You are listening to, you've got this Episode 327. 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 Lender. On this episode, I thought I would talk a little bit about how I am planning my upcoming retreat.

Now, I may have mentioned on previous episodes that I'm taking a week off later this month during my institution's spring break week, and I am really. Really looking forward to five days that I can use for one of my retreat periods. Now, if you've been listening for a while, you know that I used to take what I called like creative retreats on a regular basis.

Sometimes I did these like quarterly, and what I would typically do is take, um, a couple of weekends, sometimes maybe a holiday. And I would string them together with the week in between and have like 10 or 11 days that I would take off and just kind of block my calendar. And in those retreats I worked on a bunch of different things.

Sometimes it was about like a book project that I needed to make progress on. Um, one time I think I like completely overhauled my website and like did a bunch of website updates. Um, sometimes I would design like new programs for my business, um, really just like whatever I needed to do in a really like concentrated and creative, productive.

and I decided to bring this model back for my March, uh, retreat. And I thought on this episode I would share a little bit about how I planned what I'm gonna be spending my time on. Now, I want to say, first of all, that I have really missed having these retreats. Um, part of like. The reason this kind of fell off is just because I haven't been spending as much concentrated time on my business itself because my day job has really been taking front burner for a while now.

Um, when I had the job I had in Kansas when I had the job that I have, um, now in Denver, you know, this is something that I've really wanted to devote a lot of time and attention to, and that I feel really deserves my time and attention. And so I haven't necessarily felt the need to create something. , you know, for my business or I haven't really been working on book projects since like 2019.

I mean, it's, it's been a while since I've had that kind of thing going on. . So, um, first I guess I should say, I decided to do the retreat , like this was like the first step in the planning process. I, part of it was I, I will like, admit and acknowledge that I don't really know what to do with myself when I have five days in a, in a row.

Like I just, we're not gonna travel anywhere. And I thought it would just be fun to like work ahead on some tasks that I really enjoy. And I've talked before about how my love language is like unscheduled time. Like I just love having. Days and days in a row where I get to decide what I want to do. And usually I can balance, you know, fun things with work.

But, um, I wanted to really think about how I could use this time in a way that would help me both feel relaxed when I went back to work, but also really help me feel like I had accomplished something as well. . So the next thing I did was I opened a new project in Asana, which is the task management system that I currently use.

And one of the options in Asana, if you're familiar with it or if you've ever used a a management system like Trello, is this concept of a con bond style board. And basically what this looks like is a series of columns, and you can use this as kind of like a workflow where you like move things from one column to another.

But I tend to use this as a kind of view where I would align a column with a day of the retreat, and then I can fill in the tasks that I wanna work on and move them around to the right day of where I want them to go. On the. The board. So, um, one of the reasons that I chose this style in the past is that I've liked to kind of theme my retreat days around particular projects.

And sometimes I would spend like a half day on like a particular theme, or I would spend a whole day on a particular theme. And it helps me to kind of group like tasks together and see if there's any natural themes that might emerge. Part of, I think what I, what I went into when I first started thinking about this retreat was just what would feel good for me to get done.

So it wasn't necessarily that I came in with an idea of like a very specific project that I wanted to make progress on. It was really kind of like a, a mix of tasks that I was feeling more kind of like hanging over my head and I kept kind of pushing them off cuz I wasn't necessarily finding the time to work on them in my normal.

So the other thing that I did with this kind of con combine style board, I created a column for each of the days, Monday through Friday. But then I also created a column on the far left of the layout that I just called retreat goals. And this is the place where I'm listing the overall goals of what I wanna accomplish over the five days.

And then in each of those goals I have kind of the, um, sub items that would, would align with each of those goals. And each one of those sub items is gonna be assigned a day within the. . So here are some of the, the larger goals that I came up with when I started to kind of write some things down of what I was hoping to accomplish.

First, I have some content updates that I need to do in Slow Hustle and Prolific, which is my online community. And Slow Hustle is a program that I'm running this year, um, that I brought back. This is about like working with. Higher ed folks who wanna build businesses. And I have like a, a large resource guide for slow hustle that I wanna go through and like check all the links for and make sure everything is updated.

