

**Lindsay Binette** 00:00

Hey everyone, it's Lindsay and Lauren. Welcome to The Wavy Brain Podcast.

**Lauren Ascher** 00:09

where we talk about work life and neurodiversity. We're two friends

**Lindsay Binette** 00:12

and ADHD coaches on a mission to get more people talking about the different ways our

**Lauren Ascher** 00:16

brains work. So we can embrace the good, the bad, and the ugly, and see more of

**Lindsay Binette** 00:21

what our wavy brains can do.

**Lauren Ascher** 00:25

Hi, everybody, it's Lauren and Lindsey here with a very exciting guest. I'm super excited for the guests we have today. His name is Troy Jackson. And I first encountered Troy in a yoga class at Philly power yoga in Philadelphia, because not only is he a clinical social worker and therapist in Philadelphia, he's also a yoga teacher, and just an all around awesome person with a really interesting story and perspective. Unfortunately, this episode cannot be summed up I think, in one line, or you know, can't be like packaged tidally because there's just so much to talk about with Troy. So, you know, forgive us in advance, if we kind of jump from topic to topic, it's, it was really hard for us to pick just one topic to focus on with you, Troy, because you have a lot to say, and we're excited to hear it.

**Troy Jackson** 01:13

Lauren and Lindsay, thank you very much for having me here today. I really appreciate it. I'm looking forward to it. And as you just mentioned, I'm a therapist, philosophy area, yoga instructor jiu jitsu practitioner, basically, what I tried to do is use all my skills, my life experience, where the learned or experiential, to help people find a better happy, healthy life plan. You know, I think therapy is a very powerful tool, if I can create a cool, solid, strong, and helpful alliance with my clients, I've benefited, they've benefited the world benefits. So I'm just here trying to do my part and making the world a better place. I know that sounds kind of lofty, but that's one of my primary purposes.

**Lauren Ascher** 01:49

That's awesome. No, we love it. We love it. And, you know, we think you have such an interesting story in terms of identity, how your identity has developed and changed over time, you know, your life before you became a therapist, and after how neuro divergence fits in in terms of, you know, your understanding of yourself, and also your clients. And we also want to hear about your thoughts on substances and substance use disorder. So you, you right now work in substance use disorder recovery, is that right?

**Troy Jackson** 02:22

Yeah, I do substance use, recovery treatment, I eat those treatment, that I have a private practice where I also do depression, substance use disorder, work, anxiety, failure to launch. At one point in my life, my career worked a lot with emerging adults, I guess you would say anyone from the ages of 18 to 35. But now it's a little bit more older, younger, too. So I'm not really all over the place. But I do a lot of substance use disorder work a lot of depression, anxiety, coaching, sometimes, believe it or not, comes into the therapeutic path. Because believe it or not, I have a lot of people that come and ask me, Hey, I'm just kind of stuck with my career, I'm kind of stuck at work, relationship issues, basically, like I work with couples also, too. So just trying to make that connection with humans in a healthy manner. I think that's been my goal, for a long time based on my experiences in life, trying to turn my path around and use my, I guess you say some of my mistakes, to help someone else make not the same mistakes going forward.

**Lauren Ascher** 03:23

So tell us a little bit about your upbringing and some of those mistakes, if you don't mind.

**Troy Jackson** 03:30

Where do I start? Well, I grew up in an urban environment, a small town outside of Philadelphia called Chester, Pennsylvania. Siblings, of course, parents, my parents were never divorced or separated. I came from, I think, a really beautiful, great home. But I think my environment, outside of the home, were some of the things that were very, very detrimental to I guess, in my formative years, because it's a homeless see, not just a blue collar city, but it was a very poverty stricken city. It's even worse. Now. With that comes a lot of pain, a lot of trauma. So I was forced at an early age to learn how to navigate in an environment where the person who was a very sensitive, quiet, inquisitive, some would term nerdy child whereas I didn't like the normal things that most children like to do. I like to keep to myself, I like to read did not like loud noises did not like loud crowds. So I wasn't very good at being social if I didn't really know you. Plus another thing I was very slight, small and tiny. And I had what you would term is very poor eyesight. So I had very thick glasses and that doesn't go over too well in the hood.

**Troy Jackson** 04:43

So you know, I guess you could say I was bullied at certain points in my life. But as I grew older, I grew bigger. So I went from this little tiny small slight child to a very big large, six, five towards a 50 pounds now, but through that course of growing in which

**Troy Jackson** 05:00

Shurin, I think my way of viewing the world changed because I felt more competent, simply based on statute, believe it or not. Yeah. But yeah, I had, I think there was some ups and downs of my childhood. But I think as far as how my parents raised me, one of the things I always remember about my parents, they both have very limited education is a mother had a third grade education. The father had a third education, my father's sixth grade education from the Deep South. And one of the things that I really love about them was even though they had a limited education, they never ever turned down a book for me to read. They always encouraged me to read, if I said, I was bored, they were like, go to the library, which is one block away from my home. So that made books and reading very accessible to me. And that was something that I really enjoyed at a very young age.

