

**Bonni** [00:00:00] Today Dr. Natalie Houston joins me to talk about practical productivity in academia.

**Production Credit** [00:00:07] Produced by innovate learning: Maximizing human potential.

**Bonni** [00:00:18] Welcome to this episode of Teaching In Higher Ed. This is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

**Bonni** [00:00:44] I'm so pleased today to be welcoming Dr. Natalie Houston. She is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Houston. She is also a productivity coach and I consider her to be one of my celebrities in my life.

**Bonni** [00:00:58] She writes for a blog that I absolutely love and treasure every time a new post comes out and that is for ProfHacker which is under the Chronicle of Higher Education. Welcome so much Natalie to Teaching In Higher Ed.

**Natalie** [00:01:11] Thank you. I'm really happy to be talking with you today.

**Bonni** [00:01:13] You are an unusual position in that you both teach in higher ed and you also help other people be more effective at their productivity. One of the things I discovered when I was researching for my dissertation I had no idea but there's this unintended word productivity that shows up sometimes that can make some faculty a bit prickly.

**Bonni** [00:01:37] So tell me about why is productivity an uncomfortable thing sometimes for us to think about in terms of our work.

**Natalie** [00:01:43] I think it's uncomfortable for some people especially in higher ed but I see this in conversations with other professionals as well. It can be uncomfortable for two main reasons. One is that the term is sometimes harnessed by external forces for evaluation and measurement.

**Natalie** [00:02:05] So people associate productivity with the kind of the administration of my colleagues is going to be counting how many publications I have in a particular year. And they don't want it at quite rightly. People often resent feeling that all of their creative and professional output is being boiled down just to check boxes.

**Bonni** [00:02:29] Yeah I see this a lot. I teach at a more teaching oriented institution. So for us it's a little less about research it probably should be a little more but it's less about that and it's the the backsides in the seats.

**Bonni** [00:02:42] So it's how many an average students count for your classes and are we offering the right utilization of classrooms and to professors and that starts to feel a little bit robotic as opposed to I think a lot of us like to think about the possibility of how we might help transform a student's learning experience and how they think in the world.

**Natalie** [00:03:01] Exactly and that second the second reason I think it's an uncomfortable term for people is if they associate it with kind of mechanical factory production of objects and you know factory production chains certain economic structures.

**Natalie** [00:03:21] And so it raises a lot of associations that people don't necessarily want to import into thinking about their own lives.

**Bonni** [00:03:29] So in your life and in your work Natalie what do you think of if you are living up to your potential and being productive if you were to rate yourself that way. What does that mean to you.

**Natalie** [00:03:42] For me and this is for me personally and in my work with coaching clients. Productivity is not about doing more things faster. It's about. Doing the things that are most important to me and creating the kind of life I want to have.

**Natalie** [00:04:05] So it's about a holistic approach to your work into your personal life and to all of the different kinds of goals and projects we have as full human beings. To satisfy our core values that drive us in the world.

**Bonni** [00:04:25] I really appreciate how you phrased that reminds me I was thinking you have a really peaceful voice already on the phone with me and you really seem like someone who who isn't rushed and hurried when we got on the phone are just a very calm and natural conversation.

**Bonni** [00:04:39] And I was thinking about I told you I'm in a better place than when I first started this podcast because I'm a lot less nervous when I talk to people such as yourself. And one of the things that's helped me is just so simple as to always have a checklist.

**Bonni** [00:04:52] And I keep my checklist in a program we've talked about before on this show called Evernote but it could be kept anywhere just as long as I knew where it was. And I have my six bullets to make sure that you check the person's pronunciation of their names so you don't embarrass yourself and make sure that you've pressed record as silly as that may seem and it makes me so much calmer when I have that.

**Bonni** [00:05:13] So for me one book that was really a gift in that area is called The Checklist Manifesto And that's by Atul Gawande and I love that, because he talks about even people who are pilots and they fly every single day multiple times a day or surgeons going through their own checklist and how lives have been saved.