And I did this for the first few months of the program, but I need to do it for the remaining months of the program. So this is something that I had on my list. And then I also have some scheduled posts that I need to put into prolific. You can kind of, um, Uh, schedule them ahead of time and then they post automatically.

And I always do a weekly accountability post in prolific, and so I need to go in and schedule some of those for the remainder of the year. So those were two things that have been kind of hanging over my head. They're not difficult to do, they just take time. And I, I could easily listen to like an audiobook or something while I'm doing these, and so I think it'll be great to knock those off my list.

The next category really fell into my coach training program, and I want to get all of my coach training records and tasks up to date during this period. So for example, I have a progress report that I keep for every participant, and this helps me to track. , what are the classes that they've completed?

Have they completed the assessment that was associated with that class? And, um, have they done any observations or what are called mentoring sessions that are assigned to them, you know, throughout this program? And these are like requirements for them to either get their, um, initial hours if they're, they're just going for the first level of, of coaching credentialing or if they end up like graduating the program.

There's a series of requirements. So I have a template where I kind of map this for each part. . And basically what I wanna do is kind of update all of those reports and send each participant that is currently active in the coach training program an email about any outstanding tasks that they have and just kind of let them know where they are in the program.

And this is something that I think, I try to do this at least once a year for all the participants. I love to get into a more regular cadence. Um, but at least once a year helps everybody to know kind of what's left of any requirements they have based on their goals for the program. . Now, I also have some syllabi and core shells that I need to create for courses that are being taught in the remainder of the year.

And off the top of my head, I would guess that there's maybe six or seven of these that I need to finish creating. Again, it's not super complicated, but it just takes time. It takes time for me to update the syllabi with the right dates and to make sure that the core shells are kind of updated with the right information.

And it's really, um, something that I actually really like to do over my winter break. Like this is something I try to do before the year. But this last winter break, I did not get all of this done for the entire year. I just did it for like the first quarter. So I need to go back in and kind of get all of these tasks, uh, completed.

And then I have some upcoming emails, um, that are kind of automated in terms of like letting people know about assessments that are coming up. And enrollment emails for courses that are coming up in the program that I just wanna draft and schedule those so they're kind of off my plate. So a bunch of like administrative tasks related to the coach training program that I think it would be really great to just like set aside a couple of days and just knock all those out.

Now, of course, as I always do in these retreat periods, I would love to get head on content creation, which is, uh, including my podcast, the blog, and maybe like some YouTube videos that I have, um, that I, I used to talk about what I'm reading, and so I always love to spend at least a. Day devoted to content creation.

So that's something that I have on my list as well. And then I have a couple of mi miscellaneous category items, um, that I'm also including some like little website updates here and there. And then of course, as I mentioned on the previous episode, the delivery of our new Peloton bike, which I scheduled for the window of this retreat.

Um, so I'm glad that I can do that when I'm at home. . So once I had these kind of broader categories and tasks laid out, then I was able to kind of shuffle them and move them around the con bond board until I came up with what felt like a balanced workload for each day. Because I've done pretty much all of these things before I knew roughly how long they would take, and I don't necessarily want to have like an eight hour workday every day of this retreat.

I wanna have it be productive, but I also wanna leave some time to read books and watch movies and take naps and try out the new Peloton and, and just have kind of like a balanced, uh, workload that's happening each day. So I have to say, I really love the Kanban view for designing out a schedule of work over like a, a week period, because it will be easy to shift tasks around depending on what I get done as I go along.

So if I have a day where I'm feeling like I have a little extra energy, I got everything done for that day. I could maybe look ahead and like drag over a task from later in the week or in the opposite way. If I have a day where I'm not feeling as energized, I can like move tasks to later in the week if that's what I wanna do.

So it's been a couple of years since I've done a retreat period like this and I am just so anticipating it. I'm really looking forward to it. I'm also curious to hear how you might spend five days, um, if you had the time to go on retreat, what are the kinds of things that you would wanna get ahead on, make progress on?

Or maybe you would just do flat out rest or take a trip or do something different. So I would love to hear what you would do. You can always email me at hello dr katie linder.com to let me know how you would spend time like this. Um, and of course, after the retreat is done, I will definitely swing back and give you a bit of an update on how things went.

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