**YGT episode 222**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 222. Um, 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, as I have previous years, I thought I would share on this episode, a little bit of a debrief of how things went with my creative retreat that I took over this past couple of weeks in late December and early January.

And I had mentioned in a previous episode, I can link to this in the show notes. Some of the goals that I had for this retreat and what I was hoping to do, I definitely was hoping this year would be a little bit more of a mix of rest and work together. Um, part of that was because I hadn't been able to take off a ton of time this year, just because of everything that was happening with COVID response and different responsibilities that I had with my job.

And after talking with my kind of direct supervisor, I had decided to try to take as much time as I could off. Um, when a lot of other people were going to be taking vacation as well. And our institution actually closes for about a week, the week following the Christmas holiday and before the new year.

And I knew that I would be able to take advantage of that time, um, to not be missing out on meetings or other things that might be happening. So I ended up taking about two and a half weeks, and I know that that is definitely not something that everyone can do. It's a huge privilege that I even have this option to take this vacation time.

Um, but I appreciated having it and being able to really work ahead on some of my 20, 21 tasks. And that was really a huge goal that I had for this. Uh, break. So the main things that I was looking to do was definitely some content creation for the new year. I wanted to get ahead on the podcast. I wanted to get ahead a little bit on my blog, and I was also really pushing to get some business prep, tasks done, including creating a lot of courses.

Spaces for the upcoming coach training cohorts. I wanted to make sure that I had loaded a bunch of events into the platform per for prolific. I had a syllabus for coach training that I needed to update. I wanted to get on a social media scheduling. So there was a lot of stuff like that that really helps me throughout the year.

If I can do a lot of these kinds of tasks in advance. I also had wanted to set aside some time to do some website updates, um, particularly on my coaching page. Cause I had some packages I wanted to update there. I had a bunch of little tasks related to our January program launches emails that I needed to send out.

Some invoicing and bookkeeping, um, different forms and, um, even some mailings that I needed to do what I mail out the coach training manual, so different things for that. Uh, and then I also wanted to really devote some time to preparing for, and, uh, implementing my two virtual planning and yoga retreats.

And those both happened over the break as well. So, um, quite a bit going on. Um, and I also. Opened up my calendar to allow for more one-on-one yoga sessions during this time. So I could really collect a lot of yoga teaching hours and begin to really level up my skills in that area. Um, normally I only offer a couple of one-on-one sessions a week on the weekends because that's really what my schedule allows right now.

And so, because I had more freedom over this break, I was offering a couple of yoga sessions a day and those were filled, um, pretty regularly, which was great. I also kept meeting with my clients during this period and kept kind of my regular meeting schedule for that. And so I did have pretty booked evenings and weekends, um, during this whole time of being off of my day job work, but that's a pretty similar schedule to what I do all the time.

Um, I often have evening. Coaching client appointments. And my weekends are usually booked up pretty well. And then the other thing I was scheduling and during this period was starting to record a coach to coach season six episodes, which is starting to release in February. And I'm doing some interviews with people who are in my current coach training program.

And so I was able to get about half the season recorded and prepped during this period as well. So, what I was really focused on as I was planning out this, uh, retreat schedule was I ended up making a template in notion and it really helped me to balance everything out and try to ensure that I was building in some rest time as well.

And I ended up color-coding six different categories, including my coaching and coach training, the website work that I wanted to do. The yoga work that I wanted to do content creation, and then just some general admin work that I had, um, that I needed to make sure I was working through during this period.

Right. As well. And so it allowed me to be able to kind of, yeah, look at a day and see if it was like really heavy as a coaching day or if it was, um, going to be populated with maybe some other smaller tasks that I could squeeze in, in between appointments. And that was often really helpful for my planning.

I was also able to just block out a couple of days for multiple hours that I wanted to string together to work on a couple of bigger projects. And, um, one of those projects was some of the work on, on my next book project. And I'm starting to kind of pull that together and I wanted a whole day for that.

So I was really trying to block out time to make sure that was going to happen. So, what I ended up doing was, um, creating kind of a, almost like a regular calendar spread, um, where I just had, you know, columns, seven columns across going from Sunday to Saturday. And then I just had to do lists under each one for each day of the week.

