

[00:00:00] Bonni Stachowiak: On today's episode of Teaching in Higher Ed Number 467, A Pedagogy of Kindness with Cate Denial.

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Bonni: Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonnie Stachowiak, and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our productivity approaches, so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students. I am thrilled to be welcoming today's guest, Cate Denial to Teaching in Higher Ed. She's the bright, distinguished professor of American history, chair of the History Department and director of the Bright Institute at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, a distinguished lecturer for the organization of American Historians.

Cate is the winner of the American Historical Association's 2018 Eugene Asher Distinguished Teaching Award and a former member of the Digital Public Library of America's Educational Advisory Board. Cate currently sits on the board of *Commonplace: a Journal of Early American Life*. Her historical research has examined the early 19th century experience of pregnancy, childbirth, and child rearing in upper Midwestern Ojibwe and missionary cultures, research that drew from Cate's previous book, *Making Marriage: Husbands, Wives, and the American State in Dakota and Ojibwe Country*.

Cate is the principal investigator on a \$150,000 Mellon-funded project called *Pedagogies, Communities, and Practices of Care in the Academy After COVID-19*, which brings together 38 faculty and staff from different institutional types to think about and take action on care work in Higher Ed. Cate will soon be publishing her new book, *A Pedagogy of Kindness*, with West Virginia University Press. I do also want to mention that today's episode has a brief mention of PTSD, the common symptoms, and sometimes the diagnosis of PTSD being related to sexual assault. No depictions of that type of assault are discussed, however. Cate Denial, it is absolutely a joy to welcome you to Teaching in Higher Ed.

[00:02:58] Cate Denial: Hi. It's great to be here.

[00:03:00] Bonni: I feel like we've been having conversations even though they're just in my imagination. Thank you for this wonderful book. Thank you for all the other work that you do. You have been such a generous contributor to the community of people that care deeply about teaching.

[00:03:15] Cate: That is very sweet, and I think of you as someone who's central to that community, too.

[00:03:21] Bonni: It's fun to be in conversation even if they're in my dreams. [laughter] We're going to start out maybe not on the happiest of notes, but perhaps some joy in it for what it's done for you. Would you tell us about an experience that you've had where kindness was not a part of a person's pedagogy?

[00:03:42] Cate: The things that come to mind most often are my experiences as an undergraduate student. I was an undergraduate student at the University of Nottingham in England where I grew up. My professors were really interested in a life of the mind that left no room for the body or the spirit or anything else, certainly not for feelings. I can think of a couple of really good examples. One was that I was meant to take an end-of-year exam. These are very important in UK higher ed, the cumulative exams that you take right at the very end of the year. I was sick. I had an upset stomach.

I told my professor who sent me to student health. Student health then gave me Kaopectate and a little bit of morphine and told me to sit the exam anyway. I honestly think that's probably the best I was ever going to do on that exam, regardless that they probably gave me a little leeway and the way that they marked it. I just am struck looking back on the fact that there was no compassion there. There was no sense of, "Wow, you're ill. We should take care of you." There was just, "How can we prop up your body for two hours so that you can write this exam on schedule?"

Another of my professors, and this is a great story, I took a course on the African American civil rights, movement. We had as our book, a textbook, *The Eyes on the Prize* primary source reader, which is a big, thick book. We were looking at a document about young Black single men in Chicago in 1967. I leaned across to my friend and said, "What about young, Black, single women in Chicago in 1967?" She and I then got the giggles because it was clearly not a moment where we should have been expressing these thoughts to one another. Then the professor asked if we had something we wanted to share with the class. I said "Yes. What was going on with young, unemployed, Black, single women in 1967?"

He took the book, he threw it at my head. I ducked out of the way, thankfully. He said, "I teach about one minority group already. I don't have to teach about any others." That was the atmosphere in which I was doing my learning. Those professors really set up for me an example of who I did not want to be as an educator.

[00:06:21] Bonni: That was immediate. Obviously, you have a visceral reaction in the moment. That took root in you immediately?

[00:06:29] Cate: Yes. I had a very clear sense that there had to be a better way of doing things in the way that these professors were doing it.

