**YGT episode 227**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 127. 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. In this episode, I thought I would finally talk about my word of the year, which I don't know that I've actually talked about anywhere yet, but I did choose one and I figure, you know, halfway through quarter one is a good enough time to talk about it.

And of course, I would love to hear if you have a word or phrase of the year that you're thinking about. This was a question that I asked recently in the prolific community. And there were some amazing responses of people who have chosen different words and phrases of the year. And I've talked about in the past how it's been kind of a challenge for me to have a word of the year, because I can't always keep it kind of front of mind for myself.

And sometimes I don't just think about a word of the month or a word of the quarter and just kind of see how that goes. But last year, I feel like I broke through that a little bit because I'm in 2020, my word or phrase of the year was deeply rooted. And I chose that because we were starting the year in the process of going through a move and I was changing jobs.

And I really wanted this reminder to stay rooted in my values and to just be kind of centered as we were going through a lot of big changes in our lives. And I felt like it really worked in 2020. And of course there was no way that I could know what was going to be happening in that year. But throughout the year, I did often return to that phrase and kind of thinking about my values.

Um, throughout the year, it was really important to me. And then I ended the year launching the deeply rooted virtual retreat, um, which was my yoga and planning retreat that I offered. And it just felt like a really important coming full circle with that particular understanding of that phrase. And also being able to kind of introduce some of the concepts to other people felt really important.

So this year I thought a lot about what is my word. And there were several contenders as there usually are when you do something like this. And typically I'd like to sit with this. Starting in the fall. I typically start to think about annual planning. Um, and then as we're getting closer to the end of the year, I started to kind of narrow in.

And what I usually involve when I'm thinking about my word of the year is I will actually look up definitions of words and kind of go into the thesaurus and think about. Different ways of thinking about the same thing. And I want to make sure that it's something that I feel connected to. I want to make sure it's something that usually has more than one meeting for me.

Um, and so it's just always kind of interesting to see what that can be. So this year, what I ended up landing on was a word that started to have some resonance in meeting for me back in 2020, and especially over the summer. And that word is a practice. And of course they started thinking about this word practice when I began to practice yoga.

And it was a word that was used a lot with that. But then I also, over the summer, took a course on somatic coaching or embodied coaching. And one of the things that just stuck with me was they were talking about practice in this course and they said we're always practicing something. And we get to decide what it is that we're practicing.

And I've always been really intrigued by this concept of neuroplasticity and that we can change the direction of our brains a little bit. If we are kind of in a rut about how we're thinking about something. We can, um, kind of rewire that by thinking about things in a different way or by practicing something different.

And it really did get me thinking about, are there certain things that I'm kind of consistently practicing maybe without even realizing that I'm practicing those things and what would I practice if I was doing it with more intention? So I had been thinking about that since the summer. And, um, as I came into thinking about 2021, knowing that this was going to be a year that probably had some challenges, um, like 2020 has had, for many of us, I wanted to have a word that also felt supportive and that wasn't, uh, filled with pressure.

And I think that practice is a good word for that, because it implies that you don't have to be done. You don't have to achieve mastery. And I do like this concept of the more you practice something, the deeper and awareness you have of it. And you begin to have a more deep relationship with that thing.

And also with yourself that you begin to have a deeper understanding of yourself in relationship to that thing that you're practicing. And that is, um, really important for me to think about this year, especially as someone who. Likes to spend a lot of time in solitude. And a lot of the things I practice tend to be things that I'm doing in solitude.

So that relationship with myself is really important. So I thought I would share a few of the things that I'm practicing really intentionally in 2021. Just to give you an example of how I'm operationalizing this a little bit in my life. So, um, the first category is the teaching of yoga. And this is something that I started practicing back in the fall when I was offering one-on-one, um, options for people to come and practice with me.

And this was really to just get some experience under my belt of what does it feel like to teach yoga? Because I had not really done that very much before I was in yoga teacher training program. And up until now, I have about 50 hours that I've been collecting over time. I've really been enjoying it.

And I'm definitely coming to a deeper understanding of what does it mean to practice yoga? I feel like I am just scratching the surface of this. Um, and when I watch people who are very experienced yoga teachers, I have so much respect for the time and effort they've put into cultivating that skill. So the practice of teaching yoga in some ways is the practice of being a beginner at something and understanding what it is.

What it means to feel like a beginner, understanding the discomfort that sometimes comes with being a beginner in something and embracing that and knowing it's okay to not be like the best at everything all the time. And so that's a practice that's been really important for me. The second thing that I'm practicing really intentionally in 2021 is meditation.

