You're listening to, You've got this episode 310. 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 Linder. In this episode, I want to pose the question to you.

What are you building toward? And I think that this is a question that actually gets at kind of the concept of vision, but sometimes I think that when you ask someone like, What is your vision? That feels too intimidating for people like that. You have to have some kind of clear vision of where you're headed, and sometimes we don't have that.

Sometimes it's unclear what our vision is, and so I've kind of replaced this with this question of what am I building toward? What are the things that I'm trying to. incorporate into my life more. And then it also helps me to kind of have a sense on a day to day basis, or even on a bigger scale, like month, quarter, year, how am I doing in building toward these things that I've identified for myself as being priorities for me?

So I think this question is highly, highly personal. I'm gonna share some things that I'm building toward, and if you've been listening for a while, you're gonna completely understand why some of these things are important to me. But you might also be listening to them and, and be thinking to yourself like, Oh, I don't really care about that.

You know, I care about something different. And that's okay. That's part of why we create these lists. So I, I have this list for myself almost as kind of like a kind of vision set of vision statements of the kinds of things. But it, when you combine them all together, I think that's really what becomes the larger vision of what I'm trying to create.

For my life and, and my future. So here's some things that I've added to this list. The first one that I wrote down is, um, taking breaks when I need them or when I want to take them. And this is something that, um, has been really challenging for me honestly in the past several years when I've had jobs where I didn't always feel like I could take extended time if I needed to.

Or because I was working a day job and I was working with my business on the side, and so I don't get like typical weekends like a lot of people do now. You might be thinking, you know, I have kids or I have these responsibilities so I don't get a weekend either. And, and I totally get that. Um, and this is something that maybe many of us are struggling with, like that we, we can't really take a break when we feel like we really need one and.

I would love to have a, a life where I feel like if I need a break, I can take one or I could build one in. And right now that feels harder for me to do, so I'm, I'm constantly kind of working towards that. I'm also building toward what I call living a quiet life of small adventures. Now you all know I am.

Super introverted and really enjoy being at home. I enjoy solitude. I enjoy quiet. I enjoy reading. I enjoy all these kinds of things that really support me being an introvert. And I, I like this idea though, of having kind of small adventures. Now for me, this is often like, um, Little challenges that I set for myself.

So for example, this year, visiting all of the Denver public library branches, that was a kind of small adventure where I got to like drive around the city and see different parts of the city. Um, when I take a road trip, you know, like I consider that to be a small adventure. And I think that I just enjoy having a, a life where I get to build in these kinds of things that, again, are very personal to me that I can enjoy, but still allow me to live a life that is mostly, uh, The next thing I added to my list was engaging in work that is an engine for my creativity.

So even across multiple jobs, across multiple projects, I have really identified that I enjoy being creative and that looks different depending on what I'm working on at any given time. But I really like engaging in work, whether that's work at my day job or in my side business, that allows me to be creative.

I like to build things. I like to figure out all the different moving parts of large, complex projects. And so I just wanna make sure that that's something that's getting built in, uh, now and into the future. I also am building toward filling my days and my schedule with things that I can look forward to Now, I know that we all have days sometimes where we look at what's on our calendar and we just kind of like inwardly groan.

Like there's, there's just stuff that maybe we're not looking forward to meetings with people or projects that we're working on. It's not really entirely in our control sometimes what's on our plates. And so really what I want to think about is how can I create a life situation where I have a good amount of control of what comes onto my calendar at any given time and how I'm spending my time.

Throughout each day, week, month, year. And, um, I'm in a job right now where I don't always have a ton of control over that. Now that doesn't mean that I'm not looking forward to the things that are on my calendar, but, um, it does mean that I would like over time to be able to have a little bit more control.

I'm also building toward, uh, what I've called, aligning my values with my philosophies and actions in my. Now one of my kind of core values is around alignment. I just wanna make sure that what I wanna prioritize and care about in my life is aligned with the things that I'm doing on a regular basis. Now this is also tied in with my Radical Self-Trust framework.

Um, and if you haven't heard me talk about in the past, I will link to that in the show notes. But there's a, a huge component of radical self-trust that's basically about aligning values with actions. And so this is something that I'm just constantly working on. I think about it regularly. I'm always trying to think about how I can have more alignment between what I, um, uh, value, what I have as kind of philosophies in my life and the actions that I'm taking.

