You're listening to, you've got this episode 270. 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 share a strategy that I have been using to stay motivated with healthy habits and routines, as we are heading into this new year now, um, even someone like me who has a pre.

A healthy dose of like intrinsic motivation and discipline. And I can kind of move things forward when I want to. Um, as Gretchen Rubin says, I am an upholder, uh, for those of you who are familiar with that terminology, um, even I struggle in some of these spaces, especially when I feel like my, um, energy is low in the dark of winter.

When my willpower is starting to take a hit from lots of other kinds of decisions I'm having to make during the day. And. I can use any motivation. I can get to be healthy and kind of staying up with habits that I think are really helpful for me. And also I think sometimes setting aside kind of the discipline piece and, and, um, the motivation piece, sometimes I just plain forget what, what are the things that I.

I focused on. And so what I want to share with you today is how I've been kind of finding a way to keep these things front of mind for me, so that I remember to do them so that I build them into my schedule. And so that I can really have, um, a bit of like a reward for completing these habits and routines on a regular.

So here's what I'm doing. I started with, uh, creating a list of the kinds of habits. Um, and a lot of these are daily things that I really want to incorporate into my life right now. And, um, this is where if you want to do this, I would recommend that you start to, what are the things that are personal to you that you want to be building in more to your life?

So for me, um, some of the things that are on my list include having a minimum 20 minute walk in the most. We're even in the evening after work. Um, and this is typically on my treadmill. Um, sometimes I can go longer, but like setting that meant. Doing 15 minutes of meditation practice each day, um, hitting 10,000 steps in a day, having 11 grams of sugar or less in a day now for me, um, you might be like, why this number?

Why 11 grams. So, um, typically. A lot more sugar than we probably should just in terms of what is recommended nutritionally. And, um, this was a number I came across in some of the reading that I was doing that basically said, you know, for a woman of my age, 11 grams is, is kind of a healthy amount. And if you're like, well, how much is it?

I can tell you it's not much. So if I have like fruit with breakfast in the morning, that's probably my 11 grams and I would not have sugar for the rest of the day. But the main thing that this really helps me to kind of keep in mind is, um, there are a lot of things that I might have, um, especially like a favorite vegan dessert or something like that that are like 50 or 60 grams of sugar.

Why this matters to me is that sugar happens to trigger my anxiety. And so I try to be really careful about how much sugar I eat. So by just having this on my list, it kind of reminds me to be careful to not have too much sugar in a particular day. Um, this may be totally different number for you in terms of what is healthy or, or what kind of helps you with, um, whatever it is you might be trying to kind of control in your own life, but.

11 grams has kind of that sweet spot. I also have on my list, um, to put lotion on my hands, which might seem kind of silly, but, um, Denver is super dry as I think I've mentioned in other spaces. And I just, again, I forget to do this. And then at the end of the day, you know, I, I, my hands are dry. They hurt, um, just from being in the dry air, even if my house not even going outside.

So doing something like this on a daily basis, just to keep my skin nice and high. I also have on my list, finishing eBooks that I own because I am regularly working my way through reading, uh, eBooks that are currently on my Kindle. Um, I have a category on here that, um, I can. Uh, brush my teeth twice a day.

Okay. This is kind of embarrassing to have this on my list, but because we were doing our bathroom renovations, um, and we only had one sink working in our house. I often fell out of the habit of doing this because the sink that was working, um, sometimes was two floors below, um, where I would be at the end of the day.

And I would just forget to brush my teeth at the end of the day. So this is on my list as kind of a reminder, because I need to get back into the habit. And ever since I've started. Um, structure, I've been doing it, you know, twice a day, which is great. So this is also a great thing to put on your list of your habits and routines.

If there are things like that, that like, you're just trying to get back into, um, like flossing would be a great one to put on this list as well. Um, I also put 15,000 steps in a day, which is kind of leveling up from the 10 K steps. Just if I can get in bonus steps, you know, I'd be happy to go higher than 10 K a 30 minute yoga practice.

Uh, 30 minute lunchtime walk, either outside or on my treadmill, because I just have a really hard time getting away from my desk, um, in the middle of the day. And especially when I'm remote working, it's a nice opportunity for me to be able to. And then the other two things I have on my list are walking a 10 K in one workout, which is 6.2 miles.

And eventually walking a half marathon in one workout, which is actually one of my goals annually for the year. Now I do want to just point out again, that as you can tell from this list, it's pretty highly personalized to me and what I want to fit in what I want to focus on what I want to prioritize. I could always add something to this list.

If I needed to refresh it, I could remove something. When a habit becomes more ingrained, like eventually brushing my teeth twice a day is not going to be something I need to. Um, so this can be kind of a living list in terms of what you're including here. Okay. Now here's the magic part. So you have this list of what you want to do on a daily basis or just on a regular basis.

And next, I went through the list and I gave everything a point value. So I'm basically gamifying this process. I gave everything a point value based on the combination of how challenging it felt for me to do it, how long I thought it might take for me to do. And how much I felt like I would get a benefit from it.

And admittedly, that is pretty subjective. I mean, like that again is kind of a personal calculation. What feels easy for me to do might not feel easy for you to do and vice versa. So it's really up to you. But for me, what got one point was the minimum 20 minute walk in the morning or evening. And I also decided that.

