You're listening to, you've got this episode 258. 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. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder on this episode, I want to talk about kind of the mindset that you're going to have as we begin to close out 2021.

And part of what got me thinking about this is that in this last week I drafted a blog post it'll come out this weekend about my 10 goals that I want to complete by the end of. And this is a post that around this time I have posted the last couple of years as we're kind of getting close to rounding out quarter four.

And I really noticed a shift from the past where in some cases with my goals, I was really doing like a final sprint. And now I feel like I'm kind of slowing down and focusing more on. Things that are really priorities for me to do. Um, and I even, I, I guess I would say I kind of struggled to came up, come up with 10 things.

I think in the past, it wasn't as difficult for me. Um, I was able to build in some more things about routines, like reading and exercise that, that made that list feel really meaningful. And I also noticed that some of my pre. That I put on that list are highly outsourced. For example, I've mentioned we're going to do a kitchen, bathroom renovation, and that's really other people who are doing that and we're just kind of managing it.

So I feel like as I've talked with other people, um, there's a, a sense of fatigue and I just want to kind of be, you know, putting it out there that if you're starting to feel like right now, you're kind of at a crawl. Uh, you're not ready to sprint to the end of the year, but you're kind of crawling to the finish line.

I think that we forget that we can actually just intentionally slow our pace down to a walk. There's no shame in walking to the end of the year. And really what that means to me is keeping your pace consistent and steady without overdoing it in terms of kind of what's on your plate. Now, this is something that I've really noticed too.

You know, obviously I've started a new job. I'm trying to catch up. Um, really think about my pacing throughout the week, because I have some days that are just very heavy in terms of meetings and it's not just the meetings themselves. It's like the meeting topics, you know, there's, there's something where I have to put a lot of time or energy or attention into creating like a document for the meeting or, um, it's going to be kind of a more difficult conversation in the meeting.

And so I need to be really fully present. And, um, so I've really been looking at my weekly schedule and trying to figure out how I can pace myself to have days that are a little bit more open, you know, where I have some more margin. And this is also something that we frequently talk about in the Sunday planning hours in the prolific community.

We get together every week and we plan out our weeks and we think a lot about kind of what is our capacity for what we want to do that. So I wanted to offer you a few reflective questions. If you're finding yourself in a place that feels maybe a little bit frantic or you feel underwater, you know, maybe you're just feeling very tired.

There's a lot going on. I've heard from a lot of people that they're feeling really overwhelmed. I'm certainly seeing that in a lot of my clients that I'm working with right now. So here are some questions to kind of think about if you find yourself in this space. So the first one is where is your capacity at?

Right. And I would encourage you to be really honest with yourself because. I, I won't say just academics. I think, I think people in the Western world tend to kind of take a lot on and we just kind of pile it on and pile it on. And if we have like an empty slot on our calendar, we go ahead and fill it. We keep adding things to our to-do list.

And I think we need to have kind of an honest conversation with ourselves about where we're at. And part of that is where we are in the year. Part of that is where we are in the pandemic. Uh, there may be other contexts or things going on with your family or your job, but kind of where is your capacity right now?

And I'll admit, this is kind of where this episode is coming from. I'm feeling a bit fatigued. I feel like I need extra rest. I need more solitude time or reflection time. Um, I'm now, you know, a solid two months into my new job. There's a lot going on there. Um, and I'm not getting the kind of solitude I was getting when I was working remotely.

It's, it's harder to find that. And so, um, I find, you know, just overall, I feel like I need more rest. I need to go to bed earlier. And this is the time of year too, where it's starting to get darker earlier. And I think that we start to get into a little bit of hibernation mode. And so I'm really listening to that for myself and allowing myself to kind of lean into that a bit.

Now, the next question is when you think about where your capacity is at right now, what is decreasing or increasing your capacity. So I've really come to understand over a long period of time. And it's certainly applicable now that rest and solitude, um, really increased my company. If I can get kind of my introverted time alone to kind of rest and recharge and reset, that really helps me to take on more if I need to do that.

And what really decreases my capacity is being in kind of constant meetings and interactions with. Now to some degree, I can't always control that, but it does mean that in the evenings, you know, I'm taking more time off, you know, in the evenings and on the weekends to try to give myself more time for solitude.

And today's a really good example. So as I record this, this is a Sunday I took today off of client. And this is the first time I've done that in a long time. Um, but I needed some time to just like do whatever I wanted to do and have an unscheduled day. So I started the day catching up with some videos on YouTube that I wanted to watch.

Uh, I ended up going shopping because I needed to buy a couple of items for my wardrobe. Um, and I was in the car by myself. No music, no podcasts listening, just like being alone in the quiet and solitude. And it was actually really wonderful. And like, I could feel my cup, you know, like refilling from just having this time.

So really trying to plan that in. And I'll tell you, I booked that into my calendar over a month ago, um, and was really looking forward to it. I also got in a nap in the afternoon, so I was able to get in some extra actual, like sleep and rest. And that felt really good. So again, those first two questions, where is your capacity at right now?

What is decreasing or increasing your capacity? Now the next question I think is about looking at the bigger picture of projects that are on your plate and trying to identify the top three things that need your time, energy, and resources before the end of the. And you might think about things like what's stressing you out the most.

