**YGT episode 224**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 224. 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 in this episode. But I thought I would talk a little bit about why I hired a book coach, because if you've been hanging around for a while, you know that I'm actually a pretty experienced writer of books.

I've written several books on my own. I've edited several collections and I'm a writer who writes all the time. I do my morning pages. I really enjoy writing. I have a really positive relationship with writing. And yet I still felt the need to hire a book coach. And so I thought I would talk a little bit about what that experience has been like so far, why I made the decision to move forward with that and kind of how the process works, uh, in terms of, of doing that.

So, um, first I should say that I've been having kind of a kernel of an idea for a book for a little while now, maybe like a year, maybe even longer than that. If I'm honest, because couple summers ago I wrote, you know, maybe 1500 words of what I thought might be my next book, and then I set it aside and it wasn't ready yet.

And I had been wrapping up, you know, edits on other projects and things like that. We had the move coming up, my new job. And so I just kind of set aside bookwork for a while. And now it's been probably a couple years since I've actively worked on a book project. Because that Colonel was like sitting there, you know, in the background.

Um, I've been, you know, starting to think about goals for 2021. And is this the year that I want to be working on this project? And the book that I have in mind to write is not necessarily one that is just for an academic audience and in the past, that has been what all of my book projects have been for.

And so I was starting to kind of think about what does that mean in terms of extra tasks? That are going to come with writing, uh, this new book, because when you're not writing for an academic audience, you may need to get an agent. And that agent helps you to navigate a more kind of trade publishing world.

And we don't really have that same kind of, um, set of variables in academic publishing. You can pretty much like negotiate with a publishing house. You can negotiate with your editor. You can develop relationships with editors without having an agent. In between. Um, and, and all of my academic publishing has really been that experience where I didn't have an agent.

I was working with academic presses and I felt really comfortable with how to do that. But as I started thinking about this other book project that I'm thinking about writing, I knew that I probably wanted to start the process of seeking out an agent if I was going to move forward with it. And this is an area that I have some knowledge of, um, in part, because I wasn't English major in undergrad, I've always been interested in the concept of publishing.

And so I've read a couple of books on, you know, the publishing industry and how to, you know, get an agent and those kinds of things. And this goes as far back as undergrad, because at that point I was also working with fiction and not really sure where I was going as a writer. So I have like a general sense of what you need to do when you're seeking out an agent.

And I even feel like I have, um, an understanding of the steps I would need to take, you know, to kind of do that on my own. But as I was thinking about coming into the new year and some of the other projects I had on my plate, I also started to feel like I might enjoy having a little bit of support in this process.

And I think that this is true of a lot of things. Um, in my life that have happened post coaching and like learning about coaching and developing my coach training is I've started to see the role of coaches as really being, not necessarily giving you something that you couldn't have yourself, but just supporting you and being a supportive presence along the way.

If you're like stepping into something new or taking a bit of a leap, um, and that's what this felt like to me, it felt like stepping into kind of a new area. And I felt like I wanted to have someone to bounce ideas off of get feedback from and feel like I, wasn't just kind of doing this on my own. Um, and I could certainly have done that with colleagues, but I really wanted to make sure that I was being respectful of people's time.

And that gave me the idea of maybe just paying someone to be in this role for me. So I had been kind of thinking about this and it was also a seed that was planted in my mind because someone else that I know and talk with regularly, Has a book coach right now. And, and she had talked with me about it and, and given me some ideas about kind of where to look for a potential book coach and I'll link to, um, there's a company basically that, that has a bunch of book coaches and they helped him match you with the rate book coach.

And I'll link to that in the show notes, because that's what I use to find the person that I ended up working with. And, um, it's called author accelerator and you can look it up if you, if you don't want to find the link in the show notes. Um, but it was a helpful way for me to kind of think through my own ideas, because there was an application that you had to fill out in order to even enter into this process of being matched with a book coach.

And so it really did help me, at least initially, to, to kind of. Ask myself, am I taking this process and this project seriously? Um, and because I had to fill out this application, it was kind of taking me to the next step. So it was a helpful way for me to be thinking about that and to begin to kind of reflect and process what this idea for this book may be.

And at this way, you might be saying like, are you going to tell us about the idea for the book and for right now? No, because I'm still kind of trying to finalize what it actually is. And I'm, I'm holding it a little bit close to my chest just because, um, I'm really not clear yet on what I'm trying to do.

Um, but of course I will share this along the way. If it becomes kind of a blossoms into a full fledged project that I'm working on. And especially if I acquire an agent and sell the book and all those kinds of things, um, You will definitely know about it, but I think that for now, it's, it's one of those projects that it feels kind of special.

And whenever I have something like that, I usually keep it a little bit private until I am ready to share it more publicly. So I went through the application process, um, cheered a little bit about the book project I was working on and was matched with someone. And we had kind of an initial interview and she was basically interviewing me.

I was interviewing her, um, wanting to see if we were a good match for each other. Well, it happens to be that this book coach is also a yoga practitioner and she has some other things kind of in her bio that really do make her a good match for me. And in my application, I hadn't mentioned yoga at all. I don't think.

And so there were just some kind of nice synchronicities that, um, ended up being a good fit for this coach and what I decided to do at least initially. Um, there's a whole kind of menu of items that you can work with a book coach on. And part of it is dependent on how much experience you have with writing in your past and what are you actually trying to accomplish.