**Bonni** [00:05:31] And even the most consummate experts in their field are going through what seems like a rote checklist. But I do think it helps us as you said live more toward what our ultimate sense of meaning is in our lives.

**Natalie** [00:05:46] Yeah in that book he talks about you know checklist for something you haven't yet done. And then the kind of checklist you're focusing on for those routine tasks. Pilots like time fly planes every day but they still follow a safety checklist and make sure every single step was followed. And those kind of checklist do provide peace.

**Bonni** [00:06:10] I notice for myself while I just this is now my 10th year of teaching and just that sense of anxiety when I'm first starting out a semester because I want it to go so well and so many students coming at me.

**Bonni** [00:06:20] It feels a little bit transactional at the start of a semester where there's lots of people trying to add or they couldn't quite get. I mean just lots of

just little tiny tiny things coming at me all day and wanting to learn names and all.

**Bonni** [00:06:34] Just there's so much that I'm processing early on in a semester. And so for me we had an episode where we recently talked about capture just that sense of OK this just flew at me. Where can I get it down so I can not try to hold it in my mind because that really is stressful to try to hold something in our minds.

**Natalie** [00:06:52] Absolutely.

**Bonni** [00:06:53] So talk a little bit about. So now we've kind of looked at what productivity looks like. I loved how you said it's not doing things faster and that's not it's not about to get get that we'll turn in faster.

**Bonni** [00:07:04] But it's it is more of the you didn't use the word peace than maybe I'm projecting onto you. But it does feel peaceful when you talk about it to live that meaning and significance in our life and being able to do more of that.

**Natalie** [00:07:18] A key term for me is the word ease.

**Bonni** [00:07:22] Hmm. Tell me about ease.

**Natalie** [00:07:24] Because to do something with ease is to bring a kind of comfort and a kind of grace perhaps to the action or the task ease can also be a sense of having a little more room.

**Natalie** [00:07:41] Maybe you have more time to get to an appointment or you have an extra day built into your editing timelines you have you get the draft done early and living a life with more ease is. Oh Peace is connected to ease. But for me the really resonant term that I've been working with my coaching clients with is is easy.

**Bonni** [00:08:07] I like the sound of that ease. That just sounds good. What are some of the unique areas as faculty that tend to arise for us in our work and might cause a struggle for us in having more ease.

**Natalie** [00:08:22] So a couple of things that are very specific to faculty. One is the blurring between work and non-work time. Many, although not all faculty

have parts of their schedule that are more flexible that are under their control and many faculty prize.

**Natalie** [00:08:46] That is one of the features of this kind of life and work. But that can mean that your work is always filling up all your evenings and weekends and every minute of your life. So figuring out how to create appropriate boundaries.

**Natalie** [00:09:05] Which are going to be different for different individuals at different stages in their careers. Figuring out how you want that balance. The weather you know for this month or this semester or this year is a really important but challenging task for a lot of faculty.

**Bonni** [00:09:24] Is part of the blurring between work and non-work. Also make it hard to measure. For those of us achievement are people harder to measure our own effectiveness.

**Natalie** [00:09:36] It can be I think. It's where I see the challenges particularly are a couple of things. People often have the fantasy of a full day uninterrupted by appointments or meetings or classes.

**Natalie** [00:09:54] If I only had a full day I could write this article or and or plan this new course. And for most of us that's not something we have in our schedules all that often. But because parts of our day are under our control.

**Natalie** [00:10:14] Think we will or we could. So figuring out what the reality of your schedule is a really important first step. And working with those blocks of time you do have and learning to chunk projects down into small manageable pieces.

**Natalie** [00:10:34] So that if I don't have three hours of writing time all in a block on Tuesday maybe I can find 30 minutes in the morning and another 30 minutes later on in the day.

**Bonni** [00:10:46] I know for some people that's a lot more challenging than for others. I tend to be able to shift gears pretty well and in fact it's a little bit motivating to me to say I have 10 minutes. How much can I squeeze into those 10 minutes not that that's necessarily the best thing ever but my husband, he has talked a lot about just needing more space.