I have that add up. So if I did like a 40 minute walk, it would be two points. If I did a 60 minute walk, it would be three points. So I could kind of multiply that one 15 minute meditation practice was one point also one point 10 K steps in a day, the 11 grams of sugar, or less than a day. Putting lotion on my hands finishing an ebook that I own.

I'm brushing my teeth twice a day. And then the other thing I put in this category was if I happen to earn 10 points or more in a day, I could get a point for that. Um, so it's kind of a bonus. If I kind of stack up all of these things to get more than 10 points, I get an extra point as just to a little extra motivate.

Now what I put under the two point a marker for myself was 15,000 steps in a day, which right now is kind of challenging for me to do, unless I do a longer workout in the morning or the evening, a 30 minute yoga practice. Um, just because I'm kind of out of the habit of doing this. And so really trying to find the time to get this in my day, um, at a time and place where I can feel like I can be very like focused on it has been a little bit challenging.

So I gave that a higher point, but. And then the 30 minute lunchtime walk, I also gave a two point value because again, it's really challenging for me to get away from my desk other than to have a quick meal. And sometimes I'm eating my meal at my desk. That one felt a little bit harder now for more than two points walking a 10 K in one workout.

I gave myself four points for that because it does take me almost a couple of hours to get that done. So that couple bonus points and then walking a half marathon, which I have yet to do, um, this year at all. Um, and the last time I walked a half marathon with several years ago, that one I'm giving myself 10 points because it's a very rare thing.

And I probably will only do this. Like maybe once or twice in the entire. So you might be thinking like, okay, so what are you actually doing with these points? Like, what do they mean? This is the other part of this process that I think is highly personalized to you and what you care about and what you want the points to add up to.

Now, what I decided to do is to kind of kill two birds with one stone. In the beginning of this year. And even like last year, I had been feeling kind of guilty for all the ebook purchases that I was making. Now, this was something that I was doing daily. I was always looking to see what was like a deal.

And I was doing this very frequently. Now we have the money to do it. I'm not like going into debt buying eBooks, but I was just not feeling great about how much I was spending in this area. And even though they're were like a dollar 99 a piece, these purchases really add up, I love to read. There's a lot of books that I want to read that I want to own.

And so, you know, it adds up. So, what I decided to do was to make the point values for my habits equal the fund that I would have available to purchase e-books. And this has helped me to be a little bit more careful about what I'm actually buying, because if I don't have enough points in the fund, Purchase the ebook.

So I'm motivated to get more points, but I'm also motivated to not purchase anything beyond the points that I have. And it also allows me to, you know, get something from this process that I really genuinely enjoy. Now I will mention that I had this conversation with my partner. Gamifying this and kind of talking about the ebook fund and his comment, which I very much appreciate.

And I'm grateful for it was, does it make you happy, you know, like to buy these eBooks? Which of course the answer is yes, it does make me happy, but by kind of tying this in with a gamified system around my habits and routines and really pushing kind of the healthy part of what I'm trying to do in my daily routines.

It's made it feel less guilt inducing as well. So now I'm happy to make these purchases and I feel like I have, in some ways earned, uh, the ability to do these purchases. Now I've been using the system to account for kind of my habits and routines for a couple of weeks now. And I'm really, really liking it.

The best part about it for me is it keeps me really mindful of how I'm spending my time. It allows me to kind of schedule in certain activities throughout the day. If I am kind of lower on the points that I would want to be. And it also gives me kind of a baseline of like, what does my typical points that I'm earning in a day?

Which right now is usually like eight to 11 points in a day. If I'm earning only like four or five points, I'm asking myself, like, what happened today? You know, like what that you weren't able to build in these kinds of self care activities or healthy habits? Like what was it about today? That was really challenging.

So it's also giving me that kind of accountability to check in with myself and reflect on what's happening with these habits. And how is it kind of working for me or not working. So, um, for now this is kind of what I'm doing and I have found it to be just incredibly helpful. I appreciate kind of the mindfulness aspect of it.

I appreciate feeling less guilty of the eBooks that I am purchasing because I am still a little. Reading. And I continue to build that in as a habit as well. Now you might notice there isn't really anything reading related on this list other than just to finish the eBooks that I already have. And that's because I'm building and reading every day and it's super easy.

Like that's not something I need to. Kind of push myself to do, I'm just doing it. So you might have some things on your list that are healthy habits, but you don't necessarily need to encourage yourself to do it because it's already ingrained. So this is really a set of practices that I think works really well for things that are not ingrained and that you're trying to kind of build into your schedule on a regular basis, but that feel a little bit challenging for you to do.

Either because you can't remember to do them. Um, and they're just not habituated for you or the time that it takes or some other kind of variable is making it a little bit challenging. So I would love to hear if you try this out and how this goes for you. Um, I'll also mention too, if you're just kind of like, how do you track this?

Basically, I just have a note on my phone. Um, and I have all of the point values with check boxes next to them. And then each day I just kind of tally up with the points are. In a note down below, um, for each day, how many points I earned and how many points I spent. Um, so that's basically like a very quick, simple way to do this.

It's not complicated at all. You could easily do it in a notebook as well. Um, but for me, it's just easier for me to have it on me. So I would love to hear if you would have other things on your list, what would that look like? What are the healthy habits and routines that you're thinking of creating for the year?

And if you think something like this would work well for you, you can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie linder.com. And I always love to hear. 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.

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