You're listening to, you've got this episode 271. 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 some strategies for how to deal with an off day.

Now I know that, um, all of us have these kinds of days, and really what I'm talking about here is when maybe you haven't gotten a good night's sleep. You wake up you're low energy. Um, maybe you're not in the best mood you are lacking motivation to get through the day. And some of you might even be thinking, you know, off day I have off weeks, uh, especially right now during the pandemic or even off months that you just don't feel like yourself.

And you're trying to kind of get back into a bit of a groove. And so I wanted to offer some strategies of what you can do if you find yourself in this situation. Where you're just feeling kind of off and, um, maybe you just need a little bit of extra kind of self care or just being kind to yourself on that particular day.

And I also just want to normalize that. I think this is. Very common for this to be happening right now. I've talked with a lot of colleagues and coaching clients lately, where they're just coming into the Workday feeling, very fatigued. And, um, there's just a lot, there's a lot that we're all kind of dealing with in our different positions.

And especially as the term, um, gets off, you know, to it start, many of us are remote. We're dealing with other kinds of stressors and challenges. Um, I know some of you may even be ill with COVID. Um, and so it just throws us all off in a lot of different ways. So here are some strategies that I was kind of thinking about, especially that have worked for me when I have my own off days.

And I'm really trying to reset, um, or just kind of get through the day. So first I really try to just be kind to myself when I realized that. Situation. And what that often means is first of all, lowering my expectations of what is going to get done that day. That's like the first thing that I do is I look at my list and I think can anything be moved around?

Um, can I even move a meeting if I need to, can I move a task to another day? Um, what do I need to do, maybe even asking for help to take things off my. Now, this could look like, you know, asking my partner to do something for me or getting takeout, you know, for a meal or something along those lines, but really just trying to take the pressure off as best you can.

Now the next thing that I really try to do, if I can, is to reset a little bit. So if I can kind of salvage the day or if I can try to kind of turn my mindset around, sometimes this is actually a physical thing. So like I'll wash my hands or I'll take a shower and really just try to kind of like relax and, you know, start fresh, whatever that kind of looks like meditating for, you know, 15 minutes, 10 minutes, just to kind of recenter myself and remind me.

You know of what is most important to me, what I want to prioritize. And then sometimes what that looks like for me is actually reprioritizing my current project. So really trying to take like a big picture view and try to figure out if there's anything that's feeling, especially overwhelming to me in that particular moment.

And how can I like adjust that thing? Or, um, you know, move that thing along in a way that would actually make me feel better about it. Um, but trying to kind of identify if there's anything that's really causing me to have, uh, the off day in terms of just like feeling super stressed out about a particular.

Now, I also think that on some of these days, I'm having some kind of physical or self-care is going to be really important. Um, so physically caring for yourself through like taking a walk, getting some exercise, having those endorphins, if you can take a nap or get some rest, even if you take like a sick day or a half day, I think that that's completely understandable, like kind of a mental health day, if that's what you need.

Um, I also try to make sure that I'm doing just the very basics on days like this. And for me, that's like hydrating a lot, making sure that I'm drinking a lot of water or tea. Um, even like small things, like putting lotion on my hands or my feet, like giving myself a little massage. Um, and I also really try to focus on these kinds of days, uncomfort activities.

So, um, now that we're remote working, you know, I might try to make sure that my outfit is really comfortable that I'm wearing that day. Or maybe I try to read over my lunch hour or something along those lines, just to give myself a little bit of extra comfort that I feel like I need. And then the other thing that I think can really work well as a self-care activity on an off day is to try to journal or free write.

Or just try to kind of reflect on what's going on that may have caused you to like lose the sleep the night before, or try to identify any patterns that you might want to shift or change or adjust to try to get yourself back on track. Even sometimes doing a gratitude list. I think kind of helps me to understand that there's a bigger picture.