**Bonni** [00:11:07] And kind of that he feels like if I'm we we work a lot from home here more very much as you just described the blurry between work and non-work and we have two small children here too and most of that I mean we've got people that come in and watch them it's not like we're trying to watch them and get our work done at the same time.

**Bonni** [00:11:23] But I think for him if he's got an hour that doesn't feel like enough time to really get into the kind of deep focus he wants to have for the kind of writing and work that he does. What do you do you have any advice for people who do feel like they need just a little bit more time to get into a groove of focus.

**Natalie** [00:11:43] Absolutely. So really important is to figure out first of all when you are at your best you know some people that's going to be the morning some people is going in the middle of the day and really taking the time to explore when you're at your best for the particular kind of task.

**Natalie** [00:12:07] So writing for many people involves the kind of creativity and deep thought as you just mentioned which might be a time of day very different from cranking through end of the semester report or administrative work.

**Natalie** [00:12:23] The thinking about the different kinds of work you want to do and when in the day is best for them and really protecting that quality time for your most important project. If you are trying to write a manuscript and you know that you need longer stretches of time and that your best in the morning.

**Natalie** [00:12:46] Don't schedule meetings in the morning but do schedule your writing time as a meeting on your calendar so you won't be tempted to say oh I'll just override my writing time this week and then I'll do it again next week. And then I wonder why I'm not moving forward.

**Bonni** [00:13:03] Is that something that you recommend going back and reviewing. Then how I did the last week so I can I can tweak things if I didn't quite live up to my blocks of time as intended.

**Natalie** [00:13:14] Certainly you know reviewing what didn't work but also it's really important. And this often gets overlooked is reviewing what did work for you. Our natural tendency is hardwired into our brains is to focus on where the problems are as bad as the neurological level is like what's what's the danger.

**Natalie** [00:13:38] Focusing first on what did work over the week is really valuable because we tend to you know just move on to the problem. Even at the end of each day to take a few minutes to write down like what did I do today I can show you that you know you're actually doing all sorts of things that you had overlooked because you focus on the one thing you didn't do from your list.

**Bonni** [00:14:05] How about creating appropriate boundaries. You said that earlier what are some strategies around that that can help us both at our institutions and also as you said since we're not always at our institutions when we're doing some work how can we create a group appropriate boundaries there.

**Natalie** [00:14:21] So figuring out where the difficulties are for you. So for some people that means getting a writing appointment on their calendar with themselves to protect their time from scheduling with other people.

**Natalie** [00:14:39] For some people it means setting a time in the evening after which you will not be on a computer. Or a no digital devices after 8 p.m. or 10:00 a.m. or whatever your off time is.

**Natalie** [00:14:54] Study after study has shown that you know spending time on digital screens before bed is prevents the brain from slowing down appropriately towards sleep.

**Natalie** [00:15:06] And even just getting yourself a bedtime. Especially for people with young children. Once the kids are asleep then adults want to do other things. But you need a bedtime just as much as the babies do.

**Bonni** [00:15:20] Mm yeah. And how can we be talking with our partners and our our families about that. That boundaries what those conversations how can we do that well.

**Natalie** [00:15:32] I think really opening up communication about what both partners want a Saturday to look like for example or you know what's the shape of a weekend. And to be able to identify like it's really important to have you know X amount of time for work but that you want to make time for family activities.

**Natalie** [00:15:56] Or just play time whatever that's defined for you and enlisting your partner support in that. Certainly there might be weeks in the semester when there's a crunch for grading or whatever you're doing that.

**Natalie** [00:16:14] But you know to set a goal to take a day off every week you know the idea of a Sabbath day in many spiritual traditions is to set aside time for reflection and rest from the typical activities of the week.

**Natalie** [00:16:33] And even if you're not fulfilling that in a strictly religious based sense. Setting clear boundaries around a designated time for rest reflection recuperation is really valuable.

**Bonni** [00:16:51] I found that so valuable in my own life. I'm a big technology person. As anyone who's listened to this show for a while will know and of course you writing for a blog called ProfHacker We can probably make that assumption about you or you wouldn't be able to come up with such great articles that just that feeling.

