**YGT episode 229**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 229. 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 want to talk about restful activities and something that has come up for me lately, because every week in the prolific online community, we are having live weekly planning sessions.

Uh, we do these on Sunday nights. From six to 7:00 PM central time. And, um, in these sessions, it's basically an opportunity for people to think intentionally about the week ahead, we start with just a quick kind of debrief of the previous week. Just reflecting on what went well, what maybe didn't go as planned.

And then we dive into planning for the upcoming week. And I ask a series of reflective questions and then people have a chance to like debrief those questions in breakout rooms. We come back together, I ask some more reflective questions and then people can either do more breakout rooms or they can just kind of work on their schedule for the week.

And it is been so delightful to come together and have this event every week. And see familiar faces and just feel like you're starting off the week with a really, um, kind of positive vibe. But one of the questions that's become one of my favorite ones for this, um, event is to ask people how they're building in rest during the week.

Because one of the things that I've really realized is if you're not planning for it, it kind of can. Just out of sight out of mind, like it, you don't necessarily think about building and rest into your schedule. And I think it's actually really important to do that. So I think that the other thing that's kind of odd is, you know, rest is a very personal thing for people, but I also think sometimes.

We don't know how to rest. Like it seems like it would be something that would be really natural, but I think sometimes people feel guilty if they're resting or they just feel like they should be doing something else and it kind of ruins the rest. So I thought I would take just a little bit of time and share some of my current favorite restful activities.

These are some of the things that I'm building into my week or that I'm doing on a regular basis so that I can make sure that I'm getting rest. And for me right now, how I'm defining restfulness is usually it's quiet and usually it's alone time. Um, and this is usually meaning I'm away from zoom. Um, I'm, I'm not kind of engaging with work.

I'm usually not with my partner, although sometimes you'll see some of these restful activities include my partner. Um, but rest for me is like, I've got to really power down. And usually that means that I'm I'm on my own. Um, and I'm, I'm resting on my own now. I think for other people rest would be defined differently.

So I give these examples just to say, I'm doing this, I'm defining what rest means for me. And I'm building it into my schedule. And to encourage you to maybe think about what does rest mean for you and how do you want to actually build it into your schedule? So I'm going to share with these activities are, and then I'm going to tell you kind of, when I typically do them, So that you have a sense of like how this kind of thing gets built into my day or my week.

Okay. So these are some of my current favorite restful activities. The first one is, um, right now, meditation, and I've been doing more meditation than I normally would because I'm in the middle of a meditation class that encourages you to meditate multiple times a day. Now you might be thinking, I don't know how I feel about this, but.

Hear me out, I'm using, uh, an app called insight timer, which allows you to access free meditations. They are, um, categorized by time and topic. So if you just have like five minutes, you can pick the five minute one. I've usually been doing ones that are between 10 and 15 minutes, depending on what I have time for.

And sometimes I'll like, squeeze this in, in the morning. Sometimes I'll squeeze this in. Like, if I'm in between meetings, if I have like a half an hour in between meetings, I might pause and do a meditation. Now what I'm really trying to do during this meditation period is not completely clear my mind because usually when I'm doing this, it's like I'm just getting started with my day or I'm just like in the middle of my day, I am trying to get my mind to just quiet down a little bit and to kind of have a little bit of a restful moment.

Usually this involves closing my eyes. Um, it involves kind of, um, lengthening my breath and kind of deepening my breath. And the meditations on insight timer are led meditations guided meditations. And so you're kind of told what to do in the meditation. You're told kind of what to focus on or what to think about.

And I find that to be really helpful because then I don't have to be, um, directing myself in the meditation, but I'm just listening to the guided meditation that I'm being offered. So meditation, um, I'm trying to do one, one to two times a day, depends on the day and kind of my schedule, but that's kind of what I'm trying to build in for that.

The other thing that I'm doing in between meetings, um, and this is gonna sound. I don't know how, if it's going to sound, but sometimes I just stare off into space and think, and I feel like it is the most luxurious thing. And we all, we all just don't get enough time to do this. And especially when we're in meeting, after meeting, after meeting, if I got a break in between, sometimes I just sit in my office and I have a window right across from where I sit and I just got the window.

