

UnShaming AuDHD Transcript Document

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(Huge thanks to Mattia Mauree, host of the AuDHD Flourishing Podcast, for having the idea to put transcripts in one big document for accessible searching purposes!)

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UnShaming AuDHD Transcripts

001: Allow Me To Introduce Myself

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Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here. You have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello, hello, everyone, and welcome to the very first episode of UnShaming AuDHD. You might have heard my name in the intro, but just in case you missed it, I am Jes and my pronouns are she they, it's fun, you get to pick. I am currently a life coach for other late accepted and or late realized autistic and ADHD adults with CPTSD who are interested in cycle breaking and change making and all the fun stuff that comes with that. And I am also an auDHDer with CPTSD myself. I also have a number of other co occurring conditions, I have hEDS, dyscalculia, hyperlexia, aphantasia, a whole smorgasbord. I mostly work with auDHDers who have either been in therapy or in just general personal development spaces for a few years. But who feel like the challenges that they face as auDHDers specifically, are never quite fully addressed or understood. I wanted to start this podcast so that I can have a place where I could talk about more like nuanced and detailed topics and also share more about my own personal experiences in a bit of a cozier and shall we say Freer space, then social media. I have been wanting to do this for forever. Actually, a few days ago, I found an old planner, and realize that I have been like writing down ideas and notes for a podcast for about a year and a half. And I'm finally deciding to just say screw it and starting, even though I don't quite feel ready. But I'm always telling my clients that like, if you're always waiting until you feel ready, you're never gonna do anything. So you might as well just start and yeah, I'm trying to lead by example here. Yeah, so I've had a social media presence for a couple of years now. But what I've realized from that is that there's really only so much that I can cover in like a one minute Tiktok or 10, slide, Instagram carousel or things like that. So I'm hoping that I'll be able to provide some more in depth content on the podcast that will also be accessible for folks who might not be in a place where they can afford my paid services. And in addition to wanting to talk about more detailed and nuanced things, I also wanted to add to my repertoire of free resources for the adult auDHD community. Plus, I wanted to be able to provide a platform for other folks who might want to come on and tell their stories, and showcase some of the amazing, insightful and often hilarious conversations that I have with other autistic and ADHD folks. So all that said, I would like to use this first episode to share a bit more about my backstory, and some of the things that I have been through that led me to be the person and the coach that I am today. So before I dive into my personal story, I do

want to preface it really quickly by saying that if you're someone who is either currently working with me, or wants to work with me in the future, I don't share my story to garner sympathy or to make you feel like you can't talk about certain things with me because of my personal trauma. Please rest assured, rest assured that I'm very careful with what I share. So please don't feel like you're going to trigger me or anything like that. If you bring something up, I share more so as a way to just normalize having been through some dark shit, and to demonstrate that it is in fact possible. Despite whatever negative life experiences you might have that have made you feel like nothing is worth it, to find that happiness again, and to let go of any shame that you might have picked up along the way. This is also definitely not my whole story. I could probably talk for hours and hours and hours my entire life story. This is just the parts that I've probably just well enough in therapy and with friends to be able to talk about publicly, and the parts that I could sort of fit into the podcast and make the make sense. I've been through way more than I'm going to talk about here. But this episode should give you a pretty good sort of nutshell version of all the Infinite Jes lore that I could tell you about, and hopefully will tell you about as this podcast goes on. I also want to give a content warning, I will be talking about emotional abuse. And there will also be brief mentions of childhood sexual assault and suicide. It's always really hard to pick sort of like a point where my story began, so to speak, because I mean, technically my story started from the day that I was born because I was born autistic and ADHD, right. But just for the sake of time and the podcast, I am going to start my story today, I guess at the end of high school, sort of when I was about to go to college, because that is sort of when things in my life started going undeniably right, if that makes sense. It's when the bumps in the road began, I guess you could say. So anyway, in high school, I was very much the High Achiever type, I was always getting straight A's, and I was on honor roll. And when I was a senior, I actually had plans to go to college and become a high school physics teacher. But yes, if you have autism and ADHD, how did you do so well in school? Well, I have an answer for you. And it is that I was highly interested in school, I have always just had a genuine love for learning. And so despite having an ADHD squirrel brain, surprise, some of us do actually do very, very well in school, which is part of why I went undiagnosed for the first like 30 years of my life. But I digress. So I graduated from high school. And I was super excited to go to college, because I had all these ideas of what it would be, and how great it was going to be how much fun it would be to be independent and all of those things. And I arrived on campus and very quickly realized just how sort of underprepared I was for living independently and for just being in college overall. And in fact, the first my first day on campus, was filled with so much anxiety about just living independently for the first time having to figure out my schedule, making my own decisions and things like that, that on the first night actually woke up in the middle of the night suddenly, and just like got sick all over my dorm room. We just something that has had never happened to me before. And it actually hasn't happened since. But that was sort of an indicator that like, oh, wow, something's wrong here. I tried to kind of soldier on. But I also at the time did not realize that I had dyscalculia and all of the math that I would have had to do for my classes, especially like the calculus type math, just so quickly became overwhelming. I think I made it to made it through like one like literally day one of calculus where he went over the syllabus and did maybe like 10 minutes of teaching us math. And I was literally like, I cannot freakin do this. And so I decided to drop out after only a few days of college to pursue a career in baking and pastry arts and said, I finished out the semester. And then I worked in some various bakeries

and things like that. Until a year and a half later, I started at the Culinary Institute of America, which I'll be referring to as the CIA not to be confused with the Central Intelligence Agency. I have never and probably will never work for the federal government. My time at the CIA was overall a pretty good experience. I did learn a lot there. And I made some friends that I still talk to. Well, actually, I haven't talked to them in a while, but I could reach out to them today if I wanted to. But when I was there, I also faced a lot of bullying

both for by chefs and incidentally from my roommate. I remember there was one point in particular and one of my first classes it was like intro to baking. And I like I had accidentally grabbed a container of unsweetened chocolate when the recipe had called for bitters. eat chocolate. And I remember my chef coming over to my table. And I think I grabbed it just because you know, ADHD, I wasn't fully paying attention. I was nervous whenever she comes over to my table. And it's like, hey, you know that you grabbed unsweetened chocolate and not the right kind of chocolate. And I looked at it and immediately realized what I had done. And I was like, Oh, I was about to explain, like, Oh, my bad, I accidentally grabbed it. But my chef was on a little bit of a power trip. And she thought that I had, like, grabbed the unsweetened chocolate on purpose. And she was like, Do you know what, what this tastes like? Do you know what this is going to do to your recipe? And I again, tried to tell her like, oh, yeah, I know, this isn't good. I'm just gonna go grab the other piece of chocolate. She interrupts me again, and is basically, she basically tried to get me to eat it. But this one chef in particular, when she would get mad, she would like smile, and laugh. And it would be like, just very confusing, especially for me as an autistic person, right? Like, how am I supposed to tell that you're mad if you're actually smiling? And she basically she was like, Do you want to try it and see what happens? And so I laugh because I thought she was kidding. I was like, oh, no, Thanks, Chef. Like, I already learned that lesson. When I was a kid, I don't really want to eat this gross, unsweetened chocolate. Like I don't know if you've ever tried it, but it's not. It's really not good. It's basically like eating coffee grounds, essentially. And she took my like, No, thank you, I don't want to eat that gross thing as just like complete insubordination. She like picks up the big container of chocolate from my bench and like, picks it up and slams it on my table. And then walks up literally to the front of the class and starts yelling at all of us collectively, about how we need to learn how to listen, and you can't be disrespectful. Or when a chef tells you to do something, you need to shut up and do it. And you Yeah, that that was just kind of an example of the treatment that I experienced from chefs at CIA as an undiagnosed ADHD, er, that very much became a core memory, and took me a long, long time to be able to think about that, and not totally blame myself for that situation, realize that actually, it was the chef who was being ridiculous. And of course, I'm not going to eat unsweetened chocolate, because it's gross. And meanwhile, so while I was having to, you know, drop out of school change careers deal with all of this sort of treatment from my chefs at school, I was also in an emotionally abusive relationship around this time as well, from the age of 16, to 21, very formative years. I don't think any other trauma in my life dulled my shine quite as much as being in that relationship dead. Because for five years, I was with someone who tried to control literally every single aspect of my life, he wouldn't let me hang out with anyone without his permission. He was always accusing me of like cheating on him. And he would threaten me not with breaking up, but with basically killing himself. If I ever did something that he didn't, quote, unquote, approve of. In

