You're listening to, You've got this Episode 304. 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 life. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linda. On this episode, I wanna talk about a concept called prospection.

Now, this was a word that I had not heard of until I read a recent book on this by Benjamin Hardy. I will link to the book in the show notes in case you wanna check it out. And, uh, what prospection means is it is the generation and evaluation of mental representations of possible future. How cool is that

I feel like I do this all the time. The, the whole concept of like connecting with your future self, knowing who you want to be in the future, I feel like this really helps you decide on what actions you want to take in the present and how you want to design things like a three to five year plan and.

When I didn't know what this word was, you know, I feel like I've actually done this a lot. I spend a lot of time in prospection. I just didn't know what to call it because I think a lot about my future and I think a lot about possible directions and, you know, pivots and things I wanna learn and things I wanna do in the future.

And so I was thinking about how it might be helpful to have a few guiding questions if you are not someone who tends to engage in prospection. Um, I, I live in my head a lot as an introvert. I do a lot of reflection. But I re, I realize and kind of recognize that not everybody does that. So I thought I would offer a few questions to kind of think, uh, and answer my own questions, you know, as I'm posing them, so that you can think about what it might do for you to think more about your future and your possible futures.

So the first question that I thought of is, what do you want your life to look like that's different than what it looks like right now? Now this is something that could be so dependent on all kinds of things going on in your life. You know, like there could be variables like your children's ages or your parents' ages or your current job or, um, like I have work with a lot of coaching clients who are like geographically bound cuz their kids are in high school, but they eventually wanna switch jobs.

So this could be something that is kind of tied to, you know, your present is constrained, you know, in a particular way, but it doesn't mean your future will be constrained. Um, for me, the kinds of things that I think about are a little bit more, um, I wouldn't say abstract, but I feel like they're, they're kind of broad in terms of what originally came to my mind.

So, for example, I really would like my future to have more unscheduled. right now. I feel like I'm in a season of my life and in my work where my calendar is just really, really full. And that's tough for me. When I have unscheduled time, it feels so luxurious and I. Revel in it. I enjoy it so much and I can be so productive when I have a few hours that are strung together, but it's so rare that I have that happen.

Um, so that feels kind of challenging for me right now. I also would love to, in the future, have more time off. Um, right now I, I'm pretty, you know, restricted in my time off. It's hard for me to take dedicated time off at work because there's just a lot going on and I often have to plan it really far in advance.

And so what I've been doing lately is taking like a Friday afternoon off here and there. But that doesn't really feel sustainable. And then of course, on the weekends, I do a lot of coach training. I work with my own clients, and so it's, it's kind of rare for me to have dedicated time off. Now. I am planning more of this, um, this coming December.

I'm trying to kind of like hold certain days and make sure that I can really, um, take time off if I want to take it off and, and not be using that time for other projects. Um, so I'm working on this, but I would definitely like to have a little more flexibility for this in the. . And then the other thing I thought about of what I'd like to look different than what it looks like now is some kind of regular movement practice in the morning.

Um, this is something that I, when I can fit it into my schedule, I love it. I love to walk in the morning or I love to do yoga or, you know, something that allows me to kind of move my body on a regular basis. And I come in and out of, of routines that kind of work for me. And then I'll find myself like really fatigued and I'll spend that time with sleep instead of movement.

And now when the weather is nice, sometimes I can do like a walking meeting at work in the morning, and that's really wonderful. Um, but I would love to have enough kind of, um, I, I guess like consistency in my energy levels where I feel like I can have this kind of regular movement practice in the morning.

So that first question is, what do you want your life to look like that's different than what it looks like, right? . Now the second question is, what is something about your future that you want to be working toward that could take a while to accomplish? So this is like those long term goals that maybe when you think about them, you're like, This feels overwhelming.

This is gonna take forever. Why should I even start this now? Many of us probably felt this way about our PhD and the work that we did on our dissertations, or writing a book project or anything that we're doing that's like a multi-year endeavor. Um, If you're doing kind of this perspection and thinking about possible futures, one of the things you wanna consider is pretty far out, like five to 10 years, where do you wanna be?