**Bonni** [00:17:08] And it's not always a good one for me initially if I've gotten out of the habit of doing it is not always a great feeling because I think we get addicted to that feeling of the rush and that we're constantly doing doing doing doing doing.

**Bonni** [00:17:20] In fact they talk about on Twitter I just written an article the other day that reminded me about the dopamine that's getting released every time we like something or retweet something that kind of thing so they're all to set that aside and to just be in the moment and be fully present for those that we love cannot always feel good at first.

**Bonni** [00:17:38] At least for me because it can be how we have to get back exercise those muscles for what it feels like to be fully present in a moment.

**Natalie** [00:17:48] That raises I mean a couple of things. It's really important to identify transition moments in your day and in your because that transition can be difficult. And you know and if you're working at home you still need a transition between work mode and home mode.

**Natalie** [00:18:15] Even if you didn't like get on the train and commute home and then take off your suit or like the sort of stereotypical office idea. Those activities of commuting. Can provide that sort of transitions. And so building in a little time may in some kind of ritual maybe make a cup of tea and sit on the couch for 10 minutes.



**Natalie** [00:18:41] Or take a shower or something to just acknowledge this is a shift in my day. The same is true the shift from a workday mode or a weekend day.

**Bonni** [00:18:52] Yeah. You mentioned earlier about this flexibility in our schedule for me in my life. The flexibility has really afforded me I think and personally probably because of my personality I didn't really go through a lot of guilt.

**Bonni** [00:19:06] When I returned to work with either child and I know many people do go through a real kind of gut wrenching thing I think for me because yes I'm working but I'm working from home and if I go downstairs to get a glass of iced tea I can see those smiling faces and see that they're doing quite well.

**Bonni** [00:19:21] And I think that makes it a little bit a little bit easier. And again this is more of a personal thing but one of the things that I found helpful is that the word work didn't have to be so scary. So we will use that word.

**Bonni** [00:19:34] Daddy is working or mommy is working in that at least for our 3 year old that he understands that's going to mean that it's not a time we're going to be necessarily playing with him and we might leave the room a little sooner than we of course would otherwise. But one of my friends had mentioned early on that we can use that work with them too.

**Bonni** [00:19:53] Oh what are you working on. Oh are you working at playing with your trains or are you working on some art and doing some painting. And I really kind of liked that because I think that I love when we can bring play into our work.

**Bonni** [00:20:05] That's one of the things that's so fun for me about being a professor is it does feel like play. I think that shows that probably in a good profession for myself. And then to show our kids too that they can use that word to it. It makes I guess it makes me feel more safe and I don't know if that resonates at all with you.

**Natalie** [00:20:23] There's a lot of research neurological research psychological research that suggests that what human beings find satisfying is to work on something to create something to do something with steps and an end goal. Video games are a great example of this. You know you get tasks and you try to complete them.

**Natalie** [00:20:51] And they reward you. And people stay playing them because they're satisfying those parts of our brain. And you know to work on an art project to work on a to cook something is to work on something. And so understanding that as a deep human need you know to to build make create learn.

**Natalie** [00:21:15] And you know those are are all processes that have beginnings and middles and ends.

**Bonni** [00:21:22] We've talked already a little bit about technology and you stressed the importance of putting it away. You talked about it in reference to getting enough sleep and how it hinders that for us. You've also talked about considering a Sabbath day how can we use technology on the other end of things to help us more toward this goal of being productive?

**Natalie** [00:21:42] Some of the best features of our electronic tools are being able to consult information wherever we are. Have your calendar synchronize across different devices.

**Natalie** [00:21:55] I think electronic calendars are really valuable for many people but understanding what works best for you. Some people will find it very helpful to print out the pages and be able to refer to them on paper or to use a paper planner.

**Natalie** [00:22:12] Not forcing yourself to use digital tools if you're inclined to use paper based tools is one way of using technology. Most effective way to know when it's effective and when it's not and to not be afraid to create a kind of hybrid system when you need to.

