that I feel confident in to give to them that doesn't.

Actually feel to me to be really transportable. If I moved into another field, or if I think about myself over the long span of my career, what would I sort of be able to move through different roles and different aspects? Like that's quite micro. Um, and I don't necessarily a bad thing, but it is interesting in you asking the question and me speaking it out loud, but it's really tied to, is wanting to be able to do the short term immediate aspect of my job better.

Okay. What would it mean to redefine professional development [00:17:00] in that context?

You mean to sort of accept that that's my inclination. And then think about our new definition of professional development associated with that. Yeah. Yeah. That's an intro. What would that look like? I mean, that would look like braining, maybe, I guess, is that, and it's, it would be interesting to think about like, what is the definition of.

Training versus professional development. Um, training is a word that comes up or mastery is another word that comes up, uh, like something around, something around being able to do a core function of your job. Really well and enhancing your ability to do that. Whereas I think I have more typically gotten [00:18:00] stuck on the notion that professional development is something extra or something new that it, that it is built on.

The understanding that you have, what you need to do some core functions, and you're now learning a new thing. You're getting another level layered on to that.

Are there areas of your current career? That you feel like you would just like to deepen your knowledge within?

I think it's also, and this is really interesting. It's not surprising to me entirely, but it's interesting that this is coming up. I think one level to all of this is how my draw towards one-to-one work with clients, which is definitely a part of my role. Um, but it's not. The entirety of my role. And it is definitely the part that I feel the strongest.

I don't want to say the strongest alignment with, but where I do feel a very strong attachment to. And I [00:19:00] think the one to one work with clients is actually where I personally measure my success. And that's what this conversation is making clear to me. Um, and it's interesting because I don't know, it's not actually practically speaking the only, the only way, and maybe not even the dominant way, my success is measured by other people.

But when I think about, am I doing my job well, The place I go to is how well am I showing up in these one to one conversations? And I think then the extension of where I go with professional development is how could I show up better in these conversations? And that's really, what's kind of clarifying and coming to light for me.

And that's making me wonder is some of the professional development pieces tied up with, uh, Maybe not an over-investment, but a heightened investment in one area of my role where it feels like that's where my energy or attention should be going. If I was going to take on additional development [00:20:00] or also that that's where my attention wants to go, because there's something there that sort of feeds in energizes me.

What's the relationship between being fed and energized and what you pursue for professional development.

I think. I think that the things that I feel fed and energized by are the things that then gives me motivation to go back to the investment language, to invest in, in further. Um, I think, and maybe when I was articulating at the beginning of the two buckets, I think if there was a very clear, suddenly I was on this project and I needed to use.

I don't know, Photoshop or like a specific concrete tool then I think I would have, we have a very clear motivation to learn that, Oh, they don't even know that at that point, I would think of that as professional development. [00:21:00] Um, I think when it is the more kind of nebulous space of what do you want to do to grow as a professional.

Then pretty intuitively I'm going to be drawn to the things that I do feel energized and fed by because there is something I sort of said a little playfully earlier around having been in school a long time and now feeling a bit of resistance to do. I want to take additional things on. Um, so I think for me, there does have to be.

I don't want to say, I don't want to learn for the sake of learning, but I think there does have to be a reason for it. Like how is this going to show up in the work that I do? And it makes sense to me that I wanted to show up in the places I feel engaged, engaged by what are some of the ways that you prefer to learn?

Danielle, if you had all the choices in the world, What would you pick? That's a good question. And that's [00:22:00] definitely a layer of it. I really like to learn autonomously. I like to learn on my own schedule and I like to learn on my own time. Um, and I'm pretty good. I think at keeping myself motivated and making time for it.

And I think I'm usually. Pretty consistently able to see things through. But one thing I've learned about myself and particularly I'm kind of relearning during this period of working from home is that I strongly prefer to be able to have choice over when I do something and sort of have a sway between different professional activities.

And I think I do feel I haven't explored this. This is more just kind of a bias that professional development. Might involve a, every Wednesday at three o'clock you're now locked into this thing. And I think I feel resistance around that. So. I'll be, I'll be transparent that I haven't Lord that venture.

