**YGT episode 239**

Your listening to you've got this episode 230. 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 on this episode, but I want to talk a little bit about the difference between change and transition.

Now, this is a topic that I got really interested in when I recently read William Bridges book managing transition, and he makes a differentiation between these terms. Where he talks about change being very situational. So this might be something where, you know, something happens at your work and it's like, uh, a new strategic planning process, for example.

And you're given a timeline for when these things are gonna happen, or, um, even at my work, for example, we're moving everybody to remote permanently. And so that's a change that is situational. We're kind of changing something about our work environment that is, um, controlled by a timeline. And, and there's some kind of external factors that are driving it.

But transition. According to William Bridges is more psychological and he describes this as having three different distinct phases. The first one is when you have to let go of the old ways of doing things and maybe even old identities that you associated with that. And I think a transition to remote work is actually a really good example here.

And this is where something is ending. So you might even feel a sense of loss in this stage of the transition. And then there's a second stage, which is this kind of in-between time and the oldest gone, but the new isn't like fully operational yet. So you don't have, um, like maybe all the details worked out and there might be even some areas of a plan that are not clear.

So he calls this the neutral zone. And this is when you're starting to have some realignments and, and what he calls re patternings that are taking place. And then the third phase is when you're coming out of the transition and making a new beginning, and this is where you're developing a new identity experiencing, um, the newness of the situation.

You might have a new sense of purpose, you know, related to this new thing that you've embraced. And one of the things that I appreciated so much when I was reading this book, which I would highly recommend if you're managing any kind of change or transition, is he talks about how. Change is something that you can have some sense of control over.

You could have a timeline, you could have certain dates, um, in which something is going to happen in which you're going to be, you know, closing a building and, you know, having everybody move out and go remote. But the transition piece doesn't necessarily have a timeline. The psychological side is really personal to each individual and everybody is going to kind of go about their own, you know, ending in neutral zone and new beginning in a different way.

So I was also thinking about this because of the transition that we're all kind of, uh, engaging in now related to vaccines. Um, and some of us who have gotten vaccines, we're now in this kind of interesting, I think the neutral zone where we're starting to kind of repattern and rethink about, okay, what does feel safe now to do?

And in some ways we, we went through a transition at the very beginning of a pandemic where we had to let go of what felt safe and we had to rethink. Um, where we could go and what we could do and the kinds of behaviors that we needed to have. And now we're going through it again and trying to kind of renegotiate to find out what is the new beginning that we're entering into.

Now, I think we're still squarely in a neutral zone with that because we don't have everyone vaccinated. Of course. And you know, we have a lot of people who are maybe choosing not to do that. And so it's causing, I think this, um, pause for a lot of people to try to figure out on an individual personal level.

What does that transition look like for them? And I've heard a lot of people trying to kind of process this. Now this is also coming up with people who are physically going back to work if they hadn't already. And there's all kinds of other little changes and transitions that are happening, I would say over the next like six months to a year, because a lot of our campuses are going to kind of come back from being remote during that period of time.

Again, if they haven't already. And it's causing us all to really think about this, um, in a different way. Now you can imagine that if you're trying to manage some kind of change dealing with all these individual intricacies and in and outs of every individual, person's transition could be kind of challenging.

And so this is something that, again, I've been giving a lot of, I thought to it and, um, I actually decided to pursue a certificate in change management. Now, I know you all are probably thinking, Oh, I thought the credentialing season was over. Um, I think it is, I do feel like the credentialing season is kind of coming to a close.

I wrap up my meditation, yoga teacher training in June. Um, but this month I'm actually starting the courses in the change management certificate. And really what I am thinking about with that is just, you know, this is something that is going to be so important for higher education leaders to be thinking about how do we manage change?

How do we really support people as they're going through a lot of transition within the industry in a number of different ways and levels. So that is one reason why I decided to pursue it. But the other thing, um, that really got me thinking about this is I was reading Harvard business reviews, um, compilation on change management, which I can link in the show notes and I'll link William Bridges book there as well.

And there was an essay in the, the volume one. There's actually two volumes. And in volume one, there's an essay where, um, the author had kind of align. It was almost like a throwaway line, but it just stuck out to me. She said changes, uh, about learning. Change is always about learning. And I thought we are in the business of learning.

Like that is what we do in higher education. So of course we have to be ready to help people. You know, our learners are our staff or faculty, you know, everyone who's kind of involved in this enterprise. We have to help them see change as learning, and we have to help them to be supported as they go through all of these changes that are coming up within the industry.

So that connection of thinking about change management and thinking about, um, learning was really huge for me. And it got me thinking about some of the connections between like adult learning theory and, um, getting into issues of like motivation, for example. Personalized learning, authentic assessments, helping people to understand how their learning has a direct impact, you know, on their, on their life, on their work.

And also really, um, drawing on people's past experiences and integrating that into learning experiences in the classroom. All of these things are pretty basic elements of adult learning theory. It is all completely tied in with how we think about things like change management and how we're trying to help people to kind of know where they are within these three.

Um, phases of transition and locate where it is that they are now and where they want to go into the future. So I will link, you know, a bunch of this stuff. I'll link the books, I'll link the, the information about the change management certification as well. If you're kind of interested in learning more about that, there's several out there.

I decided to go with one, um, from Cornell. And so I'll go ahead and link that in the show notes. But part of this for me is really doing a deeper dive into how do we have the tools. That we need to think through some of our hardest challenges within our industry. And I think there's a lot of different.

Challenges that are going to be kind of coming up for us, that you could go in any number of directions with kind of educating yourself or thinking through what is the role that you want to play when it comes into managing these kinds of transitions, but particularly for leaders within higher education.

I think it's really important for us to keep educating ourselves. And I have been kind of working with managing change for years and years and years since very early in my career. Um, when I first started working as an administrator and a leader, But I still very much feel like I'm a student of these theories and I'm really trying to better understand, again, what is my role?

What are the strengths that I can bring to these kinds of situations so that I can be serving, you know, the communities that I'm working with and making sure that they're being as supported as possible when they're going through different kinds of change and transition. I think if we know anything about what is coming around the corner for higher ed it's that we are definitely going to have more change, and we're going to have to figure out what to do with that, how to support each other and really how to identify, um, again, what is the phase that we're in and then.

What do we do based on being in that phase? So I'll link up into resources. I also recently had a blog post on some of my favorite, um, recommended resources on the concept of transition. So I'll link that as well in case this is a topic that you want to dive into. Also, I would love to hear if there's anything around change management that you're learning, or even around other topics that you're doing a deep dive into in this season of your life and career too.

Kind of, you know, upskill yourself a little bit or re-skill yourself in a particular direction so that you can be better prepared for what's coming. You can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie linder.com and I'll look forward to hearing about your experiences. 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.