[00:06:38] Bonni: Walk us through more some of the other things early in your wrestling with kindness in your teaching, the kinds of questions that you asked.

[00:06:48] Cate: I think things came to a head for me quite early in my career as a faculty member. I started at Knox College in 2005. I had undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder. I was very, very depressed. I would move to a new town. I was trying to form a community. I was trying to teach all new courses. The way that I tried to cope was by being authoritarian. I suspected that my students were going to get away with all kinds of things if I wasn't going to be a hardliner. There was no room for creativity or spontaneity in my classes. I had a terribly draconian attendance policy that I remember. The things I asked them to do were really boring. [laughs]

I remember that there was a student who was clearly not enjoying the class, and I asked him if he would join me in office hours, so we could talk about how perhaps he might have a better time in class. When I expressed this to him, he looked at me very derisively and said, "You're just not Knox material." I was so floored, completely taken aback by this. Now, I think that student probably had some ideas in his head about who was a proper professor and a young woman did not fulfill his idea of what a proper professor was, but he was still telling me something very important. It wasn't that I didn't belong at Knox, it was that I was not teaching well.

I was not making a welcoming environment for students. I was not making a good environment for myself. I gradually began to try and unpick the sense that students were my antagonists, that students should be viewed with suspicion at all times, as if they were going to try and get away with something monstrous if I wasn't constantly vigilant. To just ease up on this white knuckle grip that I had on trying to battle through everything that was happening in my life.

[00:08:51] Bonni: Once you started to have these questions about how your pedagogy perhaps did not align with the values of how you might wish to show

up, what were then some of the experiences that you had that began to help those things take shape even further in your pedagogy?

[00:09:11] Cate: I worked with a project in Iowa from 2001 to 2011 called Bringing History Home. It was a professional development program for teachers funded by grants from Congress. We set out to teach teachers how to teach with primary sources, how they could do history with their students instead of just telling students about history. We focus initially on kindergarten through fifth grade, which is an age where most people do not think of students as doing history as really doing the work that historians do, but they are absolutely capable of it.

I worked with a series of master teachers who were just incredibly kind to one another, to me. I worked with the director, Elise Fillpot, who was also incredibly kind. Their example and their patience really were such an example to me about how I wanted to be as an educator. Then in 2013, I went to the intergroup dialogue training at the University of Michigan with two of my colleagues, Janice Cervantes and Gabrielle Raley-Karlin, and three students. We went to investigate whether we should have intergroup dialogue on our campus. Intergroup dialogue is a really structured forum of conversation between people who come from very different social groups, and it tackles areas of real conflict and tension.

You might have a dialogue about race or about sexuality or about gender or about religion. We not only had to learn about the theory of doing dialogue, but we had to actually participate in dialogue circles, and that was incredible. It was so hard. It was so challenging. I got to see what it was like when there was real emotional vulnerability brought into the room when people trusted each other very quickly and risked trusting each other very quickly. We went back to our campus and we said, "Yes, we think we need a program." The president said, "Okay. Make it happen." [laughs] I have been co-director of that program with Gabrielle Raley-Karlin since then.

Dialogue has a habit of just slopping out of its bucket into everything that you do. You really can't ask people to show up as their authentic selves in one class and then not show up as their authentic selves in another one. You also can't be vulnerable in a dialogue class and then go to your regular teaching and just be like, "I'm going to leave that behind. That doesn't matter in this space." I realized I had been asking my students to show up and be vulnerable for years, and I had not reciprocated. That really was a turning point in me saying, "I need to really think about this differently. I need to be a partner with them in this learning process."

Then the big aha moment was 2017 going to the Digital Pedagogy Lab at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia. Everything there was predicated upon kindness. Everything from the things that we read and the things we talked about, the exercises that we did in our little streams, to the fact that it was really well catered, and there were pronoun pins when we checked in and all kinds of little touches that really showed care. It was at that particular institute that Chris Friend and Sean Michael Morris posed the question to the intro stream that I was in of, "Why not be kind? Why were we struggling so hard to hold the lion against what?"

