**YGT episode 214**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 214. Welcome to you. 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, but I thought I would talk a little bit about how I plan for each week to balance my energy, which seems especially important right now in the middle of this pandemic experience.

And as I record this for just post getting. Election results, but still seeing a lot of, kind of pretty stressful things in the news. And, um, I am finding my energy levels, um, are similar in some ways to what they were in the beginning of the pandemic, like really going up and down, um, day to day feels very.

Uh, different. Like I might be really great one day and then my energy levels are really low the following day. And it's not really something that I have a lot of consistency with right now. So I thought I would talk a little bit about how to plan for that. And, and really the, the secret that I will impart is that.

It's something that I do throughout the week. So it's not like I, I kind of plan one schedule and then I just execute on that schedule right now. I will plan a bit of a schedule, but then I will come back around and revisit that schedule multiple times. So one of the things that really helps me is on Monday morning, I go through my week calendar and I go through my tasks of kind of primary things that I wanted to get done the week, um, that I'm looking at.

And I first go to a task list that I have in notion. Where I've put a deadline or a timestamp on everything on the list. And then I filter it for just that week. And the first thing I do typically is go through and say, now I know that I had put this timestamp on this particular task to be happening this week, but does it actually need to happen this week?

Um, can I push it off if I need to push it off? What are the things that are like really, really needing to happen right now? And oftentimes there are some things that I kind of pushed off into the future, and I wasn't sure when exactly they would need to happen, but I knew that it would be in the future.

So sometimes I kind of assign them to a random week. And then when I get to that week, I realized I really don't need to do that thing yet. So a good example of this would be, we have been wanting to replace a couple of our mattresses. We need a mattress for our guest bedroom, and we also need to replace our mattress on our bed.

And I've been putting this off for a while. We just don't really feel comfortable, you know, having mattresses delivered right now. And it's just one of those things that like, it's fine. If we kind of keep putting it off, it's just not that big of a deal. And so this is something that kind of keeps pushed, you know, forward like a month, you know, every time I see it, I kind of push it forward another month until we kind of feel like we're in a place where we want to, to actually complete that task.

So there's some things like that. So first I go through my list and I think about, are there any things that I can just kind of. Scrape off the list immediately and I'm pushing them into the future. Then I go to the things that I feel like are important that I do need to get done this week. And as I start to build out my weekly calendar, which I also do in notion, I start to layer in my meetings.

First I go to my calendar and I kind of put my meetings in. In a to-do list format, so that they're roughly in the order in which they will take place each day. And then I look at my calendar and I try to look for pockets of time and based on the pockets of time that I have available, then I will go back and start to layer in the tasks that are really important.

Into the pockets of time that I have available, that I can potentially get those tasks done. Now, some of them are going to take more time than others. And this is why I like to think about kind of this concept of putting your big rocks in first. Um, you don't put the pebbles in the sand in first because then your big rocks won't fit.

But if you put your big rocks into a container first, and then you layer in the pebbles and sand, you're going to be able to fit everything in a little bit more neatly. You can link to a video about this in the show notes. I talk about it a lot when I'm talking with people about course design. So putting in your big rocks first and then Larry, and kind of the smaller things that you want to accomplish after that.

So once I have my big rocks in my schedule and I I've kind of like put things into it amount of time that I think it will. Kind of gives me at least a buffer. So if I'm completing something in between two meetings or something like that, I want to make sure that I have plenty of time that I can, um, get up, move around, refill my tea, take a breather, answer some email, you know, whatever it might be.

So I'm, I'm trying to not just kind of schedule myself completely back to back every day. And also because I'm working from home, it's really easy to get into a mode where you just sit at your desk for a really long period of time, just like it would be in the office. And I like to be able to get up and move around, grab a snack, um, make sure that I'm staying hydrated, you know, that kind of thing.

And sometimes. If I'm honest, squeeze in a quick yoga session, which I often do in the middle of the day, or sometimes toward the end of the afternoon, when I'm, I'm feeling like I need a little bit more energy. So the other thing that often happens when I'm layering these things into my week is I realized that there might not be a hard deadline as to a particular day that a task needs to get done, but I just want to get it done by the end of the week.

So sometimes given my energy level for that particular week, if I'm coming into the week, feeling pretty strong, And I have maybe some uninterrupted time happening on Monday and Tuesday. I'm going to try to layer in as much as I can early in the week, because I don't know what the rest of the week is going to hold, but I don't know how I'm going to be feeling.

So I want to make sure that I'm kind of front-loading as much as possible. No, on the other hand, if I come into the week and maybe my Monday is like jam packed with meetings, or I'm not feeling totally motivated or productive, I'm going to think about, can I build in time later in the week to get some of this stuff done?

And also of course, um, in higher education administration, especially now during this pandemic period, There are always fires that are coming up that need to be put up, put out throughout the week. So I have extra meetings that get layered into my calendar with my boss or with people who report to me.

