You are listening to, you've got this Episode 322. 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 wanna talk about how it's never too late to start a new goal or a new routine or a new habit, because last year I had a podcast episode that resonated with so many of you, and that is when I talked about how February is the new.

January. In other words, if you've made it this far in the year and you haven't set annual goals or overhauled your habits or established those new routines that you wanted to, it's definitely not too late. And so in this episode, I thought I would talk a little bit about something that's been on my mind in terms of my routines and how I'm not letting that pesky calendar.

or kind of the social construction of time get in my way of, of kind of overhauling something that I feel like really, really needs it. So with my work being very, very full right now, I have definitely allowed some of my daily routines to fall away. Now, I wanna be clear that I'm not really like negative self-talking or shaming myself about this.

I, I don't have a lot of regrets about it because, like, it, it needed to happen in the time that it happened. , but I really do miss these routines and so I want to commit to bringing them back. And I don't wanna use that excuse that like, well, January's over, you know, my clean slates start. Um, you know, at that time that I should have started those routines, you know, has passed me by.

No, I'm just gonna say. This is the time that I want to do this, and so I'm making a plan to start it right now and I'm actually gonna release a blog post about this reset this week as well, so I can document how I'm kind of rebooting this area and also so I can check back in next week and talk about how it's going.

there is no better accountability for me than telling all of you that this is what I'm gonna be doing so that I'm motivated to actually do it. So first though, I needed to think about the true obstacles that were standing in my way of these particular routines. In other words, what shifted. and what got in the way of taking my time to do the things that I know are really important to me.

And I, after some reflection, I kind of came up with two main areas that I think were kind of causing obstacles. One is that I've started getting up later in the morning, usually waking up between like five 30 and six in the morning. usually naturally. But um, when I set an alarm, it's usually for a little bit later and the time that I spend in the morning between when I get up and when I get ready for work is usually spent like reading and eating breakfast.

Like I don't have much time for a whole lot else in that window of time. So the first thing is getting up later has kind of shrunk my morning availability for things that I might wanna do to kind of kick off. . The second thing is that, um, because work has been pretty full and busy for me taking up a lot of like brain energy during the day, I don't have a lot of energy at the end of the day and at the end of the week.

So I'm really focusing on recovery time at the end of each day, and I think that that's also allowed my bedtime to kind of creep up a little bit later than it normally does. Hence impacting the morning. . So all that to say, I know that mornings for me are the best time to add back in routines because I can kind of knock them off my plate at the beginning of the day when I have the most energy and willpower.

And I know my work is gonna continue to be full for at least the next couple of months. And so I don't expect to have like this magical energy at the end of the day. I need to do this in the morning. . So once I had a bit of a plan of when to put these routines back into my schedule, then I could focus on the actual what of what I wanted to do.

Now I wanna take just a minute and talk about the order of this planning because it's very intentional. Notice that I looked for the margin in my schedule. First. I tried to figure out, you know, on, on the one hand, like, what is it that's getting in my way, but secondly, where can I actually add some of this back in to make sure that I actually have room on my plate?

I didn't wanna decide for myself what I needed to do before I first checked in to see if I felt like I had the time to do it. I think that along with many people, including maybe some of you, I can fall into this trap of overloading myself by just adding in more and more to my plate without really thinking about the impacts of requiring more of myself and looking at the when first helps me make sure that the what is not completely unreasonable.

Um, and if I were to decide, for example, like I really do need that extra rest. Maybe I just, you know, adjust the timing of when I go to bed so that I can get up earlier, but I'm not sacrificing the rest, um, that I'm getting, you know, overnight. But I can still fit in some things in the morning without making myself feel like overburdened or overwhelmed.

So once I did that, kind of like mini analysis, I figured that I have about 90 minutes that I can carve out each morning, and this is roughly between like 5:00 AM and six 30 before I need to get ready for work. I have found that kind of optimal time to get me out the door and. To the office on time, I need to be like heading toward the shower by like six 40 ish.

So this gives me even a little bit of buffer and it feels really doable since it shifts my morning forward by just about 30 minutes, which isn't like, you know, a two hour , you know, change. And I have had a lot of experience in the past, getting up at like 4:35 AM like this is not unusual for me to be getting up early in the.

So during this 90 minute window, now let's get into like the what , what am I gonna be doing to kind of slowly work through incorporating these routines that have kind of fallen off. , the first thing I wanna do is journal, and this is literally the first thing I wanna do after I get up in the morning.

Since I've fallen off this habit, I have missed it so much and I would say I'm not, not journaling at all. I'm probably journaling maybe two to three times a week, mostly on the weekends. Um, and so I wanna commit to doing this first thing in the morning. I'm gonna grab some water, some tea to sip on and just go straight to journaling.

Second, I want to practice yoga. and this is gonna allow me to kind of slowly wake up my body a little bit and also target any areas that feel especially tight or that really need attention. Um, when it gets super cold outside, my muscles tend to like tense up. I don't know if all of you have this too, where you kind of like, um, your shoulders kind of come up towards your ears and, and you're just like cold.

And so I have a lot more, um, tense muscles in like my neck and my shoulders, so I really wanna pay a little bit more attention to. . And then the third thing is I want to meditate in the morning. This practice really allows me to get my brain quiet, relaxed, settled at least once in the day before it starts tackling the problem.

Solving and engaging in all the work tasks that I need to do it is so much harder for me to quiet my brain later in the day. Um, other than just, it's so fatigued that it kind of shuts down , which is not the the meditation experience that I wanna have. And so I really think it's important for me to, to dial this in like early in the morning to make sure that I'm doing it.

And then finally I would like to walk. Um, and this will be kind of the last thing I do before I get ready for the day. I really need more movement in my day. And with the cold weather that we've been having, I just have not done much outdoor walking at all. I used to do this over my lunch hour or I would have like walking meetings and it's just been too cold and icy to do that.

So I would like to get in a couple of miles before I get ready for the day. And this also allows me to get in a little bit of reading time. and to kind of close out my morning routine was something that I really enjoy, which is like listening to an audiobook or maybe a podcast before I have to dive into the day.

So I expect that this all together will take me about 90 minutes to do, and I'm hoping it will really help me to start my day with a little more intention rather than just kind of like blurry eyed , reading a couple chapters, having some breakfast, and then like getting ready for the day. Um, so I'm gonna work with this schedule daily for a week or two and see how it feels for my body, for my mind, and, um, I expect that it's gonna be really, really helpful.

And I'm, I'm just so glad that I didn't use, uh, missing the first month of the year as an excuse to not get this back on track. I have really just been thinking about, you know, we, we make our choices and we have intentionality, we have purpose, we have agency to do these kinds of things. And, um, I have to just start when I feel like I'm ready or maybe not so ready, but when it, it's starting to be more uncomfortable to not do these things than it is to build them into my schedule.

So of course I would love to hear if you have any routines that you're working on. Getting back to now that we're in the second month of the year, you can always email me at hello dr katie lender.com if you wanna share your own experience. And I will make sure to check back on the blog to let you all know how it's going, if you want to check in and kind of see how this experiment, uh, works out for me.

So, uh, wishing you a good second month of the year and thanks for. Thanks for listening to this episode of You've Got This. You can access show notes and transcripts for each episode@drkatielinder.com slash podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show through Apple Podcasts.