You're listening to, you've got this episode 266. 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 how we are wrapping up the end of the year and particularly how it's okay to still be in the middle with a bunch of things.

Now, I think that there's a lot of pressure when you get to the end of the calendar year to be wrapping up, you know, all bunch of projects and having kind of a clean slate for the end of the year. And. Kind of having things just end, like wrapped up with a tidy bow on it. And I guess what I want to say is it's okay to be in the middle of stuff.

And I certainly am. I'm going to give some examples today of some things that are not going to get wrapped up by the end of the year for me. And I think sometimes even though that middle feels kind of messy and unresolved, it has some benefits to it as. So, um, I want to talk about some of those benefits of just kind of acknowledging that you're in the middle of something and that it's going to continue, um, across, you know, multiple years.

I think there's something really special about having a project that takes that long, that crosses over multiple months. And there's also just a level of commitment that we give to things like that. So, first of all, I think one of the benefits of being in the middle of something is you don't have to have everything figured out yet.

Um, you can certainly be asking questions still. You can feel like, uh, you can procrastinate to some degree, like figuring out some of the things that are, um, challenging or that are just raising questions for you about a particular project. I also really love about being in the middle, that you can still be learning and evolving in, within a project or within a certain kind of habit or approach that you're taking.

And there's an acknowledgement that like you haven't mastered anything yet. It's not done. It's still malleable. It's still something that can change or be adjusted. And I think there's a lot of flexibility. I also really love about being in the middle of something is you can really enjoy the process part of it, and you can find ways to enjoy the process along the way.

And, um, for me, I, and I'll give some examples of this in, in kind of the current things that I'm in the middle of. This is part of what allows me to be in the moment. Um, if you've listened to the show long enough, you probably know. I really like to focus on the future and that's something that I enjoy. I love planning.

I love visioning the future. I love creating plans of how I'm going to get to the future that I'm visioning. And it can be hard for me sometimes to just be in the present moment. But when I'm kind of focusing on enjoying a process along the way, that is something that allows me to do that more. Yeah. I think another benefit of being in the middle of something is you can relax your expectations if you feel stressed out about it.

Um, and to me, this also means like adjusting timelines or deadlines if needed so that you can just say to yourself, like, I have more time to figure this out. Like I don't have to wrap it up necessarily on an original timeline. Um, now there are certain instances for sure when we're given a deadline that we need to meet, but I think sometimes we have a.

Affectations of projects that we kind of assigned to ourselves of when they're going to happen. And for all kinds of life reasons, they just don't happen in the way that we thought that they would. And so being in the middle of something allows you to kind of revisit your original plan. It allows you to kind of rethink your approach and decide if everything that you originally had in mind for that particular thing.

It's still true. And maybe you want to make an adjustment or you want to, to revisit something there. Now I think a good example of this is when I kind of revised my annual goals and I can drop the link to the podcast in which I talked about that I had a bunch of life variables that changed. I moved, I changed jobs and I had to kind of rethink a lot of the things that I had on my plate.

And that was fine. I mean, that was just part of the process of being in the middle of those annual goals and deciding what I wanted to do with. Now I think another benefit of being in the middle is that you can ask for help or you can involve other people if it's not going the way that you want. And I think about different writing and projects that I've had, you know, over the years where I've gotten into the middle of it.

And I thought I really need. A collaborator here. Like I need a coauthor, I need some motivation. I need somebody to kind of talk these ideas out with, and I kind of switched tracks. And I went from doing like a solo authored piece to something where I had a collaborator or a coauthor. And it was great. It was, it infused the project with energy.

It allowed me to kind of think about it from a different angle. So I think. You know, when you get to the end of a project and if it's not kind of what you want it to be, it's a little bit different at that point to try to like completely reshape it. You know, like it, it might be more in its final stages, but when you're in the very middle of it, you can make some of those decisions.

You can make what I would say, like structural changes to whatever it is you're working on to, to really move it in a direction that feels better. And then the other thing I would say that I would say is a benefit of being in the middle of something, is that you can always pause that thing or you can stop it completely if it's not serving you.

Um, or if you feel like you need to kind of switch track, I, I just feel like there's so much flexibility to being in the middle of something that, um, I think we forget about that sometimes I think we're just so focused on the difficulty or the unfamiliarity or the challenge of, of wanting to wrap something up and knowing that we still have so much longer to go, that we forget about all of these other little benefits that we.

So as we're going to the end of the year, I did want to talk about some areas where I'm currently in the middle. Um, I certainly was able to wrap up a lot of goals that I had for this year, but there's a lot of stuff that is continuing on for me. And it's been really helpful for me to think about that.

And just for me to kind of acknowledge that these are areas where they're continuing on into 2022 in some pretty significant ways. So, um, at work by first kind of category that I want to talk about. I am still in the middle of my first year at my job, because I started in August. Um, I will hit like the six month mark in January, and that is like smack dab in the middle of that first year.

And I think we all know how much we pick up in the first year of doing just about anything. 'cause there's different cycles. There's different things to learn. There's different people that you're meeting there's different projects on your plate. So I think that for me, it was really important for me to acknowledge, like, there's nothing really about my work.

That's wrapping up, um, at the end of this calendar. And to that point, I'm also in the middle of a really big work project that basically straddled 20, 21 and 2022. So I'm literally at the halfway point of this project, we've had half of our meetings, we're halfway through our work, and then we're going to do another half of this work of, um, a taskforce that I'm facilitating.

