Narrator: [(music intro) 00:00:00] - [00:00:08]

You're listening to AcademiGig, episode seven.

AcademiGig is a podcast for current and aspiring academic creatives, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. Along with every episode, we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, and a full transcript. You can find these materials, sign up for our email list, and share your ideas for episode topics, at academigig.com.

Now, on to the episode.

Dr. Katie: Hey Sara, how's it going?

Dr. Sara: Pretty good Katie, how are you?

Dr. Katie: I am good.

Dr. Sara: So, what's going on with you and your business, right now?

Dr. Katie: So, I feel like in the last couple episodes, I've been thinking about and talking about systems, and how I'm thinking about systems, and in part this is because of a course I've been working through, called 'Rock Your Webdesign Business', which I will link to in the show notes. But I recently decided to hire someone, actually, to come-

Dr. Sara: Woo-hoo!

Dr. Katie: ... Talk with me about systems, which I am super psyched about, and can definitely talk about that more in a future episode; what are some of the things that are going into those systems, but, it's a 'thing' for me right now. And thinking about, especially in terms of scalability of my business-

Dr. Sara: Ah.

Dr. Katie: ... How can I get systems started, from the very foundation, so that later on I'm not kicking myself, because I didn't set up a system from the beginning. So, that is what is on my mind lately; what about you?

Dr. Sara: Yeah, for me, the beginning of fall is always that time wherein you sit back and go, "Okay, how are things going? Let's check in!" How are we doing towards the end of the year here, and, what do I want to get done by the end of the year, and so I've been spending a lot of time thinking about ... Where I am, and where I'm going, and am I happy with those things? What do I need to shift and change in the next couple of months? I think your comment about hiring people is really relevant to me as well. I'm starting to ... Wrestle with that a little bit, and figure out, are there ways that I could get more things done, if I hired more hands to do them. So, that's where I am right now.

Dr. Katie: That sounds like a good topic for a future episode as well.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: It is all super tied in with what we are doing in this episode, and the next episode.

So, the topic for this episode ... We're going to talk a little bit about 'goal-setting', and thinking about the different metrics we're using to, measure the success of our businesses. But we felt like that was really tied in with what we were talking about in the next episode, which is, 'How Far in Advance Do We Plan ... For Different Aspects of Our Business' So, rather than try to separate out these topics in a really clean way, we're going to call this episode 'Part One', and then the next episode 'Part Two', because it may be that we blend a little bit between the two topics. So, we'll start with goal-setting, and see where we get in this episode, and then, in the next one, we'll continue the conversation.

Dr. Sara: So we'll leave you all with a massive cliffhanger at the end of this episode, to make sure you come back for the next one.

Dr. Katie: Oh, I have to think about that; I'm not sure what that would be.

Dr. Sara: Ha! Sorry.

Dr. Katie: Okay. Let's think about that along the way.

Dr. Sara: Okay.

Dr. Katie: Let's think about that along the way. Okay, so Sara, I'm curious, just to kick us off ... When are you setting goals for your business? Is this something that you are, a New Year's Eve person, or are you doing it as you go along, or are you not setting goals at all? What's the situation for you?

Dr. Sara: I'm in the middle on that one. I definitely like to have ... Targets in mind; things that I'm thinking about, in terms of, "How do I want to grow certain aspects of my business, and what does growth look like?" I tend to be a bit of an evaluation junkie, so I like having some pretty specific ideas about where I want to go, and how I want to measure that. But, at the same time, I've found in the last several months of doing this self-employment thing full-time that, I've also needed to give myself permission to have more flexibility and fluidity in that.

So, I really like to think of goal-setting for me more about ... Reaching certain milestones that I've set for myself, certain guideposts, if you will, along the way, as opposed to having the destination completely in mind, and here's exactly how I'm going to get there. It's more, "Okay, I want to go off in that direction ... Through the field, and over the mountains and through the woods." And, how I get there might change a little bit along the way; I might come up against a crossroads, and have to ... Decide of the moment which direction I want to go, and how I want to continue to explore, rather than try to carve a path through the deep dark woods, it's figuring out, "How do I need to flexibly shift and pivot along the way?" So, though I have some general goals in mind, I am not the type of person who goes really, really specific ... In terms of longer-term goals. For shorter projects, or for ... Smaller aspects of larger projects, I get pretty specific and pretty granular. But, when it comes to these big ... 'Get More Clients!' Goals, I tend to be a little more freeform and little more free-flowing in that.

What about you, Katie? How do you go about setting goals for your business?

Dr. Katie: So, I am a goal-setting crazy person, I think.