There's a lot of things that I can really be grateful for, but I think one of the things that's actually. Really important about an off day is sometimes it's just about feeling the feelings that you have and not necessarily trying to change them. So some of it, some of these activities that I'm mentioning are really just meant to comfort you and not necessarily fix, you know, whatever it is that might be the problem of that day.

I often, um, when I have an off day and I kind of realized early on this isn't really a day where I feel like I can fix it. I go into kind of like comfort mode. So it's like, okay, if I have to just get through the day, what can I do to make this feel the most comfortable for me in a situation where maybe I don't feel very comfortable or I'm, I'm frustrated or I'm tired, or like I said, I'm in a bad mood or I don't have motivation.

And so for me, What that looks like in terms of just getting through the day is, um, choosing the minimum number of tasks that I need to get done. And that often includes things like meetings or other things that I need to attend. And I'll, I'll start to shift things off my list and just know that here's like the very minimum, um, that I need to do today to kind of keep things going and I'm going to let everything else go for now.

I also try to conserve my energy for where it needs to go. So if I'm just trying to kind of get through the day, I'm going to conserve most of my energy for things like meetings, where I have to show up, I have to be engaged. I want to be offering, you know, a positive attitude if I can. Um, and I don't necessarily want to be, you know, dragging other people down if I'm just like not having a great day.

I think this is actually part of the challenge right now that I've noticed. Uh, in my work is that sometimes a lot of us are having an off day at the same time, just because we're dealing with a lot of things related to COVID and otherwise. And, um, it can be really challenging just to keep the motivation up with a group.

So I think that I try to conserve that energy just to try to give my best if I can, to those group settings. When I know other people are already kind of challenged, I also try to power down basically as soon as possible and as much as possible. So if I can take a break, you know, in between meetings, Um, if I can take a break over my lunch, maybe even take like a 20 minute nap at lunch.

And if I can close out the day, you know, with activities that feel relatively low energy, maybe I'm just responding to some emails or something like that. Um, and then after work really power down, you know, do something that's really gonna allow me to not have to think about things or I can, you know, go rest or maybe listen to an audio book or something like that, but do something that just feels like it's not requiring a lot of my energy is really.

But the most important, um, thing that I really try to remind myself of what I have this kind of an off day is that tomorrow is always a new day and you can leave the day that you're having behind and tomorrow could feel completely. You know, you could get the best, night's sleep, sleep of your life. Um, you could wake up and feel completely motivated.

Like I am an eternal optimist. And so I'm always kind of looking to what is that light at the end of the tunnel? What is that next thing that I can really look forward to? But one of the most important things I think about having an off day is. You just accept it for what it is and say like, okay, so this is not going to be my best today.

And that's all right. You know, we can't be operating at a hundred percent or even 110% is I know some of us do all the time and eventually things will kind of wear us down a little bit. There's going to be a lot going on in our work lives and our personal lives. And, um, as we read the news, as we see our COVID numbers, uh, rising.

It's just an incredibly challenging thing for many of us to process even a couple of years into this experience. Um, and I think we, we shouldn't take that for granted, you know, the, the challenges that we're really dealing with on a day to day basis, as we're also trying to operate in a pretty normal capacity.

So I hope this offers you some potential ideas of how you might handle a day where things aren't feeling quite right, where you're feeling a little bit off, not like yourself, and just know that that day will pass. You'll be able to be yourself again. In, in very short order. And I would also love to hear if you have strategies for this as well.

I think that this is just kind of the tip of the iceberg in terms of what I'm offering here. You can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie linder.com. If you want to share some of the strategies that work for you in terms of handling, when you're having an awesome. If this is you right now, if you're not feeling like yourself, if you're really struggling, um, I would really encourage you to try some of these strategies, but most of all, ask for help talk to somebody around you, let them know that you are really having a hard time.

And I am positive that they might come back and say, they're in the same boat. And we are kind of all in this together. Muscling through some days really trying to, um, contribute in the best ways that we can, uh, when we're under quite a few constraints. So I'm over here rooting for you and wishing you the best as we start into this new academic term.

Thanks for listening.

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