addition to his straight up emotional and verbal abuse, a lot of the fights that we would get into would also be related to my then undiagnosed autism and ADHD. So one of the things that we would fight about is that I have never been really, really good at being able to verbalize my feelings. Like I don't really say, I love you out loud a whole lot. And like, I remember he would write me these like, really, really long, seemingly heartfelt, like paragraphs about like, how very much he loved me and how he felt this way. And that way it all this stuff. And I would just respond with like, Oh, thanks. I love you too. Because I don't I don't talk about my feelings that well, because I'm autistic. That's kind of just how it manifests for me. And he would get so like upset and resentful because he wrote, like, all these things that I just like, didn't really reciprocate. Another fight we would have very often is that so one, I don't really verbalize my feelings a lot. And to when it's late at night, when I'm tired. I don't really verbalize anything a lot. And he would always insist on having like a good night call every night, which like, Okay, fine. Sure. Yeah, let's say good night. That's, you know, that's one thing. But he would routinely and I mean, like every single day, he would wait until after like 10pm to call me despite me, like countless times asking him to please try and call me before nine because I get too tired and I just like don't have anything to say of course at the time again, I was undiagnosed and didn't really realize that what I was experiencing is called a verbal shutdown. When like when I'm tired literally like making words it makes it makes the Words feel like feel like thick, almost like molasses coming out of my mouth. And it's just really, really hard to talk at that time. It's not just because I'm being grumpy, or because I don't want to, or I'm giving you the silent treatment, it's literally because I'm tired and my mouth cannot make the mouth words happen. So we would fight about that a lot. And then I also remember this one time, at CIA, incidentally, I was really excited because we had gotten to, we sort of took the day off on in bakeshop, that week, and like deeply into the whole, the whole classroom. So we like reorganize, things, cleaned everything. And I was super excited, because I had gotten to alphabetize, the, like the spice cupboard. So I put them all in like alphabetical order, they looked really neat and tidy. And I was so excited about it. And I was telling my boyfriend, his name was Michael was telling him about it. And he started like getting on my case about how I needed to stop pretending that I have OCD. And no one gets us excited about organizing and OCD is a real thing. And you shouldn't, you know, pretend to be so excited about this stuff, like who the hell do you think you are. So, of course, that then, you know, gave me a lot of shame about my love for organizing. And I subsequently, you know, shut the fuck about that part of myself too, for a really long time. Just to kind of give you an example of some of the things that I would go through in that relationship. And now, I'm not saying that this is true for all victims of abuse by any means. But I know that for me, I stayed with him for way, way longer than I would have, if I had half of the self respect and self love that I do today. I really just blew past red flag after red flag. And my altruism had me believing that if I just held on for a little bit longer, just loved him a little bit harder, that everything would change. And it wasn't until I went back and read my journals from a few years previously. And I saw that I was complaining about literally the same exact thing for years, like I read back and realize that he had been doing like the the phone call thing. He had been doing that for literally three years straight. And that was when I finally realized like, oh, actually, he's not going to change. I've literally been trying to change him for years. And it's not going to happen. And so I finally realized that my only option, despite how painful it was at the time, was to leave him and never looked back. I'm very much still unpacking all of the damage that was

done during that relationship in therapy to this day. But I'm also really, really grateful for everything that I did learn during that relationship as horrible and gut wrenching as it was at the time. Because if I hadn't been through that if I hadn't, you know, quote, unquote, put myself through that I would not be as great of a coach as I am today. I would not be engaged to my incredible fiancé, because I would not have learned the tools and skills to help someone else and the ways that I've been able to help them heal from their own tumultuous relationships. And I definitely would not have been catapulted into a decade long journey of practicing and embodying radical self love, and learn how to help others love themselves the same way that I've learned how to love me. So yeah, that said, so I wound up breaking up with Michael about a year into culinary school. So the first year I was there, I was with him. And then the second year

is when I was kind of really figuring out like how to be a person outside of that, that sort of relationship. So that was also when I was realizing that I was bisexual, and I was kind of exploring that part of myself. And then my second year at CA is when I got bullied by my roommate, incidentally, who she was very religious. And she wasn't a huge fan of the way that I was exploring my sexuality because it involves me dating, you know, multiple people at once. And even though the people that I was dating, like everyone knew about it, everything was consensual. She just, you know, decided she didn't like it. And so she literally gave me the silent treatment for a few weeks and I honestly didn't even know what it was about until finally like I broke down and cried and like begged her to tell me and I finally you know, found out what was going on. So that was fun. She actually did reach out a few years ago, um, she messaged me on Facebook and acknowledged you know what she had done and she apologized for that and I really appreciated that I still you know, we were still very good friends and you know, I still love her to this day. And I appreciate that she apologized. But yeah, so that was my experience at CAA. And then after I graduated from there, I actually couldn't find a job for a really long time. Again, I started getting really, really frustrated, really ashamed of myself, like, Okay, I just, you know, spent all this money getting this degree in baking. And now I can't work anywhere, you know, what gives? Finally, a year and a half later, I got a call back from a bakery that I had given my resume to, like, months and months prior, like, I'd even forgotten that I gave them my resume. Basically, what up, I did wind up getting a job. But it was three shifts, of course, because it's baking. And so I spent most of my 20s doing that, and pretty much had like, no life, outside of work, just because of the schedule and the physically demanding nature of the job. And for a long time, I also, I did a lot of shaming of myself, because I gave up a so called, you know, stable job of being a high school teacher, for just like making cupcakes. But in hindsight, you know, now that I can look back and see the bigger picture, I know that I was actually protecting myself from burning out sooner than I did. My intuition, my gut, knew that being a teach physics teacher just wasn't for me. And I'm really glad I listened. Even though you know, the the following years were very difficult. Just because I was able to learn so much about myself while I was working at the bakery that I might not have had time for if I had a bunch of like students to worry about and papers to grade and things like that. And it also allowed me to really have a lot of fun and actually be creative at my job for a few years. While I was learning to learn how to be myself as an adult, basically, outside of outside of an abusive frickin relationship. Like I mentioned, I also spent most of my 20s alone, I spent most of my time doing, you know, only things that made me happy. And I even, you know, started unmasking a little bit,

even though I didn't really realize that that's what I was doing at the time. But sometimes, of course, the loneliness would really, really get to me. And I would have what I now know or meltdowns, but I used to refer to them as so called panic attacks back in the day where I would just be consumed with this like, overall just like sadness, like deep despair. And I would just like sit on the floor and cry for like one to two hours saying just the cruelest worst things to myself the entire time. This is what I now understand, is a an internalized meltdown. But back then, I just thought they were panic attacks, I would just have like a mental breakdown every now and then. And I would just like, pick myself up, dust myself off and pretend it never happened. So after a few years of working at the bakery, I actually got a little bit tired of waking up early all the time, all the physical labor and things like that, that goes with being a baker. Even though I love baking, it's still definitely one of my favorite special interests. And just like the sensory aspect of it is the freakin bomb. But anyway, after a few years at the bakery, I decided to go back to school once again, this time to become a therapist. And so I started school again, with plans to get my bachelor's in psychology this time. But I was in my mid 20s By this point, and I was definitely still struggling one as an undiagnosed ADHD er. And I also still have a lot of like those overachiever and perfectionistic habits that I brought with me from, you know, my elementary and high school career and I was literally always overworking myself, I would totally just beat myself up for getting less than like an A on anything. But overall, I did have a much better time in college as a so called non traditional student in my mid 20s. And I actually made a lot of friends the second time around, particularly folks in pride club and in our interfaith group. So I did have a little bit of a better time. The second time I went to school, but it was still definitely a little bit of a struggle as an undiagnosed ADHD or so after getting my after getting my bachelor's in psychology, I had planned to then go to graduate school for social work to become a licensed clinical social worker and be a counselor. That way but There was one small problem with my plan. Because you see, I graduated with my psychology degree in December of 2019. And I was planning to start grad school in the fall of 2020. But in March of that year, my life as well as so many of our lives, came to a total screeching halt with the COVID pandemic. And that was the start of my burnout that I am still recovering from. To this day, I tried to, you know, soldier on through the pandemic, I was telling myself, you know, like all of us, like, Oh, this is just temporary, just going to be a few weeks, and then we'll go back to it. Then a few weeks turned into a few months. And I was also unemployed at that time, because the bakery, you know, shut down, we weren't, we weren't able to, we were able to run back in the early days of the pandemic. And also, my anxiety was so high about COVID That I don't think I would have been able to work at the bakery anyway, because I would have been having just straight panic attacks every day. And so being unemployed during that time, and you know, having all the momentum that I've gained from, you know, living on basically being in survival mode for, you know, 27 years living off, fight or flight that goes away, and I basically lost all my motivation lost all my energy, quickly became very depressed and got thoroughly, thoroughly burned out for the first time for like an extended period. Meanwhile, my partner who is now my fiancée, was working in a nursing home at that time, so I was also dealing with my own shit and supporting them through their own version of just pandemic hell. After a few months of that, though, I decided that I basically needed to get back to work, quote, for my mental health, and I got a job as a teacher's aide in an autism classroom. Ironically, I was still undiagnosed at the time. And that month was honestly one of the worst job experiences that I've ever had. A quick note, I do not

blame the teacher that I worked with, nor any of the students that I worked with, for what happened there. I blame the administration. And above all, the sad excuse for a public education system that we have in America that grossly misunderstands and stigmatizes autistic ADHD, and neurodivergent. Children as a whole. That said, going into this job, I had hardly any training at all, it was like, two days of just like a bunch of people doing different talks, and like, kind of teaching us about autism, but not really because it was from a deficit, and like ABA sort of lens.