There are professional development opportunities that are more [00:23:00] autonomous, but I think I also have a bit of tension around is professional development going to end up being something that feels where even if the content is interesting to me is the structure of it going to feel like an obligation or like a burden rather than something else I get to play with within the different tasks I have.

I'm curious, Danielle, if there are any forms of professional development that you've engaged in that feel more informal, they're not like a formal course or a workshop or a show up at three o'clock once a week. They're more informal ways of learning that you have a lot of control over.

I mean, and I think that comes back to how do we define professional development? So I'm quite active within a number of different kind of professionals and individuals. I know who say we'll host webinars on topics that are. [00:24:00] Related or kind of tangential to the work that I do. And I will usually be pretty good about logging in and watching those webinars and, you know, making some notes and thinking about them.

I'm currently doing through the university of Alberta. They do a massive open online course on indigenous studies and indigenous history on Canada. So I'm just kind of working through that at my own pace. Uh, so I do think. You know, depending on how we understand professional development, there certainly have been things I've sought out and done.

They tend to be, as you mentioned, autonomous, and they tend to be kind of one off and there doesn't tend to be a lot of community around them. And I think that's actually, Oh, okay. With me. But I do wonder if that's also a limitation. Or if there's something, you know, more I like, is there a trick between structure and community or [00:25:00] network?

And I have often found in my career and in other things, there is a balance between the autonomous and highly self-controlled tends to be much more solitary just by nature versus things that are more structured will often be the places where you get to build a relationships. And the other piece I would offer to that is I think, you know, when you say informal and what are some of the informal ways that you've learned, despite maybe some of the things I've said so far?

I think I actually am a deeply curious person and I think. Almost paradoxically. A bit of the block around professional development is a sense that like I learn every day, I learn all the time. I learned through noticing things and asking questions and well, that's much harder to kind of isolate or document on a form.

I think that in some ways, learning. New things is so baked into how I operate in the world, the high [00:26:00] operating in a professional that it almost feels like, why do I need to carve out special time to do that? So it's not actually that I don't like clicking things sometimes I think it's that I do learn more in that informal and kind of organic way, mean to have professional development that doesn't have to be logged on a form.

And it's interesting cause I have these, these conversations with the students that I work with all the time and I think. What I might say around any sort of accomplishment that is, you know, hard to document where you don't get a certificate at the end of it is you need, need examples, or you need stories about how this was meaningful to you.

So, well, I don't, I think it needs to be, I did this course on Wednesday afternoon and here's my certificate. I think I do need maybe a better ability to [00:27:00] articulate. Primarily to myself and then somewhat also to others where that learning is happening and what I'm taking away from it. And I think there is a bit of a slippage around, I.

Wholeheartedly believe it can happen organically and informally, but I think maybe what I need, it's a clearer way to document and articulate, delete that so that if I was okay asking myself or someone was asking me, what are some of the things you've learned as a professional this year? Or how have you developed.

I would have examples I could point to more readily than, I don't know. I talked to some people and I have a sense that I've gotten better at some stuff. Okay. Is there a particular theme or topic that as we're talking about professional development, you're starting to feel like maybe I want to pursue something around that.

I think in notion [00:28:00] that sort of just surface around what about all these ways of informal learning and even, you know, I offered a few just sort of examples that came to mind. I'm starting to wonder if a question could be, how do I sort of take inventory and give myself credit for the things I am already doing?

Rather than starting from a deck, that's the base. I'm not doing any professional development and I hate professional development story. And I wonder what might surface around what I am already doing and both patterns that might yield more insight into if I wanted to do additional things. Um, but I think what you're offering and what I'm finding really interesting is maybe professional development just looks.

Slightly different for me than the idea I have of what it's supposed to look like, or perhaps the idea that I'm seeing, some other [00:29:00] people experience. And what would it look like to do some digging through how it is already showing up for me and how I can leverage that rather than trying to bring in kind of external practices.

What do you think that reflection might look like? To help you dig through, as you've said, what you're already doing. I think it would be helpful for me to just sort of flip back through my calendar and makes them know, or maybe my inbox as well, make some notes about the sessions I did attend, um, the, the webinars, the conferences, even some of the conversations or maybe meetings I've had to sort of create a loose.

