

**STAYING IN LOVE
WITH FINANCIAL AID
EVEN WHEN IT'S
HARD
(AND IT'S USUALLY HARD)**

Helen Faith

University of Wisconsin-Madison



AGENDA

Staying in Love with Financial Aid Even When It's Hard



- A little about me, a little about you
- Why we do what we do
- Current and future aid office challenges
- Acknowledging stress, uncertainty, discouragement
- Digging deep for inspiration and motivation
- Self-care, growth, and community

2023

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

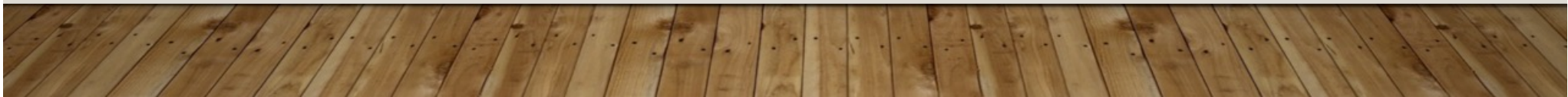


Staying in Love with Financial Aid Even When It's Hard

- Personal background
- Professional experience
- Core values
- What brings you here today?

4

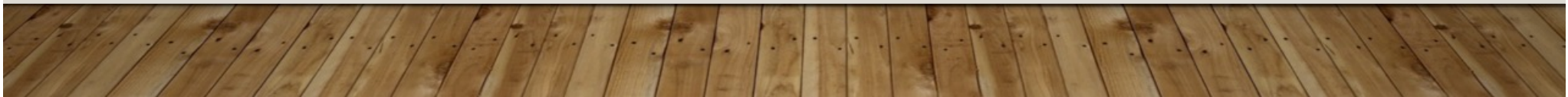
STAYING CONNECTED TO OUR "WHY"



5

WHY DO WE WORK IN FINANCIAL AID?

- Positive impact with ripple effect
- Interesting work—uses the whole brain
- Variety of opportunities and responsibilities
- Unique community of like-minded, collaborative individuals
- More?



6 OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

- FAFSA Simplification
- Loans, loans loans
 - Repayment, SAVE, debt relief, default management, debt management
- Gainful Employment
- Staffing and succession planning



7 EXISTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Position of aid office: inclusion at decision-making table, resources
- Politicization of our work
- Seeming end of HEA reauthorization
 - Replaced by piecemeal, disconnected legislation through the budget process
- Accountability

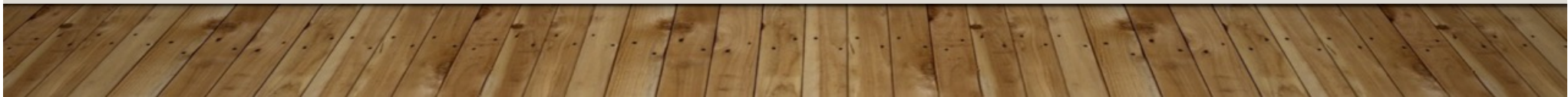
8 STRESS, UNCERTAINTY, DISCOURAGEMENT



- Acknowledging it is important!
- “Feelings are not facts”—but we need to feel them so they’ll pass.
- Uncertainty is a huge stress driver! Routine and predictability are comforting.
- Managed pessimism—set a timer, write down all the worst-case scenarios and solutions you can, then stop when the timer goes off

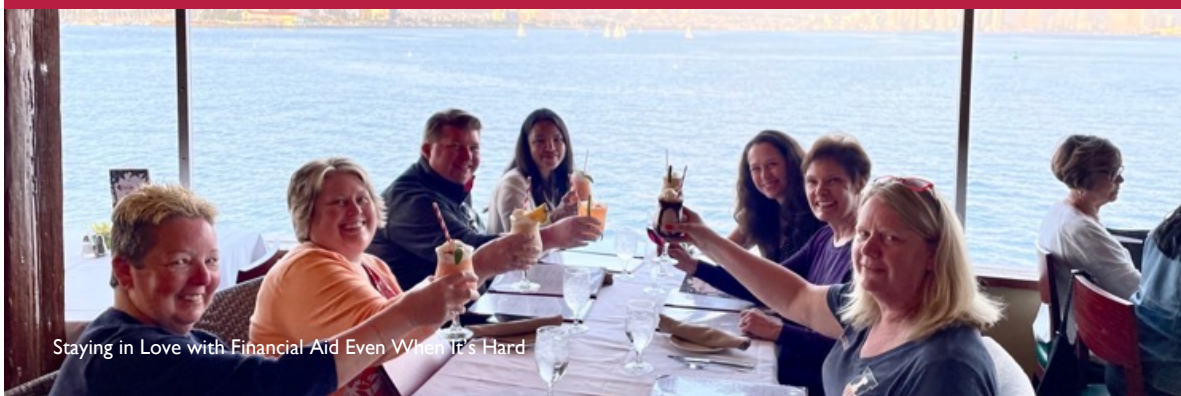
9 DIGGING DEEP: INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

