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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 about what I came up with for my word of the year.

Now I went through a few different possibilities, so I'm going to talk about what I landed on.

But before I chat about this more, I also want to just briefly say that sometimes I have a word of the year and sometimes I don't.

This is a practice that I find helpful sometimes, but sometimes I'm just like not in the mood or honestly I just forget to do this.

But I've seen other people talking about their word of the year and it kind of jogged my memory and all that to say if you have not yet come up with a word of the year, it's not too late.

You can absolutely do it at whatever time you want.

And if words of the year don't really work for you, I also understand that.

But I thought it was kind of helpful to me to do a kind of theme this year.

And I appreciated the reflective exercise of just thinking about what I truly wanted to be reminded about this year.

And that's how I often use a word of the year, is something to kind of like jog me to be reminded of something or to keep something kind of centered, you know, as I'm moving through the year.

So this is what I came up with.

It's kind of tied to how I've been recommitting to radical self-trust in different ways this year and I can link my annual goals episode in the show notes where I talk about organizing my goals around radical self-trust principles, but I decided that my word of the year is devotion.

And devotion can be defined as the fact or the state of being ardently dedicated and loyal.

Some of the words that I'm associating with this in terms of kind of my personal definition are affection, allegiance, warmth, and gentleness.

Now I want to offer some explanation for this word and I'll admit it feels still a little bit hard for me to understand like why I'm feeling resonance with this word and why I chose it, but I think that that's okay.

Like I'm kind of going with my gut on this one a little bit, but I'm thinking of devotion as a method of basically staying true to myself in a time where I have a lot of other distractions and I have a lot of other things outside of me like wanting my attention, my time.

And so I, as I mentioned, I've taken on some new responsibilities at work.

That's taking up more of my time and energy.

So this is one way that I'm paying extra attention to my own needs to ensure that I have rest and recovery time, that I'm setting appropriate boundaries, that I have good self-care and self-preservation.

So it's a way of kind of reminding myself to stay devoted to my own needs in a period of time when I'm also paying a lot of attention to other people's needs as well.

Now I have an analogy that I thought of about this and I hope it doesn't offend the moms that are kind of listening to this.

So give me give me some flexibility here in terms of this.

But I was thinking about how when women are pregnant.

And just to clarify, I have never been pregnant, but this is just as I've been out in the world and as I've known several women who've been pregnant, they often need to take extra care of themselves.

So I want to be clear, I'm not pregnant, do not walk away from this podcast thinking that I'm pregnant.

But I think there are some things, times in our lives, and this was like one analogy I could come up with, when we need extra care, rest, self-awareness.

And the closest thing I can think of that is somewhat like socially sanctioned is when women are pregnant.

And I think that oftentimes we do not kind of accommodate ourselves in particular ways.

Even when we are spending extra time, extra energy, maybe our own physical needs need to be attended to more, we just push through.

I have certainly done that in the past.

And so I'm basically saying that this year, because I have all this extra stuff going on, I need to give myself the justification to take extra care of myself.

Now maybe I shouldn't need a justification, but oftentimes life works that way.

So what I'm actively kind of being careful about is accommodating others' needs more than my own, adapting to others' expectations at the expense of my own, and not feeling or giving into external pressures for how to be or act if it feels not right, you know, based on kind of how I want to engage in a particular situation.

So I also decided that I needed a few clear steps of how to do this consistently.

So I have guidance when things get really busy.

How do I want to stay, you know, kind of devoted in these ways.

So what I came up with was three steps that I called stay curious, notice and recalibrate.

So the first step of staying curious is just being eager to know and learn, be inquisitive, wonder about things, be ready to poke around, figure something out, don't get too stuck in one way of doing things.

And I think when you're more curious, you have less fear and less insecurity because you're not saying you know everything.

You're just like being open to what you need to learn.

And this is actually a real tenant of coaching.

So I feel very good about kind of like putting that into my life in a deeper way.

The second step to notice is just to be with myself and to pay attention to my own responses, my own emotions, notice areas that maybe feel misaligned as I'm kind of going through the work.

And then recalibrate is this idea of considering what I can actually take away or learn from what I am noticing.

And based on what I'm noticing, do I need to transition that to any form of action?

What small changes could help me bring things back into alignment if I feel a sense of misalignment?

Now I will admit, I love this word recalibrate.

I really thought that this could be my word of the year.

Like this is where I started was with recalibrate.

And then I realized it was just one step of something bigger.

But what I love about recalibration is that you can always course correct if you feel out of alignment.

And there's always a way to come back into alignment.

And I think that especially when you're dealing with a lot of stuff going on, it's helpful to remember that you can take small steps or even bigger medium steps to recalibrate and get back to a sense of yourself.

So let me offer like a quick example of these three steps.

So last weekend, I had a bunch of tasks on my list I always do.

And I had a really busy morning on Sunday and I was just starting to feel tired.

And I knew that I wanted to finish a book I was reading.

So I was like, well, let me just finish the book.

Let me see if I can get like a rebound of energy because I still have things I need to do in the afternoon.

And once that was done, I was still tired.

So I decided to shift my tasks so I could take a nap.

And I laid down, I did a guided sleep meditation.

And then I had like the best a snap for like 90 minutes.

And it was amazing.

And it was just what I needed.

And it gave me permission to like pivot toward what I truly needed in that moment, which was a little bit of extra rest.

And that to me felt like a small form of devotion to my own needs to make sure that I could remember that I can kind of make that change if I need to, just based on paying attention to myself and then kind of recalibrating my schedule.

So I mentioned earlier, I feel like this is tied to principles of radical self-trust.

And here are some of the kind of connection points that I see with this concept of devotion.

So you may remember that radical self-trust at like a core tenant of the definition of how I define it is around self-awareness and self-loyalty.

And it is this idea that you kind of trust yourself so much that you're really paying attention to what you need and you're kind of aligning things around you with your own needs and your own kind of awareness of yourself.

It's also about staying really steadfast in your consideration of your own needs.

And I think that in times where you're gonna get a lot of attention pulled away to other things, and this could be at so many different seasons of life.

It could be a work season that gets really busy.

It could be a family season where you're needing to focus a lot on your family.

The idea is just to kind of say, don't lose your sense of self in this period because it could be really hard to stay on track and to really understand what you need.

And so that's kind of where I'm at right now, is I feel like it could be really easy to just pour out myself in all these different ways and not remember and get super depleted and super burned out, and that doesn't help anybody.

It doesn't help me, it doesn't help the people around me.

So if I can stay devoted to my own needs in this period, then I can also be my best self as I'm showing up.

And that really comes back to kind of the last thing, I guess I would say, is that recognizing this is such a lesson, and I know we talk about it in sometimes a very flippant way, but we are our best for others when we are aware of our own needs and our own capacity limitations.

And I have seen people around me at various points in my career get completely burnt out, and then other people want to take care of them or they're trying to work around that.

And I feel like this is a period of time where I want to be very steady and strong and able to support a lot of other people and I have to stay devoted to my own needs in order to do that.

That is my word of the year, devotion.

I am hoping I can give a couple updates throughout the year of how that's going.

This one, like I said, I feel like in my gut, this is what I'm going with and I'm interested to see how it shows up throughout the year and what it might mean, even in ways that I haven't necessarily thought of yet.

So I would love to hear if you have a word of the year or if you have a phrase of the year that you're kind of thinking about, you can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.

com.

As you know, I always love to hear from you and thanks so much for listening.

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