You're listening to, you've got this episode 312.

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. On this episode, I thought I would debrief my Thanksgiving retreat. This was the, uh, work that I had planned to do and the various things I had wanted to accomplish over the Thanksgiving break and for me this year.

This happened to be a Wednesday through a Sunday, and I will link to my episode where I talk about what I was hoping to do. Thanksgiving break. Um, but spoiler alert, of course, things got moved around and I didn't accomplish everything on my list, but I was able to do some really fun things. So I thought I would debrief that here.

And also just give permission to like, abandon some of your plans if it's not what you feel like doing, because I think that that's one of the most important things about having unstructured time. So I had, uh, some plan. Over this break to do some content creation. I wanted to do, um, a couple of things on my annual goals list, and again, I'll link to that episode if you wanna know all the details.

But the first thing that I should mention that got a bit disrupted, and this was after I had recorded the episode, so I decided not to go back and record it, is the weekend before the Thanksgiving break on Sunday. , I was getting a little bit nervous about my half marathon, um, because this was one of the things I wanted to accomplish and I was gonna try to do it on that Wednesday of the Thanksgiving break and a couple of things happened that made me a little bit nervous.

One, I have this kind of, uh, project at work that I've mentioned in a couple of places. That is a recent project I've, I've needed to take on. That's taken up a lot of time and it was unclear if I was gonna get the full Thanksgiving break. Um, that was kind of originally on my schedule because I thought I might have to give up a day for this project, and I, I didn't know when I would know for sure.

And so I was, I was nervous that I was not gonna have the Wednesday to do this, and that's what I had originally blocked for this half. The second thing that was making me nervous was I had not trained for this, like at all in terms of distance. And because of this recent project, which has been taking up a lot of my time, I've not been getting in as much walking or steps as I normally do.

And so I was a little bit nervous of like, am I gonna be able to do this half marathon at all? So on Sunday I had a couple of, uh, client meetings cancel, and it opened up this like six hour window in my morning into like the early a. And I thought, well, let me just do like a test run. Let me jump on the treadmill and kind of see how this feels and like see how far I can get.

So I put my audiobook on and I started walking and um, I ended up doing the entire half marathon on my treadmill. . Now, I first wanna say what a huge relief this was to get this goal done, to know that I could like, jump on the treadmill and, and do this 13.1 miles. I will say the last four miles were not the most comfortable I've ever been.

There were, they were definitely painful, especially in like my hip flexors. But I, I was able to do it and I didn't feel like I was gonna injure myself. It just felt very strenuous, um, on my body to do it. And toward the end, I did turn on some music just to kind of keep. Motivated to keep going. I needed kind of the beat from the music, but I was able to get that done the Sunday before.

So basically what that opened up for me was Wednesday didn't have to be about the half marathon, which is what I originally thought it was going to be about. And I did find out later on that week that I did not have to work on that day. So I got like a free day back because I did some of the stuff that I wanted to do early.

So what Wednesday turned into was basically like an errands day. I had a clothing order I had to return. Store. I wanted to like drop off a donation to Goodwill. I wanted to go to the library and browse because it's very rare that I get to go to my local library and just like, hang out there and like look around.

I often like go in, pick up books and then leave again. So I wanted to do some browsing. Um, I wanted to, uh, go out and just kind of drive around a bit with my partner. We went to lunch. We went to the grocery store. Um, and I wanted to also, uh, continue our efforts of watching Star Trek movies. So we watched a Star Trek movie that day, so Wednesday ended up being one of those really wonderful, kind of like meandering days where I just got to like do a bunch of stuff I wanted to get done.

I also ended up like reorganizing a little bit of our master closet that day. Um, I like moved some of our recycling into the garage, like just kind of like organizational stuff that felt really good to just spend time on and not be too worried about other things that I had on. . So that is what was focused, uh, that's what I focused on on that Wednesday.

Now on Thursday, my original goal was to do the, uh, yogurt treat. And uh, I have to say I'm actually really glad that I did the half marathon the Sunday before because the following day, as you might imagine, I was quite sore. Now I was only sore for about 24 hours. After doing that, I took some Tylenol and I kind of bounced back really quickly.

But it would've been very difficult for me to have an enjoyable yoga retreat the following day. This was another thing that was kind of in the back of my mind that made me a little bit nervous about trying to do it on that Wednesday. So on Thursday. I ended up doing my day long yoga retreat, which is really wonderful and I posted on the blog about how I organized it, but I basically organized it around the theme of gratitude and, um, had a bunch of different, like videos from YouTube, a lot of free resources, um, that I was able to kind of string together.