**Lauren Ascher** 05:50

Yeah, so you grew up and tell us a little bit about how things played out, you know, around college age, and, you know, when things

**Troy Jackson** 06:04

really turned definitely, I'll tell you a little bit, they just got arrested. I'll never forget this. I remember the first day I went to high school. But firstly with high school, but father said, how was it? I said that there were so many girls, he goes to me says, x this young man, how was high school only he's talking about his women girls, right? He just walked away from never forget that. So when I went to college, I was much bigger, I had started developing more of a persona that I guess could say was more in my terms, not as frightened of the world that is traumatized by the world. So I became a little bit slightly more outgoing. And, you know, college students tend to drink a lot, right, you know, tend to party a lot, right. And, you know, I found that alcohol and drugs made it easier for my growth and development. And I learned a way of coping in the world, far, far easier than I had ever before. So of course, you know, coming from the historic background, and I have about myself and my personality. You know, I was a perfect candidate with low self esteem, being a victim of some bullying as a child being forced to fight back. I became a perfect candidate for substance use disorder. Like totally, it was a it was a way of me learning how to cope. What were some

**Lindsay Binette** 07:28

of the things that became easier for you, you mentioned like the alcohol and the drugs made

**Troy Jackson** 07:34

women socializing? Yeah. Just joking about that. But yeah, you know, just communicating. Yeah, just simply communicated. It turned the volume down, and it made me see, you know, more relaxed, more ease with myself.

**Lauren Ascher** 07:50

Yeah. Do you think that your low self esteem was connected with your sense of identity, or maybe lack of understanding around how your brain works, you don't have any official diagnosis. But I know you've always felt different,

**Troy Jackson** 08:06

always felt different. I remember one time though, I did talk to a therapist about possible diagnosis by ADHD. And he looked at me, he said, I said, Do you think he's, he looked at me just started laughing? He goes, Are you kidding me? You know, this is much earlier as an adult. And he just said, Yeah, and we just never really talked further about it. Because I had other issues I was handling at that point in time. And it wasn't at that point in time really getting into my way or my life path. Yeah, he was like, what I thought these I thought, once, that's exactly what he was. But you guys, easier words right now, because I had been sober at that point, actually. So I was worried about how to live a more productive life on that plane.

**Lindsay Binette** 08:45

That is interesting, though, that you were sober at that point. And you were, I wonder if you're questioning of wondering if you had ADHD was because being sober allowed you to do a little bit more of that, like honest self discovery. And it made you I wonder if that has anything to do with sort of like thinking about the way your brain works and thinking about how you had felt in the past and your overall sensitivity. Just,

**Troy Jackson** 09:10

I'm glad you brought it up, because I learned once I became sober, that I was impulsive. And I was the type of person that would really try hard to dial things in, you know, on a granular level. So it was one of these kinds of things that hey, I want it I want it now let's do this. Let's do that. But my interest was buried as a child, even as a young adult in now, I just always buried I would get bored very easily. So these are just some of the things that I think to note that something was really different, or neuro different about who I was. But I think my impulsivity, heightened even more once the substance were introduced, right, they're like, you know, the guardrails are off. Yeah. And so it was just like, hey, I want this and I want it now.

**Lindsay Binette** 09:59

You know, Uh, well, it's like every people with you know, and again, I know you are not officially diagnosed but people with ADHD can relate to the guardrails being off and with the impulsivity because we live and feel and just experience life so much more intensely than a neurotypical. And so you add in alcohol and or drugs to that scenario, and you're truly is guardrails are off.

**Troy Jackson** 10:23

Yeah, car rolls off.

**Lauren Ascher** 10:25

Yeah, so not to skip ahead or but you I assume you reached rock bottom at some point. And over the years, yeah, you have come to recognize that, you know, this is also a lot about not just impulsivity, but like dopamine. And, you know, I recently read an article that profiled you called how yoga and exercise helped with addiction recovery, which we'll link to in the show notes, where you talk a lot about, you know, substituting dopamine hits, you know, from substances with dopamine hits from exercise. And I know, that's part of your story. So we just tell us a little bit about how things played out when you got to that rock bottom point, and then clicked out?

