You're listening to You've Got This, episode 345. 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 share about a new evening routine that I have been engaging in that has helped me to deeply relax during a pretty stressful time.

So first, let me offer just a little bit of context about the stressful part and just to note that stress is relative. So I am sure some of you are going through even deeper stress than what I'm about to describe here. But I'll just say that my stress has been just ratcheted up. bit as we head into the new term.

Part of this is because I've had several full day events that have been pretty fatiguing. And I was involved in, um, facilitating some leadership retreats. I had a couple of full days of like a leadership training that I'm doing. And then this is also that time of year where I'm getting asked to come in and give a lot of presentations for like term start meetings in our various schools and colleges.

And so it's just been like a lot of. People and a lot of changes and shifts in my schedule that I'm used to kind of just having a lot of meetings like throughout the day, but not necessarily kind of these full day, you know, events where I have to be kind of on and I don't get a lot of breaks. So I should say I actually like all of these things.

But when they're strung together over several weeks, like they have been, I end the day just completely exhausted and completely depleted. And part of this, I'll also say what I can attribute it to is because I'm going to these all day events, I don't have access to my office, you know, typically for, for most of these all day things.

And this is where I typically like bring and store my food, and I have an option of kind of having like real regularity and consistency with what I'm eating. And when I have these all day events, I'm having to pack different food because I don't have access to like a microwave or, you know, the kinds of things that I would normally be eating.

So I know that part of what's throwing me off is that I'm eating things that I don't normally eat. And also with these events, they're, you know, they're catered. And so like sometimes I'm eating some of the stuff that is catered and I'm, I'm kind of supplementing with my own food. And if you've been listening for a while, you know, I have some kind of like dietary preferences and things that make it a little bit challenging to do this.

So I know that's contributing a bit to my fatigue and just kind of throwing off my body. And then also I will add, like many of you, the weather in Denver has been very warm. And this also tends to like suck my energy by the end of the day. And again, totally relative. I mean, we've been in kind of the 90s and the low 100s.

I know other people have been hotter than that and it's just so fatiguing and tiring. So at the same time that I have had this kind of physical and mental fatigue, since every day is really full, I also find though that at the end of the day, my mind is like still racing because of all of this, you know, stuff that I'm engaging in throughout the day.

My nervous system is, like, really activated by being around people all day. So, in a word, I'm just really overstimulated from all of the interaction with larger groups of people. And I've definitely had episodes where I've talked about this before, like, um, planning to go to conferences and things like that, where I know I'm going to have, like, a lot of stimulation, and how do I kind of plan for that?

So, given all of that, I needed to find some activities that would allow me to deeply relax at the end of the day so that I could go to sleep before I needed to get up and do it all over again, because I had kind of this three week marathon. And as I record this, I'm like entering into week three. So I've had a couple of weeks of this where I really needed to find something that would help me to relax.

So here's what I landed on after I get home and I have some dinner. I put on my workout clothes and I jump on my Peloton bike for like 30 to 45 minutes. Now, um, If you've been, again, listening for a while, you should kind of know this is very strange. Like, I am not a workout at night person. This is not something I've ever done consistently.

I mean, I think it was probably in, like, 2014, the last time I was, like, regularly working out in the evenings. And that's when I was running a lot, and I needed, like, time to go for a run in the evenings. So it's been, like, almost 10 years since I have done any kind of evening workout. Now I should also mention, in the morning, I'm usually doing a walk.

or I'm doing something before I leave for work. Um, not anything super intense, but just getting kind of a little bit of movement in before I go into the office. So this is actually like doing a double workout basically by the end of the day. So I choose a scenic ride, I start up an audio book, and I ride at kind of whatever speed I feel like, but the idea is to get me to sweat, like a little bit, just to kind of like get my heart rate going, and kind of try to tire out my body a little bit, so I definitely do something that's a bit more cardio.

When I complete that ride, I get about 20 ounces of water, I have these like 24 ounce jars, like mason jars basically, and I fill one up with water to hydrate because it's so hot here and so dry, and I sit and let my heart rate kind of slow down a bit while I, while I rehydrate. Okay, then after that, take a shower.

brush my teeth, you know, get ready for bed, put on some comfortable sleeping clothes, and then I take my nightly dose of melatonin so I can start to kind of wind down. And then, this is my absolute favorite part of this new routine, I lay in my bed backwards with my legs extended up the headboard. So my head is kind of resting on pillows toward the center of the bed, and then my seat is like where my pillows would normally be.

Now, you've probably heard me talk about this pose before. It is a simple yoga pose called legs at the wall, which you may have heard of, you may have seen people doing. You can, you know, find videos of this online if you're not quite sure what I'm talking about here. Um, but this basically can help to regulate your nervous system.

It, it impacts like your circulation and helps you to calm down. Now, in addition to that benefit, the other thing I have found is that in all the heat we have here, by the end of the day, my legs and my ankles and the day just really swollen. So it's really nice and it feels really good to put my legs up and get my circulation moving in a different way.

So it serves a couple of purposes. It kind of, It gets my, you know, my heart rate down. It helps with my, you know, regulation of my nervous system, and it helps to kind of bring down some of the swelling that I have in my my legs and my ankles. So I put my legs up the wall for about 10 minutes, and usually while I'm doing this, I might read a little bit, you know, if I, if I'm continuing my audiobook, or I'll just like scroll social media.

I've also found that, um, you know, when I have these really busy days, I'm I'm not really keeping up with like the things I typically follow, so I might like read the news a little bit or just kind of like catch up on some stuff that came in throughout the day. Once I finish that pose, again like 10 minutes or so, my body and my brain are both like completely ready to go to sleep.

So it's like a combo. It's a combo of like the exercise, um, doing a little bit to kind of exhaust myself like physically, but then also doing the hydration, the warm shower, which kind of calms everything down. And then doing this legs up the wall is so nice. It is so deeply relaxing. So this new routine has really been helping me process kind of any stress that I have at the end of the day and just deeply relax so I'm ensured to have that good night's sleep.

Now I can also say that in this kind of schedule that I'm in right now, I mentioned I'm getting up and doing, you know, a little bit of exercise in the morning, but I'm also really prioritizing sleep because I need to kind of have that recovery. And so what I find is that I'm getting up later than I normally would, and I'm getting in less time for, you know, movement or other kinds of things in my morning routine in the morning.

So this is also another way that I can ensure that I'm, like, building that in, um, at the end of the day, too, which is really nice. So I would love to hear if you have a kind of evening routine or maybe even a morning routine that you shift into when you're in a period of overstimulation. Um, you can always email me at hello at drkadylynder.

com and let me know what is working for you. I always love to hear. And, um, maybe this is something you want to try in your own life, depending on kind of how the term is starting out for 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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