- Happiness research: service, control, accomplishment, connectedness, physical health, nature
- Remember your “WHY”
- The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence
- Using numbers for perspective—quantify it!
 - How much do you love your work? How much do you not like it? How's the balance, and how can you do more to focus on what you love about it?
- Identify the things you want to change. Create a plan for the changes that will improve your happiness and satisfaction.



SELF-CARE, GROWTH, AND COMMUNITY

Investing in yourself



Staying in Love with Financial Aid Even When It's Hard



2023

INTENTIONALITY, MINDFULNESS, GRATITUDE



- What are your practices?
 - Meditation
 - Gratitude practice
 - Physical exercise
 - Grounding activities



BE SELECTIVE WITH YOUR TIME.

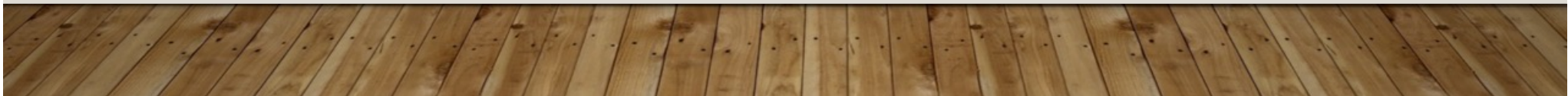


Staying in Love with Financial Aid Even When It's Hard

- Alone time
- Social/community time
- Wellness time
- Focus time

13 VOLUNTEER!

- Work-related or not
- Giving back is the best feeling
- Build community
- Grow—personally & professionally
- Expand your network
- Feel connected and grounded



GROWTH: IMAGINE AND PLAN IT



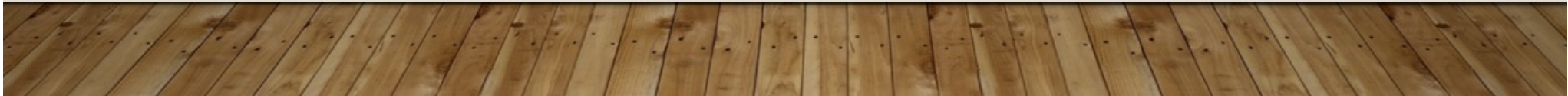
Staying in Love with Financial Aid Even When It's Hard

- Where do you want to be in 3 months?
 - 6 months?
 - 1 year?
 - 3-5 years?
 - Beyond

15

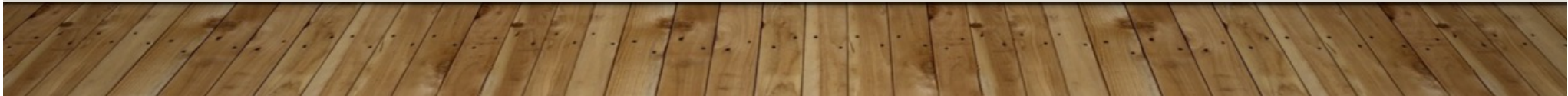
GETTING THERE

- How can you get there?
 - Skills to build
 - Formal education needed
- Set SMART goals
 - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound
- Have an accountability partner
- Track your progress



16 WHAT WILL YOU COMMIT TO?

- Self-Care
- Personal Growth
- Career Development



17 RECOMMENDED READING & LISTENING

- <https://hbr.org/2023/06/how-to-stay-engaged-at-work-without-burning-out>
- https://www.nasfaa.org/off_the_cuff_ep272
 - 9/29/23: Justin and Andy, president and CEO at CUPA-HR discuss concerning employee retention rates for the financial aid profession



THANK YOU!

Additional questions & thoughts?

Reach out anytime—

helen.faih@wisc.edu

LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.