And I look at the weather or I kind of think about and process what just happened in the meeting, or I think about the upcoming meeting. And I just give myself a moment to just kind of be with myself and, and process what it is that I'm doing and my job, and this is time, you know, that could be spent in emails and other kinds of things.

But I think, especially when you have these little margins in your day, it's fine to just take, you know, a few minutes and just sit with yourself. So I've enjoyed that because it just gives my, my brain a chance again, to kind of power down for a moment. And also, I think another key element of this is that I'm taking my eyes away from my computer screen and I'm focusing in the far distance and it's giving my eyes a little bit of a rest from constantly looking at my laptop screen, which is kind of right up close.

So that's another kind of added bonus, I think just staring off into space as you give your eyes a bit of a rest. Another restful activity that I've been doing a little, a lot of this year is reading. And, um, I did recently replaced my iPad. I had an iPad mini that was like 10 years old and, um, was just really getting to a point where it needed to be replaced.

And so I've been really enjoying, um, getting eBooks from both, um, like Kindle deals, but also from my local library. And then I had a ton of eBooks just sitting on, on my Kindle account, um, from previous years and things that I've purchased over time, things that have been gifted to me. And so I've just really been enjoying kind of working through that back list and doing a ton of reading.

Um, this year, I would say ebook reading has really been just my primary form of reading. It's a lot faster for me to read that way. And I'm also highlighting some things in what I read and then sharing those highlights on good reads, which I think is kind of a cool thing too, so people can see what I'm reading.

So reading for fun has been something that I've really been enjoying. And especially if I can string a couple of hours together, I really, really enjoy that of just getting kind of lost in a book has been really great. Now the obvious restful activity is going to bed early, and this has been something I have definitely been doing some nights.

Um, most nights I work after my day job and I have client meetings usually from six to eight, or I do a coach training from six to eight and it is not uncommon for very shortly after those meetings. Um, are done for me to go straight to bed and usually my partner and I will chat for a while and kind of debrief our days or we'll sit on the couch for a little while, but I, it's not uncommon for me to go to bed by eight 30 and I get up every morning at 5:00 AM.

So it does help to get kind of the full night's sleep. But I am, I am not. Someone who feels guilty at all about going to bed early, because I think if I'm tired, it's just, there's not really much left of me to kind of give to the day to my work, to my partner. And it's better for me to just get refreshed with a night's sleep.

Um, okay. So a couple other things here. One is kind of tied to this, going to bed early, which is sometimes, um, my partner and I, especially toward the weekend time, we'll watch a movie in bed together and we've been working our way through the Marvel movies. This was one of my 21, uh, for 20. For 2021 goals list.

This was on my list was to work through the Marvel movies. And, um, so usually like on a Friday night or a Saturday night, we'll start the movie and then I just can fall asleep at the end. And, um, it's kinda nice because our typical place that we watch movies is downstairs. Right. And so rather than having to be downstairs and work my way upstairs and get ready, I just get ready for bed before I watched this movie.

And then we try to start it by six 37 o'clock. So that around the time that it's ending is my usual kind of bedtime. We debrief the movie, of course, because we have to talk about it. Um, but then I can just go straight to bet. No, I know there's a lot of stuff about like, not having TV in your bedroom and you know, those kinds of things, but for right now, this is actually working well and it's making it a little more efficient and making sure that I get rest.

So I also wanted to mention couple of yoga poses that I found to be really helpful as restful activities as well. These are super simple. They're restorative poses. One is called very fittingly legs up the wall. And you basically, um, put your legs up against the wall. You're kind of in an L shape. And it elevates your feet.

And, um, there's a lot of pictures of this. If you want to just Google, except the wall, a lot of runners do this pose. If you do a lot of running or walking, it's a good pose to just kind of get the circulation going in a different direction in your legs. And it can be very restful. Um, so legs up the wall.

And then the other one that I've been doing a lot lately, and again, you can kind of Google this if you're not sure how I'm describing it. It's called supported fish pose. And this is one that really opens up your lower back and your shoulders, um, because you're kind of arching your back and then allowing your upper back to be elevated so that your shoulder blades can open up and your chest can kind of open up.