And I really just didn't know what to do, because there was hardly any training and like, I didn't get a lot of instruction from the teacher either during the day, because she just straight up like, didn't have time to support both me and all of her students, which fair. Plus it was in the fall was the fall 2020 Yeah, fall fall 2020, which means it was during COVID Still, and all of the restrictions just made it so much more challenging for the students and the teachers like we couldn't have. We couldn't have like a collective, you know, class time where like, all the kids would sit together in a group like it was every kid had to be in their own individual, you know, Cubby separate from one another, we were having to try and stay six feet up. It was it was it was so freakin hard, you guys. And, you know, looking back, of course, now I can see all of the the problematic ways that they would talk about autism as well, you know, trying to train the kids to behave more like neurotypical children, instead of just embracing their, you know, beautifully autistic brains and just helping them work in the way that they wanted to work instead of the way that the school thought that they should work. And within the first week of that job, I actually experienced my actual worst nightmare like this was one of the things where when I started that job, it was the one thing that I was like, I really hope this doesn't happen. And if it does happen, like I don't know what I'm gonna do, I'm so scared. Because a student decided that he suddenly just needed to yank all the hair out of my head. He like chase me and he just grabbed hold me got his little fists right in there. And it was really, really scary. Luckily, he didn't actually hurt me Because a few days ago, I had actually voiced the spirit of the teacher. And she let me know what to do in that situation, which is basically just like grab the students hands and push them like towards your head so that they can't actually rip any hair out of your head. Because Fun fact, my mom was also a teacher's aide, she did it for like, I don't know, 10 years when I was a kid. And that happened her one time. And so that just like stuck in my brain. Anyway, luckily, I was I knew what to do. And I was able to call for help, and you know, the situation was resolved. However, once that student sort of got a taste of that, he literally wouldn't leave me alone, to the point where I couldn't even be in the same room as him without him trying to do it again. Luckily, that teacher did have two different classrooms. So I would just have to be in the other room, but the scheduling and just trying to navigate that situation was absolutely just not fun to deal with. Also, it didn't like being threatened with having my hair ripped out every single day. Again, I do not blame that child at all. Of course, he was just a kid. And you know, I can only imagine how satisfying something like that might feel, especially to an autistic kid, like, I get it totally. But it was not fun for me. And so shortly after that, I left that job and went back to my path to become a therapist. I got a job at a factory shortly after that working 12 hour shifts in a medical plastics factory. Very, very boring. Work. Paid pretty decently. But it was it was so boring that I actually I had to leave that one, too. After a few months. And I went back to the bakery, I until it was finally time for me to start grad school. And then at the so by this time, it was like the end of summer

2021. And I was poised once again, to have a stable and so called professional career. And I planned to make a lot of changes from within the mental health system. However, a couple of days after leaving the bakery, and only a month before starting grad school, I started seeing all of these videos on Tiktok about ADHD and autism. And I realized, oh my god, I think I frickin have ADHD, my whole life started making sense, right? I'm sure you all have been there. And I went to my doctor to get ADHD meds so that I might have an easier time in grad school because I was like, Oh, I'm going to start grad school soon. And maybe, you know, if I was on ADHD meds, it would make my brain B's a little bit quieter, might make it a little bit easier to focus. So I wouldn't have to like shrug arm my way through all the classes. And so I went to the doctor, I got the meds. And then a couple of months later, once the meds had sort of allowed me to quiet the ADHD side of my brain a bit and get that under control a little bit more, I realized that I was also autistic because the my autism sort of had a chance to show itself now that the ADHD side was a little bit quieter. And so I started trying to accommodate that as well. All the while, I was also realizing that the the Social Work program that I was in, left much to be desired, especially when it came to things like trauma, autism and ADHD. I always feel so conceited when I say this, but like, I genuinely felt like I definitely knew more than my classmates. And sometimes I even felt like I knew more than my professors, which like, again, I don't like saying that, but I genuinely felt like it was true. And like my my fiance can can corroborate my statement here because they would sometimes hear my classes and they couldn't believe some of the things that we would talk about in classes like I remember this one, one day we were talking about so called resistant clients, aka clients who like do things like they don't, you know, immediately open up in therapy or they might forget to do assignments, they might be late to sessions or skip them altogether, just overall seeing kind of uninterested in getting held or making any changes and things like that. And as we were looking at this list of quote unquote signs of a resistant client, I raised my virtual hand because we were in Zoom Room. And I said to the professor, that honestly this just looked like a list of ADHD traits or symptoms of trauma. And I wondered if a more compassionate approach to the so called resistant clients might be more beneficial both to us as therapists and to them As our clients, and I shit you not the professor literally said that she hadn't thought about it that way before and thanked me for pointing it out. Like, what do you mean, you hadn't considered a more compassionate viewpoint like you're a therapist, that's literally your job. Anyway, I have more stories like this from grad school, but it would take hours and hours to tell it all up. Hopefully, as this podcast goes on, I'll share a little bit more about how just like, messed up that was. So January of 2022, is when shit really started to hit the fan. For me at least the most recent fan, shit hitting event in my life. Is that a word and is now.

So in in January 2022. So I'm in grad school, I'm realizing I'm autistic and ADHD. And I had started my internship for grad school. It's called field work. And they assigned me to an organization for children who were either sexually abused or had problematic sexual behaviors themselves. I will spare you the details, but it was very heavy stuff that I was dealing with, especially because a lot of my trauma, especially from childhood has to do with CSA story for another day. But yeah, I basically, I just really didn't like it there. But again, I tried to shoulder on and push through, I told myself that it would be temporary. And you know, I would learn very important skills and this and that. But I was just getting buried underneath assignments, in

classes that I felt like they weren't even really teaching me anything. Like it was just hours and hours of literally busy work of me just like writing down things that I already knew, in a way that made sense for the assignment. To the point where like, the assignments we would get online, a lot of times the professors like wouldn't even bring them up in class, or they wouldn't even know about them, they wouldn't even look at them like it was to don't don't get your social work degree online, you guys like if you're gonna do it, don't do it online, at least don't go to Fordham. That's where I went, and it wasn't good. Anyway, so I'm dealing with that plus, because of the very, very sensitive nature of the clients at my internship, I wasn't able to actually get enough FaceTime with side clients to have that actually count towards anything. I honestly don't know why they accepted interns, if interns can't even really work with the clients, like I understand. You know why that's a role. And I wouldn't want someone inexperienced working in that situation. Anyway. But anyway, I digress. So finally, the combination of burnout and frustration at just the general lack of humanity in the mental health industry, led me to make the decision once again to drop out of school, or risk at this time it was I either needed to drop out or I was going to risk like a permanent effect on my mental health. Like I could tell that the burnout was here. And if I kept trying to push through and soldier on like, it wouldn't, it wouldn't have worked out well for me. So after that, I needed to find a job and basically decided to become an audio HD coach, which is what I'm doing today. And I haven't looked back since I have now been coaching and making content online for ADHD or for over two years now. And I am four years into a relationship with by amazingly incredible and supportive fiancé, who recently actually bought a house that we moved into a few months ago, which has been a lot of a lot of getting used to a lot of transitioning, but overall very, very exciting change. And we also have three kitty cats. So yeah, that's kind of my my story in a nutshell. Hopefully it makes sense. I feel like I jumped around a little bit. But usually when I listened back, it did make sense. So if anyone has, you know, any questions or any thoughts about anything that I said, Please, please feel free to share it with me. I'm going to put all of my contact information and all that fun stuff in the show notes. Also, I'm going to try and make it so that you can leave comments on episodes. I'm not quite sure how technology works quite yet, so I guess we'll figure it out together. But yeah, that's a little bit of my my backstory. Hopefully you found it. relatable. And yeah, thanks for listening, and I'll catch you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you enjoyed this episode, please be sure to subscribe and leave a review as that will help my message get to as many people as possible. And if you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. There, you'll get access to bi weekly group coaching calls with no time limit, as well as our online community full of auDHDers who get it. Tiered pricing is available for folks of all economic backgrounds. You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

002: Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria - What It Is, and Three Rules To Manage It

Published: April 17, 2024

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it. A lot of auDHDers, myself included, struggle with something called rejection sensitive dysphoria, also known as RSD. This is something that comes up with a lot of my clients pretty much all of them at some point. And it's also something that I've noticed a lot of auDHDers carry a good amount of shame around. So I thought it would be a good topic for the podcast. In this episode, I'll first spend some time talking about what RSD actually is, what causes it, as well as some of my own experience as someone who deals with it. Then at the end, I'm going to share three rules that I made for myself a long time ago, way before I knew what RSD was, or even that I was neurodivergent at all, that helped me to manage some of the pain that can come with feeling rejected. Before I talk about RSD, though, I want to add a quick caveat about any sort of term label or paradigm that we assigned to our life experiences. Now I'm a big fan of being able to find language to be able to explain what might be happening in your brain and body, especially for autistic folks, it can be very beneficial to be able to find a specific term that helps us better understand our own experiences. That said, I think it's also important to remember that no term or label is ever going to be 100% correct for you, or be able to fully encompass really any part of the human experience. AuDHDers have a tendency to be very all or nothing when it comes to things like this. So I just ask you all to keep that in mind that your experience is multi layered and very, very nuanced. There are a lot of things that might be impacting your experience with rejection. And RSD is just one of those things. While learning about RSD can definitely be helpful, otherwise, I wouldn't be making this episode in the first place, I don't want you all to walk away with any sort of like learned helplessness about it. Like it's not just "oh, well I have RSD. So now whenever I get rejected, I'm just going to be in pain forever. And I need to do everything I can to stop that from happening." What I'm going for is "okay, so RSD explains a lot about what's actually going on with me. And now I know now that I know where the core of it is coming from, I can make more specific adjustments for myself in order to help myself have an easier time living my life." So what is RSD? one of the first things of note that I found when I was doing research for this episode is the difference between rejection sensitivity and rejection sensitive, rejection sensitive dysphoria. This was an article by the Cleveland Clinic, which I'm going to link in the show notes if anyone wants to read further into this. But according to that article, rejection sensitivity is a feeling of intense anxiety or negative emotions before an anticipated rejection, struggling to see neutral or ambiguous interactions as non rejection, and overreacting to feelings of rejection and displaying behaviors that signal negative emotions like anger, rage, extreme sadness, anxiety, etc. Anyone can experience rejection sensitivity, sometimes, especially those who also deal with things like