It was a great question. It was a question that absolutely caused my pedagogy to disassemble in the best way because I realized I hadn't been very kind and that I really should be. I said about recreating my pedagogy over time to be as kind as I possibly could so that I could answer that question, why not be kind?

[00:13:24] Bonni: In order for us to be kind and show kindness in our teaching, we need to be able to be kind to ourselves. Before I ask you how to show kindness to ourselves, I would first like to hear you share a bit more, what does Cate look like when she shows up as her fully authentic self in learning spaces as opposed to who you thought that you were supposed to show up as before that?

[00:13:51] Cate: I show up as Cate. For a long time, I showed up as Catherine. I never insisted that people call me Dr. Denial or Professor, although many of my students just call me Professor anyway, but I made a very distinct decision to have my students call me Cate once I decided to engage in this pedagogy. I show up looking different. I should say, for people listening in right now, I'm wearing a long-sleeved t-shirt and a Ted Lasso baseball cap. I feel okay with being more informal in the way that I dress now. I will show up in a pair of jeans once in a while instead of this very carefully crafted look that I had when I started out teaching that was meant to project authority and authoritarianism. It wasn't just authority.

I show up looking forward to class. I used to be tremendously nervous before I walked into a classroom. That lasted for years. It wasn't until I started teaching with kindness and realized how thoroughly I had positioned my students as my antagonists that I realized that was why I was nervous. I was walking into classrooms prepared for battle, and now, I don't. I walk into classrooms prepared for collaboration and for discovery with my students, and that has changed absolutely everything.

[00:15:12] Bonni: I mentioned having my teaching and my learning shaped by you, and it's also been shaped by many of the names and people and programs that you've spoke of already. What does it look like when we think of our students as antagonists? What are some of the things that might come into

our practices and our mindsets when we think of students as they might be? You mentioned some examples. They might be getting away with something, but what are the kinds of things that our minds allow ourselves to think students might get away with if we think of them as antagonists?

[00:15:51] Cate: We think they're mocking us. We think that their comment aren't sincere. We think that they will plagiarize. That they will collaborate in a bad way with other students to subvert the norms of academic conduct. We think that they will do as little of the reading as possible, that they will lie to us constantly, that they are looking to get one over on us, basically, in every way that they can. That's just such a profoundly damaging way to enter into a classroom space, and it makes learning impossible because when you are inviting people into that space, but you really are just standing there waiting for battle to commence, even if that is subtextual for you, it just makes for a rotten teaching experience.

It makes for a teaching experience where you can never relax, that you can't find comfort, where you can't find genuine expressions of who you are, where you're constantly guarded both against your real self and against who these students might perceive you to be.

[00:17:04] Bonni: It is also unkind to ourselves and our sense of meaning and our sense of significance. Would you now share a little bit about what kindness to ourselves looks like? Don't think I'm going to forget to then extend that over to our students and come back to that.

[00:17:23] Cate: Kindness is not niceness. I live in the Midwest and there is such a thing as Midwest nice, but Midwest nice is a façade. It's a way of having general pleasantries so that there's never conflict, even though it just means that conflict is sublimated. Kindness is not niceness. Kindness, I think, is taking the principles of sincere self-care and extending them. Kindness says, "I am going to screw up at times, but I will extend my self-forgiveness and understanding when I do. I will also learn so that I don't repeat my mistakes, and I'm going to hold myself accountable." Niceness is not about accountability.

I think that being kind to the self is about a little grace, a little breathing room, but very much so not excusing things that are inexcusable. When people ask me how they can implement kindness to themselves, I tend to go to some really gritty practical solutions. Boundaries are so, so important in carving out time for us to be our whole self. I tell people to limit the number of hours that they spend on email, for example, and make sure that there are long stretches of time where they are not constantly hovering over their phone or at their computer. For me, I log off about eight o'clock every night, and my students know this, it's on the syllabus, and I tell them.