Dr. Sara: (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: I love goal-setting. And, this is something that, if people who are listening to this show, listen to my other podcast, you've got this; you've heard me talk about goal-setting in lots of different ways. Typically, I'll take any excuse to goal set, basically.

Dr. Sara: (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: I goal-set every day, I goal-set every month; I do annual planning, I have a thousand-day plan for longer projects I want to do. I have been known in the past to do five-year plans ... Not always with my business, sometimes it's with other things too, but right now, it's really focused on my business.

I love New Years. That's a huge time for me to really think about, what do I want to do ... Over the next year. And I usually take that opportunity to really reflect a lot on, what are the things that are going well, what are the things that I really want to incorporate more into my life, and I usually do a blend of business and personal with that. Because I think that, my business is such a part of my life, it's such a huge part of my ... Day-to-day working life, in the sense of, my weekends are spent on my business, I take vacation so that I can work on my business, that I really have to goal-set for all of those things at once.

But, similar to you, Sara, I would say that I set a goal, and then if I realize partway down the pathway, that the goal has shifted, I pivot.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: Because ... When you're doing longer-term planning, sometimes you hit a certain point, and you're like, "Oh, that's not really what I want to do anymore." For whatever reason, you thought that it was a goal, and then, all of a sudden, it's not so much of a goal.

Dr. Sara: (Laughs) Yep.

Dr. Katie: And I think especially with businesses, when you have different ideas for your business, and different ideas for projects and things, you can be totally on fire for it, and then six months later, you're like, "Okay, so I realized there's no audience for this."

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: And, I have to shift. So, I think ... Just because I goal-set all the time, and I actually think ... I'm a big believer in, when you write you're goals down, you're more likely to accomplish them, so I have goals on my whiteboard, I carry them around with me; I have a planner where I mock out what my goals are for each quarter, and things like that. So even though I'm such a huge believer in that, I'm also a huge believer in ... Erasing something off that list, if it ... Turns out that it's not what it's supposed to be.

Dr. Sara: Yeah, it's so interesting, because I've heard that suggestion, or that recommendation from a lot of people of really ... Making your goals, or your targets be, a very visual part of your everyday life, that you see them every single day. For me ... Admittedly, I haven't done that to the same degree, and maybe if I tried it, I would like it, but I have this sense, that if I did that, I would actually find that really stifling. I tend to have ridiculously high expectations of myself, in a lot of ways, and so, I feel like if I set a goal, and then, for whatever reason, didn't meet it, or didn't feel like I was moving ... Sufficiently toward that goal, that there would be some feelings of guilt or inadequacy or, failure that would come along with that, and seeing it every day would be constant reminder of how you're not doing enough to move forward on that goal. For whatever reason, even if it's completely legitimate reasons. Life happens sometimes, and you're not able to ... Dive into something in the same way that you wanted to. I would just find that really, really hard.

So, I'm glad to hear that you, and I'm sure many others like you find that helpful, and to have that reminder there. But for the listeners out there who ... Might find that a little bit stifling, I'm like you! I need to have it be a little more, amorphous than that, in order to be ... Happy.

Dr. Katie: So, I'm curious. Are you the kind of person that, creates lists, and then puts things on the list that you've already done, so you can check them off?

Dr. Sara: I mean, I've never done that before. (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: I am that person.

Dr. Sara: (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: This is the difference between Sara and I, for the people who are listening. I am a list fanatic-

Dr. Sara: Yeah.

Dr. Katie: ... So, this is what the goal-setting is for me, is really list building.

Dr. Sara: Yeah.

Dr. Katie: And, it's also a brain dump.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: To really get everything out of what I'm thinking about, somewhere else, where I can look at it, and then, I don't have to have it in my brain anymore. Because I really want my brain functioning, at a pretty high level for the creative work that I do, and I don't want to be constantly cycling through ... So, a lot of the writing down of things for me, is actually a really, logistical function for my brain of getting it out, so that I don't have to think about it anymore.

But I'm wondering if we can talk, Sara, about some concrete things, when we think about goals-

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: ... What are the kinds of things we're thinking about? I literally have things written down, which I would be happy to share, but I'm wondering if you have examples of ... What are some things that you think of, maybe for the next three to six months, because I know you don't do ... Super long-term planning.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm. Yeah, for me ... As I said, these are less specific goals, but for me, a couple of things that I'm really focusing on in the next four to six months or so are, getting back to posting regularly on my YouTube channel. I don't know if I've mentioned this on the podcast before, but, if I haven't, I have a YouTube channel called 'Developmental Enthusiast', where I talk about a variety of things, related to human development, across the lifespan. So, my background is in child development, and I do a lot of videos on ... Science content, related to child development research, and that sort of thing. But I also have found that there's a pretty big audience for things about ... How to develop as a person. And I mean that, a lot of career-kind of focus, discussions about how to survive graduate school, and what that looks like, and ideas for how to move through those really tense periods of that whole struggle thing.