**Troy Jackson** 11:06

Well, what I say was, I was probably for a long time in my life functioning as they would call person, addict or alcoholic or substance use, you know, had jobs at one point, you know, maintain relationships to some degree, relatively healthy. But as I got older, because, you know, I got sober later in life, how would you say like, I knew that there were some changes that had to be made on how I was living my life. More than not just jerseys and alcohol. It was a lot of things that had to be tweaked or added to it, it wasn't just about taking things away. It was about adding things to my life. So when we talked about yoga, and again, I'm we're fast forwarding somewhat to this point, you know, yoga was a way for me one to connect with community, yoga was a way for me to find competency with my body, and with my mind, amongst others. Yoga was also a way for me to be believer not popular, because at one point in

my life, I was a bouncer into security work for about 20 years. So I was used to people knowing me, and then hey, hi. So, you know, being in a yoga community, being a yoga teacher was a healthy way of me connecting with people, I guess you could say, somehow, like, stoking and stroking my ego a little bit, you know, to some degree, it gave me a sense of purpose of let's put it this way, it made me feel valid. So I come back from or I go back to this idea of who I was, at one point as a young child as a young adult, as an adult. And now where I'm going to get my validation from, because once you become sober, you kind of lose a lot of your connections, a lot of your peer group, because you're living a total different lifestyle. And thought about that, you know, yeah, and one of the first things I did was in part of my transformation was dive strictly straight to yoga. And what it did was gave me a new sensation in my body that was done, like you said, Lauren Ascher Ascher, a dopamine hits in a totally different way. I felt better connected with people in a much healthier manner. And it just opened up my world to a lot of other options that I never thought of myself and helping others, which eventually led to grad school and other things.

**Lindsay Binette** 13:15

Yeah. I mean, in the beginning, you mentioned this idea of like, oh, this lofty, like this idea of wanting to help others sounds really lofty, but not to Lauren Ascher and I write like, we that's exactly why we left our we sort of made left hand turns out of our careers, because we felt that same desire and purpose and community and helping people through this type of work and community as well. And so I think her and I can both, you know, that definitely resonates with our story, and we can connect with that, for sure.

**Troy Jackson** 13:45

I'm glad I'm here. And I'm glad I'm talking to both of you, since you both feel that way because innately and and truly in my heart, if someone truly I said that jokingly, but I made it but if someone does think helping others is lofty, I'm like, then Scott on my way. Like, you know, Lindsey is waking out Laura's way, let us do our thing. And leave it at that. Because like, I think having a primary purpose is important.

**Lindsay Binette** 14:10

Yeah. And but it's, I think important to call out that to your point on like, if that's not for you then get out of our way. If that's not for for you, that's okay, too, right. Like it's not for everybody, right? Yes. But it's just you know, to be able to realize what makes you tick and feel good. And for you it was yoga was a big part of that for you,

**Lauren Ascher** 14:32

huh? A big part of it. Not everybody makes it into part of their career. Yeah. either. You know, some people reserve it for after work or what, you know, there are other free time.

**Troy Jackson** 14:41

Yeah. And it was it was a total like, because that studio has since closed and change names. So I'm not teaching this at all right now. But you know, still thinking about where my next move is going to be with that. But I was lucky that I laid it somewhere in the instructor who owned the studio, said hey, I think I want to He said it was kind of like an organic thing. So I'll teach you and then I went to other trainings.

And it just morphed into a career for a while. Yeah. So I was at one point I was a bouncer. Right. And another point, I was a yoga teacher to save time, which is kind of like, well,

**Lauren Ascher** 15:17

I love it. I love it. And then how did you decide to go to grad school? And did you feel any trepidation around that? I mean,

**Troy Jackson** 15:25

you guys are you guys are really doing it but it was great. You know, when I look at my life, where we at one point graduate from college, even though you know, I was a heavy party, or heavy drinker at that point, great functioning, to some degree. And then my life's changed the years and years of substance use disorder and things of that nature, I realized that I needed something different, to get back into the workforce in a different way, and needed something different. And I talked to different friends and people that I knew I was going to try this, try this. And one of my friends just said, Hey, like, why don't you just go to graduate school. And it was weird. A close friend of mine, had said that, Mike. And then like, there was a psychiatrist, and a psychologist, they were a couple that I would talk to them and walk by the bar that I worked at all the time at night. And I was still thinking about maybe doing something in my life, they were like, want to go to grad school. Right? So I started getting this kind of what, like, once it kind of like, I put it out into the universe. Yes. You said that. No, but seriously, it just started, I started getting encouragement from these different people. Right. And like, you know, it was a beautiful thing. And my fears were there. That image of who I was back as a child is starting to coming back up again that, you know, a trauma response, oh, I can't do this, I can't do that, you know, I'm shrinking within myself thinking, Oh, this is going to be hard, because I don't write too well. I'm a non traditional student, because I went back to graduate school in my 40s. I'm 60. Now, right? So I had some encouragement from close people. And I just went for Remar accepted me know what they were thinking, and they created a monster. So it was, it was a beautiful thing. It was a very beautiful experience. So it was really just basically me deciding, I guess I need to like, add a little bit more to who I am. On paper. On paper.