I try not to check my email on a Saturday or a Sunday so that I have time to recharge. That's how I explain it on my syllabus, too. I do that also to model that recharging is a thing my students should do as well. I take time for myself that is completely free of all academic responsibilities. That's really important. Putting things on my calendar like eating and rest are super important. The calendar can be so tyrannical, and we tend to fill it with all of our obligations without thinking about the things that sustain us. I was diagnosed as a type II diabetic about 18 months ago, and that was a big wake-up call for me because I realized I couldn't just get along by eating string cheese anymore between classes.

I had to put a dedicated lunch hour on my calendar because I needed to be able to either go somewhere and eat something real or go home and make something real. Then it just changed the dynamic of the whole day to be able to have that particular break. Forgiving ourselves for accidental things like writing on the whiteboard with a permanent marker, realizing that students are not going to remember for the rest of our lives that day that we spilled coffee down our shirt. I have forgotten some of the other things [chuckles] that I said. Let me think. Getting pedagogical training in whatever way we can is a kindness to ourselves. We shouldn't, first of all, be thrown into a classroom without any pedagogical training, but that happens to so many graduate students and early career scholars all the time.

If structurally, the institutions for which we work on not supporting us, then we need to find the places that will. That means looking for online communities whether there are often professional development opportunities that are free or very low cost, finding whatever form of social media works for an individual where they can connect to other people who are wrestling with many of the same things that they might be wrestling with, whether that's in terms of the discipline that they practice or the business of teaching. All of those things are so important so that we are not just replicating that sense of panic that we might feel when we're thrown into a classroom for the first time.

[00:21:32] Bonni: Yes. The sense of panic and also the complete and utter lack of an opportunity to unlearn some of the things we were taught that we, at least in my case, was not cognizant of that I was taught both in terms of my experience in college and my subsequent degrees as well, as well as what other colleagues modeled for me very early and were formative. It wasn't until I was able to connect with a online community, as you describe, that I could see other ways and see a different view of students. I want to encourage people who may be wrestling with some of the things that Cate's describing here as difficult.

It is both incredibly difficult and easy all at the same time because it's incredibly freeing. Again, I just want to express my gratitude to you and ask you more about what does that look like, Cate, to believe students in practice?

[00:22:30] Cate: One of the tenets of teaching with kindness is to simply believe students when they tell you what their experience of their education is, of what their experience of their life is. When my students tell me that they're sick, or that the printer died, or that the dog ate their homework, whatever it is, I choose to believe them. There is an obvious risk that someone might put one over on me and get away with something that someone might think they shouldn't, that I would much rather enter into a relationship with my students that is based on me extending them trust and then deal with exceptions to that rule as when if they occur than to risk disbelieving someone who's in really genuine crisis.

If I say to one student like, "I don't believe your grandparent died," not only do I risk their emotional health, their emotional responses, but that's going to travel. All of my students are going to know that I am that professor at that point, and all the students that I would like to teach in the future are going to hear about that. That's the kind of stuff that passes through the grapevine. I think it's super important to simply say, "I'm going to trust you." If I become aware of something that needs my attention, sure, we'll deal with it, but I'm going to trust you.

[00:23:54] Bonni: Sometimes I think it's easier for us to have empathy when we've experienced something similar to what the person may be describing. Obviously, all of our experiences are different from one another. We should never assume, "I know exactly how you feel because I had 'the same thing happen with me,'" but I do think it can be more challenging to have empathy, but what a wonderful opportunity it is when we haven't experienced something. You mentioned earlier being diagnosed with PTSD. That is not something that I have been diagnosed with.

Would you give us a couple of examples that come to mind with that specifically what someone like myself who has not experienced that might not have a broad enough imagination to understand what that experience might be like, and specifically what someone in an educational context may need that someone like me may not even think about in terms of being kind to someone with that diagnosis?

[00:24:55] Cate: The thing that most quickly comes to mind is the issue of trigger warnings or content warnings. This is, of course, a hot-button issue in academia if the discussion rolls around with predictability. What I think people don't know about PTSD and being triggered is that it is a full-body experience. It is not simply something that's happening in your brain. It happens to your whole person. You cannot learn under the circumstances of intense stress that come with being

triggered. For instance, if I were to be surprised, and I have been in educational context before by, for example, a depiction of sexual assault, my body, and my brain are going to react.

