**LWQA episode 135**

You're listening to wife work, QA episode 135. Welcome to life work QA where I answer a listener question each week and provide resources and guidance to help you take your life and work to the next level. I'm your host. Dr. Katie Linder. On this episode. I want to ask you what would you tell your past self and a while back?

I did an episode on a coaching exercise called future self, which I can link to in the show notes. And the idea of that exercise is to go forward in time and imagine yourself 10 to 15 years in the future and basically to have kind of a vision exercise where you meet with that version of yourself who's older and wiser.

And go to them for advice and ask them questions and see what kinds of things they would want to tell you. But in today's episode I want to encourage you to do kind of the same thing but to do this with your past self and part of the idea of this is to kind of remind yourself that you're also older and wiser right now and that you don't have to wait for that to happen because you have already learned so much in a period of time.

It's kind of up to you as to how far back you go. In terms of this past self. It could be talking to yourself in your teens or 20s or 30s or 40s depending on the age group you're in or anytime you want to pick but kind of imagine yourself taking this version of you to coffee or Tootsie. Or to just sitting down and having a comfortable conversation.

Maybe you go back and visit your past self in the place that you were living at that time. So we remind yourself of where that was, but go back quite a ways maybe 10 to 15 years or more. And I was thinking about this obviously with my own past self. I wanted to go through this exercise as well and think about some of the things that I would tell that person tell that version of myself and a lot of it is kind of about bringing to the surface.

What are the lessons that you have learned over the period of time between that past version of yourself. And now and sometimes we can feel kind of stuck in the present we can feel like we haven't learned very much or that we haven't progressed in the ways that we wanted to and so this exercise is really about bringing some.

Kind of a more realistic view to that and really thinking about what is it that you've learned over that period of time so I was really thinking about myself in my 20s because when I was in my 20s, I was finishing up my grad work. I was starting kind of my first real job and I was in such a hustle mode.

I was really trying to prove myself. I definitely felt like I was young to be in the position that I was in I was in my late 20s when I started my first job. But I felt like I looked young. I felt like people were questioning my credibility a lot and whether or not they were I certainly felt that way.

I had a lot of kind of internal self-doubt around that period. And so I was thinking about you know, if I was to take myself to Coffee, I think first of all, it would just be kind of calming for my 20 year old self to think about who I am now because I think I'm a lot more calm now. I think I have a lot more confidence now.

I think I present in just a really different way than I did at that time. And I was just questioning so much and I was posturing a lot. I was really trying to kind of fake it until I made it because I didn't feel. I had everything put together and while I certainly don't have everything put together.

Now. I definitely feel much more confident in my skills. I also feel much more confident in the areas of just knowing what I don't do well and really being able to work within my weaknesses as much as I can work with in my strengths but also owning those weaknesses and and not being kind of concerned about them as much as I might have been in the past.

So I was thinking about what are some of the things that I might say to this version of my past self as we were to sit down and here were some of the things that kind of immediately came to mind for me. One was that my hard work will pay off in the end because I think that sometimes we put in a bunch of hustle.

We put in a bunch of hard work. We don't always know what is going to happen with that. We do a lot of that work on faith. And I think this is particularly true in Academia, but this is also been true as I've been growing my business. Sometimes you just do things because you feel like they're the right things to do.

Or because you feel passionate about something or you feel like this is going to be the thing that really helps you to express, you know, an argument or something that you really want to share out with the world in a broader way, but you don't really know where it's going to go and sometimes we write articles.

We don't know where we're going to publish them. You know, like we can have a lot of unknowns when it comes to sharing out our work in our ideas and the products of our labor. And so I think that part of the message I would have is just you know, you may not know where these things are going to go but they'll go somewhere and the the hard work is not in vain as your kind of putting the efforts into all these different projects.

The other message I thought that was kind of interesting when it came to mind for me is that my priorities are going to shift and that's okay. I think that sometimes as we get older we start to lose that drive or that hustle. Maybe we have energy that goes into different places for me. I feel like I was putting a lot of my energy kind of externally I was doing a lot of service work at that time and I was doing a lot of Faculty development I was.

Lee supporting a lot of other people and while I do that work now through coaching I definitely have really shifted my priorities a lot more Inward and really trying to figure out what is it that I have that I want to share with the world. I've definitely embraced the fact that I'm an introvert. I spend a lot more time in solitude.