Less stuff. The things that stand out for me, and I know the past six months or the past year, uh, notice what I see there. Are there any themes, the things that I was sort of drawn to, or the things that I sought out, do [00:30:00] them stand out for me in terms of the method or the way they were set up. So that I could maybe look for other things that are similar to that.

If there was something that felt like it really worked for me. And then also thinking about, you know, maybe feeding a bit of that summary or some point form notes around, based on these things that I have done past year, maybe what. Are some of the things I've learned, what are some of the things I'd like to continue learning?

Or when I look at this sort of collection, are there things that I'm seeing gaps around that now help me to understand what I might want to seek out in the future. What do you you think are some of the benefits Danielle, of doing that kind of retroactive reflection when it comes to your professional development, rather than trying to plan it out ahead of time?

Well, I think that comes back in an interesting way to, to when we talked about kind of the organic or the emergent versus the, the future forecasting and [00:31:00] the planning. And I don't want to suggest that there is a tension between them, because I don't think that there has to be. Um, but I think there is something for me around the acknowledgement that I am already doing this and that this does.

Happened through, through the openness, through the curiosity, through the desire to explore things and kind of honoring the way those qualities might feed into my professional development, rather than thinking about those are things that hold me back from professional development, or that would have to be set aside in order to move forward with professional development.

And when you think about professional development in this kind of slightly new way as something that you're already doing, What does it mean to you to harness it at this stage of your career? Yeah, so I think that there is

I [00:32:00] think that one reason this is starting to come up for me or come up slightly differently is that I feel I'm just coming up to three years in my current role. And I feel a certain sense of like stabilization. Around it, like, not that I have it all figured out, but yeah, I do feel like there's a certain sense of like, I've been doing this, that the elements that repeat, I have a sense of how they work.

So on one hand, there is both a platform for what are the new things that I may be open to learn, or that I have some space for learning, as I do feel kind of increasing amount of stability around some other aspects. And then I think I also feel a bit of a fear around complacency. Um, which is interesting, but I think maybe when I felt the sense of like, if I don't feel drawn to professional development, what if I just never learned anything again, in my role, which is clearly not gonna happen.

Um, but I think there is that balance between giving a [00:33:00] certain spaciousness and openness to professional development. And then also a question of like, I need to, I need to spend some time thinking through this so that I do make sure I am learning and growing and that I'm getting the opportunities, um, that I, because I think part of this is tied to, you know, having the privilege to be asked, what would you like to learn and how can we support you in learning, which I know many people don't get.

So I want to make sure that I am. Actually drawing on that opportunity. What's the relationship between your development as a coach and what you're kind of exploring here with professional development?

Yeah, so the coaching development is interesting in that. For me, there was a fairly significant change as we wrapped up, the more [00:34:00] formal kind of group cohort based coaching training, where we did have sort of some on-sites where we were doing things in a more structured week by week breakdown. And then when I moved into the.

I need to now meet with a mentor coach a few times and do some work with clients to, to build that my skills there for me, I became much more engaged with coaching, more kind of interested in my coaching practice when it became something I was doing. On my own time, according to my own schedule, um, coming back to that question of community, when we were doing it, the more structured coach training I did really with like that sense of being part of a community of learners and being around other people who are sort of experiencing that coaching training.

But I think there was a notable shift for me as it became sort of a project or a. Yeah, a project that I felt I had more ownership over that I could kind of make my way [00:35:00] through and that I could kind of manage my time around after our conversation today. What does it look like to you to take ownership over your professional development?

That's a good question. I think it looks like.

It looks like deciding what I want professional development to be in my own career, coming back to that idea of definitions and knowing that that definition doesn't have to look the same as other people's definitions might, uh, there are still strategic considerations. And I think that is maybe something that, that we can touch on or that I still feel a little fidgety around.

Well, and good for me to be like, well, I'm just going to live my own Christian definition of professional development, and there might be some strategic considerations for where that does or doesn't align. [00:36:00] But I think to the extent that it is possible, I think the recognition that I can make choices about it, that if it is an investment.

