**YGT episode 231**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 231. Um, 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, I thought I would talk about a topic that has come up in so many of my coaching sessions lately.

And this is the idea of thinking about your current job as a training ground, for something that you want to get better at, or potentially do later on in your career. And I think the reason this has been coming up so much lately is a lot of people think about. Their current job as the place where like they should be prepared to kind of do.

What they were hired to do. And some of my clients right now are going on the job market. And so they're really trying to showcase in their materials like how they've been prepared and they're ready to like take on new responsibilities, but then they kind of forget within all of that, that we're all still learning, like all the time when it comes to our jobs.

And we sometimes I think don't give ourselves permission to admit that there are still things that we want to figure out or grow in or evolve in or learn. And we have to be kind of intentional about this sometimes with our jobs. So I love this concept of a training ground, which is basically just an opportunity to learn skills in your field, your profession, your discipline, but in kind of an intentional way, and thinking about what does that mean for you strategically as you're trying to grow your skills or build, you know, your career path.

So I was thinking about this and how there's a couple different ways that I've done this recently, where, um, it started with just identifying a topic area. No, I think I've mentioned on the podcast or in the blog. Are there places in the past that I recently kind of shifted in my position and, um, ended up in a leadership role.

That was a little bit of a higher level than what I was originally hired for. So when I started my job about a year ago, a little more than a year ago, I came in and I was managing one team. And toward the end of the summer, I started, uh, managing four teams. Um, including the one that I was originally kind of overseeing.

And then I took on several more. And as part of that, my position description was updated and there was an area that was added in to my position description about strategic enrollment management. Now this was an area that when I first saw it, I was like, What is this exactly. You know, like, I feel like it's, it wasn't something that I'd had like formal training in, but I started doing some reading around it and I was like, Oh, I know what this is.

Like, I, I know the components of this. I've definitely encountered several things within this before. I feel generally kind of familiar in a broader way with the concepts of strategic enrollment management, but because it was newer to my portfolio and I hadn't really had it in my portfolio in the past.

Um, as part of other positions that I've had in the past, I decided I wanted to do a deeper dive on this area. So I went ahead and started looking around to see, you know, how can I learn more about this? And I ended up finding a class that was available through like the national association for registrars.

And it was a class that went for about six weeks and there were several kind of themed readings. And then discussion posts and, you know, various ways to engage with these materials and some videos and things like that, that you could, that you could watch as part of this class. And I decided to go ahead and take this class because I felt like it would be a really helpful way for me to connect with other people who were maybe asking some of the same questions that I was asking and trying to figure this out.

But I also, um, as I've talked about before, I love a guided learning opportunity and it, it really does help me when I'm really busy with a lot of things going on to have someone else kind of telling me and directing me about what to do and what to learn and what to read and, and to kind of hear from experts about what are the things that I should be caring about when it comes to this topic.

So as part of this course, I learned a lot about the history of enrollment management, which was really helpful. I learned about the different areas that are kind of impacted by strategic enrollment management across the university. I learned about some key texts that are being used in the field right now.

And I also ended up purchasing and reading several texts about strategic enrollment management, just so that I could kind of see in the literature base and in the scholarship. What are the kinds of things that people are talking about? So I just ended that class this month as I record this and I left it feeling a lot more confident about my ability to talk about this topic.

Um, my ability to plan around this topic, and especially as we're kind of leading our organization, you know, around some of these issues, we're often conversing with different parts of the university about. Strategic enrollment management issues and topics. And so now I feel much more prepared to engage in those conversations.

And I can feel kind of more confident about officially putting this in my CV as like a skill set that I have. So not only am I gaining experience of doing this work in my job, because it's now part of my portfolio. But I've done a little bit of formal learning around it and feel like, you know, if somebody asked me at a cocktail party, um, which, you know, happens all the time about strategic enrollment management, I would have some things to say, I would, I would be able to talk about it in a way that I felt confident about.

So I think sometimes you can pick a topic and it's okay to admit that you're like not really knowing a ton about it. I mean, like I had been exposed to a lot of things around this topic, but I loved doing a deeper dive and I found it really interesting and it allowed me to really have a better sense of what did I need to know to move things forward within my own organization, around these issues.

Now, I think there's a ton of different ways to do this. I mentioned taking a course. I also mentioned doing some readings. I think that there's also a lot out there right now, like in podcast form and blogs and other kinds of things that people are doing that make it really easy to find, you know, lots of different modalities of information around certain topics.

So I've been thinking more about what is this concept of a training ground and what else do I want to add in there? And I think about this past year and some of the credentials that I've pursued, I think project management for a long time. My job was a training ground for project management and especially the last job I had and the current job I have, I was very focused on that.

So it helps me to look historically at my different jobs that I've had and to ask myself, what was the training ground at those jobs? What was I really working on developing as a skillset and I kind of listed out the different things that I've been able to develop over the course of my different jobs.

And it allowed me to see how I was. Stacking up these skills over time in a way that has really contributed to my career growth and the trajectory of where I am right now and maybe where I'm headed into the future. So I think that it's important for us to realize that we're learning. We're always learning as we go and we have the opportunity to choose what that learning can look like.

And some of the things that we might be able to focus on. Uh, with our learning. So I still have some more readings that I'd like to do around strategic enrollment management. I'm also starting to do some readings now around leadership and communication and executive presence in the past. I've also done quite a bit of reading around emotional intelligence.

And so I think that there's a lot of different directions that this can go. Um, and I'm really curious if this is an area that you're kind of interested in, and if you can think of any training grounds that you might have in your own role, and what does that look like for you as you're developing. And learning new skills.

So, um, I would love to hear about it. 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 and I would really enjoy hearing about all the different skills that you're developing right now in your career.

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/podcast. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes. Thanks for listening.