**YGT episode 238**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 238. Welcome to you've. Got this, a weekly podcast, 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 week's episode, I thought I might talk a little bit about how do identify your core professional values.

I feel like I talk about values a lot, and then I went back through my blog posts and my podcast episodes, and I realized I haven't really talked about how do you figure out what these things. Are now I talk about this a lot with my coaching clients and in some of my group coaching programs and we go through different activities to help people identify their core professional values.

But I thought I would just talk you through some of the steps and also link to some resources if this is part of your current journey. And you're kind of trying to figure out what your core values are, then some of these things might be helpful for you. So the first thing I think, um, to do is to start with a values list.

And I'm going to link to one in the show notes that I often provide for people when I do workshops or coaching. And it's basically just a list of values words. Now you can also Google around and find a bunch of different kinds of values, words, lists. You can also find, um, I know some different places, um, sell like almost like flashcards with values, words on them as well.

So there's a lot of different tools out there to help you figure this out. So first, what you do is you read through all of these words and there are hundreds of them. So this can take a little bit of time. You probably want to set aside, you know, 30 minutes to 45 minutes to go through, depending on how long the list is, all the different words and what you're going to do when you're first going through this list is just circle or note anything that.

It feels like it's resonating with you now. It may be that you're circling a lot of words and that's okay. At least in the beginning, we're just trying to kind of get a little bit narrowed down, um, so that you can start to see maybe some patterns or themes in the words that you're circling. So once you have noted or circled all the things that resonate with you, then you're going to take those words and maybe just jot them down in a separate list and start to see if any of them are connected.

So, for example, you might have had words like collaboration, teamwork, and community, and you might say, well, those things feel kind of connected to me. They feel very relational. And so I think I could put them in like a bucket together. And so you want to start to theme your common words in these kinds of values buckets.

How do they relate to each other? Where do you see connections between these different words? Now, once you have these buckets in place and you have kind of themed this, you might realize that you have a smaller number of groupings than what you originally started with. Maybe you started with, you know, a couple dozen words, but then when you start to group them, you realize it's a lot less than that because these words are kind of connected and they're all different ways of saying kind of the same thing that you think is important to you.

Now the next thing that I think can be helpful once you have these kinds of themes of what is starting to resonate with you with these values words is then to look for examples of when these things have already shown up in your life and career. And you're looking for concrete examples of where this might have shown up in a project or in a job that you had, or in a decision that you made where maybe one of these values was a key element to you making a particular decision.

Or prioritizing one thing over another thing. And that's going to start to point to kind of a strengthening of that particular set of theme words, or a values word, where you're starting to see some evidence that this is kind of already in your life. No, a lot of people will ask me about the difference between like your core values and aspirational values.

And I feel like this activity of looking in your past and seeing where things have shown up is part of how you differentiate that. Because if you have an aspirational value, it may be that this is not really something that you're living yet, but some of your core values, you probably are going to start to see them show up.

Um, you would already have integrated them into your professional life, into your projects, your priorities, your decision-making they're already going to be showing up there. Now, it's also really important at this point to differentiate between what you value and what you consider to be guiding values.

And this is something that I think, uh, people have a tough time with because you'll look at the list of values words, and will be a lot of things on there that are just important. Like you, you could look at that list and say, well, that's really important. So I'm going to circle it. Or I know the value of that.

And so I'm going to circle it. But it doesn't necessarily mean that it's one of your core guiding values. It just means that you see the value of that thing and that's different. So one example I often provide when I'm talking with people about this is I can see the value of something like collaboration.

I've used it a ton in my career. I leverage it like a tool when I do edited collections or when I'm working on big institution-wide projects, collaboration is obviously a really important skill and a really important tool to do work that involves a lot of diverse voices. And when you're making sure that you have a lot of different perspectives being brought into a project, Now I can recognize the value of collaboration, but because as many of you know, if you've been listening to the show for a long time, I am an introvert.

Collaboration is not necessarily going to be a guiding value for me. It's going to be something that I know how to do that I care about that I think is a really important skill to have. And maybe I've even nurtured this skill in myself to make sure I know how to do it effectively. But it's not necessarily going to be something that I'm drawn to, or that when I have to make a decision, I'm going to lean toward collaboration.

Now there will be other people who would lean toward that, that it is a core value for them to always be thinking about collaboration. And part of it is just kind of a, um, one way to think about this is it's, it's like an emphasis of scale. And how important is this thing to you? Would it impact decisions that you are making for your life and career, or do you just kind of see the value of it?

Um, and that's the, that's like the level of scale that it has in your professional life. So once you have this set of your buckets of you've, you've kind of patterned these words, you've themed these words into buckets. You're going to try to narrow down to maybe five or seven words that you would consider to be your values that are represented by what you're seeing in terms of these themes.

Now, the last step that I think is really important is to take these five to seven words. And it may be that you have like a grouping of words and you pick one of the words in that group to like represent the rest of the world. It might be that you have a grouping of words and you pay like a new word to represent what all of those things mean together.

Like when I said earlier team building collaboration, um, I chose relational as the word that kind of describe those things. But you also want to make sure that you're defining your values words in your own words, because sometimes we'll say a value, but what it means to us in terms of how it's operationalized or made actionable in our life is different than how it might look in someone else's life.

So, um, if you think about values, words, like integrity, Or, um, alignment, those kinds of words might mean different things to different people. And so part of what we want to do is define values in your own words so that they can be actionable in your life. And really just so that they make sense so that when you look at those words, you're like, yeah, I do feel like that is a representation of me, of how I operate of the things that I care about, of what I prioritize and of my professional identity.

Now another way to kind of check this is if you were to look at your values, words, would other people look at those words and say, yes, I think that's a representation of kind of what you stand for. And what you prioritize in your professional life and would other people be able to tell based on your actions that you are engaging those values?

Now it is possible that you have a set of core values and you haven't really been able to operationalize them in your day-to-day life or in your work. And so that would be something to pay attention to. If you feel a sense of misalignment between your current professional situation. And the kinds of core values that you want to be operationalizing.

But for the most part, we should all be able to show at least some of our core values in our day-to-day practices, in our decision making and in the kinds of projects and things that we take on. So I'm going to go ahead and link, um, a couple of, uh, well, at least one values list that you can download if you want to do this activity on your own.

And then I'm also going to link a couple of books that talks specifically about identifying professional values in case you want to do a deeper dive in this area. Um, there's a couple books that I found online. Um, one of them is pretty slim actually, but it allows you to kind of walk through some steps to think about your values.

And I think this is one of those areas that I have certainly found, um, helps me when I'm making big decisions or when I'm trying to figure out how I want to prioritize my time or choosing my next projects. It really does help me to think through what I'm currently engaging in with my core values. And, um, so I hope that it does the same for you.

Of course, I would love to take any questions you have about identifying your core professional values. You can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie linder.com. And I would love to hear what your questions are or how this has gone for you. If you decide to try this activity, I have always found it to be so useful to re-engage and kind of center around my core professional values.

And I hope you find the same. 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.

Thanks for listening.

Yeah.