And so, for me, there were a lot of things about writing that I still feel pretty confident about, even if I'm stepping into a new area of publishing, but the elements that I really wanted. Feedback and support with were kind of the general understanding of what it was that I wanted to work on with this project.

Partly because I had a few ideas. I wasn't sure how they were. If they were mixed together, if they needed to be separate book projects, um, if there was a way to combine them, that was all feeling a little unclear to me. So in the early kind of stages of really trying to get the kernel of what the idea was for the book, I wanted to have support with that.

And then the other pieces that I could potentially get support with later on are things like, um, getting a list of agents that I might want to reach out to. And some of the research involved in finding the right fit for you, of working with a publishing agent. And so that was something that I was like, yeah, I could appreciate kind of outsourcing that a little bit and not doing all of that work on my own.

And especially with a book coach that's really trained in the publishing industry in a way that I am not trained. And for me, it was also a way of thinking about this process. Of how can there are, are there certain steps within the process that can maybe be a little more efficient? Um, the writing part is usually not as efficient, just because there's a lot of like reflection and trying to figure out what I'm trying to say.

And I'm a pretty fast book writer. I can usually write a book in about nine months. Um, but I'm not sure, obviously this one has been going on for a couple of years now. I haven't actively been working on it, but I, I just, it's a different kind of project. And I felt like I needed some, some extra help there.

So for now, what I have decided to do with my book coach is she's helping me with kind of the pre-proposal stage. And that's really just trying to narrow down what exactly is this book about and who is my audience? What am I trying to say? It doesn't have legs. I mean, that's kind of the question that is really at the root of our work is, is kind of this kernel of an idea that I have.

Does it have legs? Can it stand on its own? And would it be of interest potentially to a publisher and, um, The next step would potentially be to write the actual proposal. Now, the proposals that I've written in the past for academic books, um, are relatively short. Um, they're usually pretty short treatments of the book kind of running down the chapters and I've even had, you know, once I developed a relationship with my publisher over several years, I wasn't doing as extensive proposals.

You know, they knew my work. They had a lot of trust in my abilities to. To bring a book, you know, that was going to be one that would sell. And so the proposal that I would put together for a more trade based publisher would be maybe three or four times the length of what I would normally do for something for an academic press.

And that does not include sample chapters. So that is something else that was. Something that I thought, you know, I would appreciate a little more guidance on that in terms of just making sure that it's as strong as it can be. And if I'm going to make this attempt to get an agent and kind of move this thing forward, I really want to make sure that I'm supporting myself in the best ways that I can in the midst of a pretty busy schedule with a lot of other things on my plate.

So what it really came down to for me, when I was thinking about this project in 2021 was. If I want to move it forward this year, did I feel like I could move it forward on my own? And the answer was, yes, I probably could, but I think it would be pretty painful to do that, um, that I would be really like pushing it into the margins of my schedule, you know, really trying to kind of like shove something in when I didn't have a lot of time and energy to do it.

And I didn't feel like the process would feel good. But if I was able to hire a book coach and get a little bit of help with this process, I felt like it would be, um, more of a positive situation for myself and that I would be able to enjoy the process a little bit more if I was able to ask for support and have some of the things kind of outsourced to another person.

So I feel like that's kind of a long-winded explanation of, of why I decided for at least for now to be kind of working with this book coach. And we decided to do our work in phases, just because I'm still a little bit on the fence about what this project is supposed to be. And I'm trying to kind of figure it out actively, you know, working on it.

And so we decided to just do phase one, which is kind of the pre-proposal work. And then when that's done, I'll make the decision about if I want to kind of keep going with the proposal and then keep going with the research about how to pitch to agents and which ones to contact. And, um, I think that what's interesting about this process is in the past, when I've written books, I've had a really clear timeline and it's usually been.

Pretty aggressive. Um, because I knew I wanted to get the book out. I was under contract, I had the deadline and I just went, but in this case I don't have that. And I'm actually trying to get a really clear picture of what I'm trying to do and take some time with that. And, and not, I don't feel rushed. I actually feel really patient with this process, which is not my typical, um, response to creative work.

And something about that tells me that I'm approaching it in the right way. Um, I don't know that I can fully explain that, but it's helpful for me to, to understand that this is a project that when it's important enough, I can take my time and really decide what it is that I want to be doing. And I also feel like as I get more mature as someone who's creating things, that is where a lot of my projects are headed is.

Is there taking more time and I'm being really thoughtful because I'm understanding that I'm not going to be able to just keep creating projects all the time. Um, you know, like I, I have my own limits and my own capacity of what I can do in my own schedule. And it makes me get kind of picky about what I devote my time to and getting I'm getting more careful and more selective about the projects that I work on.

So I would be happy to answer additional questions. If you have them about working with this book, coach, I will make sure in linked to the author accelerator program in the, um, in the show notes. And I'll also link specifically to my book coaches website, in case you want to check out, you know, the kinds of packages that she offers.

I think that it's really helpful to consider all the different ways that we can get support when we're working on creative projects. And of course, as a coach, I fully believe in the concept of coaching and I'm always willing to hire a coach for myself. When I feel like it's going to be. A supportive presence or when I feel like I need to kind of level up into something that feels new and different.

So thanks for calling snake. And of course I would love to hear if you've worked with a book coach, if you have questions about working with a book coach, 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 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.

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