And so I've really kind of shifted my own way of taking care of myself and really nurturing my own creativity. And I think that that's not something that I would have been mature enough to understand when I was in my 20s. And so just this idea that you're going to have things that come into your life that maybe you know about or you don't know about but they will shift your priorities and it's okay.

It's you're not always going to have the same things be front of mind for you all the time. Along those same lines. I think I would also tell myself that you are going to learn so much about yourself and about the world around you it in such a short period of time it is kind of amazing. If you think back to who you were 10 or 15 years ago and what you knew and what you didn't know.

The amount of information we gained from experience alone. I think about for example what I've learned about publishing since I was in my 20s, when at that point, I hadn't really published. I hadn't published my first book. I hadn't edited much. I hadn't really done a ton of publishing in terms of peer reviewed articles and I just didn't really know anything about that landscape and that is just one example of something that now I feel like I have a really in-depth knowledge of I've gained a lot of experience over time.

I feel a lot more confident in that area. But your it's also taught me a ton about myself and who I am as a writer and what I think about when I choose where I want to publish and who I want my audience has to be for the books that I'm working on and all of those kinds of things. So just this idea of being open to learning about yourself.

And that's been I think one of the best parts about getting older is I feel like I've deep in my relationship with myself. So the one of the kind of harder messages that I think I would give myself is you know for a long time. I and I think we many of us struggle with this. I don't think I'm alone in this I worried about fitting into other people's molds and in Academia, you know, this is kind of built in we're trying to fit the tenure track.

We're trying to fit into what success is defined as within academic settings. But for me, also, this was really about in some ways hiding things about myself that I felt were strange or different and I was just recently talking with someone about a good example of this which is I was really hiding for a long time the fact that I was working so much that I really enjoyed working that I would work on the weekends because when I would bring things like that up, I would get a lot of judgment around that or people would Express a lot of concern about me being a workaholic.

Taking enough vacation or like there was just a lot of. Kind of negatively tinged comments around that and I didn't really know how to handle those. I didn't feel confident enough about my choices at that time. And I really just questioned myself a lot. Like what if something's wrong with me that I'm like different from everyone else that I'm not taking weekends off and I think that part of what I've done over time is I've really embraced parts of myself that.

Maybe different from how other people do things and that I have to have kind of my own evaluation of my own capacity. What rest looks like for me it especially if it looks different from other people and that it's okay to be different. And now as you know, if you follow the show for any length of time, I talked a lot about work and I'm really open about sharing what I do on the weekends on things like social media and Instagram story.

And I do quite a bit of work in my business on the weekends and it's something that I really like to do and I enjoy it. So I'm starting to kind of apologize less for those kinds of things and I think that as we start to embrace different aspects of our personalities and things that really make us unique.

I've started to feel more confident about not worrying so much about what other people think about that and being able to feel like I can express it more in a way that has confidence to. So that idea about just not worrying so much about fitting what other people standards are I think would be a really key message for me to talk with my past self about and then the last thing that came to mind for me with this was this idea of dream a lot and also write those dreams down because there's something magical about putting your goals down on paper.

They kind of just magically happen at least that's been my experience. So when I do strategic planning for a year or a month or five years those things just get lodged in my mind and I start to kind of work toward them and. This was something I did in my 20s. I made a five-year plan and everything got checked off and that was kind of how I knew I was ready to move on and go on the market again from that first job I had was because I had really achieved the things I wanted to achieve.

And so I think that I would just reaffirm that for myself that that is a good direction to go. That at the time I didn't know that that kind of strategic planning was one of my superpowers, but I was leaning into it instinctually and I think that there is such a power in allowing yourself to dream and think and you know kind of consider lots of different options and then start to kind of Journal around that or write down ideas or come up with your teacher plans for different aspects of those ideas to see where they might lead you into the future.

So, of course, I'm always curious if you decide to do an activity like this, you know, what would you say to your past self? What are the kinds of lessons or things that you would want to reassure your best self about and also to just remember that it's not as if you grow out of that past self all the time.

Sometimes they are still with you that's still part of who you are and so in some ways it's like giving a pep talk to yourself even right now. So I would love to hear if you decide to do this you can always. Is email me? I contacted Katie Leonard artwork. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender.

You can connect with me on Instagram @ KD underscore lender, or you can write me a letter at Katie Linder PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon nine seven, three, two one. I always love to hear from. Thanks for listening life word QA is part of the radical self dress podcast Channel a collection of content dedicated to helping you seek self-knowledge nurture your superpowers playfully experiment live your core values with intention practice loving kindness towards yourself and others and settle into your life's purpose.

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