**Lindsay Binette** 17:28

I love that you brought up the universe, right? Because, you know, Lauren Ascher, and I talk about this all the time, I'm a big believer in the universe. And sometimes you're afraid to even and I speaking for myself here. Sometimes it's hard to even say what you truly want. Because you don't think you're deserving of it. Or you don't think you can do it. And that becomes a little bit of your identity, right. And sometimes I just forced myself like, I think about how Lauren Ascher and I started this podcast. And there was a point where I was like, I can't start a podcast. I don't know anything about a podcast, like, there's no way I can do this. And then one day, when Lauren and I met each other, we both said to each other, let's start a podcast. And then like, off with the universe, the universe started to do its thing and you know, doors started to open conversation started to happen, we started getting validation. And you know, I just think the universe obviously works in ways to help you if you're listening right to the universe, it helps open your perspective to question parts of your identity and be open to exploring other things. And it sounds like that's what you did there.

**Lauren Ascher** 18:40

It's also like, fake it till you make it. Like if somebody's listening who has some inkling of an idea of something they want to do, but really feels like it'll never happen. They're not good enough. You know, you don't have to believe it yet. But just maybe say it out loud to somebody and start putting it out there. And then it's like the universe kind of responds with encouragement a little bit.

**Troy Jackson** 19:00

Yeah, it's interesting. You hear this often said, as a suggestion to say yes to more things. And sometimes it isn't. Yes to what other people say this yes to what am I saying to myself? Those conversations I have with myself is like, you guys asked me do the podcast. I was like, okay, then I was like, yes. Right? Oh, like Yes. Right. And so like saying yes to more things is a way of putting it out in the universe. And I think also like one of the things I try to help people learn about themselves, including myself. It's okay, if you make a mistake. It's okay. If it doesn't work out. Plan A, there's Plan B, there's Plan C, like I don't know where it came from, in our society, at least the circles that I travel at different points in time, where you're not allowed to make mistakes, not allowed to fail, as we call it.

**Lauren Ascher** 19:51

Yeah, yeah. And where this idea that quote unquote, failing or having a wavy path, you need to look back on that as a negative thing. instead of a positive testament to your resiliency and and like evidence that even if you make a mistake, you'll get through it because look at all the other mistakes you've gotten through. One of the things I

**Troy Jackson** 20:11

do for like mental and physical health is jiu jitsu now to combat martial art. And they have the sense that they try to steal your teachers try to steal in you, especially if you're sparring one on one, or rolling as we call it, you know, there's winning, and there's learning. And I was like, wow, right? You know, it's just like, hey, I'm trying something that doesn't work out. What did I learn from it? So I think as leaders, whether it's our family, whether it's people we come in contact with, instill into people, it's okay to be human, it's okay to make mistakes. Yep. I'm not going to throw you out of the tribe. If you fail, you know, now, yeah, let's just get rid of that word sometimes. Right? You know, like, the strength that it has for so many people.

**Lindsay Binette** 20:55

And there's like, let's talk about those failures more. Because, you know, in this world of social media, and you know, in these like influencer or public personas, you mainly see the, oh, I started a company. And now it got bought by a huge company, and I made a million dollars overnight. And yes, those unicorn stories happen. But usually those aren't the mainstream, right? There's, you know, more often than not, there's a wavy path of how to get there. There's mistakes that you learned from, there's, you know, things along the way that you you took away to get to UT where you are. And, you know, that's part of why we started this is to hear more of those stories.

**Lauren Ascher** 21:38

Yeah. So going back to grad school, I imagine your identity kept changing and evolving, as you you know, work to become a therapist, and you told us a story about your Diversity and Multicultural counseling class. And the moment when you were sitting there, will you share that? Well,

**Troy Jackson 21:57**

I think all of us, I would hope we evolve, we have revolutions, we have evolutions in our lives. And for me, it was never because I was in this class was a diversity class, talk about phenomenal Professor Donna. And, you know, we're talking about identity. Well, a lot of different levels. And I started in this class, because graduate school would social work, it really makes you look at who you are. It really does at least that was my experience. And I was looking at who I was a 40 something year old man. And what was my station in my life now compared to what it was grown up in sesor, Pennsylvania, and as someone marginalize poverty stricken to some degree environment, like when I say powdered sugar, I'd never starve and ever, you know, with asleep without food, it wasn't like that. But it just wasn't a lot of resources abundantly around me. So now, I'm in graduate school at Bryn Mawr, wow, okay. Yeah. I'm a yoga instructor. And at that point, I feel very popular yoga instructor from what people were telling me in Rittenhouse Square, I lived in renounce. My friend group was vastly different than it was growing up from my college days, I was surrounded around a lot of people who don't look like me white, Asian, you name it, which has always been part of my path. But socially, economically, my life was somewhat changing. Ideally was changing. I was meeting new people who had different backgrounds. And I started wondering who am I? Right, who am I? Because, in my mind, right, to some degree, I was still this little black kid. Right? Call it like it is in Chester. Right? That's who I was. But it was like, I'm not anymore. So this class sparked the question this thing of what's my identity now? And I think a lot of people, and this is just my experience. I think a lot of people of color who jump into other areas or arenas where there aren't a lot of people of color, you have the same questions. I think even for women jumping into a field where there's not a lot of women, there's a lot of men, you have these same questions. So I guess anywhere that you feel as though you're somewhat outside the norm of that population, every human being no matter what your racial identity is, or gender that you accept or express. You feel a little bit out of place. Yeah. And that was happening to me, and I'll never forget, when I said, I don't know who I am, and I will actually broke down in class crime hit me like who am I? And a teacher pulled me aside outside after class. He said, Troy, it's okay. If you don't know. I was like, really? She was like, yeah, it's okay. That blew my mind because I was so programmed into thinking I'm a grown adult, man, I'm 14. I'm supposed to know who I am. Yeah. But like, that's not the purpose of this us being stagnant on this planet. Right you know, Our identity is going to change, our perception of ourselves is going to change. And that was a really great moment for me. It wasn't about what you think I am, or how you want to put me in a box. I'm not gonna do with that comes up every once in a while, but what really wasn't about who do I think I am? And do I deserve to be in these places? Yeah. So it was a beautiful thing. And that still happens. You know, it still happens all the time. In different ways, though.

