You are listening to, you've got this episode 340. 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 want to share some of the questions that I'm pondering for my own mid-year reflection, because we are in mid-June.

Um, and it's the perfect time, the last couple of weeks of June to kind of start to think about the first half of the year, how it's gone, what you want for the second half of the year. If you've been listening to the show for a while, you know, I love an opportunity to reflect, so I wanted to share some of the prompts that I have been thinking through in case they might also be helpful for you in terms of some reflective questions at this mid-year point.

So, um, the first prompt was, what word would I use to describe the first half of the year? And for me, I think this word would be scattered. I, as I've described in previous podcast episodes, I've had some unexpected projects get added to my plate in this first half of the year. Including some new job responsibilities that I did not necessarily see coming.

And I would say that this has definitely left me spread a little bit thin across the board. And sometimes I'm just struggling a bit to keep my head above water, um, and stay consistently motivated when my plate is so full. So, um, scattered is definitely a word that I think describes this first half of the year.

Um, not necessarily the word I want, but definitely the reality of the situation I'm in. The second question is, what is going well? Uh, I think it's always really important to not just jump on what are the things that are maybe not going well, but what are the things that are going well so that we can recognize and kind of celebrate those things?

So I am on track with a lot of my annual goals for this year, so that feels good. I have really loved getting back into a regular movement practice through, um, the Peloton bike that I purchased in my treadmill. And of course, the warmer weather has also meant some really nice walks outside. Uh, I'm also getting in more yoga and meditation on a consistent basis, so that's felt really good as well.

And I would also say the reading that I'm doing this year is life giving in the midst of a very busy schedule. Um, I feel like I've read broadly, I've read diverse in terms of different genres, which has been really fun. And um, so that's something that I'm really enjoying. And I also feel like in terms of what's going well, I'm learning a lot about myself this year since I've had a lot of opportunities at work to stretch in new directions and that kind of reflection and learning is always welcomed, uh, for me.

So those are some of the things I feel like is going well. The third question is, of course, what is not going as well as I would've hoped. And part of this is also I think an opportunity to just kind of like reset expectations because maybe I had unrealistic expectations for myself of how certain things would go.

And so now I can kind of start to reset. So, as I mentioned, I am feeling more scattered than I would like to feel. And um, usually I, I have pretty clear priorities at any given time. This is something that I've really kind of prided myself on. I'm very values focused and aligned and really trying to know, you know, like what am I supposed to be focused on at any given time.

But with all of these added projects at work, it's been really hard to have that sense of clarity. Um, and, and that's been tough. I feel like. This is something that could calm down over time and nothing's really going badly, but I just often feel like I'm not giving my best because I'm spread pretty thin.

And that means paying a lot of attention to how I'm managing my energy and building in recovery time. And I. I would say that I, I spend a good, you know, a fair amount of time really thinking about that and making sure that I'm kind of taking care of myself, whereas I feel like in a more balanced situation, maybe that would be happening more naturally.

Um, so I, I don't, again, it's not going badly, but I guess I, I would've hoped that I could be a little bit more. Just not overloaded. I mean, that's probably, you know, the situation I'm in is I, I'm just super overloaded in a way that I wasn't anticipating and, and that's caused, you know, spillover into other areas that I've had to pay attention to.

Okay, the next question I'm asking myself is what do I feel behind on? Or what is just stressing me out? Um, because this is the good part of the year to like renegotiate your time, how you wanna prioritize different tasks or projects. Like this is a really good time to do that. There is a full six months left.

Plenty of time to do lots of great work. So the thing that I would say that is kind of weighing on me is the book project that I have due in November. This is really starting to stress me out a little bit. Now, I'm hoping to get some really good progress on this during a two week break that I'm taking from work this summer, and it is explicitly to work on this project, and that's gonna really help me know where I'm at with the status of the project.

I have been here before in terms of kind of stressing about a book manuscript, and I've been able to turn it around, so I'm hopeful that I'm gonna feel better after this, you know, push on the project. I will say I am super happy that I have a co-author for the second edition of the book, um, because I just don't think there's a way I could have carved out the time if I had to do this on my own.

So I'm really grateful for my co-author and, um, that we're gonna be able to kind of like kick this out. Hopefully in the summer months it's gonna feel really good to hand that off, um, to the publisher. Okay, next question is, how am I feeling physically? Now I would say that I'm feeling a solid, like seven to eight out of 10.

Pretty consistently I'm getting regular exercise and pretty good sleep. I've recently, um, posted an episode about some of the stuff I'm doing with my sleep, and that's working really well. I. Sometimes I admit I am eating more sugar than I would like, which does not help my energy levels. And it, it serves as a kind of stimulant for things like my anxiety, which is why I'm really careful about sugar levels and caffeine levels and things like that.