And this is a great pose. If you sit at a desk a lot and you're like typing a lot, you're on a laptop or a computer a lot, it kind of makes sure that your back is like arching in a different direction. So supported fish pose is one that I've also been using a lot in my one-on-one yoga sessions that I'm doing with people on the weekends and people seem to really enjoy it.

So, um, that's one again, you can kind of Google the pose. If you want to see what it looks like. The other couple of things that I've been doing is, um, one restful activity that I've liked lately. As I, since I got this new iPad mini I've been playing a game on it that I played like a long time ago, years and years ago, but I was kind of reacquainted with it.

And it's one of those like hidden picture games, definitely for kids probably. Um, but I don't care. I think it's fun. I play one called hidden city and it's basically a mix of finding. Images and pictures, like if you ever used to read those highlights magazines, you kind of know what I'm talking about. Um, this is definitely dating my generation, but there's also, um, like little games and other kinds of things that are embedded.

I think what makes this game really restful for me is there's little kind of quests and things that you're supposed to do. But the game directs you in exactly where you're supposed to go with those things. So you don't have to put a lot of thought into it. You just kind of like follow where it tells you to go and then find whatever it wants you to find or complete the puzzle it wants you to complete.

And this is something that has just been kind of a nice distraction, like at the end of the day. If I'm trying to kind of wind my brain down from meetings or something like that, I may pop into this and play a few rounds and just kind of keep my brain a little bit activated, but also doing something that feels a little bit more fun and restful.

So a couple other things I would just add here is that, um, journaling is definitely an activity that I've kept up. Um, during this whole pandemic period. That's very restful for me. I do journal every morning when I get up. And this is also an activity that kind of allows me to clear up my brain before I'm kind of starting the day.

And I usually talk about kind of what happened in the previous day. What's coming up in the, the current day. Anything that's kind of on my mind. Um, so journaling, I do three pages a day of that. And then the other couple of activities that I added to this list when I was thinking about it was, uh, sometimes I just drink a cup of tea without doing anything else.

Like I just sit and have a cup of tea and that's it. I'm not looking at my phone. I'm not talking to anyone. I'm not reading emails. You know, I'm just kind of sitting and drinking a cup of tea and that pairs, well, with the last thing I put on my list, which is just do nothing, um, which is kind of tied to the staring off into space, um, option where I just sit.

I just sit with myself and allow myself to have a moment that's not where anything else is expected of me. I can just kind of sit with myself and have a quiet moment where I'm either drinking some tea or, um, you know, just sitting on my couch or whatever I want to do. And I, again, I it's so simple, but I feel like this is one of those things that a lot of us are not really getting this time to just sit and.

But our brains pause and be with ourselves for a moment, which is also why I'm really enjoying meditation, because it's just kind of time that I'm spending with myself and I get to kind of have that quiet moment of solitude. So those are some ideas. Uh, I know that some of you may be like, Oh, that is just not my personality or that doesn't fit me, but I know that you probably have some activities that feel very restful for you.

When I think about this, what I've really tried to kind of cultivate on my list of restful activities was things where I'm not really doing anything that feels like work. So I had thought about things like folding laundry or doing the dishes, which can be kind of meditative in their own. Right. Because you know, you, you don't have to pay a ton of attention, but I was like, you know, I don't want to have to feel like I'm getting anything done when I'm resting.

You know, I'm doing a lot of things in the rest of my day. I need to have some time where that's not the expectation and then I'm not looking at the clock and I'm not, you know, like trying to be efficient and like get all these things done within a certain period of time or multitask. Like part of the goal, I think for wrestling with me is I'm single tasking.

Um, I'm doing kind of one thing I'm focused on that one thing, whether it's meditation or reading or watching a movie or doing a yoga pose where I don't have to have this expectation that I'm cramming at a bunch of other stuff. So I would encourage you to think about what are the restful activities that you can focus on right now.

And that will help you too. Experienced this level of rest and maybe single task and let your brain power down. There's so many benefits, I think, to not just rushing all the time. And I know it's tough because modern work world, this is what we all do, but I thought it would be helpful just to share some of the ways I'm doing this.

And also just to be open about the fact that I am doing this. I am finding time for rest. I am looking at my week. I am finding the margins and I am building this in. So I want to wish you a very restful week and I'd love to hear how you're doing this. 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 lender. 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.

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