And, um, I have to kind of leave in buffer time for that. Okay. So that's just the scheduling component. But the other thing that I'm really trying to think about in terms of my energy is trying to prep for my week in a way that there are a lot of things I don't have to think about. So, for example, last weekend I made a big pot of soup and the whole idea of this was that I would have all my lunches covered.

I know what I, I pre make my breakfast as well, which I talked about on a previous podcast. I make a big bulk, um, prep of tofu scramble and some baked potatoes. And then I made this big pot of soup. So I know that I'm getting like a ton of this stuff. Done ahead of time. I can just go open the fridge, grab the thing.

I need pop it in the microwave and I'm good to go. Um, and so in the middle of the day, this really does help me to plan ahead so that one, I know I'm going to get a meal in because some days with zoom meetings, um, they do get stacked back to back. And I have tried to maintain my lunch hour as much as possible, but it's not always in my control.

Sometimes someone else schedules something in my calendar. And for example, I meet regularly with, um, other associate deans at our institution. And, uh, we all have to meet over the lunch hour cause that's the only time that we can meet. So I really want to make sure that my meals are, um, something that I don't have to think about because.

It's more likely that I would like snack on something instead of having a full meal, if I don't have something prepared in advance. And that really is something that helps me to manage my energy, especially going into an afternoon of meetings, because I want to make sure that I'm, I'm actually getting nutrients and that I'm feeding myself.

The other piece, I think is, um, I have been focused a lot on staying hydrated because I think that when we're home. Um, even in the office too, I would, I would really try to have like a cup that was always full, or I would bring a certain amount of liquid with me to work, um, usually water or tea. And I try to get a certain amount by a certain time in the day.

So I, I drink out of, uh, people who meet with me on zoom. I have seen this, I drink out of a Mason jar. That's a 24 ounce jar. And so I try to drink one of those before I get ready in the morning. Like, that's like what I drink, um, roughly before eight o'clock then I tried to drink another one of those before noon.

And then I'm often also supplementing with some kind of herbal tea throughout the day. And then I usually stop hydrating, uh, around dinner time because I don't want to be. Um, having to like sacrifice a good night's sleep if I'm, if I'm hydrating too much up until the time I go to bed. So the hydration and the food part is really important for me.

And also having really simple and easy snacks. Um, I always have mixed nuts available. Sometimes I'll pop myself a bag of popcorn if I don't have a ton of meetings and I can snack on that. Um, and we always have. Fruit. So I'm usually having an orange or something. Um, and those kinds of things are really helping me to kind of keep my energy at a pretty good level throughout the day.

Now I can not underemphasize the importance of good sleep to all of this as well. And, um, as I record this, I'm recovering from about a week of pretty poor sleep because I was going to bed late. I was watching election news some nights. Um, I couldn't help myself. I think we all got kind of sucked into it.

And I was, uh, recovering from a little bit, um, of extra sleep that I was getting in the morning, but I just feel like my whole schedule got kind of thrown off and with the time change as well, I just really, um, was sacrificing a little bit of sleep. So I think that this week I've really been focused on getting more, um, uh, kind of strict bedtimes in my schedule so that I'm getting to bed on time.

I'm getting that sleep in. And that always helps me to manage my energy throughout the day as well. The last thing that I really think about, um, what I'm thinking about, how to plan my week to balance my energy is how am I feeling mental health wise and the week of the election? I think we all struggled a little bit where, um, I was definitely noticing, especially towards the end of the week.

Um, I just couldn't watch the news anymore. It was really revving me up. I was having a hard time relaxing. Um, I felt like I was really not able to focus very well and I was having a hard time. With just managing kind of my own nervousness and anxiety. And so I ended up just kind of cutting off the news, um, which was something I talked about in a couple of places that always helps me to kind of come back into a little bit more alignment and.

To focus on the things that I really want to prioritize. So being able to cut back on that was really helpful. Um, and this week I'm really kind of focusing on not forcing myself to do things, um, that I don't feel like doing, because I am noticing that I'm just kind of fatigued coming off of that election week.

And there's a lot of stuff going on just within my job that is, um, uh, as we see COVID numbers go up and things like that, it's, it's pretty stressful. Um, and so I think that part of managing my energy is also building in. Time for watching like a quick YouTube video or listening to a podcast during the day to really just give myself something fun.

Um, that can be like a nice distraction in the midst of everything else going on. So look for a blog post soon about, um, some of the YouTube channels that I'm really enjoying right now. And I think that they will offer you a nice distraction as well. I'll link to a few of them in the show notes. Um, because I think if you're looking for something that will be a little bit fun, it might be something to turn your attention to.

So I would love to hear how you're balancing your energy and your weekly planning. 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 always connect with me on Instagram at Katie underscore Linder. Any way you contact me. I always love to hear from you.

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 dr. Katie linder.com/podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for listening. Um,