In myself and who I want to be as a professional than I am the best person to make those decisions, rather than trying to follow us script or a template based on what I think it might look like or should look like. Is there anyone that you think can act as a good model for you of how to engage in professional development in that way?

Yeah. Yeah. A colleague of mine. I think I mentioned earlier that I suspected she might have. A similar approach or some similar questions around professional development. And I had met and she had mentioned a course, or maybe it was a workshop she was taking and she mentioned it as professional development.

And I was interested in that for me [00:37:00] at a glance. It didn't seem super aligned with her job functions while I sort of said to her like, Oh, like, is there something I don't know about in your role? Or like, how does that fit with your role? And I think she said, Oh, well, it's an investment in. Myself though, it's inherently professional development and she seemed, I could talk with her more about it, but she seemed actually very confident and I really admire the confidence of, she seemed to have a lot of clarity of this is what makes sense for me.

It's something that I do enjoy and will benefit from. And I would like to maybe talk with her more about how she got to that place or. How that works in her mind, because that was sort of an, a moment for me where I went, Oh, this is not the conversation about professional development that I'm used to having.

And there's something interesting there about the way she spoke about it and the way she seemed to understand it within her professional experience for this discussion. Daniella curious [00:38:00] what you're learning about yourself when it comes to how you're viewing professional development and how you want to pursue it.

I think, I think I am learning, I guess, or I maybe relearning or being reminded is, is the better word. I think a couple of things that are standing out to me are that sort of, uh, the planning. And the emergence and how to balance those pieces and sort of acknowledge that that is a big part of my identity, but also not get stuck on it.

And remember that there could be sort of a space in between those, uh, the formal versus informal, particularly how it relates to kind of control over that experience. It's something that, again, I don't want to limit myself to, but I think it's. It's okay for me to make my peace with it. The fact that the less formal or the more [00:39:00] autonomous experiences might just be, uh, the easier wins for me.

So trying to build those in so that there is some energy saved for more structured things, rather than thinking, it always has to be a certain way. And I think this piece around kind of the, the decision making that professional development doesn't. Has to inherently look a particular way. If I truly feel that I'm benefiting some of the actions I'm engaging in.

And if I could articulate to someone or feel confident that they could articulate to someone why those experiences have benefited me. You had mentioned Danielle, this possible action item of going back through your calendar and kind of trying to list out some of the professional development that you have engaged in, you know, over time and starting to look for maybe patterns and themes in that.

What are some of the reflective questions you want to ask yourself once you have that list and you can kind of see [00:40:00] everything in one place, what would be helpful for you to know? Yeah. None of these are groundbreaking, but the first one that comes up is like, why did I do this? Like, I think all of these things will be things that I voluntarily chose to spend time on when I could have spent time on other things.

So why did I do this? What kind of called to me about it? What did I gain from it? Like, and I think in the sense of will actually be helpful that some of these things happened. Further back, because it will just be interesting to think about like that workshop that I did 11 months ago. Do I remember anything about it?

And if so, what's the one or two things that have stuck in my mind. So what did I take away from it? Would I do something similar again? I think it's an interesting question in terms of thinking about other opportunities I could and what would be another question?

[00:41:00] Perhaps something around what did it not quite give me or what did I hope for that? It didn't quite achieve because I think that will also help with sort of teasing out remaining gaps or remaining areas that I might still like to revisit or where it feels like there's more work. Okay. What is the relationship for you, Danielle, between professional development and your value system?

And I touched on this earlier. I think I have a deep, deep value around and a deep value around curiosity and like being open to new opportunities and new experiences and novelty and trying things. So. I think part of the question is [00:42:00] knowing I hold those values. Why doesn't professional development come more naturally?

To me, I think part of the reason that's why I wanted to explore it. And I think

I think actually the relationship is almost, and wondering as we've been talking, if. Professional development. And especially in that like somewhat structured, somewhat formulaic right down. Yeah. The two things you're going to do this year. I wonder if, to me that feels like it's putting, learning in a box or it's implied that people wouldn't learn if they did not document.

And I wonder if there's almost something around the idea that I want to see learning as. Bigger and more diffused and, and looser than that. And if I, and not, of course, if that's what professional development has to be, but I wonder if I've sort of picked up on a nice idea, that [00:43:00] professional development is like, A way to ensure people learn because otherwise left to their own devices.

