You're listening to You've Got This, episode 369.

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'm going to talk about how I fixed January for myself.

And what I mean by that is every year, January has always been kind of a tough month for me.

Now, while I love the turnover of the calendar and jumping into the new year, that clean slate feeling, that feeling of like jumping into my annual goals, all of that I really, really love.

But I've also always felt like January just takes forever to get through.

And it's like this long slog and it's like winter time, dark, cold.

And it's just never really been my favorite month for that reason.

Now, part of this might also be lit when we're kind of like coming to the end of the year, it's like this final push.

And so I don't always feel like I have a ton of energy in January.

And, um, so this year I thought, how can I turn this around?

Because when I have a situation when I am like unhappy or I don't like something, I really like to take action and I really like to figure out how can I somehow fix or change this to be better for myself.

And so I decided to do a number of things in January as kind of experiments.

And I feel like they really worked.

So I thought I would share with you a little bit about how I fixed January or really how I like shifted my mindset around January, um, in ways that were really helpful for me.

Now, the first thing that I did was I gave myself something to do in January that I was really, really looking forward to.

And that was to read a, of like series of books that had been like something I've been holding off on doing because I wanted to read them back to back.

And this is the throne of blast series.

I will link it in the show notes for those of you who want to look into it more.

This is a fantasy series that I would say, um, all together is probably.

Oh, 3000 plus pages, maybe a little bit more.

Um, I'm just kind of guessing off the top of my head.

Most of the books are about 500 pages each.

And this is a series that's kind of interesting because you read like the first couple two to three books in the series, and then there's this book of short stories that you're supposed to read, and then you read another book, and then the fifth and sixth books, the novels in the series, are supposed to be what some people call tandem read, where you go back and forth between the two books.

Like you'll read two chapters in one, and then you'll read a chapter in the other, and then you'll go back and read a few chapters in the first book, and then of course there's the final books which are just, you know, normal, and you just read those.

But it was kind of one of those series that I felt kind of intimidated by in the fact that it would take a lot of time and my attention.

And anytime I read a new fantasy series, I really want to dive in in a way that I can really understand it.

And so I thought this is perfect.

This is the perfect kind of like distraction and also like reward for going through January that I'm going to kind of like dive into this series.

So that was one thing that I did that took a little bit of planning to make sure I could actually get through it.

I had all all the books physical copy and I had them on audio and I had them in ebook form so that I could be making sure that I was getting through these and I loved the series.

It was super fun.

I will also link to my youtube channel in the show notes because I will be talking about indie briefing the series in an upcoming video.

Okay, the next thing that I did is January has also been sometimes I get kind of like that new year energy but sometimes like I said I don't have a ton of energy in January.

And so something I decided to do for myself was to give myself a kind of fitness challenge.

Now I recently talked about this on my blog and I called it going for the gold and I will explain why in a moment but I will also link to that blog post in the show notes if you want to read it as well.

Basically what I decided to do was in the Peloton app, if you are unfamiliar with it, there are all of these monthly challenges that you can complete and you get different badges, a bronze, a silver, or a gold badge, depending on how much you do in that particular challenge.

So there's kind of these milestones that you can be kind of working toward in different areas.

And I wanted to try to get gold in all of them.

So what that meant was, there was a certain amount of days that I was trying to be active in the app.

And that could include things like meditation and yoga.

So it's not all, you know, like running and biking and all of that.

There's also a milestone for biking and I think it's 150 miles to get to gold.

There was a milestone for running which for me is actually walking.

I just do walking and that I think for gold was 40 miles.

And then I also decided to do the rowing milestone as well because I recently did get a Peloton row.

I got one of these in December.

I can't remember if I've mentioned this on the show yet but I do have a Peloton row so I have all three of the Peloton machines now.

And the gold for the Peloton row is 80,000 meters.

And then there's also this strength challenge, which is basically to do 15 strength workouts throughout the course of the month.

I am horrible at the strength workouts.

I never do them.

I don't like them.

And so that was one thing that was really going to motivate me as well.

And then they had like this special challenge as well in January that was like a collaboration between Peloton and Lululemon to do, I don't know if that's how it's pronounced.

So if I pronounced it wrong, you can tell me.

But a collaboration between those two brands to do some special workouts.

And I think you had to do 15 of the.

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It was a range of things.

They had biking and they had meditations and all kinds of other things as well.