And then toward the end of the day, I kind of went off script a little bit with that plan and really just focused on areas of my body that felt really tight, which for me was like my neck and my shoulders. I've been doing a lot of computer work lately and I really needed to like stretch all of that out, like my upper chest and into my back, and that felt awesome.

So I was able to do that on Thursday. . Um, and then my partner and I watched another Star Trek movie. And then the other thing I've been trying to do over the course of this weekend, uh, this past like long weekend was finish one of the wheel of time books because I'm still working through that. I'm so close to the end, but they are long and so I was actually able to finish one of those on Thursday as well.

I was able to devote some time to reading, so that felt awesome. Okay, then this brings me to Friday. So I don't know if any of you experience this when you go on some kind of break. Um, but I always have a point in the break where I kind of crash and I feel like this is because I'm used to going at like 110%, like most of the time.

And so when I try to like power down and like yoga's a great example of that, sometimes my body is like very confused. Like, what exactly are we doing here? And I feel like I go from like you. 80% or whatever that I'm trying to do to kind of power down, like down to like 10%. Like I just kind of get super not motivated and I just want to like really rest and do like absolutely nothing.

Some of you may have experienced this. I also feel like for me it's a bit of a like mental health challenge as well to kind of go from. really activated, you know, with projects and work to like not doing as much of that. Like, my brain also just doesn't quite know what to do with it. So my, my anxiety and other kinds of things often take a bit of a dive, you know, when I, whenever I have a break now, my partner and I are both very used to this.

We've experienced it multiple times, like where I kind of have this dip and then I recover, you know, usually within 24 hours. But that happened to me on Friday. So I did have some things that I had on my list, like content creation and things like that. And I was just so like negative percent motivated to do these things.

Like I just did not want to do them. And when I get into that mode, like if I am feeling that way, and I'll, I'll kind of like check in with myself throughout the day and say like, how, you know, are you feeling like it now? Like, and, and if the answer is no, I just drop it. Like I, I don't worry about it. . Now, what I will say, um, is that when this kind of thing happens to me, it's kind of rare that it will happen to me, like during a work week, but sometimes it does.

Like I just kind of crash for whatever reason. I often cannot take that time off and I will push through like I, because of various obligations I have, you know, on my calendar or meetings or whatever. And that's an incredibly challenging day for me. But I can do it if I want to, but it's just incredibly rare for me to have an opportunity where I don't have to push through and I can just literally take the day and like be a bit of a zombie.

Like just do nothing like, and just kind of lay on the couch and whatever. And so when that happened on Friday, I did that intentionally. I was like, you know what? I never have the opportunity to. I'm literally gonna like lay on the couch and like listen to audio books all day. And it was just what I needed.

It was so helpful for me to have that time. It felt very restful. And so I ended up finishing like a book that I had from the library. I finished three other books that I was like trying to read for my monthly, um, to be red pile. And throughout the day I got up and I kind of did a little bit of laundry.

I cooked a batch of soup for the coming week. So I did kind of things that felt like productivity. Just to give myself that chance to like really sink in to rest. And then we ended the day watching another Star Trek movie. So Friday to me, even though it felt like kind of a dip and it's, it wasn't like the most, um, I, it was a challenging day just in terms of like not being at my normal capacity to do work.

But it also just felt really restful and good. Like it felt what I, like, what I needed, and that I really listened to myself and I was proud of myself for, for not pushing. Okay. Then Saturday Saturday I had a bit of a rebound, which I was hoping for because there was some things that I wanted to get done over the weekend.

I had some writing that I wanted to do that I spent some time on Saturday. I had some coaching clients on Saturday. I knew that Saturday and Sunday were gonna be kind of less productive, um, for me cuz of other things I had to do. But the other thing that we did on Saturday, which I really, really loved is, um, one of my listeners, uh, or blog readers, I'm not sure, which emailed me about this thing that happened south of town in Denver at the, um, one of the county library systems.

That's not the Denver Public Library. And it's something called Forest of Stories, where they create these holiday trees, but they're themed to books. And uh, the person that wrote to me, hi Jennifer, if you're listening to this, um, told me about this and said, you know, I know you've been visiting the library branches.