**Natalie** [00:22:33] I store my new projects and project task lists in to do list which is an electronic app. But I often will first do that initial capture of ideas and tasks for a project on paper because I think better more creatively when I'm writing by hand on paper and then I'll transfer it to an electronic system for maintenance and in referring to over time.

**Bonni** [00:23:01] Back in the early early Franklin Covey days I believe it was them the idea of only touching something. Once it came up I think that would mean maybe they weren't the first people to say it but they certainly had it in their in their books and in their classes with the hybrid.

**Bonni** [00:23:19] We can definitely leverage the best of what paper has to offer and the best of what electronic has to offer. Some of the things with email and it's funny. I don't know if you have found this in your work in the consulting and workshops that I have offered professors absolutely are not excited about hearing about email but some of some of our dearest dearest faculty friends are atrocious.

**Bonni** [00:23:44] So I have this tension between wanting to say some things there but when we think about how many times we touch email and go back and read the read the exact same thing. I had a moment a few years ago with a colleague she actually it was.

**Bonni** [00:23:59] It brought tears to her eyes she was just so overwhelmed with everything I wasn't just email but that was a specific indicator of just how overwhelmed she was and her life and she admitted to me she had 7000 e-mails in her inbox.

**Bonni** [00:24:14] I mean and obviously you can't really fulfill anyone's needs who's hoping to get something from you or really manage things very well and it's got to that so we kind of went through this thing we're running like the 7000 we're gonna put them in a folder.

**Bonni** [00:24:26] We can get to them if we need to but we start kind of fresh and the it was it was a really nice release for her to do that but so what are the areas where we keep going back to stuff and we're losing some inefficiency because every time we don't resolve it but then we're still having the stress over.

**Bonni** [00:24:42] By then it just sits there as are other areas besides email where you see that happening where it just becomes the snowball effect.

**Natalie** [00:24:50] Well one of the worst ones is email related but one of the worst things is reading email on your smartphone. Many people likes to read things on the on the phone but they're not going to respond. It's just like a one sentence response just because it takes a while to type things out on your phone and so forth.

**Natalie** [00:25:10] So people will often read emails that they're not acting on them and leaving things in the inbox that you've already read. This means you're re reading and you're reading writing about that email and what you need to do.

**Natalie** [00:25:27] David Allen's two minute rule from Getting Things Done is really valuable in processing email and other kinds of materials to know if it's something you can deal with in two minutes or less to do it then. But if you've already read the email on your phone you're you're missing the value of that.

**Natalie** [00:25:45] Do it now. Principle. And so. And the same is true for other things you might encounter through the phone that you want and take care of later if later means later put it on a to do list.

**Bonni** [00:26:00] Are there any other tools we should talk about under productivity that you just want to not miss until we get to the recommendations section or anything else. Another strategy you want to mention before we transition over to that.

**Natalie** [00:26:12] Well you know we were talking about the Sabbath day and setting boundaries and you know one of the really important things you can do to improve the quality of your day immediately is to practice taking high quality break.

**Natalie** [00:26:32] And what I mean by a high quality break is a break that isn't checking email and probably not even looking at Twitter or getting on Facebook but a break. That's really refreshing your whole body and mind. Get up walk away from the computer get a yoga pose walk around the block. Get a glass of water.

**Natalie** [00:27:00] You know physically moving your body away from the position in which you're working helps oxygenate your whole system and reset your nervous system at a physiological level and many of us even when we think we're taking a break we're not doing the things that would give us the most pleasure.

**Natalie** [00:27:23] That thing away from your desk and reading a novel for 15 minutes with a timer so you know you don't have to worry about when you go back to work or just read for 10 or 15 minutes something you just want to read. It's immensely refreshing for many people much more so than scanning headlines or catching up on Twitter.

**Bonni** [00:27:42] Sounds so refreshing as you talk about it I love it. I love it. Is there anything that you do ever use any kind of technology to help remind you about taking those breaks. Is there anything you'd recommend there.

**Natalie** [00:27:54] I have sometimes set reminders at certain times of day and typically just using my calendar app which you can set reminders for. There are apps that are designed specifically to not you know to remind you every hour to stretch and so forth.