So I'm always working on that because I tend to go for sweet foods when I'm stressed and I just know this about myself. And so, um, there's some stuff to like work on here, but I feel like this is pretty good right now. Okay, next question is how am I feeling mental health wise? So I think it's so important to not just check in on physical health, but also to think about mental health as well.

And in the past couple of years, especially through the pandemic period, I feel like I've gotten really good at listening to myself, paying attention to my capacity limits, and really understanding when I need to get some solitude or recovery time. This, I think has really contributed to my mental health being pretty stable at, I would say like a six to eight out of 10.

Now, some of you might be thinking like six might seem kind of low. Um, but I would just say I think we all have our challenging days and since I'm carrying a pretty heavy load right now, I expect that I'm gonna have some days where I, I need some extra self-care and support. My concern would be if I was having like six or below consistently, which is not happening, it's kind of like dips every once in a while where I feel like I, you know, need a little bit more, um, like extra support.

Like I said, now I talk very openly with my partner about my mental health and kind of where I'm at. And this really helps a lot, um, because I can ask him, you know, for support when I need it. But all that to say, this is an area that I, I just pay a ton of attention to and will continue to do that because I know that I can't really carry a heavy load when I'm not caring for myself in this area first.

And so I do a lot of kind of check-ins, um, very regularly. Now, the other thing I'll say that I think contributes to some of the lower numbers of my mental health is I don't always feel like I have the recovery time that I need. To like really fill my cup before I have to like dive back into work. And so I, I've been really trying to think about this and how I can balance that a little bit better.

My sense is that it is just the season that I'm in, um, and I need to just kind of like be in the season and, and do the best I can in the season. But I would say like in the next six months or so, I'll be checking in about this again, just to kind of see where I'm at because um, as we all know, we can't just carry heavy loads forever.

I mean, at some point we have to balance things out. Okay, next question. What are my priorities for the second half of the year? So as we head into the second half of 2023, What are the things I really wanna give my time, my energy and my attention to? So there are a few things that come to mind. The first is definitely the book project.

I will feel really good when this has crossed off my list and there's some project management elements of this because I have my primary co-author, but I also have some like chapter contributors that we're working with as well. And so I need to not only like write my sections of the book and kind of edit and revise, but also be like project managing these other pieces as well.

So it's just gonna feel really good when we have that turned into the publisher in November. A second priority is I have this, what I'm calling like a gift that I'm giving to myself for my 40th birthday and, uh, my 40th birthday is happening later this year. This is one of my annual goals and, um, it was kind of my way of like celebrating my 40th birthday in a way that was like meaningful to me.

I am chipping away at this on a weekly basis, and I'm gonna talk about it in the fourth quarter of the year, but this is just gonna be con continuing to be a priority for me for the remainder of the year. A third priority is I really wanna try and focus on offering care to people around me at work. No, I am certainly not the only one who feels overloaded.

Like I see my colleagues around me and even like my team members that I oversee, like we're, we're all kind of struggling to some extent. Like there's a lot going on and, and there's a lot of stress in higher ed generally right now at a lot of institutions. And I just wanna make sure that I have kind of a caring attitude toward my coworkers and my team members because I, I can tend to just focus on the bottom line.

Um, and that can be my default mode when I'm stressed. And so I'm really trying to, Take care of myself enough so that I can also care for other people. And, and what that really looks like is just being like a listener, you know, like listening when people need to kind of unload about something or just checking in with people about how things are going for them.

Maybe asking about, you know, their personal lives, like their kids or you know, their families, how things are going. So it's nothing major, but it's just one of those things that I think is gonna be really important in this second half of the year. Okay. The last question that I had that I posed for myself is, what is my theme word for the second half of the year?

And since scattered isn't really working for me, I think a theme word might be something like focused or flexible. Now, if I can get a little more focused, that is definitely gonna help me feel more in control, but I'm not sure that that's going to be possible. I'm just gonna be honest with myself that there's gonna be a lot on my plate for a little while.

And I think that flexibility is gonna be key, um, with that. So if I can't be focused, I can at least be flexible and that is really gonna help me stay positive and motivated, even if I have some kind of shifting sands under me a little bit. In the latter part of 2023. I think one of the most important things that I can offer myself is positive self-talk, which I try really hard to do, and I'm often reminding myself that like I'm doing the best I can.

What I bring to the table is enough. You know, I can learn and grow through any situation. I mean, these are all kinds of like mantras that I repeat to myself, and I think that that flexibility is gonna allow me to stay positive even if things start to feel kind of challenging. So I hope that you find these questions helpful as you reflect at the midyear point.

And of course, I would love to hear your reflections. You can always email me at hello dr katie linder.com. I always love to hear from you. Thanks so much for listening. 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.

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