**Lindsay Binette 25:31**

Yeah. And you said, you're in your 40s. When that happened?

**Troy Jackson 25:35**

Yeah, I was in my 40s. When that happened. Yeah, yeah. Much older now. I'm 60. Now.

**Lindsay Binette 25:40**

And do you feel how do you feel like since then, your identity has evolved even more?

**Troy Jackson 25:46**

Wow, that's a good question. Well, the first thing popped in my mind when you said that I feel more grounded, I feel happy. The first thing comes to mind is happy. I don't feel conflicted or feel confused. I still question my identity or where I'm going next. But I'm totally more comfortable with not knowing the answers to everything. Yeah. You know, like, sometimes when we're confused, we don't know the answer. The good old, like, you just take a moment and pause, you know, like waiting is an action to me, sometimes I just have to step back and you'll figure it out. Also, I always say this to myself and others. There's no point in crisis. There's no point of crisis right now. You know, I'm not I'm not harming anyone. And I've heard myself no harm anyone. So it's just a beautiful exploration of where we're going, where we've been, where we're going to end up, you know, so it's in a risk course. But I would say, I'm happy about the, like, my identity right now. Yeah, I was even happy. I think so. Um, I didn't I didn't I just was confused.

**Lauren Ascher 26:51**

Yeah, well, it sounds like what you describe is your identity was very dependent on external factors for lunch, like, and that's how I grew up to like, just defining myself in terms of how other people saw me or who I was in relation to other people. And without a firm sense of internal, like, you know, grounding and who I am independent of anyone else, like, I believe I am. And that as you, you know, grew that within yourself. You know, you didn't need to look outside anymore. And you know, it really changed things.

**Troy Jackson 27:24**

And what's amazing about this conversation, even just now, Lauren, right? I'm thinking like, I'm thinking of the factors that made that kind of like, break down moment occur. But now you just said, wow, she hit the nail on the head. I was so focused on the external.

**Lindsay Binette 27:41**

Yes. Yeah. Right.

**Troy Jackson 27:43**

That even just resonates with this experience. I just share with you guys seek tell when you say yes, great things out there. Say yes. It's like, yeah, I was focusing on the external of Lotro. Yes, yeah. The external and what other people think it was some internal thing Tell us like, let's go home with me.

**Lindsay Binette 28:04**

There focus on on the external is something that resonates so strongly with me, because that's how I you know, as I was climbing my career in this corporate world, that's exactly what I was doing and dry. I love that you brought up the idea of you don't always have to have the answer. You, you can question and you can wonder, that was like one of the best pieces of advice that somebody gave me early on in my career. And that's when I realized, like, oh, Lindsey, your ego. And you're wanting to outwardly project that you have all the answers is sort of getting, I don't know what it was doing at that point. I don't want to say it was like getting in the way per se, but it was sort of, I don't know, probably putting up a barrier of like, I don't know, let

**Lindsay Binette** 28:54

me be real. Yeah, exactly.

**Troy Jackson** 28:57

The word magic word. Authentic, authentic. Yeah. Yeah, exactly. And when you guys were sent as I started thinking about a meme that I saw it, it was something to the effect of when I stopped trying to be interesting, right? I find freedom. Right? And I thought like, yeah, like, just be authentic. Just be me. Yep. Right. I'll have to impress anyone, I'm gonna have to do this. And I was like, Man, I want to live that more. Just being authentic, just being hard to do, because it's a practice like everything else. Right? Because we want to be liked, we want to be adored, we want to be validated. But when I'm just like, trying to, you know, be right size and not too interesting. Things work out a little bit better for me mentally.

**Lauren Ascher** 29:41

Yeah, and I imagine things still come up for you a lot because you don't fit neatly into categories and boxes. And so you probably get a lot of like, wait, what what do you do? Who are you, you know, kind of questions and love. And how do you how do you handle that like and does that happen? With certain and people more than others are in certain settings more than others.