So I've found that having this creative outlet in the past was really, really helpful for me, but as I was transitioning to doing my business full-time, it fell off the plate a little bit, because there were other things that I needed to be focusing on, because the YouTube channel was not making a ton of money for me or anything, so I needed to focus on some other things to build that revenue base in the background. But now that I'm in a little bit more comfortable of a place, I know I want to spend more time and creative energy on building that YouTube channel. So for me, the goal over the next several months, is to continue to post more regularly, and ... That's the extent of the goal in my head; I want to post every two weeks. That's the marker for me. But I also know, that sometimes life happens, and that might not happen as regularly. So, for my framework, I want to post more regularly. And I know what that means, but I also don't necessarily need to come out and say, "I will post every two Wednesdays at 2 PM." I don't want to be quite that specific about it; I want to see how the flow works a little bit, with everything else I've got going on. So that's one thing.

But in general, other things just ... In terms of, thinking about getting more speaking gigs lined up, finding some more potential consulting opportunities, and those sorts of things. And I have some ideas about how to get to those goals, and I know there are probably lots of listeners out there who would say, "Well, you need to say more than just 'more of those.'" But realistically, it depends on ... A balance of things. Because I'm doing all of these different kinds of ... Aspects of my business, if I get two more consulting gigs, then I can't do five more presentations. There's a balance there for me, and a lot of it just depends on the individual situation, and so I need to ... Have that openness and flexibility to be able to say, "Okay, if I take this client, this is going to be a massive project for me." That means I need to not devote resources in this other direction. So for me, it's focusing on growing those things, but growing them in a way that's sustainable and that's ... Acceptable for me. And that's a challenge, and there are times when I'm like, "I really wish I had a very concrete goal here." But I've also found that having that flexibility has really helped me feel more okay with the way that my business is growing, in a lot of ways.

So, those are a couple examples of things that I'm thinking about, or that I'm working toward, and, next episode I know we'll talk a little bit more about some of the specifics of how we're planning out reaching those various goals. But that's where I am.

What about you, Katie? What are some of the main targets, or goals that you're setting for you're business for the next several months?

Dr. Katie: So, it's so interesting to hear yours, Sara, because your more flexible approach gives me anxiety.

Dr. Sara: (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: Mine are very ... Tangible, in a lot of ways.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: For example, one this year, for the past year, was to establish my LLC. That was a goal; I could do it, I could check it off my list. I like to set goals that I can say, "Yes, this has officially been done."

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: And ... It's not necessarily a constant thing I'm working toward. I break down those constant things, into really tangible outcomes.

Some of the other things on my list for this year were to release a course. The one I'm working on right now is on academic book promotion, and that's coming out, as we record this, about from now, and it's on track to be released. And then, I also wanted to work on this year, shifting my revenue model. That's maybe one that's a little bit more broad, but I chose to do that by focusing more on webinars versus face-to-face speaking engagements, because I have limited amount of travel time.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: And then, I'm looking at my whiteboard right now ... I'm turning from my mic. I wanted to get a coaching certification this year; that was another goal that I had set for myself. There's a huge list on my whiteboard, so I'm picking and choosing.

Oh, and then I have a book that I'm finishing this year. Actually, several, but my monograph, that I'm just working on by myself. My third book is going to be coming out in 2018, so that was a big goal for this year, was to finish that book.

I have very concrete things. A lot of the projects are actually huge, but then I break them down, and chunk them in different kinds of ways.

Dr. Sara: Yeah, and I want to revisit this a little bit, and say ... I am also a person who loves lists. I have my 'to-do' list, and I carry it with me everywhere, and my friends make fun of me when I have to pull it out and check something off of it. But I think ... The tactics, are what goes on that list, and they, in my head are not always directly tied to, "And this is how I will reach this goal." It's more about, "Okay, this is going to move me forward." I know that if I want to make more YouTube videos, I need to write a script this weekend, and I need to ... Film two videos by Tuesday, or whatever. I have those tactics in mind, and it's all with the goal of moving toward that end goal, but ... If it was more rigid, I think then I would have trouble ... My to-do list would feel more stifling than it already does; there are days when I'm like, "Ah-Ha, I can't do all of this stuff!"

So if I had even more of a very specific connection between the tactic and the goal, that would actually create anxiety for me, so it's interesting to hear you say, "I want to have all of this ... Written down and very specific to how it ties to these particular goals." Because that's what creates anxiety for me, it's just funny to hear different perspectives on that.