**Natalie** [00:28:15] I haven't used them personally but I mean I know there are a number of them out there. But a simple you know setting an alarm once in the morning and once in mid afternoon for example. This is a great starting point that you know he doesn't have to get complicated with a special app it can just be an alarm.

**Natalie** [00:28:32] To remind you to take 15 minutes and to think ahead of time what would be refreshing playing a video game or reading a novel with something that's totally different from the kind of work that you're doing on a given day.

**Bonni** [00:28:46] I found for fame for myself I get so focused that I do have to set something to remind me or I will it'll fly right by me and also now look at the clock and go.

**Bonni** [00:28:56] And then I get physically have some physical issues to where if I sit too long my wrists and my my it's just going to create a much bigger issue than it needs to be. But if I stretch and take the time to do that it makes such a big difference.

**Natalie** [00:29:11] A timer is my most important productivity tool. I've written about this before and I'll be talking about time. You know I could talk for an hour just about using a timer but you know you can use a timer. So many parts of your day.

**Natalie** [00:29:28] You know you need to limit time on a particular kind of task to tighten timing of brake enhances the relaxation of that brake if you know if I set a timer for 40 minutes and I'm going to eat lunch and watch part of a show on Netflix. I don't have to keep interrupting my enjoyment of Lawrence by wondering when do I have to get back to work.

**Bonni** [00:29:54] That's such a good point. I just realized I do this with students because my favorite part of my job is actually the one on one connections with students and I had a student come and share a little bit of a medical/psychological challenge she was having and I won't get too specific

with that but I really wanted to fully attend to her and I found myself not being able to because I had another appointment coming up.

**Bonni** [00:30:16] So I said Would you mind if I just set a timer on my phone because I'm finding I want to really listen to you but I'm also cognisant of the fact that we don't have unlimited time and just so sure and that felt so good to just set that timer.

**Bonni** [00:30:27] And by the way for anyone listening who has an iPhone to hold down that home button and say set a timer for 20 minutes and let Siri do the work for you. And it felt so good to just then I could completely focus on what she had to say. It felt really good. I hadn't realized that I that I did that until you mentioned the.

**Natalie** [00:30:46] Absolutely. It is very freeing. Sometimes people associate timing with anxiety because they think they have to work faster or a race or something but it's really not.

**Natalie** [00:30:57] And a timer is also really valuable for just finding out using it in the stopwatch mode. Like how long does it take you to shower dress. Get ready in the morning if you time yourself over a period of a few days you get a sense of OK this is you know 20 minutes or whatever it is.

**Natalie** [00:31:16] Which lets you then plan your morning in a much more realistic way than like assuming what I ought to be able to do this in ten minutes feeling rush. So timer's are great for getting you know finding out how long things take and for arranging blocks of time.

**Natalie** [00:31:34] And third final you know really fun way to use a timer is you know five minute Clean-Up two minute Clean-Up if you've got small kids two minute cleanup of the living room. Everybody pick up toys for two minutes or you know find a song that's about two minutes long. That's the clean up song.

**Bonni** [00:31:52] Love it. The reason I'm sure she's still there there is a lady called The Fly lady she refers to herself as the fly lady. She has just that very thing where it's you know grab a trash bag or grab a box and go far find five things you can fling into the box that you could donate to someone else. Just that little.

**Bonni** [00:32:09] That's because that's all her whole philosophy is just a little tiny thing that those little tiny things really do add up to a lot more ease in our life as he said. So true.

**Bonni** [00:32:20] Well this is the point in the show where we transition over to recommendations. I'm going to go first if you don't mind and then toss it back to you to close us out. My recommendation is from a blogger who writes about digital literacy. She's a digital librarian and so she wrote a book called How to Manage References with Zotero.

**Bonni** [00:32:42] Her name is Catherine Pope. And I've been using so Zotero for years now and it's something that now I started to require of all my undergraduate students.