I am going to sweat. I am going to have physical pain in different parts of my body. My thinking will become foggy. I will be full of adrenaline. Adrenaline has certain relationships to certain bodily functions. I'm going to need the bathroom very quickly. Panic, my heart racing, becoming clammy, confused. All of these things are happening all at once. Sometimes when I'm triggered, it puts me in a position where I am remembering the thing that happened to me at the same time that I am experiencing the present. Those two things coexist in vivid, vivid detail. It is one of the things that is so hard when you experience it to reconcile because we understand that there's now.

How can there be now and then right next to each other and feel perfectly embodied in both spaces? I think a lot of people don't know what a range of physical and cognitive and psychological effects a triggering event has. I think a couple of things happen. Some people suggest, "Exposure therapy's great for people. It heals people all the time." Exposure therapy is not a thing that we should be doing in our classrooms. We are not therapists. It is not recommended for everyone when it is done. It's done in a very particular circumstances. This is not something a bunch of amateurs should be trying to engineer in their classrooms.

Then there's the opposition to trigger warnings just as a blanket position. What that does is it means it is impossible for some students to probably engage with the material they are supposed to be learning. A warning gives someone like me the opportunity to prepare myself, so I can put my coping mechanisms in place. I might have a student who says, "I can deal with a generalized discussion of sexual assault, but I can't deal with a graphic description of it happening." Then I will give them page numbers and say, "Skip these, but let's have a more general conversation."

That kind of accommodation is what makes it possible for people to weather distressing conditions. It's not a means of circumnavigating discomfort altogether, it's just about putting in place the coping mechanisms You need to do that better.

[00:28:23] Bonni: On a practical level, where does this show up? If I were to want to do better at this, where would I have these kinds of warnings show up? How might I put that into a practical application?

[00:28:35] Cate: I have a blanket statement in my syllabus that says, "I have tried to take into account common warnings that if there is something in particular

that you need a warning for, please do let me know. I will be happy to make that happen." Then on the reading schedule or on my LMS, I have a warning before readings. I have page numbers for people to skip. I have alternate readings. Sometimes I will make accommodations by allowing people to watch movies or documentaries on their own time instead of in class, but I make sure that I communicate clearly and repeatedly where something might be triggering and to ask for my students to help me help them by telling me what else I can do.

[00:29:26] Bonni: Do we one day just arrive at a destination of kindness or is this more of a journey?

[00:29:33] Cate: I think kindness is a discipline. We are not going to feel kind. I do not feel kind all the time. I have not reached some level of enlightenment where I'm just magically putting out rainbows and sprinkles all the time. It is that I have trained myself to ask what is the kind response before I do things. When I get an email that perhaps irritates me, I don't fire up a response. I wait. I pause. I make sure that I'm asking myself how to phrase things in a kind and compassionate way before I send that email out.

When something happens in my classroom that I wasn't anticipating and that maybe is a little worrying or perhaps somebody says something that is offensive to someone, I don't simply fly off the handle? I take a moment to pause. I ask myself what the kind thing is to do, and then I act from that place. I may not feel wonderfully compassionate all the time, but I can pause every time and ask myself, "What is the kind thing to do here before I take action?"

[00:30:47] Bonni: I want to revisit the earlier parts of our conversation. Thank you for sharing those, I suspect, painful stories of your education particularly the one where the book gets thrown at you. [chuckles] I happen to have that book on a bookshelf upstairs. Our daughter has been asking me. She's actually asked this question of me a lot. Why do I keep books on the bookshelves that I never read again, I never pick up? Anyway, that one definitely comes to mind.

[00:31:15] Cate: It's big, right?

[00:31:16] Bonni: It's big. [laughter] I have a paperback version, so it may not be as large as the hardcover is. Would you take us back if you were going to revisit that? I'm specifically interested in the kindness you speak of of involving students in the collaborative experience of learning and how a group of learners, myself very much included, Cate, might go about finding some primary sources that could explore the questions that you and the person sitting next to you in that class had about women, and they're not being represented in that portion of the book.