Dr. Katie: Yeah. Okay, so I want to circle back to what you were saying, Sara, about staying flexible in your business-

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: Because, if one thing happens, you maybe won't be able to do another thing. Or, certain things will trigger different kinds of decision making. And, what I think is actually really challenging about goal-setting in a business, is around stuff like revenue.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hm..

Dr. Katie: And, specifically, because ... This is what I want to dig into a little bit, is business lead generation.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: And, I've been thinking about this a lot lately because, I feel like a lot of my business this past year, especially the speaking engagements ... People just found me.

Dr. Sara: Yeah.

Dr. Katie: Yes, I'm out on social media, and I'm doing enough speaking that there's word-of-mouth, recommendation that's happening, but I haven't put out ... Maybe twice, I've put out a specific call that's like, "Hey, I've opened up my speaking calendar for the spring." And no one every responds to that.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: So, I'm not even sure how these people ... I mean, I know how they're hearing about me, but it feels very out of my control.

Dr. Sara: Yep.

Dr. Katie: In terms of how people are coming in the door. And similar for, some of the stuff that I'm now starting to sell in terms of products, it feels very word-of-mouth. Obviously I've set up a strong foundation before I've gotten to this point.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: But, I'm wondering if you can speak to that a little bit. Because, do you feel like you have control, over your business-

Dr. Sara: (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: ... Lead generation? In the sense of, you could put out a call and say, "Hey, I'm looking for clients!" And people contact you. Some people have that, and I just don't feel like I have that.

Dr. Sara: I'm sorry, I laughed because, you asked, "Do you feel like you have control?" Oh, that's funny.

Dr. Katie: (Laughs)

Dr. Sara: And, I laugh because I tend to be more of a control freak; I am a planner in the sense that, I want to know where I'm headed, and where I'm going, again, a little bit more vaguely than other people like to be. But, no. I have no control, and that's part of what gives me anxiety, in terms of planning is, I don't necessarily know what's going to lead to the next thing. Because you're right, so much of it is word-of-mouth. For me, for my presentations that I've done this year ... I've been pretty successful at landing speaking gigs, and ... None of those have come from me asking for them. I have not done a single bit of that, which is both really validating, in the sense that people keep coming to me, asking, "Oh, will you come do this talk; I'd love for you to come and speak to my group." But it's also a little bit terrifying, because, "Oh, okay." But if I were to ask, would there be a ton of people then requesting this from me? Or, like you said, would it be crickets?"

I don't know. I haven't tried that yet, and I probably will at some point, because I do think that there's a certain degree to which ... That well of people recommending you, and getting business from having done business, dries up a little bit, so you have to have those other strategies in place. But, I don't know what that looks like for me, in a way that's authentic to ... The messaging I want to put out in the world. I always feel weird asking for business in that way, and I ... That's a thing that I'm wrestling with a little bit, is, how do I ask people if they want to book me for a speaking gig; I've never done that before. And I've done well having not done that. So do I just continue along this path of, relying on a lot of word-of-mouth, and doing really good work.

I think with, with respect to your question about generating clients ... My moral laissez faire, is that how you pronounce that word?

Dr. Katie: Something along those lines, yeah. I'll take it.

Dr. Sara: My moral laissez faire approach to all of this is, if I'm getting responses from people when I'm not necessarily actively seeking them, I must be doing something right?

Dr. Katie: Yes.

Dr. Sara: Why mess with a good thing? And I also know that, doing good business and doing good work recommends you without you saying, "Hey, I could do this thing for you." People want good people, and want to share about the good people that they have worked with. And so, I do rely a lot on, my good work speaking for itself.

What about you? You were saying a little bit that you ... Struggling with that. "Okay, if I ask for clients, I don't really get a lot of response to that, but word-of-mouth seems to be going well." How are you dealing with that, conflict and that inner turmoil?

Dr. Katie: First, I want to say, "Yes" to all of what you just said. And, I think the challenge for me is, when I think about trying to ... For lack of a better phrasing, "Stabilize" my business, in terms of regular revenue stream-

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: This is where I run into the problem here. I'm not worried about paying my mortgage from my business, because I have a full-time job. So, I'm in a different boat. For people who are listening to this, who are in the same situation that Sara is, obviously ... I'm in a different situation; this is not my full-time gig. However, it would be nice, and I think a lot of people with businesses feel this way, that if you knew quarterly where your revenue was going to come from.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm. Yep.