anxiety and depression. But it becomes rejection sensitive dysphoria, when there is also a feeling of intense and most of the time very overwhelming sense of emotional pain in response to rejection to the point where it actually like, physically hurts. This is an important distinction because I think this is one of those things where a lot of the times if you talk about some of the things that are happening with you with your RSD you'll get the old "oh but everyone experiences that" response. And while it's true that everyone might experience rejection sensitivity, sometimes, if you have RSD, even the smallest hint of criticism or rejection is actually physically painful. A lot of the times the way that folks describe it and I've also experienced this myself is that it literally feels like you got like punched in the gut or punched in the chest like it really does hurt. So when you're considering whether something is just like a so called normal human experience, or if it actually qualifies as an actual condition, or neuro type, or disorder, or whatever term you want to use for it, three things to keep in mind are frequency, intensity, and duration. I'll probably repeat those three words a lot throughout this podcast, because it applies to a number of things about the auDHD experience. So with most traits and symptoms and characteristics of both autism and ADHD, they are things that most people do, in fact, experience at least some of the time. But the difference for us is frequency, also known as how often the thing happens, the intensity of it, or how severe something is for us, and the duration, so how long the thing has been occurring, or how long it lasts when it does occur. So I think this is a good comeback. For anytime you're talking about really anything related to being auDHD, and someone says, "oh, everyone does that," you can go "well, actually, that may be true, but for me, it's a matter of frequency, intensity, and duration." And then you can explain that this is what psychologists actually use to diagnose folks, because that's where it does actually come from. Like, it's not just "oh, my friends all went out to a restaurant and didn't invite me. So I got sad for a bit." It actually like physically hurts. Some other characteristics of RSD, which I got from embrace an article on embrace autism.com, which I will also link in the show notes. It's a fantastic website with a ton of great blog articles and self tests and things like that highly recommend checking it out. But yeah, so some other characteristics of RSD are, you're often described as too sensitive, you often perceive criticism or feedback as rejection instead of just neutral. You might respond to feedback with anger, or emotional outbursts. You have low self esteem or self worth, you are a so called people pleaser. You constantly replay social situations in your head so that you can figure out what you did, quote unquote, wrong, you will avoid getting close to people altogether. You often fear disappointing others, you have a fear of making mistakes, you might avoid situations where you are likely to make mistakes, for example, like trying a new activity, you might feel embarrassment or shame when given neutral feedback. And you fear being judged by others, even when doing everyday activities. RSD is also recognized as occurring more often with ADHD than with autism. And as far as I know, there aren't many people if at all, who don't have ADHD, who also relate to RSD. I've actually spoken to my fiance about this, who they're autistic, but they don't have ADHD. And they do not experience nearly the same amount of turmoil that I do at rejection, they're able to sort of let it roll off their shoulders a lot more easily. Whereas for me, it can really impact me and it's actually sent me into like meltdowns before.

And I think, for Rdh dears in particular, though, it's particularly hard to deal with RSD because we have our ADHD side that really really enjoys meeting new people, and is very social and

wants to make all the friends. But because we're also autistic, we don't speak the same sort of language as artistic folks. And so it can be hard to connect with others well enough to make those friends that we so very much want. And so we experience a lot of very deeply felt rejection. It's also a fact that ADHD children experience more rejection on average than non ADHD children. Some articles estimate anywhere from 50 to 80% of ADHD children experience peer rejection in elementary school compared to about 15% of their non ADHD peers. But another way, some articles also claim that ADHD kids experience roughly 20,000 more negative comments than non ADHD peers by the time they're 12 years old. So let that sink in for a bit. So given that, it makes sense that we would eventually learn how to be hyper aware of perceived or potential rejection or criticism. It's because we have been there. And we have about had our fill. But according to the article on embraceautism.com RSD is more than just a like typical trauma response as a key factor of RSD is the dysphoria part of it, which means that the response is actually disproportionate to the situation at hand. Now, that doesn't mean disproportionate and like a mean or invalidating way, like, Oh, you're overreacting or your emotions themselves aren't valid, because they absolutely are. But it means disproportionate just as in being like completely consumed with shame, self doubt, or feelings of inadequacy, when a friend has to cancel plans due to a reason that you know, logically has nothing to do with you or whether you did something wrong or not. This disproportionate response is due in part to the fact that ADHDers also tend to experience emotions a lot more strongly than non ADHD folks, which is why we have trouble regulating our emotions sometimes as well. It's because for us, the dial is turned up to like a nine or a 10, when for most others, it would be at about a three or a four. So when we experience the rejection, our emotions go totally haywire about it. And when you couple that, with ADHD, impulsivity, we can quickly assume that rejection is actually what is happening. And we will start reacting accordingly, both emotionally and at times, behaviorally. So now that I've kind of explained what RSD is, and kind of where it comes from, I want to share a personal example, from when I was in college the first time because I know I was in and out of college a few times, but this was when like the first time I tried to go to college. Because by the time that I was 18, my RSD had really gotten to the point where I even had it like, preemptively so before something even happened, I was I was just so fearful. So for context of the story, I am a very former fan of the quote, "wizard boy series that shall not be named due to extreme transphobia of its author." And that was a very, very huge, special interest of mine for pretty much most of my life until, you know, Jo started showing her true colors a little bit more loudly. And so one of the things that I was looking forward to the most when I went to college the first time was the fact that my school had a Quidditch team. Now, logically, I knew that that was the one place that I would be pretty much guaranteed to make at least one friend. But emotionally, as soon as I like saw the group of people on the field, I wasn't even there yet. I just saw them in the distance. I just totally froze. And I remember thinking to myself, oh my god, I could never fit in with them. They all know each other already. Who the hell am I to just come in there, they're going to be able to tell that I don't belong there. And I just like sat in the car and cried. And meanwhile, I was in the back of my parents car, like I wasn't driving myself I was in the back of their car with both of them just watching this whole thing. So I was just like, embarrassed from all angles. I wound up sitting there for about 10 minutes just like having a mental breakdown. And my parents did help me kind of work through it a little bit you know, they helped a little bit with the sort of cognitive distortion that was going on. And after

about 10 minutes I did finally like pull my shit together enough to go and join them. But I just those 10 minutes were so rough and so painful for me and it was like so sad and because I was I was genuinely really excited to go and try and play with them but it just yeah got stopped by the RSD. So yeah, I did go up and go and join them. And I wish that the story could end with and then I made my best friend in the world and we're still friends to this day. But actually it did wind up working out anyway. Because for one thing, the whole mental breakdown that I had had really tainted the experience for me overall. Because I just started associating going to practice with having a mental breakdown. And to, you actually have to be pretty athletic to play Quidditch. And my ass was over here, I wanted to be the snitch, because I secretly not so secretly love being the center of attention, even though I hate being perceived, which is a topic for another day. But I am I'm a lot of things. Athletic is not one of them, largely due to my hypermobile Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, and I simply just literally couldn't physically keep up with any of the team members. So between that, and how much work it took, trying to convince myself that the whole team didn't actually hate me and find me super annoying. I eventually just gave up trying. I also would feel like so throughout my 20s, you know, up until today, I would also feel like actual physical pain, like physically painfully hurt when hearing about like, literally anyone around me talking about like a Hangout that I wasn't at, even if I didn't normally hang out with them in the first place. Like if it was just like a co worker who I didn't really talk to, and they were talking about going out with people, I would feel that painful, like gut punch feeling. Or like, anytime I would get a so called low grade, I would just feel like a complete and utter failure. And I would start just like beating the absolute crap out of myself, which for me, like a low grade meant literally anything lower than a 90. So like imagine I'm getting like an 87 on an essay or something. And I'm just like, oh my god, I failed, I should drop out. That kind of thing. Nowadays, it mostly that nowadays, it mostly shows up for me in like work related things. So like, for example, I'm always having to convince myself that my clients don't hate me or aren't annoyed by whatever advice or coaching that I'd given them. Another thing is, negative comments on social media are super, super dysregulated. Especially in like the beginning of my coaching business. Like before I got more used to them, they would just totally like throw me off for the whole day to the point where I had to make a rule for myself that I I'm not allowed to check my notifications outside of the hours of like 10 and four. Because if it's like too early in the morning or too late, I just it just completely throws my whole day off. And I can't do anything because it just impacts my nervous system so much. Social media, in general is actually really challenging to with RSD. And I think a lot of my perfectionism on social media comes from this, like RSD fear of someone either not liking what I say, or having some kind of criticism that I didn't ask for. Which is actually why I usually just delete comments. And sometimes I'll even block people depending on how disrespectful it is. If someone is like, hey, you need to change XYZ about this post or whatever, because I just don't have the emotional capacity for it. I'm also very, very careful with who I accept any kind of criticism from in the first place. And people who follow me on social media, and think that they can tell me what I can and can't post on my own profile are definitely not on that list.