**Bonni** [00:32:51] She did such a wonderful job with this book at making it all encompassing for people that are just getting started really really simple easy to understand with screenshots throughout. But as for someone like me who is as advanced a user as I am and has written some book chapters and articles and feels really really competent at it.

**Bonni** [00:33:12] I learned I think five or ten brand new things I didn't even know it could do. So it's amazing that with this really readable short book I got through it in just a couple of nights that she could get so far and have it range from the very very basics for people just getting started all the way to more advanced users.

**Bonni** [00:33:29] I would highly suggest people and it's only for ninety nine for the Kindle edition and a wonderful support to the great resources she puts out on her blog. How about you, Natalie what's your recommendation or recommendations today.

**Natalie** [00:33:41] I'm going to mention two things. One I could have mentioned earlier in the tools. It's a website called I don't this.com as you have to excuse the lack of grammatical correctness there.

**Natalie** [00:33:53] So IDONETHIS.com and you and it's free for an individual user you can also sign up to a paid plan for teams and it will send you an email at the end of every day and you can set the time.

**Natalie** [00:34:09] I think the default is 6 pm and you can see that you can reword the question but basically it sends you an email that says what did you do today. All you have to do is reply to that email with things you want to record that you did that day.

**Natalie** [00:34:24] And then there are ways you can then on the Web site through review your calendar of what you did see some statistics a word cloud. Those kinds of things but it's a really valuable exercise. Again on reflecting on the positive.

**Natalie** [00:34:41] Like what did you do during the day and the chance to write about it in whatever kind of free form you can write one word with these and write sentences you can use that tool however you wish. And it's a really important moment and it just makes it easy to like it because it arrives in your inbox every day.

**Natalie** [00:35:02] It's just a reminder. Like take a moment to think about what you did during the day so that's a free tool. I find really valuable and if I can just mention a book that I've been reading that I'm finding very interesting called *The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance* by Steven Kotler.

**Natalie** [00:35:25] And he talks about he's looking at extreme athlete and I should preface this by saying this in no way am I ever myself going to be interested in jumping off of cliff. Navigating whitewater rafting. I mean the people who do like incredible death defying activities and he's interested in how these athletes in a variety of different kinds of sport.

**Natalie** [00:36:00] All very you know when he interviews them. You know they're tapping into a flow experience and you know that sense of timelessness and fusion with the universe that arise when we are as human beings doing the things that most deeply connect us to who we are as individuals.

**Bonni** [00:36:22] What's so fascinating.

**Natalie** [00:36:24] The really fascinating book even especially maybe because you know like the world of you know boarding is not my world at all but it's got very interesting scientific research into what creates close days and how you can adapt insights from this research in extreme athletics to your everyday life. You know at home at work.

**Bonni** [00:36:51] Thanks so much for both of those recommendations Natalie and I just really genuinely want to thank you for investing your time in this growing community of people that want to just get better at teaching and part of that is as we get more productive we have more of what you called ease than really



experiencing that true significance. And what we do for our vocations. Thank you so much.

**Natalie** [00:37:14] You're so welcome. I really enjoyed the conversation.

**Dave** [00:37:17] Hey everyone it's Dave Stachowiak just stepped out here to wrap up Bonni's show this week and you can find all of the notes and resources mentioned in today's episode at [teachinginhighered.com/34](https://teachinginhighered.com/34).

**Dave** [00:37:31] And while you're online I hope you'll take a moment to join Bonni's weekly update. She writes an article each week and it also includes the show notes for every episode you'll get that in your inbox on Wednesday.

**Dave** [00:37:44] And if you'd like to join that just go to [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](https://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe). And when you do you'll get to download her diary. The Educational Technology Essentials she's put together 19 edtech tools to help you be more efficient and effective in your teaching.

**Dave** [00:38:01] So check that all out at [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](https://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe) and we'll look forward to talking with you again next week.

*Teaching in Higher Ed transcripts are created using a combination of an automated transcription service and human beings. This text likely will not represent the precise, word-for-word conversation that was had. The accuracy of the transcripts will vary. The authoritative record of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcasts is contained in the audio file.*