**Troy Jackson** 30:03

I think I think one thing is very proud of it like being a black American and being a large male because I am. And being a therapist, like, there's not many, like black male therapists, I'm just lippy. For real here. There's just not only and maybe I'm in limited a bubble, there's just not. And so when I tell you that, like, they always get this and you're laughing. You mean, like physical therapist? I don't know. I think too, because people put the yoga together. So they think that's a natural threat. So I get that I'm like, no, like, I actually help people with mental concerns, mental health concerns. So that's something else always look at and explore. But I think Lindsay Binette, something you said a lot, I really appreciate that question. It's the idea. I try to live in wonder. Now not only about myself, but about others. I try to live in that. Okay, wandering, like a curiosity about who I am. And that wonder like, Oh, I'm going to be and what's going to happen next. And I think one of the greatest things about my path, I've met some amazing men and women who have been very, very, very supportive. Like we're talking about me, but I gotta be honest, there are so many people who I can't even begin to name everybody. Now in pass. And some of you know who you are, who might listen to this podcast, thank you. Because I wouldn't be here, right now. Without some of these people. You know, we can make all episode I can run down a list because I'm a, I'm a big I'm a big proponent of gratitude. A big proponent of that, like, given Thanks for this do, or just living my life? Insane. Thank you. Yeah, you know, if you guys think I'll flip it, you guys think about it. Think of the people in your life who always wanted the best for you? And how do you repay them by doing the best that you can giving? Well, I like the term is your 100% not theirs than anyone else's. But when I give my 100% all those folks that have helped me along the way? Okay, in the back of panic

**Lindsay Binette** 32:11

for Yeah, love that.

**Lauren Ascher** 32:13

So another question I have is, you know, thinking about listeners out there who maybe are starting to get a new sense of identity, maybe they're questioning their identity, maybe they're feeling totally lost. Maybe they are, you know, turning to substances or looking for external validation to, you know, define themselves or fill themselves up. What would your advice be? Or like, what message would you give to somebody like that?

**Troy Jackson** 32:40

Well, when you start to ask that question that was kind of like racing, my mind was jumping ahead of the question. First thing I started thinking of is like, slow down, you know, take it easy, less judgement of self, more empathy, more compassion, because empathy and compassion, we say these words, but they're actually their actions. You know, we have to act with empathy, we have to act with compassion, and that includes for ourselves. So you know, step back, slow it down, slow down the rush to know the answer is one. We live in a society where Russian is applauded. I don't know why I mean, I'm guilty of it, too. So I think first slow down, think about what's going on. Gather information about who you are, what you want, what you don't want it because sometimes we don't know what we want. Or at least we know, we don't want our lives, which is a very powerful tool. And then also put out a universe like we talked about earlier, talk to people you trust, use your resources, doesn't have to be a professional, it could be a friend, a family member, a partner, husband, wife, anyone a neighbor, talk to your resources, and, and so a little bit of vulnerability about, hey, I have something I'm struggling with, you know, everybody, usually, usually we all most of us, like helping others. So when we think oh, no one wants to help me. No, it's nothing. Most people enjoy helping others sometimes. You know, it makes us feel bad. It makes us feel important. It gives us purpose, even if we don't know what our purpose is. So I would say slow down, reevaluate, and put it out in the universe, talk to people.

**Lindsay Binette** 34:17

I love that you bring up the idea of slowing down alongside obviously the theme that we've talked about this whole episode of your identity, because you're right, we do live in this world where it's like, I have to do this by 20. I have to do this by 30. I have to do this by 40. And it's like, where did that come from? Like why? Yep, says we have to do what by when, like, you know, you're in grad school in your 40s. And now you have something different in your 60s and like that is a beautiful, beautiful thing that you're just allowing yourself. You're giving yourself the self compassion that you deserve to enjoy your life. Allow yourself to evolve and shift and go along with the things that make you happy and that is a wonderful, beautiful thing and you know I'm about 10 years too late on this book, but I'm reading Brene Browns Daring Greatly right now. Okay. Have you read it? Or

**Troy Jackson** 35:08

read part of it? I buy my favorite book by her is the gift of imperfection.

**Lindsay Binette** 35:14

Yeah, yeah,

**Troy Jackson** 35:15

I have learned earlier works. That's my her earlier works before Brene. Brown became Brene. Brown.