Before I learned about RSD, I thought that I was just overly sensitive and needed to quote unquote, get over it and stop being such a baby. Not to mention that the vast majority of the panic attacks that I now know we're meltdowns were caused by just feeling so rejected and

lonely. But now that I know it's not just a me problem, it's gotten a lot easier to work with those painful thoughts and feelings instead of letting them sort of completely take over and control me. Now to be sure they have not gone away completely. That will probably never happen. But it has gotten a lot sort of quieter over the years, to the point where now I feel like I am the one in control rather than my RSD. So without further ado, here are the rules that I adopted for myself a while ago when it comes to worrying if other people find me annoying or hate me or whatever else my inner critic slash RSD is telling me about folks. I repeat these reminders to myself, whenever I noticed that gripping feeling of rejection in my chest, or whenever I notice, my inner critic sort of ramping up in my head. So, rule number one, if someone else has a problem with me, it is their responsibility to let me know. Otherwise, they cannot reasonably expect me to address it. And therefore, I do not have to waste time and energy thinking about it. Rule number two, anything that could be interpreted as rejection is way more than likely something totally benign, or neutral. Is there an explanation for this that has nothing to do with how they feel about you, then it's probably that. And number three, other people are not thinking about you nearly as much as you think they do. Lovingly, you are not the center of the universe. You can relax, it's not about you. You don't have to take everything. Personally, I repeat those reminders to myself literally almost every single day. And they usually help me get re grounded in reality instead of stuck in a shame spiral. So I hope that they help you as much as they've helped me. Thank you so much for listening. And if you have any questions about RSD, or thoughts about this episode, please feel free to drop them in the q&a box or send me an email because I love hearing from you. All right. Take care, and I'll see you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you enjoyed this episode, please be sure to subscribe and leave a review as that will help my message get to as many people as possible. And if you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. There you'll get access to bi weekly group coaching calls with no time limit, as well as our online community full of auDHDers who get it. tiered pricing is available for folks of all economic backgrounds. You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

003: Tarot & Astrology w/ Christian Palmer

Published: May 7, 2024

Jes Diverges 0:02

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello, hello, everyone. I have another guest for you all. Today I will be talking to one of my best friends Christian Palmer all about Tarot and astrology. This is a particularly exciting episode for me because things like magic and spirituality have been interests of mine for a really long time. And I'm only just now starting to really embrace those parts of myself. Christian played a big role in helping me to learn more about a lot of those things. And in particular Taro. I actually started offering tarot readings recently, which I'll share that link in the show notes for anyone who might be interested in a virtual four card spread. And I wouldn't be nearly as good of a reader as I am today without her. So without further ado, here's the interview. Hi, Christian. I am so so so excited for our conversation today. Christian is on our podcast today to talk about her special interest in like, Tarot and astrology and spirituality and all of that fun, fun stuff. So I guess first I will let you introduce yourself, Christian. How are you? How are you feeling like you're coming into the world today? Who are you?

Christian Palmer 1:53

We Yeah, existential crisis time, as like. I've been on a few podcasts now. And every single time the question hits and like who am I today? I don't know.

Jes Diverges 2:08

But I am uncontainable. That's who I am today. Yes.

Christian Palmer 2:11

undefinable. I'm a mutable sign. Yes. We evolved. We change we adapt. Yeah, so today, I am just a girl living her life. Special interests like you said in Tarot and astrology. I look my chart up every day to see what is fucking with me. What is the moon doing?

Jes Diverges 2:36

Oh, the moon

Christian Palmer 2:38

Yes. And yeah, just do focusing on my little social justice initiatives. And what's the other thing I'm doing? Playing d&d? Just being that girl?

Jes Diverges 2:55

Yeah, you recently had your first DM experience, right? Yes, I

Christian Palmer 3:00

just ran my first game. And then I read my second game. And it's going really well. Super fun. I'm incorporating a lot of astrology and Greek mythology. Oh, very cool. And my players know nothing about these things. So they are not picking up on like the clues that I'm leaving the little easter eggs. And I think it would be really fun to play with people who would pick up on those things at some point. And but that's what I'm building toward, like. Like this is just practice for the ultimate plan of creating my own world where mythology is real. And you can definitely fight the sun. Like that's the thing you could do.

Jes Diverges 3:51

Oh, it's so cool. I love it so much. So I guess my first question for you would be like, what was it that kind of like initially sparked your interest in things like Tarot and astrology and all the fun magical thing was

Christian Palmer 4:05

always a good question. My interest in astrology came first I would say. And this is when I was like deep in the throes of like, what's the way you would put it like a mental breakdown, like a full on existential crisis, I was not having a good time. And then I was on social media. It was Instagram at the time. And Instagram was feeding me mental health content, which led to astrology content, which led to Taro content. So basically, the algorithm just figured me out and fed me what I wanted. And, you know, the more you engage with it, the more that you get, right. So it's, it was social media. It was Instagram specifically And then taro was said to me a little bit more once I got to tick tock started getting the tick tock, Taro content. That's a little bit of a tongue twister.

Jes Diverges 5:14

Yeah, Say that five times fast. Yeah, I

Christian Palmer 5:16

won't even dare I have better things to do with my energy in

Jes Diverges 5:26

there, yeah, there's nothing like a good true, like mental breakdown to really kind of show you a new facet of who you are as human being and like, good all social media algorithms, like, I could talk a lot of shit about some of the ways that the algorithms work, but I have to give it to them. Like they really figure us out better than like, sort of weekend sometimes. And I do really, really appreciate social media that for that, for sure.

Christian Palmer 5:52

Yes, cuz I was like, I'm a Pisces, and I'm, like, also just have significant Sagittarius placements. But I was not her. Like, I was doing a bad job at being me for most of my life, because I was masking and pretending to be someone I'm not. And once all of that started to crumble down, and fall apart, and like I'm starting to figure out who I actually am is like, Oh, I'm a spiritual girly. Like, I've always been like, the logic is King kind of girl, and just dangerously stoic at some points. And then it all started to fall apart. Like I got my ADHD diagnosis when I was 30. I, a few years later, like self diagnosed as autistic, because it started to feed me the autism content also. Right?

Jes Diverges 6:51

It's good at that, too.

Christian Palmer 6:53

Yeah, it's like, once you like, come to terms with your ADHD and start to like, accommodate that. And like, I took medication, a lot of people go down that route, then the autism starts to present. Right. And that's how it is for a lot of people. So like, they all just kind of came one after another. I don't even remember the order. But I know astrology and the Tarot, mental health, ADHD than autism. But, yeah, I was trying to be someone I wasn't. And now I'm figuring out who I actually. And it's this girl. Yeah.

Jes Diverges 7:32

Amen to that. Because, like, and part of the reason why I wanted to talk to you about this, because I'm also kind of, you know, reaching this, this phase of my own unmasking journey, where I'm also kind of realizing slash admitting that I am also very much a spiritual, girly. It's like part of me that I have been, like, interested in for a really long time. Like, I was always that little girl who was doing little like witch circles with their friends. And like, look it up spells on Google back, you know, when the internet was, you know, in the early 2000s, all that stuff. And then, you know, when I was in college and pastry school, I really started to, like, try and explore that part of myself a little bit more. The issue though, is because I was with an asshole, who also at the time was actually ironically deciding to reclaim his own Christianity and things like that. And was basically literally told by him that I was gonna go to hell for dabbling and shit like that. And it's not that I believed him necessarily, but like, still that shame and rejection, from that, like, was something that really kind of latched on to my soul. And sort of forced me to, like, quite literally hide the, like witchy intero, like parts of my personality in a shoebox in a closet, like, it's literally this orange shoebox that I just kept stuff in forever and that just hid it from everyone for so long. But now that I'm older now that I'm 31 and are kind of away from folks who would judge or reject me for things like that i with a partner who doesn't fully like quote unquote, believe in magic and spirituality or things like that, but they are so supportive, they're always willing to listen and like they will not judge me even if they think that it's like silly or whatever. So that says, Now I'm also kind of at a point in my life where like, Oh, also thanks to friends like you who like because we've been friends for I think a couple of years now. Which is Yeah, two years which is wild. I feel like we just met like, yesterday. But yeah, listening to you, like talk about tarot, and you've

also taught me a lot about it. You have actually really helped me on shame, like my own sort of spirituality and like magical girly nature. And so like, I just really appreciate that in you, for sure

Christian Palmer 10:04

That warms my heart so much. And like you've told me that before, and like it doesn't hit any less hard when you say it again. Like, that's a big part of my mission, like I is, when I was going through my mental health stuff, I used to be on Twitter, and I was really open about my mental health struggles and my journey. And then I was starting to get really vocal about my finding spirituality, and astrology and tarot. And I was just, I'm always trying to be, like, a voice to like, show people that there's another way to be, because like, a lot of us fall into that same trap. And like, I want to be the person who makes it. So that you see, like, representation matters, like you see someone being who you want to be. And, like, I it is my objective to show people a better way and help people realize that they also have the strength to do that, too.

Jes Diverges 11:04

Yes, and

Christian Palmer 11:07

oh, there's their support. There's community out here. Let your freak flag fly. Now their tongue twister nailed it.

Jes Diverges 11:17

Yes, right on with the freak flag.

Christian Palmer 11:19

Yeah, just be who you are. Like your people are out there. Like it might take a little bit of an effort to find them. Community is something you build. It's not necessarily you trip and fall into. Right? And it's such a like, wow, I'm a chatty Cathy. Like you get me get me talking. You can't shut me up. Like I for all my astrology girlies like my Mercury's like conjunct my MC Obi Mercury in pisces conjunct my MC. So like, I'm supposed to be talking. And so funny because I was like a nonverbal kid. I have my Chiron in Gemini.

Jes Diverges 12:01

Interesting. Yeah, so like,

Christian Palmer 12:05

my core wound is like, communication related and like, conversations are hard. And it's in the 12th house. So especially like ending things like a conversation to end a relationship is like, the worst thing I can do. But we're working on it, because I'm such a Ghoster. But we're working on.

Jes Diverges 12:25

You know what, literally, Sam, it's part of my experience that I don't really like talking about because I know that it's, you know, not the best thing to do. But yeah, I definitely relate to that I have I have ghosted, more people than I care to admit. Because conversations are hard.