And I blocked out the entire break. So I could see all the days. And then, um, in notion you have the option of creating like a check box for it to do item and you can highlight it in a different color. And so I use the color coding system to do that. The other thing that was really helpful for me about using this as a process was I was able to.

Look ahead and see what I had planned for myself, so that if I ended up like finishing something earlier than I had thought I would look ahead and say, is there like a small task from a day later this week that I can drag over and do it today and just kind of check some things off my list a little bit ahead of time.

And that was actually really great because it ended up creating a situation where I was a little bit front-loading the work because I had, um, a little bit more energy. I think like I was just excited to dive in. And then as the time went on, I was creating more margin in my schedule too. Um, do like extra things that I was wanting to fit in.

So for example, toward the end of my break, I ended up purchasing, um, the yin yoga training that I've talked about in a couple other places that I wanted to do in 2021. And I was able to start that and start watching some of the videos from that, um, which was kind of way earlier than I thought I would be able to do that just because I had some extra time.

Now, of course, that also was time that went to things like reading a couple of novels, watching a couple of movies with my partner, watching some TV, um, and just kind of getting some rest. I tried to take afternoon naps when I could, which was really incredible. And just trying to have that balance of work, but also having some rest.

Now, I also tried to think about my first week back to work, which I think is also a really important. Part of coming out of a creative retreat is trying to figure out how you're going to re-engage in your normal schedule. And so throughout this time, I was pretty careful about keeping my normal bedtime and morning routines.

So I was making sure that I was going to bed by roughly nine o'clock, sometimes nine 30 at night, and then getting up at 5:00 AM every morning, which is my typical wake up time. And, um, that allows me to have plenty of time in the morning. Um, usually my first appointment during the break, was it nine. In the morning.

So it was a little bit later than when I would normally start work, but it's really allowed me to kind of stay on a schedule that feels really comfortable for me, so that when I ended up kind of going back into work, I don't think I'm going to have to, um, just completely reset my routines to make that happen.

I also found it to be really helpful during this break period to layer in different kinds of calls and check-ins with friends and family members, so that I was also getting some time to come out of my. Little work, cave and talk with other people. And that's something that I haven't always built in to these kinds of retreats in the past.

I'm usually just kind of like head down doing the work, but in the past, I've also had about half the time when I've done these retreats around this time of year. And so having more time, definitely allowed me to stretch out the schedule in a way that felt, you know, really manageable for me. And I ended some of the days.

Pretty tired, just because there was a lot that I had been working on, but most days it just felt kind of like a typical Workday. I didn't feel overextended. I felt like I gotten done what I wanted to get done, but I didn't feel like I had overdone it in terms of just really pushing myself past my limits.

So overall, I would say that this has been a pretty successful, uh, creative retreat. I was able to check, um, pretty much everything off of my list that I wanted to, there was an area that was kind of a question Mark for me, and that was making some progress on outlining my new project management offering.

And I was able to make a little bit of progress there. I have an outline. I feel like it's not quite what I want it to be. And I'm kind of chewing on that to see how I want to change it. Um, but I feel like even just getting that outline down was a pretty important element of what I needed to do at this break.

So getting ahead on all of the business prep, all of the podcast creation, um, the blogging, the, uh, Book work that I was trying to do the program launches, you know, all those kinds of things have really got me coming into the new year, feeling great about what I am working on and my ability to integrate myself back into work without being worried about all these other things that I have on my plate.

So once again, I just continue to love the concept of a creative retreat. I think it's so helpful for me to set aside time to do this work. And I would love to take any questions that you have about this kind of concept. I know I've talked about it a lot in the past. Um, and of course, if you did anything like this over your break, did a creative retreat.

I would love to hear about it. And also sometimes I should just mention, I mean, this, if you just look at my list, it just looks like I did a bunch of work during this period, and it feels so much better to call it a creative retreat. So even if you were working on something that wasn't always fun for, you maybe consider thinking about your break time as partially being a creative retreat, because I think it just reframes it in a way that is really, um, a little bit more fun and palatable for us.

So I would love to hear from you if you've done anything like this in the past, or if you did this over your break, 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, 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.

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