Dr. Katie: And I think that the problem of not having a solid business lead generation model, is that you're constantly relying on the universe to just provided stuff to you. Some people are super cool with that, and I'm not judging it, but I think that there is a different model. It's like I know there's a different model out there; it's like a unicorn, there's this special unicorn where you actually know how much revenue is going to come in. And I think that that's why I'm actually experimenting with things like courses, because I'm really curious about ... The course that I have been talking about a couple times on this show, the 'Rock Your Webdesign' business, that's a course that they only open up a couple times of year.

Dr. Sara: Hm.

Dr. Katie: It's not constantly for sale. They do a drive for this course, and then they know during that period that they're going to have a certain amount of revenue from that product. So, I've just been paying attention to those models. And for example, and this is getting a little bit into part two about advanced planning ... I have this webinar series, and this year it launched in August, and next year it will probably also launch in August. So I know that in that time period, I'm going to have some revenue, because I'm going to launch this product again, and I'm not launching it ... Throughout the year. The big launch happens in August.

So I can look at my revenue for this year, and hope that I have the same or more revenue for next year, but it's just got me thinking about ... I think that as a challenge. How can you feel like you can actually ... Do things that generate revenue, and that you're not just literally waiting for clients to walk in the door.

Dr. Sara: Right, right. And I think this speaks a little bit to ... There are couple of things I hear in what you're saying. The first of which, is that there are these peaks and valleys in self-employment, or in side hustles, when you're doing this kind of work that Katie and I do. And there's a lot of ... Weird anxiety feelings of inferiority, all of that stuff rolled into that. Because there is that fear, "Well, what if this doesn't work next month?" Right? Or next quarter. Or, next year.

Dr. Katie: Yeah. What if if dries up?

Dr. Sara: Right.

Dr. Katie: What if it just completely dries up, and nobody contacts you anymore.

Dr. Sara: Yeah. And so, people in the field are often talking about, making sure that you're constantly building in the background. That you're constantly either networking, or marketing, or doing those kinds of things, that will lead to more business. But, what I hear you saying, Katie, is, "I don't know what that is." Because, it's all been word-of-mouth, and I feel the same way, that a lot of it, my best work comes from people having seen me, or worked with me before, and recommended me, or that sort of thing ... As opposed to a mass marketing campaign that I might put together. So, for us ... And, please jump in here, I feel like for us there's a little bit of, "Okay, I'm going to try this thing, and see how this works." Partly because, putting yourself out there in new and different ways is a way to expand that core audience, and that group of people who might recommend you, or who might come and look for your services.

For me, doing this podcast was not something that I planned on doing at the beginning of the year, but because, you and I connected so well, and because I felt like we had a lot of interesting stuff behind the scenes to share, I was like, "Sure, yes, I will devote some time to this." Because I think it will lead to other interesting things, and other things that will fulfill my ... Revenue streams eventually, though the podcast itself ... Just, for you listeners, this ins not raking in tons of dough. For anyone who's wondering, podcasting is not usually where you go to make it rich. But, I know that it will lead to other interesting opportunities. So, I feel like that strategy is more about ... Opening myself to new opportunities than it is about ... More traditional marketing perspective.

I'm curious about your thoughts on that, Katie, whether that seems to fit, or if you approach it differently?

Dr. Katie: So, what you've really got me thinking about, Sara, is the importance of backward ... I don't know the right words to use, so help me if you understand what I'm trying to say. But basically looking at a success, and then working backward from that, to say, "What got me to that success?" And I wanted to give two very concrete examples of this that have just happened to me.

The first example is ... And I'm going to work backward from this. I got contacted by someone on LinkedIn who ... Was interested in one of my services. And she found out about this service because, first of all, she's connected to me on LinkedIn, she listens to my podcast; this is somebody who's in my realm of ... Influence, for lack of a better word.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: In my circle. But she saw someone else who has received one of my services host, on LinkedIn, about her experience, and she was like, "Oh, Katie, I didn't know you did that thing."

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: So then the person who posted ... And she has since hired me; this is now one of my clients. The person who posted the service ... Person number one is the client who hired me, person number two is one step removed from that, who was my former client ... Well, an ongoing client, who I provided a service for. And that was web design, just so I'm not talking in complete abstractions here.

Dr. Sara: (Laughs)

Dr. Katie: So I designed a website for her; she posted about it on LinkedIn. I had reached out to that person about designing her website, because she's in my Mastermind group.

Dr. Sara: Ah.

Dr. Katie: And I knew that she was trying to up her game, in terms of speaking, and I was trying to pilot this service with people that I knew, who needed new websites.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: And she was in my Mastermind group, because I formed a Mastermind group.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: So I formed a Mastermind group, I met this client, I engaged this client, she had a good experience, she posted about it, and now I have another client, directly from that experience, because she saw about that post. So that's one example of ... I feel like I have no control, but obviously I am putting things into play, that are creating this situation.