Christian Palmer 12:40

Yeah, they are hard. And like, like, the thing about communication is you can do all the communication perfectly and good and like clear and concise, even. But your communication partner, for lack of a better word, the communication is only as successful as they are, you know, prepared to hear that or, like, handle that on their end. Like if they're dedicated to misunderstanding you. It's an unsuccessful communication, despite your best efforts. Yeah,

Jes Diverges 13:16

exactly. I think a really important part of like having things like clear communication, healthy boundaries, and things like that, is that you can be like, as careful and as intentional with the way that you word things with the way that you approach the situation. But if you're trying to do these things with somebody else who's not willing to also put in that amount of effort, it just ain't gonna fly no matter what you do. But speaking of communication, part of what I really like about Taro is that it can kind of be like this really interesting. Third party in conversations like one of the one of the ways that like my, my pre wife, which is my my new word that I'm saying for fiance because I say fiance, and people think that I'm straight, so I'm not calling to my pre wife. But even though they don't really fully like, believe in, you know, the universe, and you know, whatever, they'll still ask me to like pull cards for them sometimes. Because like, and I think especially for autistic folks, it can be a really good kind of, like outside perspective of like, because it's one thing if you have a friend, you know, telling you these things and pointing these things out. It's another thing to get completely read to filter by the universe. And like, I think that the cards are really helpful for us because they can help us like really put words and like, like, I don't know figure out situations that are otherwise like too nebulous for us to be able to understand

Christian Palmer 14:47

yes, that is such a good point and as a real thing that drew me to it is like it it's an existing like taxonomy of feelings. Like, like it's a way to external I have my own brain, my like heart brain. And like, like I made a spreadsheet of all the card meanings. And like there's books galore. And like you pull a card, something like I don't know, the five of pentacles. And you see it, actually like, oh, I have suffered loss. I was like, Oh, are the five of cups like, oh, I have, this is, I should be grieving. That is what I should be doing. But one of my favorite things about the Tarot is it gives you the opportunity to reject it. Like if you're having like, an internal conversation in your head. Taro gives you the opportunity to take that other voice out of your head. So say, for example, this is something that actually happened to me. So you pull the card, and it's like, everybody hates you, actually. And I found myself like reflexively going, like, that's not true. So it, it can do that. You don't always have to trust the cards, it can just be like an exercise and like getting you to admit that that's not true. Because, like, it's all it's really helpful to take. take things out of your head sometimes. I had a point. I don't remember what it was.

Jes Diverges 16:28

Sorry, in my life. No, I love that point you made though because, yeah, it's also it's it can kind of be like, flipping a coin sometimes. Because if I'm like, for example, having trouble making a

decision, sometimes I'll flip a coin, just to see like how I feel whenever the decision is made. And then I'm like, Oh, well, I actually didn't want to have tacos. For lunch. I want to have a tuna sandwich instead. And just because the coin said tacos, I actually don't want to so now I'm gonna have a tuna sandwich. So even though the message wasn't like, exactly what you technically, like, needed to hear maybe it still was what you needed to hear. It just gave you that sort of clarity of like, oh, actually, you said that. And that's fake. So now I'm gonna go over here and reality land.

Christian Palmer 17:12

Yes, yes. Oh, I think I remember my point now. Like, if your friend told you, everybody hates you. Yeah, like you would stand up for yourself. I would hope. Oh, yeah. No, I flew away. Again. I don't remember what it was. But it was something about, like, along those lines.

Jes Diverges 17:36

Yeah, sometimes you need to hear the like, wrong thing in order to like really fully solidify what you believe is right.

Christian Palmer 17:44

Yes. And of yes, it gives you that opportunity to have that conversation with

Jes Diverges 17:49

yourself. Yeah, exactly. Or

Christian Palmer 17:53

no, no, I remember what it was. Now somebody can tell you that everyone doesn't hate you. But you don't trust it? Yeah, so it has to come from you. That everybody doesn't hate you. And that's stronger. That's kind of where it's gonna land. Oh, yes.

Jes Diverges 18:10

Yes, exactly. Because then when you kind of get to stand up to yourself, whether it's to a friend or to the cards, like, yeah, it's like showing you that like, no, actually, this is what you believe. And like, you are correct. It is okay to move forward and the way that you want to move forward and

Christian Palmer 18:27

yes, oh my God, I feel a lot better now that I remembered my point. But, but you were saying something that sparked another point for me and one of my like, favorite, like, tools to help me like, take action on the things I want to do is like if I have a to do list I'll like assign each of the tasks a number and then roll a dice to see which one I want to do. And then pretty much like 90% of the time like the dice will say what task I'm going to do and I actually don't want to do that one. It's helping me make a decision even though it's not you know, the the method the game isn't playing out exactly. As it should in theory, quote unquote.

Jes Diverges 19:13

Yeah, definitely. It reminds me of your like, fight the sun metaphor that you have. I don't know if you would like to kind of like tell the people what you mean when you say fight the sun because I love that thing so much.

Christian Palmer 19:26

I I don't like it's it was so long ago now that I'm I kind of am starting to lose what I was thinking when I came up with that. But basically, like finding the sun is such like a that's not a thing you can do in this world. Like it's such a, an A. What's the word? I'm thinking of? A ridiculous thing. It's like it's a ridiculous thing. But it The point is, regardless of the ridiculousness of your goal, do it. Do the big thing take the big action. I halfway remember now that it was like on a Tuesday, and that's Mars day. And shit, I really, it's fading apart now I haven't written down somewhere what it means. But there was a bunch of things saying, do the thing. Like the astrology was all do the thing. And I had heard someone else talking about fighting God. And I was like, I don't want to fight God, I'll fight the sun because that's just as ridiculous. And the sun is, you know, a tarot card and an astrologer will astrological astronomical body. And it fit more with like, my, my whole thing. But yeah, basically, it's just it just boils down to do the thing. Do the crazy thing. Do the big thing. Take the big leap.

Jes Diverges 21:11

Yeah, I've always I believe

Christian Palmer 21:14

I have not explained this in a way that I love. But

Jes Diverges 21:26

it is fine. It is totally fine. We are here for jubbly thoughts, I thought that it made sense. My understanding of fight the sun. And like maybe this is just like my own interpretation is not necessarily what you meant by it. But like, the way I see it is fight the sun means like, Okay, so just because, you know, those cards said that all your friends hate you. That's not necessarily true. So fight the sun would mean like Stanford, what you know, is right, even though the universe is telling you, you know, XYZ, because like the universe, while she is correct, most of the time, I will say I have a very healthy respect for the universe and the decisions that she makes. Sometimes what we hear from it just isn't always the case. Or like, for example, I know there are a lot of folks who really pay attention to like, where the moon happens to be, or like they're waiting for like a certain day, like, Well, I'm gonna wait until I don't know enough to say real things about this, like, I'm gonna wait until Pluto is like, in conjunct from Saturn to, you know, do this grocery shopping trip or whatever. And it's like, purely pop. That's not going to happen for like another six months at least. And if you don't go grocery shopping, by the end of the week, you're gonna starve. So maybe just go today. That was kind of my understanding of facade.

Christian Palmer 22:43

I love that. I love that so much. And I love the thing like this, because it can mean whatever you want, like perception is reality for you. And like it can mean all of these things. Everything can mean 100 things all at once, and I can feel 100 different ways about it.

Jes Diverges 23:00

Yes. Yeah. And that's also another thing I love about Taro is like, yeah, there technically are like, certain meanings assigned to certain cards. But it also like, is something that 100% Depends on who you ask. And like a major, like, literally spoken out loud thing about Tarot is that it is up to your own personal, subjective interpretation. And like, whatever kind of comes up for you, when the card comes up is like, whatever the reading is, and we're all allowed to have our own, like, personal spins on it, like you can choose to interpret in certain ways versus other ways. Like it really is, like one of the most customizable, I think hobbies that you can have. And it's also fascinating for me, like, seeing how different folks interpret like the same readings of cards. Because like, oftentimes, I will try and read for myself, and like, I find that that really doesn't work a whole lot. It's like I'm always too close to it, or like I'm hoping for a certain answer, and I'm gonna like kind of pick my own like, meaning out of it, but then I kind of shit. Like, there have been times where I've pulled for myself and sent you the cards to be like, hey, this was my interpretation. What do you kind of think about it and you're able to like, see, like different perspectives or like find other meanings in the cards that kind of like help make it make more sense, which is like, such a fun part of Tarot for me.

Christian Palmer 24:20

Yes, yes. Like, there's no like, what's the word like, an organization that sets these meanings in place? It's not. It's not like that. That's one of my favorite things about it is it literally can mean different things for different people. Everybody has their own relationship to the cards and like, the more you work with them, the more that your understanding grows, and the more people you learn from, the more your understanding grows, and you can take lessons that you learned here and apply it to the next reading. And one of my favorite things also about Taro is like, even if you learn Like, quote unquote, wrong meaning like if you learn the card wrong, like the cards will trust you to remember that. So it's like, like, say you've remember, like you heard someone say like, I don't know, a wrong thing about the cars like one thing I remember hearing, hearing being said is like the queen of swords. I don't remember who said it at this point. But like, she doesn't start shit, but she finishes it. And so now whenever I see the queen of swords, that's not like the meaning that you get from the books. But that isn't meaning that my brain trust me to remember. And so when it shows up, that is the thing that my brain is going to reach for and the cards trust that to happen. So it's like, you don't have to stick to the rules if they don't make sense. If you heard something else, he heard something better. Like you assign your own meaning to the cards like it's all inherently arbitrary. Then subjective.

Jes Diverges 26:08

Yeah, 100%

Christian Palmer 26:10

like enough people decided that this means that and that's what we're gonna go with for the rest of eternity.

Jes Diverges 26:19

Right? Like I'm actually who died it made you king Taro? Like, it can be whatever you want the domain. Yeah, yeah. There is no king of taro.

Christian Palmer 26:31

I don't I didn't think of something funny fast enough. So I'm done.