[00:31:56] Cate: I don't know if they're not represented in the book to be honest. We were reading things that the professor had chosen. There may be documents in that book that I just had no idea existed. I think if that had been a moment that had happened in a classroom of mine where someone had said, "Where is this missing group of people?" The obvious thing for me is to say, "That's a great question. Why do you think they're not here?" To unpack the book as a constructed item, to be able to think about when it was published, about what was going on in the world at the time, what did the academy look like at the time, what things had currency within academia, who was fighting to have their stories told and who wasn't?

Then be able to say, "Can we go out and see if we can find something?" Taking them to websites that I know have those resources and setting them loose and saying, "What can you find that are going to fill in the gaps here?" I think simply acknowledging that students' questions are usually really good questions and then making space to unpack why things are the way they are instead of simply accepting that they are the way that they are. I think that's really important.

[00:33:23] Bonni: My final question before we get to the recommendation segment is a totally unfair one [chuckles] because there's so much we could talk about here. What comes to mind for you in terms of being kind to students and also to ourselves when it comes to grading? Specifically that, and you mentioned this earlier, we don't assign things that we would consider to be boring. Help expand our imagination for what not-boring grading might look like and not-boring assignments might look like?

[00:33:55] Cate: One of the things that I'm very passionate about is the fact that we tend to have almost monocultures, I'm not quite sure that's the right expression, but within disciplines. In my discipline of history, it is just assumed that writing about history is the best way to communicate knowledge. That is so untrue. [chuckles] That's just not true. Putting together assignments where my students have a range of ways to respond. This is one of the principles of universal design for learning, is that you have multiple points of access and that you have flexibility in the way that students can respond to things.

I might say to my students, "You can write a short paper, or you can make a short video, or you can audio record your response. It does not have to be writing." I design unessay activities where my students make things that show me what they have learned in their research rather than just writing another academic paper. I do focus on writing in parts of the class, but I also make space for people for whom writing is not their strongest suit to also express themselves and show me, "Hey, I'm learning. I just can't express myself through

this particular medium." I think that is a really important kindness in the way that we design assignments.

Then when it comes to grading I am someone who un-grades. I am now at the point in my trajectory as an educator where my students are the ones who decide what their grade is every term. They have assignments with deadlines, after each assignment they get lots of feedback from me, especially about what their goal is for their next assignment, where we can really strengthen them as a thinker and a scholar. Then at the very end of term, they write a metacognitive paper where they reflect on the term, what they learned, what challenges they faced, how they overcame them, and then they tell me what grade they think they should get.

I reserve the right to raise the grades of students who I think are too hard on themselves, but I have let go of the idea that I will lower people's grades. This has yet to backfire on me. Now, I may have just jinxed myself, but I have been doing this for several terms, and everybody has been scrupulously honest in giving themselves grades at the end of term. That seems more authentic to me, to have it be a metacognitive project where students get to rate all kinds of things; their effort, their time, their curiosity, and not simply could they properly format a paper.

I'm a big proponent of finding ways to limit the number of times that we unilaterally put a number or a letter on a piece of paper or an exam book and say, "This sums up your learning," and to find other ways to be able to communicate with students about what that learning is.

[00:37:18] Bonni: That's such a big idea. I harken back so often to my earlier conversations years ago with Cathy Davidson who said it wasn't even good enough, these grades, having letters assigned to grades wasn't even precise enough for the industry and how could that be good enough for measuring something as unique as learning and difficult to measure. This is the time in the show where we each get to share our recommendations. I want to begin, Cate, by sharing a big, big, big endorsement for your book, *A Pedagogy of Kindness*. I was waiting for it. [chuckles] I know you and I went back and forth a little bit.

I love how you set boundaries even with having conversations like the one we're having today. I got my hands on that digital copy and just devoured it. What a delightful, generous, important, necessary book for challenging our thinking but also shaping our practice to help us expand our imagination for what these things could look like in practice. Thank you so much for that. I wanted to also recommend-- You were talking about calendaring. We also spoke just recently about grading. I've been inspired, again, by people like you, by people like

Jesse Stommel to not assign things that are boring to grade, and I've gotten so much better at that.