What's going to have the greatest impact for you as a way to kind of prioritize some of these projects. Um, but I would say for example, I have a big project at work that I'm about to launch, and it's a task force that I'm facilitating for several months. So that's kind of one big priority on my plate. I have a big project at home, which is this kitchen, bathroom renovation.

That's going to throw our lives into a bit of a chaos for, for the next couple of. And partly because of these projects, I want to make sure that I'm getting time for rest so that I can show up in the way that I want to, for all of these other things that are on my plate. So when you think about kind of your priorities, especially this time of year, it might have something more to do with family and you know, the holidays and getting some rest and recovery.

But thinking about what those bigger picture projects are and where you really want to put your time, energy and resources can help you to make maybe better decisions about what you're trying to prioritize. And it can maybe even help you to say no to some things that are coming. Now the next question is, and I think this is a kind of a dangerous one is going to kind of preface it by, by saying, let me show you kind of both sides of this coin.

Um, so the question is what can you put on the back burner without any consequences? Um, and this is one that I definitely think about this time of year, but here's the other side of the coin. I think we all have a tendency to say, oh, let's just throw that into January. Like it's kinda like throwing it over the fence until, until the new year comes along.

And then we get into the new year and we're like, okay, we didn't realize how many things we threw over the fence. And we're not necessarily thinking about our future selves. So this is really a question that's like, are there things right now that maybe are just kind of on the edge of your mind or they're taking up your time or attention?

Yeah. It's, you're not even actively thinking about them. Like you really just need to formally set them aside because it's not something that you can really do anything about right now. Um, the other kind of companion question to that I think is where can you ask for help? So if you have something that is not able to move forward and it, you want it to, you know, maybe you ask for like a coauthor to join you on a project or something like that.

Um, or you talk with your boss or your supervisor about. Um, you know, getting some extra resources for something or, or just seeing how you can kind of get some assistance. Um, for me, I would say this absolutely falls into my personal realm as well. We have people who come and clean our house every two weeks.

I definitely think this falls into asking for help. My partner manages all of our grocery ordering. Um, so there are certain things that I'm kind of delegating on my personal life that are helping me to create space for other. Now, you might also ask yourself if there are things that can be taken off your plate completely.

So maybe there was a project that you were kind of wishing that you could do. Or at one time it seemed like a good idea, but now you're looking at it and thinking. No, I, I just don't think that this is going to be workable, you know, for the near future. I have a lot of these kinds of things that got put on my plate when I first started my new job and I didn't have enough information to really prioritize what I needed to work on now, versus later now I have enough information that I can say, you know, that's a project that I'm probably not going to tackle into, like the fall of 22, you know, I can actually just move it forward into my calendar and know that it's not something I need to be thinking about.

Right. Now the last question that I would encourage you to think about is if there are routines or supports that are going to help you maintain your pacing towards your goals, whatever that pacing looks like. Now, I know some of you might be listening to this and thinking I have to be sprinting right now.

Like. There's not another option just based on your context or what's going on at work or in your life. Um, and that's okay. I mean, if that's where you're at, you know, I think that you might want to think about what are the things that are going to allow you to do that. And what is the recovery time that you can plan at the end of that period so that you can be, um, making sure that you are doing that kind of self-care.

Now I, I think when I have to go through a sprint period, it's usually a four to six week sprint and that's kind of what I was doing at the beginning of this job. And I feel like I'm kind of coming out of that at least for a short period of time before I go into maybe another sprint in the spring. Um, and I think that for me, as I think about things that support me, certainly like exercise.

Sleep time with my partner. And like I mentioned today, that unstructured time where I can do what I want and I'm not like, um, you know, looking at my calendar all the time to make sure I have my next meeting. And, and I know kind of where I'm supposed to be. You know, having that unstructured time really gives me a chance to take a break, um, and to really let my brain kind of rest and do what it needs to.

So thinking about the kinds of routines and supports that you need this time of year, as you're deciding on what that pacing looks like for yourself is going to be really simple. So just another reminder that if you can, if it's possible, there is kind of an option between a sprint and a crawl and that's just a steady walk and it can even be a slow walk.

It can be a, uh, ambling walk. Um, And remembering that we can make that choice to kind of be keeping our pace consistent and steady without completely overwhelming ourselves with whatever it is that's on. Our plate is really, really important to keep in mind. So I know a lot of us, we're just trying to get to the winter break.

Um, if you're on an academic schedule and you have that opportunity to take some time off around the holidays. It's coming, uh, that, that is coming, but you don't have to exhaust yourself before you get there. And if there are a small things that you can do to kind of slow the pace down, take some things off your plate, start to think about prioritizing and also keeping your future self in mind so that we're not just lobbing things over the fence and to into 2022.

Um, all of those things I think can help you to figure out how to get to that finish line and still feel like you've preserved some of your energy so that when you're resting. It's not out of a sense of exhaustion and just a collapse. So what I wish for you in this time of the year is that you do have a moment or two to come back to yourself to think about what you need the most, and to figure out how to build that into your schedule and into your priorities.

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.