Now this was something that I wanted to, um, start for a long time, kind of like with yoga. And I decided to add it to my 21 for 2021 goals list this year. And, um, what I have done to kind of support my practice is I am in a yoga teacher training, um, a different one than others I've talked about. I just completed my 500 hour for, um, teaching kind of the physical practice of yoga.

But I, I entered into another yoga teacher training. That's a 200 hour training just on meditation teaching because something that people may not realize is that yoga, the physical practice of yoga is one of eight limbs of yoga and meditation is another one of those limbs. And so I wanted to do a deeper dive into it and ended up signing up for a class with a friend of mine so that we could do this practice together, which has been really fun.

And basically, um, the kind of meditation I'm learning. What I really appreciate about it is it's very focused on personalizing the practice to you and not having a lot of rules or judgment about what meditation means and looks like. Which I think is again, kind of fitting in with this concept of practicing things in a relatively low stakes way.

And this is something I'll definitely be sharing about more in the future. Um, but for right now, I'm about three, four weeks in to this class, really enjoying it. It'll run through June of 2021, and it's giving me a really strong foundation of just meditating every day. So. As part of the class work required to meditate multiple times a day.

And so it's been a great form of accountability for that. And I'm honestly just really enjoying it. I'm like constantly looking for a little ways that I can add more meditation into my day. And so that practices going really well. Another thing that I'm practicing in 2021 is. Patients. And, uh, I probably am not alone in this.

I think a lot of us have felt, uh, really challenged by, um, a lot of the things we're having to wait for during this pandemic period. And I've really been trying to, um, Kind of realign my neuro-plasticity around this concept of patients and I've known for a long time that I'm, I'm a very impatient person.

Um, I happen to be married to someone who's incredibly patient. It's like one of his special gifts. And so I've been learning from him for a long time. Sometimes I call him my spiritual teacher when it comes to patients. Um, but this is an area that I'm actually really trying to focus on. Um, this concept of like, things are happening in their own time and that's okay.

Um, and things will take as long as they need to take. And there are special things that can happen in the meantime, and that I need to be paying attention to as I'm waiting for, um, certain things that are going to be able to come back into my life. So patience is something I'm just paying a lot of attention to.

And I think the meditation practice is helping with that as well. Okay. So those are the first three things. Um, and then there's a couple more things that I'm practicing right now. The fourth one is leadership. And this is an area where I think depending on the kind of position that you have, you know, we can lead from all different kinds of positions, but I'm actually, um, in a very kind of, um, formalized leadership position right now.

And my job in 2020 did change and I went from overseeing one team to overseeing four teams. And it did, um, cause me to really step up kind of my understanding of certain areas of what I was trying to do within my day job. And I think that, um, this has caused me to do a lot of reading and a lot of reflection about what does it mean to be a leader in higher education?

How do certain leadership competencies mesh with kind of my personality or not? And what does that mean? You know, for me as a leader and what I want to be cultivating. And so the practice of leadership, um, is really about me developing a stronger sense of self-awareness of what does it mean to me to be a leader and what kind of leader do I want to be?

Um, and so that's something I've just been giving a lot of thought to. And then the last thing that I would say, um, I'm starting to practice and all of these areas, I mean, practice is just such a good word because I don't necessarily feel good, uh, that I'm doing like all of these things really well, but that's the, that's the purpose?

That's the concept. So the fifth area is, um, compassion. And trying to understand, uh, and have compassion for people who may think very differently than I do. And I think from the very beginning of, uh, 20, 21, there's been a lot going on just politically and otherwise, where sometimes I look at, you know, what's happening and I just have a complete lack of understanding, um, of how someone could think the way that they're thinking or do the thing that they're doing.

And, um, It's challenging. And it puts me in a state of mind. That is not exactly where I want to be. It can be very negative, it can be very judgy. And I want to try to practice this, um, feeling of compassion and trying to see things from lots of angles and have an understanding of the emotions that are sometimes behind people's actions, which often are rooted in things like fear.

And so practicing compassion is something that is, um, I feel like I have a really open space to do that in coaching. And I've been able to practice compassion through coaching for years now. And I'm trying to kind of broaden my perspective of how I'm then applying that, that compassion muscle, that I've kind of been building up to other areas of my life as well.

And, um, it's helpful and interesting. And, and there are kind of readings and other kinds of reflections that I'm doing around this concept of compassion. And including things like empathy, which is helping me to think through in a more deep way of emotional intelligence, which ties in with leadership. I mean, all of these things are kind of connected when you really get down to it.

So practice, I think is also, uh, an Avenue to allow you to see connections between things. And that's something that I'm also really focused on this year. So that's a little bit about the word that I chose for 2021. And of course I would really love to hear, if you have a word or phrase, that's guiding you this year, you can always email me at hello at Dr.

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