The second example I want to offer ... And again, I'm going to work back from this. And I feel like working backward is sometimes confusing, so ... I don't know how else to do it.

I have this webinar series that I have launched, and one of the options for the webinar series, is to buy an institutional membership. And, currently I have two institutional members, who have invested in this webinar series, and this is the highest, higher-end of the offer; it's the most expensive buy-in to this series. So obviously, this is good to have more institutional members. And it also brings more faculty into this product, which is what I want. I want to help as many people as possible.

I have both of these institutional members; people who have previously brought me to their campuses, face-to-face. So they know me.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: One of them in particular, was an institutional member who ... Recently I was going on a trip, I was hired by a school, and I reached out to people in the area, and said, "I've been hired to come to your area, do you want me to ... Are you interested in bringing me to your campus, because I'm going to be local, and here's the dates that I'm going to be there." And one of these institutional members hired me.

Dr. Sara: Hm.

Dr. Katie: Because I did a cold email outreach-

Dr. Sara: Yep.

Dr. Katie: And they hired me. Now this person also listens to my podcast, the main contact that I have at this institution, and ... I went there, I had this face-to-face engagement, and now they've purchased this institutional membership. So, you can see the web, if you work backward. These are not strangers who are buying my products; these are people that know me, who have been listening to my podcast, who have been engaging with the resources that I've been putting out for free, and who are reacting to wanting to bring me to their campus, because they know that I do that, and then that forms a relationship where then they buy my products for their faculty at a later time.

I feel like that's a really long winded way of saying, "You need to work backward to see what's working." When you are bringing clients through the door, they aren't coming to you randomly, so you do need to be asking them, "How did you hear about me?"

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: "What brought you here?"

Dr. Sara: Yeah, I think you have great observations there. There are always connections in some way, shape or form; how did this person discover you ... Did you reach out to them? Did they reach out to you? How did they hear about you? I also think, and maybe this is a topic for a future episode ... I also think it's really hard, when you're standing in the middle of the open field of possibilities, to figure out which way to go. It's hard to see the future. You didn't know, when you did that cold email-

Dr. Katie: Exactly.

Dr. Sara: ... That this line of success was going to come of it.

Dr. Katie: Well I didn't even have the webinar series at that point.

Dr. Sara: Right.

Dr. Katie: It wasn't even in my brain as something I was planning to do.

Dr. Sara: Exactly. And so, it's really hard when you're looking at, "Okay, I could go this way, I could go this way, I could go this way; I have finite time and resources, I don't know where this is going to lead." But you also have to trust the process. You have to trust that, "Okay, if I pour my time and energy in this direction, because I feel like this is where the energy is; this is where I'm excited, this is where there's a need ... This is where my ideal audience, or client base is," that if you put good work into the world, people will start to recognize that, and start to call on you for it. N

ow, you also have to establish yourself first, in some ways, to even begin that conversation, but, I think for where both you and I are, Katie, there's this sense of, "Okay, if I put this out, what is it going to lead to?" And we could do any number of different things, so figuring out how to prioritize which thing to do ... That's a little bit harder, and that's something that I sometimes struggle with. If I put a bunch of energy into my YouTube channel, is that going to lead to more clients? I don't know. But at the same time, I've heard previous clients, or previous presentation gig people say, "Oh, I saw your videos on YouTube, and that's why I reached out. Oh, cool, I didn't ... Wow, that's good to know. So now I know that that's at least somewhat of a useful mechanism for me to continue to pursue. So continuing to do that data gathering helps you make those informed decisions, but I also know it can feel really, really scary, if you're like, "I don't know which thing to try next!"

Dr. Katie: I think one way to think about is ... And I want to also give an example from a 'me being a client' perspective of this, because there's something I'm going to buy soon, that I've been orbiting around this person for a long time, and this is one of their higher-end products, and I'm about to buy it. And actually, this is true of a lot of things that I buy for my business; the course that I've been talking about, about web design. I've been orbiting around that person who creates that course for years.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: So I think that ... Part of what we're talking about here is, how can you expand your orbit, so that the people who are around you, and who are hearing about your work, they may not need the thing that you're selling right now, but it doesn't mean that they won't need the thing that you're selling in a year and a half, that you haven't even thought about yet.

Dr. Sara: Right.

Dr. Katie: But that's the challenging part about goal-setting.