Jes Diverges 26:42

Um, so I think something else that I was kind of curious about is like, what are some ways that you actually like integrate Tarot and astrology into like, your daily life and your routine? Like what does that kind of look like for you?

Christian Palmer 26:57

That's really cool. Yeah, I, I'll, I'll talk about Tarot first, and then astrology. I go through phases where I don't pull a lot of cards. But if I do find myself having a little bit of an existential crisis, or like I have big feelings, that's when I'll go to the cards and they say you're not supposed to do that. But like, what a rules. Don't go to the Tarot if you're like looking for a very specific answer, or if you're like, particularly wound up. But like, if you just need a little bit of guidance, a little bit of a gentle voice. All the cards aren't always gentle. I like to pull my four card spread, like my one card, didn't know when card to do one card to release one card to think about. And that is not my spread that I created. I found that on the internet. So it doesn't belong to me, it doesn't belong to anyone. And I just see what the cards have to say. And like I was feeling a few days ago particularly wound up about a situation and the cards were literally like, have some fun. You got this. You it'll it'll be some work, but it's work you've done before. And it's work you can figure it out. You're smart enough to pull this stuff. And there were cards of like, because I pulled cards because I was trying to plan my d&d campaign and I couldn't focus on it because I was thinking about this other bullshit and the cards were literally like that bullshit is shit you can figure out later focus on having fun right now. And I loved that for me. They are not always like that.

Jes Diverges 28:37

Yeah, definitely they can be Yeah, the energy it can either be like a gentle like Sister energy or like the very rough like Wynette energy of like, you know, shit or get off the pot. Come on, like Yes.

Christian Palmer 28:52

Oh my god, like my classic Rider Waite date deck has like such Gemini energy. Like, such trickster energy, like I opened this new deck of cards, the first three readings, the lovers card came out. And like that is the card that represents and corresponds to Jim and like, and I was reading for a gym and I Oh, wow. Yeah, it was wild. Like and I was let's just say under the influence when that so I have a really good time. Like, oh my god, this deck is a Gemini talking

to a gym and I thought that's so funny. Shit I made. I had like two points that I came up with while I was saying all that and they're gone now. Such is the life of the ADHD, Girly Pop.

Jes Diverges 29:47

For real, I wish that there was some kind of contraption that I could connect to my head that would just immediately put the thoughts that I'm having on like a whiteboard or something. Because like, same happens to me like I'll be Talking and then I'll think of a couple other points and I'd be like, Oh, cool. I'll finish my sentence before I say that and then no, they're freaking god. Like,

Christian Palmer 30:08

and, and that's why half the time I don't bother finishing the sentence, I just go on the tangent. Yep. Like I have Mars conjunct Uranus like abrupt.

Jes Diverges 30:21

Yeah. Yeah, that's fine. Just like trusting in yourself that like, whatever you happen to what happens? That whatever happens to come out of your mouth is what was meant to come out of your mouth? Well, you ever you remember, is what you were meant to remember. And c'est la vie. Sometimes.

Christian Palmer 30:38

It's like, I feel what's the word? A little bit. Pit of, like, I have pity for people who like only have one train of thought at a time. Like, how boring that must be. You

Jes Diverges 30:54

know, sometimes I think about that. I'm like, literally, what is that? Like? Like, that

Christian Palmer 30:59

must be so boring. can't relate. Could not calculate. But okay, let me see. Now we're gonna talk about astrology. I look at my chart every single day. Every time I noticed that I'm feeling a type of way. Any type, I have just like a random question. And especially when I'm scrolling social media, like, I'll see you like pop astrology content, which I think is fun, and not always harmful, but can be harmful. Like, what is my Saturn doing? Like? Or like, what? What degree is my Saturn or like, what house is that in again? Like, there's always like, a curiosity. Yeah. And like, I find myself looking at my chart every day, and increasingly find myself looking at the charts of other people every day. Like I have a, an embarrassing story for you. So I had earlier last year, a little bit of a hyper fixation on one direction, and more specifically, Harry Styles, I think all of us kind of go through something similar. So I pulled his chart, and I took a screenshot of it, and I put it in my phone. Because I wanted to, like reference it. And so months go by the hyper fixation has passed, I'm scrolling through my phone, looking at all the charts, I have just several of them in my phone for like my family members and my friends. And I come across his chart, and I'm like, I'm looking at the birthday, cuz that's how you remember who it is. And I'm like, I don't know whose chart this is. And then my sister on the other side of the room, she's like, is it Harry Styles and I'm like, Oh my God. I didn't even tell her that I did that. She just knows that's

what I do now. And to make it even better, this isn't normally the case, but it said his name on the chart. I just didn't see it. Oh my

Jes Diverges 33:05

god, that is amazing. And I love that. So watch. It reminds me of because I've, I think so many Rdh years can relate to just like becoming very, very obsessed with celebrities. And so what I would do, especially when I was a kid is like, anytime I saw like a J 14 Or a Tiger Beat or something, I would pick that shit up and go right to the fun facts section and like just like collect sort of facts about my, my favorite celebrities. You on the other hand have hacked that system. So good. Were like, all you needed to know is their birthday and maybe their time of birth. And you can literally figure out so many details about those mofos like, I am obsessed with that. I love that so much.

Christian Palmer 33:48

Yes. Like it usually happens is like, what sign is he? Because like in my head. I was like that man is a Leo and then you pull it up and that's an Aquarius right there. And then you're like, oh, yeah, that is an Aquarius right there. And then you look at the rest of their signs and it just it all adds up. There are so many small pieces that make you up like saying you're an Aquarius Sun means so little.

Jes Diverges 34:15

Yeah, that's also something that has been really fascinating for me as I'm learning more about like astrology specifically. It's because so my sun sign is a Virgo, which I think is a major contributor to the fact that I didn't realize I was autistic until I was like 29 years old is because I literally attributed all of my autistic traits to just being a Virgo like, Oh, I'm just really organized and meticulous because I'm a Virgo I have attention to detail because I'm a Virgo. I'm really hyper critical of everyone else around me all the time because I'm a Virgo. It has nothing to do with anything else. But like, I've also always said that I'm not like a regular Virgo. I'm a cool Virgo. Because while I can be neurotic sometimes and I only use that word by myself. You know I'm allowed to call myself neurotic when it Because I am sometimes. But I think the way that my big three sort of interact is like, honestly really fascinating to me and explains a whole lot because I'm so I'm a Virgo sun, Leo rising and a cancer moon. So it's like, I have like a boss pitch in my head. That's the Virgo. I also have a performer who believes all the world is a stage. That's my Leo. That's why I made a Tik Tok account of, you know, on podcasts and everything like that. And then my cancer, Moon, especially because it's my moon means that I'm also very, very secretly a very, very sad bitch. But nobody else is ever going to see that part of me that's only for bye, bye secret dark. positives.

Christian Palmer 35:42

Yes, I love that so much. Because you have so much diversity in your big three, like you have a cardinal sign in cancer, you have a fixed sign in Leo, you have a mutable sign in Virgo, you have three different three of the four elements represented. Like there's a lot going on there, just in there in your top three. And that's there's so much there's so many signs you can look at like it's more than your sun sign it, you expand your understanding of yourself so much just by going to

your big three, and then naturally, your curiosity will widen and you'll move to your big six, and then you'll see all of your planets, and then you'll see the asteroids. And then you'll look at what house they're in. And then you'll look at the aspects and then you'll look at the degrees. And then you'll look at what the transits are occurring right now what's interacting with what there's so much like, it's, it's one thing to like, pull up your chart on the internet, and like you see a visual representation of what's going on. But behind that there is so much math. Like, yeah, it is, it's a little bit overwhelming and intimidating to look like. And like astrologers of the past, they didn't have the internet to just pull up a chart, they didn't have spreadsheets to take to keep track of all these meticulous calculations. Like it was a real job. And that's why I think that if you're an autistic person, like give astrology a chance, like the real, you can explain human behavior using math. Yes.

Jes Diverges 37:18

And like that part is what is so so cool for me because like, sometimes I'll look at someone's chart and like it's so so like, specific to a person. Like right down to nailing like your core childhood trauma wound, like I remember the first time I got a full birth chart reading and I heard about my Chiron, which like mine is about, like sort of fun. And in playfulness, I wound up taking myself way too seriously, which I'm trying to make up for now that I'm in my 30s anyway. But astrology is like so freakin specific. Sometimes that I'm like, There's no way this is made up like there's there's no way this is real. This is just like magic and science combined. Like yeah, yes, cool stuff. And

Christian Palmer 38:07

one of the other things I love about it is and I'll credit my friend Dira with giving me the phrase, Dira who if you do the show notes, you can put my link tree in there you can find Dira on my link tree because I love her that much. Yeah, shout out to Dira. I love her. Yes, she calls astrology, the observational science. So it's like, yes, it's all this math. But like you adapt your understanding based on what you actually observe. And that's why astrologers do what they do. They ask you about your chart, and they observe, they see what you're doing. And they make those connections, they update their understanding of that placement or your sign or whatever it is that they're curious about in the moment. It's like it's an evolving understanding. It's not set in stone necessarily. Yeah. Which I love about it.

Jes Diverges 38:56

Yeah, definitely. I think one of the things that I really wanted to ask you is like, what are some of the like common sort of misconceptions that you see about Tarot and astrology that you like? What kind of like to push back on a little bit.