So my goal in January, all that to say, my goal in January was to try to hit gold on as many of these as I possibly could, knowing that it was kind of one of those shoot for the moon, land among the stars kind of challenges for myself.

That even if I didn't hit gold in everything, I would be able to get close.

And that was still going to be more movement and kind of engagement than I normally would have had.

I also set kind of an informal goal with myself to try to hit 2000 Peloton minutes throughout the month.

So as I am recording this, we're still a few days left in January, but I actually think I'm going to be able to hit gold on all of these areas.

And basically what it took was morning workouts every single day and making sure that I had kind of a plan of what I was going to work out.

And I ended up making a workout schedule in Asana so that I could just cover what I was going to do each day and that made it really easy to know what I needed to do.

And I am so glad I did this.

It allowed me to be way more active in the month of January that I probably would have been.

And also because my work life has gotten super busy, it encouraged me to get up and do a morning routine that involves some level of movement.

And that was also really, really good.

Okay.

Couple other things that I did in the month of January.

One of them was I did end up engaging in a bunch of evening work to stay on top of things.

And what I have found in the new responsibilities I have at my job is that I don't have a lot of time in the day to do email anymore.

And I used to have little margins here and there where I could kind of get email done.

And now my volume of email has increased and I'm also just engaging a lot more with people and meetings.

And so I end up working a little bit at the end of the day to just kind of clean everything up and make sure I'm ready to go for the next day.

The benefit of this in the month of January is it actually made the days feel a little bit more full and I wasn't trying to kind of like fill time at the end of the day because I always had something else that I could be doing.

And I didn't want to overwork.

I was really careful to like also fit in some things in the evening that were just for fun or for relaxation.

But it just ended up making the month go by very quickly that I had all of these things kind of constantly that I was working through, whether that was like projects or other things that I needed to do in my evenings, in addition to the full days that I had at work.

Another thing that I really focused on in the month of January that made it really fun is I looked at my annual goals list and I will link my 24 goals for 2024 in the show notes in case you haven't had a chance to look at this yet.

And I tried to figure out what are the things that I could do on that list to just kind of check them off.

And one of the ones that I decided to really focus on, which has been super fun, is I had a goal on my list to watch 12 nostalgic movies throughout the year.

And what I mean by nostalgic movies are just movies that I haven't seen in a long time, but that I would want to watch again or things that I like remembered like very fondly.

And as I record this, I think I've watched like seven in the month of January.

And oftentimes this was on like a Sunday afternoon or sometimes it was like an evening, like my partner and I would like watch a movie, you know, in the middle of the week or something like that.

And that just felt super luxurious to have that many movies in, you know, a relatively short period of time, because this is not something that I would normally do.

So adding something like that into my schedule has also been just like super fun and motivating as I think about, you know, like getting through, you know, a long month.

Now the last thing that I can note about something that kind of helped me to think through getting through January like one week at a time is that I had three different things that were launching on the weekends in my January.

So in one of the first weeks of January, I launched a coach training class.

And then the week after that, I launched the new coach training cohort.

And then the week after that, I launched the slow hustle cohort for this year.

And so having something like that every week that I was launching, first of all, balanced it out.

I didn't feel completely overwhelmed that I had all of these things launching like in the same weekend.

So it was nice to have kind of like a measured approach, but it was also really helpful for me to have something like that to like look forward to and to know that I had these kind of milestones that I was hitting throughout the month.

And so by the end of the month, I had a lot of things that I could say I was I was able to kind of launch these things and get them done and move them forward.

So basically I feel like the the moral of the story here for me at least was like make a plan.

Make a plan for this thing that is like not necessarily super fun for me but I wanted to have lots of things that I could be like motivated by and that I could enjoy.

And I definitely think the the concept of like what I call go for the gold which is to try to hit all of the different peloton badges in the same month That was something that I could definitely see becoming a new tradition for January to do that again in the future because I just found it to be so successful.

And I also love the idea too of giving myself a pretty big reading challenge as well, something that I've been really looking forward to and that I know I'm really going to like.

That also helped me to just kind of be motivated to carve out the time that I could find to do that as well.

So I would love to hear if you have different strategies or methods for getting through January, first of all, or other periods that just feel kind of tough.

And I would also encourage you to spend a few minutes thinking about how you want to shift your mindset around something if it is just feeling not great for you.

Just by spending a few minutes and a little bit of planning time, I was able to completely shift how I was approaching January, and it felt so much better this year than it has in many years in the past.

So you can always reach out to me at hello@drkatylinder.

com.

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

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