One more example, just because I think the concrete is really important here. There's an internet entrepreneur called Jason Zook, and you all may have heard of him; I'll link to his website in the show notes. He was someone who, several years ago, sold his last name, and also made quite a bit of money by wearing people's T-shirts, and doing some promotion of other brands online. And he has since created a product called 'Buy My Future', which is now 'Buy Our Future', because he's combined it with his wife Caroline. So there's this thing that they open up a couple times of year, where you can basically buy all of the products that they have created, both alone and together, and then, you will get anything they create in the future for free.

Dr. Sara: Hm.

Dr. Katie: If you invest right now, with a certain amount of money. And they've been slowly upping this amount of money over time. So a couple years ago, it was $1000, then it was $1500; now I think it's $2000, and this is opening up at the end of September, as we're recording this; we're recording this in early September. So, this is something that, for the past couple of years that I've been watching with a lot of interest, because I think that it's a really interesting business model, and he also does a lot of behind-the-scenes process sharing, which I love; I like to do that myself, so I love when other people do that. And he has a podcast, where he talks about how ... The launch goes, and he gives updates on their revenue, and all these other kinds of things that are really fascinating, and we can link to that podcast in the show notes.

But, it's been three years that I've been following this person, and I've invested in a couple of his products here and there, and he has a course-building platform that I'm currently using for a couple of things, and all kinds of stuff. But basically, it was never quite the right time for me to invest in 'Buy My Future', because I either didn't have the revenue, or I wasn't going to be using the products that he was offering as much as I would want. But this year, it makes total sense for me to invest in his products, because I'm using his course platform, I'm using a couple of his other metrics tools that he's created, and if I buy into it now, I will have all of those things for free.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: I will have made the one-time purchase, and then I can just make as many courses as I want. But it's one of those things that reminds me, from the other side of ... The situation, that I do this too; we do this too. We orbit around people, and we wait until we feel like ... One, we trust them, and two, we feel like it's the right time, to make this purchase for us. So when I think about things like my webinar series, I completely understand that this year, there might be people who are looking at it, and who are really intrigued, but they're not quite ready to buy.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Dr. Katie: But next year, when I change up the topics, and I do some different stuff, maybe that's the year, that people are like, "Okay, now I'm ready." Because they get that year's stuff, and they get this year's stuff, because I'm going to repackage this year's stuff, and offer it along with next year's stuff. But that's the stuff you can't plan for. And this is getting into part two ... How far in advance do we plan. But you can plan for it, and you can not plan for it. I can't necessarily plan for revenue, but I can plan for, "I know what I'm going to do with this product, and I think it's going to be valuable for the people who are interested in it."

Dr. Sara: Yeah. Yes. Everything you said. I agree. I think there's a lot of ... It's interesting, because even though we work more in online spaces, and operate more in online spaces, I think the same kinds of basic 'building your business' mantras are the same, which is that it's really about relationships, and having people trust you.

Dr. Katie: Yes.

Dr. Sara: And so the more that you can do that work, either one-on-one, having met somebody, or online, the better off you are in the long run, the more you can build that trust and build that credibility that you do actually know what you're talking about, or what you're putting out there has value ... To people, the more opportunities you're going to have for people to come around, and eventually buy your fancy, cool thing. Or ask for your help with a thing.

Dr. Katie: I think ... Yes, to all of that too. We're just 'yessing' each other all over the place.

Dr. Sara: We're just yessing. Lots of yes.

Dr. Katie: We're all on the same page here. Despite the fact that we come at this from two completely different angles.

Dr. Sara: (laughs)

Dr. Katie: But, not to add too much pressure, but I feel like this is why the stuff that you do in your business, on a day-to-day basis that feels like a slog ... The social media posting, and all the little things, that you're like, "Is this really doing anything for my business?" I think that's why that stuff matters.

Dr. Sara: Yep.

Dr. Katie: Because you never know how it's expanding that orbit, and how someone is like, "Wow, I'm super impressed by what you're putting out there on a consistent basis." The fact that you can do this with consistency; it builds trust, and people aren't emailing you, saying, "Wow, I trust you 10% more today, because you've put out, a year's worth of podcast episodes." It's not like that.

Dr. Sara: Yeah.

Dr. Katie: But it is like that, and that people are increasing trust in you, when they see you putting out product every week, or however your frequency is. There's a lot of currency there. And you can lose that currency if you stop, if you get frustrated; if you're like, "This is a waste of my time." I don't think it's a waste of your time. I think that's a big vote for ... Be consistent, and put in the effort there, because it does pay off.