They wouldn't, and I'm so resistant to that idea as someone who believes in learning every day and in all these different ways that I've sort of set up this dichotomy between the two and that that's where my values feel misaligned with the concept. Interesting. What do you think as a result of that misalignment?

That, that it holds me back from, or it potentially leads to missed opportunities because it's not either. Or, uh, in fact, if I am thinking about various learning experiences as a form of professional development, then I get to have those in a more organic way. But there's also no reason that if a more structured opportunity.

Calls to me, or seems to be a good fit with a skill that could help me. There's no reason I can't have that as well, but it's not a choice between the [00:44:00] two and that engaging perhaps in that more structured learning opportunity, does it mean I then give up or like all those unstructured ways would just vanish from my life?

If anything, they might actually feed into each other or I might have more to bring to that more structured learning opportunity because of other things I had picked up in more. Spontaneous ways. What do you think are some of the criteria that you might use to decide if a more structured opportunity as something that you want to pursue?

Hello? I think the community piece would be a big part for me, knowing that. As far as like topics go, or if there's information, I really feel like I need, I'm going to find a way to go out and get it. So then I think one thing that, that more structured opportunity might really offer is that chance to be part of a community of learners or a cohort.

So I think I'm interested in knowing who [00:45:00] else is going to be participating in that. Are they people I might not otherwise cross paths with or have access to. And is there. An opportunity in that. Um, how does the structure of the learning maybe give us more or less chances to interact with others? I think that would become a big criteria for me.

And then I think also, you know, is there something about not just thinking about what I can take away from this opportunity, but I think it might help for me to start to ask the question of like, what can I. Bring to this opportunity. And I think there's also been something around and maybe this is still kind of a, a student mentality, um, that this is all about what I'm going to get from it.

Sure. There's, that's not irrelevant, but I also wonder what it might be like to look at professional development and think of it as like, what do I already have to offer to this conversation? Or if I show up at this [00:46:00] experience, what are some of the ways I could bring all the things I've already done to that conversation?

And I mean, I don't know, this feels a little bit cheesy, but almost like, does this opportunity need me rather than do I need this opportunity or maybe both those questions. Hmm. I love that idea. Okay. So I want to check in Danielle, because we were ultimately looking for a specific area or possibility to follow up on from today's conversation.

And maybe that shifted a little bit based on the definition, but what is that looking like for you right now? I do think that the, the plan around reviewing. Recent experiences, kind of documenting, asking some reflective questions. For me that feels like a really good action step. And that feels concrete enough that I think that that's a really powerful thing I would take away and that feels too need to be.

[00:47:00] The more you see, well option then, like I'm going to go research this specific type of course, because I think as you said, as we've been speaking and some of this work around reframing and recasting what professional development could be, it seems to me that taking stock of what I have done and what has already worked for me is the logical place to start.

So I do think that that works really well as something coming out of this conversation. you had also mentioned talking with your colleague, is that an action item that you think might be something helpful to pursue? Yeah, no, I think that would be good. And she, and I try to check in every so often, just kind of in general about how things are going.

So I'm sure she'd be open to that conversation. And yet there might be interesting things that I can offer her on the topic as well. Hmm. What are some of the things that you're most curious about when you talk with her?

I mean, I would be interested in what her definition of professional [00:48:00] development. Isn't. I also think maybe that's even an action item in and of itself. Like maybe it's broader. Then that one individual, maybe it's, you know, just thinking about a small pool or a group of people and asking them that kind of question, like, what does professional development mean for them?

How do they choose this professional development opportunities? What do they look for? And I think that I, cause I haven't really had it at any of those conversations explicitly and I think it would be very interesting to get more of a sense of how other people are. Approaching this and what they're choosing.

So what does professional, I mean, how did you choose a professional development opportunity and then also, like how do you know with meetings? So what, what do you, how do you understand whether that was a valuable experience for you? I'm curious, Danielle, if there's anything, when you think about those conversations that kind of deep in your heart of hearts, you're hoping will [00:49:00] be either affirmed or kind of you're be given permission for something for those conversations.