**Lindsay Binette** 35:21

But so your the topic of vulnerability is so on my mind right now, because I'm reading that book. And I'm so glad you brought that up as an important thing to consider as well, like, be vulnerable to ask a question like, oh, you know, ask, I learned I remember this, actually, in our barre, one of our very first Atka classes, we went around the TV screen, because we're on Zoom. And they asked us to share what we all did. And I remember when Lauren shared that she was studying to become a licensed mental health practitioner. I immediately dmged because I was like, Oh, I'm so interested in this. Like, I want to know more, because I'm interested in maybe pursuing that path should I want to go that path. And, you know, remains to be seen if I go down that path, but like, like asking somebody that, you know, putting yourself out there asking the questions being vulnerable, you never know where that can take you. And it's just so important to think about,

**Troy Jackson** 36:17

instead of us when you were speaking about that, I was thinking about one of the things that I struggle with not as much anymore, but I have the practice is really simply asking for help. Just really, you know, it's part of being vulnerable, but said, hey, you know what, I'm feeling like, I need your help with this. You know, like, I think that's a challenge for a lot of people just simply be willing to ask for help and to receive the help. deflation of the ego not know that, I don't know everything, I need help. So that's been a great tool for me, when I get a little bit confused. I be willing to ask for help and to be helped. So

**Lindsay Binette** 37:00

people with ADHD, especially we talked about this a couple episodes ago, we especially for some reason think that we can like handle it all ourselves.

**Lauren Ascher** 37:08

Well, that's just been the MO I think, for so many people is like, okay, something is not quite right with me. I'm just gonna handle it myself and work twice as hard and make it happen. Because What other choice do I have? You know?

**Troy Jackson** 37:20

Yeah. And then I think to like, where do we learn that from? Yeah, who told us that it's weak to ask for help, that I have to be so self reliant? No, I'm gonna do it on my own. You know, teamwork, good for hurt anybody. It's a good thing. It's a good thing. You know, connect with that tribe. As I like to say all the time, you know, those people that are in your circle of trust I ever right? Find your people, right? It's a good thing, at least this way works for me.

**Lauren Ascher** 37:48

Well, and especially if you're reinventing yourself like that, that's a scary thing. And I feel like you need really special people in your tribe, who can support that and nurture that and be open to it.

**Troy Jackson** 38:01

And Lauren, when you mentioned the words, reinventing yourself, I think people sometimes confuse, and maybe I'm wrong, reinventing myself like as if I'm completely lost. No, not completely lost, I'm still functioning well in the world. Right, and a lot of different areas. But there's, there's something that's a little off, I always joke and go. There's a few problems in the kingdom, but it's just and I'm still the king. But there's a few problems. Right, but I'm still, in my own little world. My kingdom is this little things going on, I got a handle on or get help with. So yeah, it's like, just because I've reinvented myself doesn't mean I'm completely lost, or inept at any other things that I need to do.

**Lindsay Binette** 38:42

It's such a good distinction, because I feel like some people might think, oh, gosh, I gotta start over, I have to, I'm not happy with where I am, I need to completely reinvent and go, like, completely changed my identity. Whereas it might just need to be a couple of tweaks that have something that might make you feel better about your your path, it doesn't have to be this big, like, I'm going to change careers. Now. It could be like, oh, I need to have more creativity in my life. So I'm going to prioritize like doing creative stuff on the weekends or whatever that might be.

**Troy Jackson** 39:15

I always share with clients and certain clients, I say, Look, you don't have to reinvent the wheel, just make the wheel spin a little bit better, right, you don't have to just like make a spin a little bit better, really up again, you don't have to reinvent it, just make it spin a little bit better. There's a lot of things to tweak, just make the wheel spin a little bit better. That's a good point all the way going and looking at it like this make a spin a little bit better, right or roll up there. However you want to turn it.

**Lauren Ascher** 39:40

Yeah. So final question before we share with people where to find you and learn more about you. I imagine so Lindsay Binette and I always had the gall to ask this question in every episode of our podcast and we have forgotten up until now, but we're gonna bring it in. And now we're going to ask it in every episode of the podcast and you're ready for this question. So we believe that everyone, but especially people who may be neurodivergent have something that they are really, really, really good at not just a little good at, like really good at a super strength. And that you probably know what that is and have known your whole life. Like, I'm guessing there's something you've always been super good at. What is that? And I think we can also guess at it just listening to you speak and listening. You talk about the work you do. But I'm curious, you know, as a little kid getting bullied and having low self esteem did part of you always also know you? You were really good at some things?

**Troy Jackson** 40:37

Yeah. It's kind of where it I'm a good protector, right? Like, that's one thing. Like, I don't know what it is. Even as a very young age, I remember once seeing a young man, from New Kid to the neighborhood, being jumped by these other guys from a different neighborhood. And I barely knew this kid. And I was one of the smallest kids in my neighborhood. And I remember trying to go help this kid. And I remember other people holding me back going, Troy, you're going to get hurt. Right? And I never forget that. And I think when I look at my life, I've always wanted to be or try to be a good protector. Of course. I'm not always good at it. Because sometimes I go sideways in my own life, but I think trying to make sure people are safe or feel safe or comfortable, has been one of the things that I've been good at,

consistently at different points of time of my life. Maybe too much of a protector sometimes right, like, like stifling someone else's own growth or self determination. But I think that's one of the things I think I've always been good at is trying to be a protector of quality. Yeah, time will tell, right? Yeah. Because I'm a big believer to like, It ain't over till it's over. You know. Um, so? Yeah, that's, no, that's a question I'm gonna sit with. What am I really good at? What happened to that? And I, you know, if I kind of get a little pushback on that, right, like, you guys asked my question, I gave you an answer. So now I'm like, Well, what this whole bunch of other things I'm good at?