Dr. Sara: But I also think that you need to be thoughtful and strategic about that, right? You can drive yourself crazy thinking, "Oh, all the little things on my to-do list that will help me build in the back ground ..." Eventually you can get to a place of complete overwhelm, and I have a lot of friends and colleagues who have done this, especially in the sphere of social media. You feel like you have to join all the platforms, and do all the things. No. No, no. No, no. Do one, maybe two, really well. That is going to lend a lot more credibility to you than if you're on every single platform, and doing them all poorly. So, you do have to think a little bit about, "Where is my audience? Where do I want to go? How do I want to engage with them, in this space?" So I think that speaks a little bit more, again, to the next episode, which is 'How Far in Advance' do we plan these kinds of things, and how do we think about ... Making those choices about where we're going to invest our time and energy, and how do we get from point A to point B. I'm excited.

Dr. Katie: That's perfect. That is a perfect segway. I think we should close out this episode; I know we have some resources to share, but I think that's a nice ending point for this episode. And then, make sure to check in with part two, where we're going to talk about, 'How Far in Advance Do We Plan' for some of this stuff.

Dr. Sara: Hm-hmm.

Now Katie, I know you have a couple of resources for us today, would you like to share?

Dr. Katie: Yes. On behalf of Sara and I, the couple of resources I want to talk about ... There's a couple of books by the same author, Gretchen Rubin, and I'm a complete fan girl of Gretchen Rubin. Listeners, you might know her books; she had a book, called 'The Happiness Project', and then a second book called 'Happier at Home', and her third book is my favorite, which is a book called 'Better Than Before', which is about habit building. And she's about to have another book come out, as we record this; it's this month, so by the time this is out, it's probably available, called 'The Four Tendencies', which is a personality framework that she created to talk about accountability ... And how you're accountable to something outside yourself, you're accountable to something within yourself; you're accountable to both, or you're accountable to neither, and she has these four different frameworks for that.

I've been following Gretchen's work for a very long time, and 'The Four Tendencies', as someone who does a lot of coaching, it makes a lot of sense to me. Not just for me, but for my clients, so it's been really interesting. And I think it's a framework that, when you're thinking about goal-setting, and holding yourself accountable ... It's a super helpful framework, in terms of just, trying to think about, how can you know yourself better, so that you can make better decisions around your goal-setting.

And then, a third quick bonus resource that I want to mention is ... A planner that I've been using, that has been super helpful for me with my goal-setting and list making, and this is a planner called the 'Get To Work' book, and it's by an entrepreneur called Elise Joy Cripe, who is in California. And, Elise has been creating this product for several years now; I've been using it probably for a couple of years, and I love it. It basically allows you to write a series of lists for each day of what you want to get done, and what I love about it is, it's a planner that is not time-stamped. So, it's not really meant to put your ... Appointments and stuff in, although you could if you wanted to, but because I manage all of that in a digital calendar on my phone, I really just wanted a planner where I could write all of my lists out.

So she's got a bunch of feature in this planner that allow you to goal-set for each week, for each day; what are the three top priorities that you want to do. But the design is super minimalist, and I love it. So we will link to that in the show notes as well; it's called the 'Get To Work' book. I think it's just at ... Gettoworkbook.com, but I will confirm that and we'll put it in the show notes.

Those are our three resources this week, if you're thinking about upping your game with goal setting for your business.

Dr. Sara: Awesome. Thanks, Katie! Well I'm looking forward to, next time talking a little bit more about this whole, how do we plan out our lives conversation. I think it's going to be an interesting one, especially given that, you and I approach things ... From a different perspective on goal-setting, and on planning. I'm excited; it's going to be interesting.

Dr. Katie: Yeah, I'm excited too. Thanks so much to our listeners for joining us for this episode for goal- setting for our businesses. Remember that you can always find information about the AcademiGig podcast at academigig.com, where you can also sign up for our email list, to be notified of new episodes when they come out, and also to receive our list of 100+ resources for academic creatives, entrepreneurs, and small business owners. So we would love to connect with you there!

Thanks so much for listening, and we'll see you next time.

Dr. Sara: Bye!

Narrator: Thanks for listening to the AcademiGig podcast. We hope you enjoyed the conversation, and heard something useful that you can apply in your own business. Show notes, with links to resources mentioned in the episode, and a full transcript, are available at academigig.com. There, you can also sign up for our email list, and receive over 100 great resources for recommended books, blog posts, and podcasts for the academic creative, freelancer, and entrepreneur that you won't want to miss. You can connect with us on Twitter, at @academigig, or you can also find Sara, at @DrLangworthy, and Katie, at @katie\_\_linder. We'd love to hear from you, and continue the conversation about this episode.

There are several other ways to connect with the AcademiGig podcast. Visit the website to post a comment about a specific episode, suggest a future topic, or ask a question, that could be feature on a future Q & A episode. If you like what you heard, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. It helps us out, and helps others find the show!

And as always, thanks for listening.