# Transcript: IT Podcast - EP 140 - How Getting Your Degree Is Like Getting In Shape - Julianne Koch and Jessica Galterio\_mixdown

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Speaker #1: Julianne Koch

Speaker #2: Jessica Galterio

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Julianne

Hello and welcome to the IT Audio Series. I'm Julianne Koch and I've been a program mentor in the IT college since 2012.

Jessica

I'm Jessica Galterio and I've been a program mentor in the IT College since 2015. We talk a lot about time management strategies and how to study efficiently and effectively and how to keep yourself motivated when things are going a little bit sideways. Along the same vein today I want to talk about how to finish what you started.

Julianne

You ever discovered a new hobby and decided it's the thing that's going to make your life complete so you go and you purchase all the supplies you could possibly need for that hobby and you dedicate hours and hours of your life to it over a period of weeks and then months and then suddenly you find yourself moving on to the next shiny thing and your spouse is complaining about the boxes upon boxes of unused supplies taking up half the garage or is that just me?

Jessica

No, not just you, for a lot of people when we start something new it's exciting, it's shiny, and it really is easy to dedicate a lot of time and money to it. I recently got into bullet journaling and the first thing I did was buy a ton of stickers and markers and a stencil and a new thing thankfully, I'm using that habit, but it wouldn't be the first time I've done something like that.

Julianne

The piles of office supplies that I purchased for my home office is pretty out of control and I don't use nearly as many of them as I buy. I will admit that too.

Jessica

But it's actually really common. Eventually, the novelty wears off and the thing that used to bring all that joy and excitement. Sometimes it just starts to feel like a chore and with bullet journaling in particular, I have had a little bit of that experience myself. I go in and out of doing that as I should. Especially, it really becomes more like a chore if it's something that's harder to do the further along you get in it. Something like a video game or some crafting thing or really any new thing that just takes up a lot of time and money. Definitely, I see this play out all the time with my students. Students who complete 24, 32, 40 CUs in their first term, somehow find themselves hitting Term 3 and struggling to complete all of their required courses.

Julianne

What happens in Term 3?

Jessica

Well, it's a little bit of burnout. A little bit of it is definitely harder courses and the novelty is just starting to wear off and it becomes harder and harder to dedicate the time that is necessary to keep making consistent progress in the degree program.

I have absolutely seen this with my students too. To be honest it happened to me while I was working on my master's degree. I did most of that degree part-time while I was working full-time and it wasn't a WGU so I had a little bit different structure in terms of how the program was set up, so it was a shorter terms. There was one where ultimately I just didn't register for any courses for that term and I took a breather. I almost didn't go back. I almost didn't finish. But ultimately, I was close enough to the finish line that I had to just push myself to complete it.

Julianne

That's great. But what made you decide to push through?

Jessica

There were quite a few different factors involved. I had a pretty awesome support network, to be honest. That was a big part of it. My family, my friends, they'd often ask me about my progress and honestly, I just didn't want to have to tell them I wasn't going to finish it. I was also the first person in my family to earn a master's degree and I knew that it meant a lot to my mom. My mom, especially she was never able to take that route because she had children. I just decided that I wasn't going to quit. I acknowledged that it was hard and I put my head down and I made a plan and that's actually when I realized that I was a lot closer to finishing than I thought. I laid out every class, I laid out a timeline, and I changed my mindset a little bit instead of thinking is this degree is the shiny thing that I was going to earn or I was going to have that great accomplishment at the end or when I was at the beginning is like, here's this thing I'm taking on. I tried to approach each course that way. Each course was my new shiny. I'm going to learn about this new thing in this course. I'm really excited, I'm trying to motivate myself to get that feeling for each course on an individual level instead.

Julianne

That is such a good way to look at things because we all fall victim to that mindset where a new hobby or a new job or something that we're trying to do becomes difficult. It really starts to stack up in our minds that there is just a lot of cons to this rather than prose. It's really easy to put it to the side so I love that different mindset to look at things. You know what? Here's all I have left, we're going to break it into smaller chunks and just tackle this one chunk at a time and before you know it, there will be no more chunks to tackle. You'll be done.

Jessica

Yeah, I even use this strategy for a ton of things that seem to be overwhelming on the whole. A craft example, I'm a crafty person. When I was making my sister's housewarming present, I decided to crochet her a blanket. I wanted to make sure that it was done the same year that she bought her house. It's a thing. It was a concern. I did the math and I came up with a number of rows that I would have to finish each day in order to finish it within a decent time frame for when she was moving in. That approach made the entire task seem a little less daunting. It was I just have to do five rows a day and then I will have it done in time. I ended up having it done about two weeks after she moved in so it was perfectly on time. She was able to get the decor up and have a place to put the blanket right on that couch when I had it finished for her.

Julianne

That's great. That's wonderful. For those of you who are feeling similar, who can relate, you're feeling a little bit of burnout. Take a minute, take a deep breath, and call your program mentor and talk about what's going on. Together you guys will definitely be able to find a way to focus on your next step. The most important thing is to be honest and to engage with your course instructor, your program mentor, and really give the program a fair chance. I know sometimes that's hard for students to do, but they never are regretful for that initial investment in time and energy. Reaching out to the resources here can really help you finish your degree.

Jessica

Exactly, just find a way to make it engaging.

Julianne

Absolutely. Eventually, you'll push through and you'll finish your degree and imagine how shiny that diploma will be when it's upon your wall. Thank you for listening today.

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