You might wanna check this out. . And so we went on Saturday and went to one of the larger libraries in that system and they had maybe 20 different trees all decorated with different themes. And it was so fun just to kind of amble around the library and like see a different library than what I had seen, you know, from the Denver area and just like see how they were decorating this as part of their annual tradition as a library.

So that was really fun to do. Um, I also read a bit that day we watched another Star Trek movie. I have like one Star Trek movie left after this weekend because we just binged a bunch of them, which was super fun. Um, so Saturday was kind of a nice mix of like easing back in to being a little bit more productive.

Okay. And then Sunday was when I had already scheduled the prolific readathon. So we have these events within prolific where we read all day together. And I did have a couple of things I needed to do, like I wanted to draft and schedule a blog post. But this is the, the stuff that really kind of went to the wayside this weekend was a lot of the content creation that I wanted to do for December.

Now, part of the challenge that I realized as I was looking at that content is a lot of it is like, Talking through like how my goals went for the year and things like that. And the year isn't quite over yet, so I actually have to record some of these things more in like real time, which I didn't realize when I was kind of looking at, um, what I wanted to get done.

So I kind of set that aside and decided to do more reading. Um, I did a little bit of like, you know, newsletter drafting and things like that. Um, I recorded my YouTube video for December in terms of the books that I wanna. So I, I did like a couple little things around content, but it was definitely not, um, the amount that I was hoping to get done over this weekend.

Now I did make great progress on reading, which was super fun, and uh, was able to kind of have a more relaxing evening to prepare myself for the reentry into the week that would happen the following day. So, all that to say, um, I actually feel like the Thanksgiving. Retreat time for me was kind of just what I needed, but I didn't always know what I was planning for it, what that would be.

And so I felt like I needed to kind of like roll with it a bit in the, in the midst of the actual break, just to kind of wake up and be like, okay, what do I feel like doing? What do I feel like I need to do? And that helped a lot and it's actually giving me a lot of inspiration for how I wanna think about my winter break as well, because that's also an extended amount of.

I know I'm gonna have that dip at some point in the middle of it. Cause I always do. Um, and I think that I want to kind of plan around that and try to give myself as much unstructured time as possible so that I can just like, move things around and reshuffle things and, and kind of make sure, um, like everything is, is getting done.

That's like super important. But then I'm also giving myself room to be. Now one of the things I really want to normalize through this episode is that we all have these kind of dips. So I certainly don't want you to walk away being like concerned about my mental health. Like this is a very normal thing that like happens for me, especially when I have to like power down, you know, in a break period.

Like I said, my partner and I like absolutely recognize it. We have seen it happen multiple times over the course of my career because I've always been in academia and I always have these. , Thanksgiving breaks, winter breaks, you know, along with, um, our normal academic calendar. And I just wanna say like, if you're experiencing some of that, like for whatever reason, like maybe it's powering down for you, maybe it's the holiday season, like it's just part of the rhythms for many of us, of like what we may be experiencing in terms of energy.

Now I do think that's different than like other kinds of mental health episodes that people might have. So I, I certainly want people to be taking care of themselves and for you to address something if you're concerned. Um, but for me, this is like a normal part of my rhythms and it's important for me to be able to recognize when I have energy to do things and when I don't, and especially when I'm taking on big new projects that take up a lot of time and energy.

Um, I need to have these kind of recovery periods where I can literally like do whatever I want and, and that feels really, really, So that is a bit of a debrief about my, uh, Thanksgiving long retreat. And I probably will share a little bit about what I'm planning to do over the winter break, but I don't know that I'm gonna plan it in advance like I normally do.

I feel like I might need to be a little bit more. Flexible, but I'll certainly debrief it and, and kind of let you know what that looks like when it gets a little bit closer to the end of the calendar year. So thanks so much for listening. Of course. I would love to hear what you did over your Thanksgiving break.

One of the things I thought was so fun was following everybody on social media and seeing what everyone was doing for Thanksgiving. I loved seeing everyone's, um, Pictures that I follow of like food that they were eating and trips that they were taking and family that they were seeing. Like it's so, uh, cool to see everybody celebrating that holiday in such different ways.

And I felt so grateful this year that I could celebrate it in a way that really made sense for me and, and for my, myself and my partner. So please feel free to reach out if you wanna share about what you did over the Thanksgiving break. You can always email me at hello dr katie leonard.com. I always love to hear from you.

Thanks for listen.

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