Yeah, I think

I think a part of me hopes that I will here. I don't know, I just really go and do stuff if it's interesting, which I actually, as I say that, or, you know, if it works in my calendar and I'm like, I actually think that there's a very possibly I'm, you know, elevating this whole thing. And not that it can't be elevated, but that there might be something really grounding.

And as you said, affirming about hearing that other people are also. Casual or somewhat ad hoc about these choices. And yet that they are then still deriving meaning. And that sometimes we, that the meaning comes from the experience rather than, or we assign meaning to the experience after we've had it, rather than we sort of.

[00:50:00] Have to choose to decide whether or not any meeting happens. So, yeah, I think it's very possible. And I think a part of me is hoping that other people are also approaching this from a more, a place of curiosity, a place of playfulness of openness. It's a place. It is a place of pragmatism and that those might be helpful things for me to hear.

And let's say you did hear those things. How would it change things for you?

I think that it would.

I think that is, it would be a good reminder that there isn't a memo that everyone else got about how to do this. Right. That you somehow didn't it get, I think I have a little bit of professional development, imposter syndrome, which is interesting because they don't, I don't usually find myself in that space.

Um, but yeah, that as. [00:51:00] I know from having talked about so many other things, and I'm sure you knew from your coaching work and your professional work, that sense that everyone else magically no something that allows them to do something better. Um, and I think having it affirmed that they don't, that they're making choices in the moment based on.

Their best judgment and what's available and what's possible. And that, that is working out for them. And that's still giving them things that are rich and useful and, and feeding them as professionals. I think that that would make this whole process something to still explore and be intentional about and kind of pay attention to, but that would help it to feel a bit lighter for me.

What is something that you can do right now to help it feel lighter for you?

I'm tempted to say, it's interesting. This idea popped up. I'm tempted to say, like pick [00:52:00] something almost ad hoc, like pull up the human resources website or the various kind of places I have. And almost, almost like spin the wheel or just pick something almost at random. And then see, I mean, they're typically one hour or something, times 90 minute sessions.

There's lots of things that are a fairly low stakes investment. Um, and I wonder what it would be like to act something almost at random. And then just go in with the mindset of like, this doesn't have to be the perfect choice. We'll see what I get from it. Maybe there'll be one good question, or maybe I'll meet one new person and kind of go back to that place of like radical openness and really lowered stakes.

And I wonder if that would be something that'd be interesting to just explore as a one off as kind of like hitting the reset button on all of this. That sounds interesting. Maybe a third action item coming out of our session today. Well, is there anything I can do to, to support you as you're moving forward with [00:53:00] reviewing your past experiences, talking with your colleagues about this definition and maybe spinning the wheel to pick, uh, an event at random to move forward with.

I think that those all feel. Pretty manageable to me. Um, I may kind of check back in to let you know if anything has surfaced for many of those. Um, maybe around the event like that as like something that involves putting something in the calendar I might ask or email you to tell you, this is the thing I pick to, this is the thing I'm going to, because that would be good accountability to actually move that forward.

But as far as the reflection and the conversation, those, I feel. Pretty committed to, I think those are pretty feasible. Um, and I'm just excited to see what comes with them. I'm excited too. What is one takeaway from our session today, Danielle, that is feeling kind of interesting to you as you further explore this area.

[00:54:00] Is that there isn't any right way to do this, which I think I knew. And I think I know about so many different things and kind of spaces of careers and choices. And yet it's, it's easy to forget, um, yeah, that there isn't any right way to do it. That I am someone who loves to learn and will always find places and spaces to learn in my life and in my work.

And I can tinker with how that shows up. But I think that I don't ever have to be afraid. That's not going to be there, that I can kind of rest in the knowledge that that will be somewhere in what I'm experiencing. That sounds wonderful. Well, thank you Danielle, for spending this time with me, it was a pleasure to coach you today.

Thank you so much. It was great. Thanks for listening to this episode of coach to coach for any resources [00:55:00] mentioned in the episode, check out the episode. Show notes at dr. Katie linder.com/coach. If you found this episode to be helpful, please take a moment to rate or review the show in Apple podcasts or recommends episode to a friend or colleague.

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