Another thing that has been a practice that's been important for me to do is also to be realistic about the time that it would take. If I've got a reflection journal, and each journal might take me X number of minutes to be realistic and kind to future me, as of us recording this conversation, we are nearing the end, I teach in the semester system, and how much better it is for me to have blocked out a lot of time this week to grade this particular assignment. Not just grading in general, but for me, it really makes a difference to go-- It's worth it. You've asked these students to reflect on their learning. Set aside the time, just like you're asking them to set aside time to reflect on their learning.

It brings me to so much of a centered place where I don't overdo it. Cate, you were talking about blocking off times for lunch. That is something that I do as well. Blocking off times for every single day, getting outside and moving my body. Yes, blocking out time to hold in the highest regard. The learning that we're all getting to experience together and celebrating that and not allowing myself to vent in any circles really about that practice, what a joy it is to get to celebrate in that learning. That is a discipline that I continue to grow in. I don't think I'll ever be done, Cate, as you said earlier.

Boy, when I put a sense of intentionality and purpose and think about that calendaring as a way of celebrating learning, it is so freeing, so good, so fun. Many of the practices that you talked about I use as well. That final thing of just blocking out your calendar and thinking about it as a celebration of learning is a better frame for me than grading ever has been. Cate, I'll pass it over to you to respond to any of that and then to recommend whatever it is you'd like to share today.

[00:40:44] Cate: I think that's a wonderful recommendation. One of the things that I tell people as they're grading during their term or semester is to put grading on their calendar for two weeks after a thing is due so that you have the time built into your calendar for people to be able to turn things in late, so you can grant extensions without it then causing a problem for you as you continue to do all the other parts of your job. I love your framing, and I love this idea of making sure there is adequate time to actually do this well. I think that's so important.

My recommendation is a new book that I just picked up. It's called *Work It Out: A Mood-Boosting Exercise Guide for People Who Just Want to Lie Down*. It's by Sarah Kurchak, and it is a delightful book. I am that person. I would rather lie down every time than move my body. Absolutely. There are also things about me that make some moving of my body really difficult. The PTSD, for example,

when my heart rate elevates, my brain goes-- We recognize this, this is a panic attack. Then I get super anxious and end up having a panic attack. I have to be really careful about what ways I move my body.

This book is written by someone who is a trainer. They're also artistic. They have dealt with depression, and it is so kind. It is so understanding. It really gets why people might have trouble. It delves into the fitness industry and the way in which we're taught to think about bodies in some really destructive ways. Then it builds you up and says, like, "Let's find some way that you will feel good." Sarah has exercises you can do while lying in bed if you want to. If that is your situation, perhaps you have a disability that means you are in bed a lot. It is just this very very thoughtful, funny, and wise book that really came to me at a moment when I needed it.

[00:43:10] Bonni: Cate Denial, it has been a joy to get to have a synchronous conversation, even though, as I said, I feel like we've been having some asynchronous conversations, at least one-sided on my part, for such a long time. What a joy to talk to you, to have read this book a little earlier than other people might have the opportunity to. Thank you so much for your work, for your generosity and contributions to this community.

[00:43:33] Cate: Thank you so much for having me here. What a wonderful conversation this was.

[00:43:40] Bonni: Thank you once again to Cate Denial for being the guest on today's Teaching in Higher Ed. Today's episode was produced by me, Bonni Stachowiak. It was edited by the ever-talented Andrew Kroeger. Podcast production support was provided by the amazing Sierra Smith. I hope that today's conversations get you thinking more about how to incorporate kindness into your pedagogy. To be kind to yourself, you also might want to consider subscribing to the weekly update from Teaching in Higher Ed. Head over to teachinginhighered.com/subscribe, and you'll receive weekly emails with the most recent episodes, show notes. Thank you so much for being a part of the Teaching in Higher Ed community, and I'll see you next time.

[music]

[00:44:40] [END OF AUDIO]

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