That's different than where you are now? And if it's a pretty big project, it could take a while to get there. So some of the things that I put on my list for this, Where I'm, I'm currently gathering more coaching hours, um, and experience for what is called an MCC level credential, a master certified coach.

And you need to have 2,500 hours of coaching experience to apply for this. And there's a couple of the requirements of training and things like that. Um, but really the coaching hours and the time and the. Experience is what is the, the big obstacle for me because I can't, I can't coach full time right now, so it's kind of like whenever I can gather hours from my my clients, I do that.

And right now I'm at about 1400 hours, so I've got another 1100 hours to go. It's gonna take me a while to get there. . The other thing I added to this list was working on the second edition of my book. I expect this to take, uh, maybe up to a year to complete. Hopefully less than that, but it's a pretty big project.

It's gonna take multiple months to kind of get this pulled together. And then I also put on this list paying off my mortgage because that is a, definitely a multi-year project. It's something that, um, that number is big enough. It's gonna take me a while to chip away at it. But it's something that is important for me and my future self, that I have that kind of financial freedom of not necessarily having a mortgage.

So that's on my list as. . Now I also have, uh, the next question is, is kind of connecting your current self to your future self. So what practices do you currently engage in that you think your future self will also do? I think sometimes when we imagine a future, it's easy to be like, well, that future is so different than who I am now, but there's probably some stuff that's also the same.

So I put on my list regular journaling practice because this is something I plan to. Probably for the rest of my life. Uh, lots of reading cuz I love to do that. Learning new things regularly is definitely something that's been a, a major pattern in my professional development and in my life. And then also coaching and coach training cuz that's just something that I really enjoy and I can definitely see my future self engaging in those things.

Now I also asked the question to myself, If you didn't have the job that you have now, what would you want to do? Now? The easy kind of answer for me is like, Oh, I would just do like the stuff I do in my side business, but I, I had to set that aside. I had to say like, Well, that is a job that I have now, so how can I really think outside the box?

And what I came up with was one thing that was pretty vague and a couple of things that were more specific, the vague thing. I really enjoy helping people with things that feel complicated to them, but that I can make them easier by outlining the steps and especially when people are feeling super stressed or overwhelmed by something.

I like that I can come in and try to clarify that. Now, this is probably why I like coaching, cuz coaching is all about clarity. But I would look for a job that allows me to do that. I also wrote down, I would write novels. I would try to do something more creative. I do have a undergraduate. Degree in creative writing, which I, I haven't been able to do a ton of, um, in my adult life that I really enjoy.

And then the other thing I thought of, which is a little bit tied to coaching, but it's more of a sub John Revit, is executive coaching. This is something I'd probably do more of, um, and engage with, uh, executives and leaders more in a coaching space. Now the last thing, uh, the last question that I'm posing is what is the best way for you to map out a plan for connecting your present with the dreams that you have for your future self?

And, um, I actually like to create three to five year plans and think of specific goals and milestones for each year. This is really helpful for me to know that I'm on track. So, for example, I have milestones for the coaching hours. I wanna gather annually the money I want to contribute to my mortgage payments each year that are like extra payments.

And if I can achieve these things, then I stay on track with the timelines that I have for each of these goals. I also have kind of a learning plan for new skills that I wanna develop that involves both formalized learning and things like books to read and podcasts that I wanna listen to. Because I do feel like for me, Change in whatever capacity that looks like in my life, is always accompanied by learning.

And so it really helps me to think about how do I wanna continue to deepen my learning in certain areas? Like for example, would I want to take, you know, like another training in yoga or something like that, Um, that can allows me to kind of continue to deepen what I know and how I practice. Those certain kinds of things.

And same with coaching. What are the extra kinds of trainings or things that I wanna learn about with coaching that allow me to deepen my current practice? There may also be other things that are brand new that I want to learn as well. And then how do I set up a plan for myself to learn those things Also,

So I would love to hear how much time you are spending in Perspection if you've ever heard of this concept. If you like this concept, please feel free to email me at hello@drkatieleonard.com. I always love to hear from you, and I think that the fall, or really any season is the best time to just reflect, think about your future, make a plan, and start to do a deeper dive into how you connect your present with that future.

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