I'm also building toward not feeling external pressures too much or giving into external pressures for how to be or how to act. Now. This is something that I've given so much thought to over the years, especially as someone who is introverted, cuz I do feel like we live in kind of an extroverted world and I have a lot of pressure to engage in like social events or in other kinds of things.

Are just really energy sucking for me. And of course I can do them and I can perform in those spaces, but they're not necessarily things that fill me up, um, or fill my cup. And so I am really trying to actively not feel that pressure to do things that don't feel aligned, um, with kind of what. I see as my strengths with what I see as I, what I most need to get good energy, you know, through my work.

And this is a tough one, um, because we are in kind of a world where there's a lot of constant comparison, especially on social media and places like that of like what we should be doing or how we should be feeling about particular kinds of things. And so I just actively try to resist that and really try to pay attention to.

What are my instincts? What do I feel like I need to be doing at any given time? And do the best I can to align my actions with those feelings. I'm also building toward feeling consistently satisfied with my work. At the end of the day, we've all had that feeling of like wrapping up a day and just feeling like really good.

Feeling like we got something done or we made progress on something, or you know, we were able to close out the day with intention. You know, something that felt really satisfying. , and I would love to have that feeling on a regular basis. Um, sometimes I feel like work can get so chaotic that it's hard to have that feeling and you just feel like you're in projects that like continue on and on and on, and you don't ever see like an ending point.

Especially when you work on things like multi-year projects fitting in those milestones that feel like really satisfying. Um, it's often, they're, they're pretty far apart. It's not something that you necessarily feel on a daily. And I also feel like when I have that feeling of satisfaction, at the end of the day, it's easier for me to walk away from work and to spend time on other things.

And so that's something that I'm also working toward. Okay. Just a couple more things that I'm building toward. One is creating beautifully designed experiences that people need and enjoy. Um, this is something that is definitely tied into work being an engine for my. I love creating experiences for other people.

Um, I've done this through retreats. I do this through prolific. I do this through my day job, which is highly involved with things like program development. Um, this is something that I just enjoy and I try to bring it into my life in all different kinds of ways. and, uh, the last thing I'm building toward this is a little bit tied to that external pressures piece, but basically it's taking care of myself and prioritizing, taking care of myself over making other people happy.

This is super hard. I'll just say that. It's a, it's very much tied in with radical self-trust because radical self-trust is a form of self loyalty. It is really about self-knowledge and living out, uh, your life in a way that feels aligned, um, to your values and all different kinds of things. And that can be hard when you have people who are asking for certain things, when you wanna make other people happy, when you want other people to like you, you know, all these other kind.

Of pressures that can come in. And, um, I have found that it's really challenging to kind of have all of that flowing at you and you're kind of holding your ground and, and trying to think about what does it mean to take care of yourself and prioritize. Now, a recent example of this is, um, I have just come through a couple of weeks of conferences.

and I got invited to all kinds of things at these conferences. There were vendor parties, there were demos, there were beat up. I mean like there were just all different kinds of things and a lot of it was after hours and I said no to pretty much all of that. Um, now, That could have potentially had all kinds of opportunities to, to learn more.

And I certainly had this kind of fear of missing out, you know, by not going to those things. I, I wasn't networking as much. I wasn't maybe making, you know, important contacts that I needed to make, but I also knew at the end of those days, I was so tired from being at the conference all day, from networking during the day, from making connections, from learning a lot of new things, and it would've just completely burned me out to go after hours to all of these other events.

And so I really had to prioritize taking care of myself versus like saying yes to all of these things that I was being asked to. . And I think that part of it is just having those clear boundaries of what does it mean to, um, do your best work and also like be your best self. And sometimes you have to say no in order to really maintain those boundaries and, and show up in the way that you want to on a consistent basis.

So I would turn this question back to you. What are you building toward? What are the kinds of things you're trying to create as part of your life vision and the good news of this entire list that I've kind of put out there, the majority of these things I feel like I am doing right now, I want to do them more over time, but I can see little ways that I'm building them into my life.

And part of the reason for that is cuz I wrote these things down and I look at them regularly and I think about what does it mean? For me to do that in my particular life circumstance, given where I am right now in my life and my career. And, um, so I would love to hear are there certain things that you're building toward and what does that mean for you?

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