**Lauren Ascher** 42:15

Oh, yeah. I'm actually shocked that you have not considered this question before because of the work you do. I imagine you're asking your clients these that kind of strength based question all the time.

**Troy Jackson** 42:27

Yeah. Yeah. It's weird. I could say like, I'm humorous, but everyone thinks they're humorous. Right, you know, like, or, or I think it's a really good question. It's a really good question. Like, what am I really good at? Throughout my life?

**Lindsay Binette** 42:42

Yeah. And I was gonna say, like, Do you believe that that also evolves? Is that also something that's evolving? Obviously, yes. Yeah, there's obviously like a performance good at right. But then there's also like a character good at that protector feels like a character strength.

**Troy Jackson** 42:59

I don't have to get into too many details. But I just noticed that when, in certain points in my life, when I was in somewhat dangerous situations, I seem to get calmer than excited when someone else is involved. I'm a little reckless when it comes to me. You know, evidently, right, based on my history of my past, but when it came to taking care of someone else, or pain or someone else, I tend to get more focused. I get more focused.

**Lauren Ascher** 43:29

Great. Well, we could keep talking for hours. Anything else?

**Lindsay Binette** 43:34

The only thing I want to know or see are these big glasses that you talk about? Because anybody has worn glasses since I was four years old to correct my lazy eye. I can relate to being bullied for my glasses, because when I was little they like made my eyes huge. And yes,

**Troy Jackson** 43:52

yeah. So you're farsighted?

**Lindsay Binette** 43:55

Yes. Yes. And music canteen? Yeah. Yeah.

**Troy Jackson** 43:59

I'm there. So I think what's really interesting is that, yeah, you know, back in the day, those high index, I can have the frame and yeah, but now they got the context. It's interesting. I wear my glasses. Now. They make them much better than they used to 20 3040 years ago, because I like I think I started wearing glasses and like, six years old. Yeah, I was four. I think I was like six years old, right. And like, so. I think that was a really transformation for me too, as a person not wearing glasses anymore.

**Lindsay Binette** 44:30

It's so funny to see that my glasses have become so much of my adult identity, like so much because I used to always wear contacts and now I wear glasses. I also have a really good friend that works at Warby Parker and that helped to sponsor this podcast.

**Troy Jackson** 44:49

Are you go, that's great. That'd be nice. Talking about it. Yeah, but

**Lindsay Binette** 44:53

very, it's very much a part of my identity now and I kind of didn't really think about that. I'm glad you brought that up. You had to go Get through us.

**Lauren Ascher** 45:00

Please share a photo if you have one of yourself as a young, like small kid with big glasses. Put that on social media.

**Troy Jackson** 45:10

I have whatsoever. I have this one up like that is not you. I have this one where I'm like sitting there with it desperately, my arms crossed. i The joke is like training to be a therapist at a young age is I look all serious, right? I gotta find out.

**Troy Jackson** 45:26

What's right, where can people learn more about you find you online? Well, I guess, you know, I'm a therapist. So I'm on psychology today. I'm on LinkedIn. I'm very old school. So I'm not on LinkedIn every day on my like that. I have a Twitter account. I'm on Instagram a lot more than anything. But as far as like, you know, the professional part of me more is psychology today. And you can see some like, Well, my ideas are some of them on my fun Instagram account, like the post positive stuff. But yeah, so Google. Yeah, so they can find you googling Troy Jackson on psychology today. And what's your Instagram name? We'll link to it. Loving Life, Troy.

**Troy Jackson** 46:08

Because I truly love life. And I always tell people if you want to find me, just call I am not a female person.

**Troy Jackson** 46:18

Does he call me leave a message? I like I like the game. I think I told you guys, email. I mean, just call me. I'm just like call or text or something. Just call.

**Lindsay Binette** 46:32

Troy. This was so fun. Thank you for being so open and vulnerable role.

**Troy Jackson** 46:36

Yeah, I appreciate it. You guys asked me and I was like, hey, why not? Let's go for it. Right. You know, you have you guys have a beautiful thing here gone. So it's going to help people and I hope I can contribute something to help somebody.

**Lauren Ascher** 46:46

Thank you.

**Troy Jackson** 46:48

All right, thank you.

**Lindsay Binette** 46:54

Tune in every Tuesday for a new full length episode of the wavy brain podcast to hear from people managing neurodiversity in their work and lights.

**Lauren Ascher** 47:02

And then tune in every Thursday for a mini episode with tips for managing some of the twists and turns that ADHD and other know