In, um, January, February and March, and we're not really wrapping up until the end of March. And then there's going to be kind of implementation from that task force that will continue on probably into the summer, in the fall and beyond. And so that's a project that is absolutely not wrapping up now. It was great to hit that kind of midpoint milestone, um, in, in this month of December.

But I've really wanted to acknowledge that the work is not even close to being done and that. And then the other piece, which I think is so true for all of us is that many of us are in the middle of the. Yeah. So, um, because of the way the academic year sits in the calendar, the academic year does not function like the calendar year.

And it really does again, straddle one year into another. And so even though like our term is wrapping up, we still have the entire second half of the academic year that we need to be engaging in. And I think that that's the piece too. That can be a bit challenging. Um, especially if you're coming to the.

The end of the act or the end of the calendar year and you're feeling kind of tired, but remember, you're going to get that boost. You're going to get that boost from the beginning of the calendar year to help you keep going. Now, I also had a category of personal projects that I'm in the middle. So one is, we're definitely in the middle of settling into our new house.

We moved here in August when I started my new job. Um, as you've heard me mentioned in a couple of places, we are doing some renovations. Um, as I record this, I'm really, really hoping that they're going to get close to being done this week. Um, we actually had countertops installed, um, It's like a couple of days ago, and I really want to get the plumbing of our sinks back up and running.

Cause that will just be incredibly convenient. I'd love to have a functioning kitchen again. Um, but we are absolutely in the middle of that. And, and once those renovations are done, there's like stuff to get hung on the walls. Um, you've probably heard me talk about in a couple of different places. I need to unpack some boxes.

You know, they're, they're still very much, you know, settling into our house tasks that need to be done. And, and those are not going to be completed probably before the. I'm in the middle of my current journal, which may not seem like a big deal. But to me, I really appreciate that my daily journaling, it continues on, it's not like it ends, you know, at the end of December.

And then I start fresh in January. It helps me to see how the end of the calendar year is. The social construction that we've kind of created. Um, and, and there's a lot of meaning around it for a lot of us, but it really just is, you know, you, you go to bed on one day and you wake up the next day and yes, it's a new year, but it's still just kind of you're in the same old spot that you've typically been in for a long time.

So you can infuse the level of meaning to that, that you want, but having my habits and routines just kind of plot on during this period of time, I think is really helpful. Um, I'm also in the middle of getting back to an exercise routine and still kind of figuring out what that looks like for me. I have been regularly walking, which has felt awesome, and I really loved doing some longer walks over the Thanksgiving break.

Um, but I needed to get back into like a regular yoga practice. I need to get, uh, you know, starting to think about, you know, what are the ways that I want to, um, Bring kind of a meditative practice back into some of the walking that I'm doing. And so I feel like I'm just very much in the middle of that.

And, and some of this is stuff that we'll just continue on whenever we have habits or routines that are going to change over time, they're never really done. I mean, we're, we're always kind of like fiddling with them. Um, but that to me still feels like something that I'm very much in the. And then of course, in my reading life, I'm in the middle of a bunch of different books series that I am definitely not going to finish any time soon.

And that helps me to just think from year to year, you know, what are the kinds of stories that I'm listening to? What are the authors that I'm learning about the different characters that I'm engaging with? Like, I, I just love that that continues across the years. And especially when I can revisit something that I read or listened to years and years ago and I can bring it back, you know, that's always really wonderful.

No in the larger context, I also had this as kind of a category. We are in the middle of winter and cold weather. We just had our first snow here in Denver, not too long ago. And that weather is going to continue probably for several months. So thinking about the habits and routines that I have around cold weather and just having like tea in the morning and making sure that I'm, you know, wearing warm and of clothing and, uh, we are, we have snow tires on our car and just kind of other things that we've been able to implement into our lives as we're heading into.

Like actual season, um, is something that straddles the years as well. And so that's certainly on my mind. And then of course, what we all cannot ignore is that we are smack dab in the middle of the pandemic and all that, that entails, and still trying to figure out how do we navigate through this process?

Uh, we are all kind of continuing to go through a period of grieving. We're trying to figure out what does this mean in the longterm to live with a pandemic. And I think that as much as we want it to wrap up, you know, at the end of the calendar year, it's not going to. And so what does that mean to kind of live within that space?

So all that to say, I guess I'm, I'm just wanting to put out there that if you're in a situation where you're like, I don't know, like the end of the year, isn't feeling special or it's not feeling like it's wrapping up for you or you feel like there's just a sense of like, you're just plotting on, you know, into this next year.

It's okay to have that feeling. And it's not always going to feel like things are wrapping up in a way that feels really clear or that there's a big pivot point. That's hard. Now, if you are feeling that too, that's fine. And I think that part of what I'm trying to open up here is that there's all different kinds of ways to approach the new year.

And I get a lot of energy from it. I'm really looking forward to that. I think that there's a lot of areas in my life that are going to get infused with that energy and it's going to feel really positive, but I also feel a kind of comfort and familiarity with these things that are just going to continue.

And that they're going to be part of my life. Now they're going to be part of my life in the new year. And I bet you probably have some of those things as well. So I would love to hear about it. You can always email me at hello, Dr. Katie linder.com. And I hope that as we are coming up to the end of this year, you are able to find some space and time to just reflect on what you are wrapping up and what is going to continue with you in to 2020.

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.

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