Christian Palmer 39:13

People don't know a lot about Tarot. And I learned that when I started to tell people that I do it. They're like, what is that? Is that like fortune telling predicting the future? So I think that's what most people probably think. And that is one I would like to nip in the bud. You can use it to predict the future. Some people do that some better than others. But I don't really use it that way. I use it to like evaluate my current emotional state, for the most part is like how do I actually

feel about this thing? Yeah, versus predicting the future or doing like party tricks with it, which you know, I'm an I'm all for a little bit of fun, but that comes with liability. And people love people who are not like in the no love to approach tarot readers with questions about like, health or like legal questions and we are not equipped to handle those types of things. So do not approach a Tarot practitioner with a legal question. Take that to the appropriate professional. Yeah, like don't bring your health questions to me because I am not a, like a doctor. People think people like to think my doctor, and I'm just not. I'm not that type of doctor, like I can read you to fill but I cannot like diagnose whatever ailment you have going on in your physical body. That is not my purview at all. Right? So do not bring those questions to a taro or astrology practitioner. If they do accept that question, that's a red flag.

Yeah, I would say so. Yeah.

Especially if they're going to take money. Right. Like, like, I'll sit here and all ask legal questions to my own deck, because like, there's no liability questions there. And I understand like what I'm doing, and also I'm a trained paralegal.

Jes Diverges 41:13

Yeah, you know, but you got that. Like, I

Christian Palmer 41:16

mean, I have ADHD. I've had like five different careers. Right.

Jes Diverges 41:20

Yeah, literally say, I love what you said too, about like, Taro is not really about predicting the future. It's more so about just getting clarity on the current situation, because I think there's another reason why Taro, Taro is helpful for everyone. But just for ADHD ears in particular, especially like autistic folks who struggle with like interoception alexithymia, can't really put our thoughts into words very easily. Like sometimes the cards can be like, so helpful for literally figuring out like, exactly what you said, how do I actually feel about this? Like, what's actually going on? Because when it's stuck in your head, you know, our thoughts. One, we have like very, very fast thoughts, many, many thoughts at once, from the ADHD side, and then our autism with the system's thinking has like big, big grand thoughts, we can connect dots that are like, miles and miles apart. And so like, trying to figure it out internally can sometimes be impossible. And so I feel like tarot was a really great way to kind of externalize that. And like really be able to, like, figure out what the hell is going on. Because sometimes you just can't do it on your own. There's no shame in that. Yeah.

Christian Palmer 42:23

It gives you it gives you like a framework to like, put your feelings on top of like, if you're saying like, how do I feel about this? And then you draw like the three of swords for examples like, oh, I have been betrayed. Oh, I am feeling like I'm defeated. And like, I've been stabbed in the heart. That is exactly how I'm feeling actually. Yeah. And the evidence supports that.

Yeah. Yeah. So I love that.

I love that you can choose a card. You can literally if you don't even know anything about tarot, you can just look at the book and it'll tell you three of swords means defeat heartbreak, betrayal, all of these things. Yeah,

Jes Diverges 43:06

you know what else I'll do sometimes too, for like anyone who's like now interested in tarot, maybe after listening to this episode wants to try it out a little bit. Sometimes I will pull cards, and then I'll just like, put them into chat. GPT. And like, you know, always take GPT with a grain of salt, it can always be wrong and like verify with Google searches or whatever. But that is actually really, really helpful. For me when I'm pulling for myself, especially because like, like I was saying earlier, it's really hard to read for yourself. And so like, yeah, if you want just a little assistant to help you when you get started, check GPUs right there.

Christian Palmer 43:38

Yeah, why not? Why not use a tool that's available to you? Well, I mean, you know, there are many, many thoughts to be had about AI and chat GPT in particular, but like, it can help with things like this. It doesn't have to. It doesn't have to be war crimes. It doesn't have to be made for that. It can it can help us with our feelings. Right?

Jes Diverges 44:01

Exactly. Whatever. Whatever indeed.

Christian Palmer 44:08

You use any and all tools available to you to accommodate you're saying, whatever, right?

Jes Diverges 44:14

Don't feel bad about really, literally, though, like, if it's gonna help you don't feel guilty about it, just use it. Like, there are so many more people doing so many worse things in the world. Like I promise you if you're listening to this episode, like, yeah, you can do whatever you want. It's not an individual problem. It's a systemic problem. Yeah, I can literally soapbox about this for like, another

Christian Palmer 44:35

hour or so I also have like a thought queued up. Oh, go, go. Go. Yeah, so I mentioned earlier that I'm a paralegal and I think one of the funniest and best lessons I learned from that job is you can do anything you want until someone tries to stop you. Literally

Jes Diverges 44:51

the way that is my actual life motto and philosophy. Like if I don't hear someone else, have them problem, have it back. If I Don't hear someone else having a problem with what I'm doing. I'm gonna go ahead and assume there isn't one and just keep doing me.

Christian Palmer 45:07

Yes, like, and that is, you've said that to me so many times and like I associate that advice with you now. Oh, yeah. It is their responsibility to convey the problem. I don't have to assume there's a problem. I don't have to wonder if there's a problem. I have a history of doing that.

Jes Diverges 45:25

Don't we all dude. Yeah, literally.

Christian Palmer 45:29

Yeah, it's like bringing it to me. Like we can have this conversation like adults like, yes, yes. Like what I said earlier? Like, I am a Ghoster. Yes. But like, directly communicate with me. Yeah, we're healing. We're working on it.

Speaker 2 45:49

Oh, yes, indeed. So I do, oh, my gosh, I could literally keep talking to you about this forever, like, you know that. But I do want to try and keep episodes like underneath an hour, just because the audience does have ADHD, sometimes the longer episodes are a little tough. So I think a final question that I would like to ask you, and I think I'm going to start asking, like kind of all my guests this at the end of our, our episodes, is, what is sort of your, like, favorite way that you are able to accommodate yourself with your, your autistic at ADHD brain?

Christian Palmer 46:23

I really love this question. And like, I'll just preface it by saying there's a lot of ways I'm able to accommodate myself personally, because I'm like, well supported and well resourced, and, like, like, I can do things like wake up when I want to, because I don't have a job. And like, that's not going to be the case for most people. So I'm gonna, you know, not pick that as an example like, so one of the things that I think that most people could probably have access to, is it's a twofer. I have an aversion to like mint flavor toothpaste. And like a lot of us we have oral hygiene issues. So like, if that's going to be the thing that's keeping me from oral hygiene, by kid toothpaste by a toothpaste with flavor. I am not a spokesperson for for this brand, but I think it's called Think er, but they have cute flavored toothpaste and the one I'm doing is the it's like a blue dragon Dazzle. It has like dragon scales on it. It's so cool. But it tastes like blue raspberry. And like they have they have like an orange dreamsicle flavored one. They have bubble gum they have. They have several different flavors. There's so much fun. They make oral hygiene a lot easier. And oh my god. So my other tip is you don't have to stand in front of the seat while you brush your teeth. You can walk around. Oh, yeah, like I just stand in place. Like I'll just go walk around my room not even like, because I want to multitask because I don't believe in multitask. I just want to like be less bored while I'm brushing my teeth. Oh, I remember the third one. This is going to be a three for if I don't feel like I have the spoons. to brush my teeth. I'll just use mouthwash. Just just do mouthwash because that requires less boons. There's less of a commitment. And if I find that probably 30% of the time. Once I've done mouthwash, I'll go ahead and be ready for brushing my teeth. And it's all oral hygiene. I have such a hard time with this historically I have so many cavities always have oh my god teeth are a nightmare and I think they should be out a lot. But

Jes Diverges 48:43

we got so frickin' many of them like what's that about?

Christian Palmer 48:46

Why haven't we evolved beyond the need for teeth? Why do we need to eat food?

Jes Diverges 48:51

That's what I'm saying. Just give me a tablet and be done with it. I don't mind mint toothpaste but like that sounds actually so delicious and like it would actually make my tooth brushing experience a lot more fun and interesting that I might actually go out and try and find that dragon toothpaste because that's literally the coolest thing I've ever heard in my life. Thank you for sharing that

Christian Palmer 49:13

yes, I will share that with you.

Jes Diverges 49:15

Yes please do have and so I guess I know you're not really working right now but if just in case our audience has like any questions for you or anything like that, would you want to share like maybe an email or your your social or things like that just for folks to connect with you?

Definitely

Christian Palmer 49:32

I'll give you my link tree so you can put it in the show notes or whatever but I am on threads primarily right now. I do have Instagram and Tiktok it's all the same handle everywhere pogsandjellotarot all one word so that's P O G S A N D J E L L O tarot T A R O T. Yes. So that's where you can find Join me. I'm happy to answer any good faith questions and I'm going to lean heavily on good faith.

Jes Diverges 50:06

Yes, good faith only. Don't be mean to my friend. Yes,

Christian Palmer 50:11

yes. Happy to answer any questions about Tarot or astrology. Although I don't consider myself to be a professional astrologer. I would consider myself to be a professional Tarot practitioner. But there's a lot more I have to learn about astrology. So ask away. And I look forward to seeing y'all out there on the social media on the interwebs and whatnot. I saw that word so much I can't believe I used it.

Jes Diverges 50:40

I started seeing interwebs ironically, a while ago, and that's one of the words now that I just like regret ever doing that? Because I say all the time and every time I do, I'm like, oh my god, what the hell? Yeah. So on that note, thank you so much for coming to my podcasts and sharing all

this stuff, but a great conversation. I can't wait to listen back. And yeah, thanks, everyone for listening. Take care. I'll see you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. As one of our members said about our calls: "I never imagined I'd be standing in my kitchen hearing my struggles come out of someone else's mouth, and then someone else's. After a lifetime of feeling like I just don't make sense... it's revelatory, and it's everything." You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

004: AuDHD Explained

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Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Jes Diverges

Hello, hello, everyone. So as you could probably guess by the title in this episode, I'm going to give y'all a rundown of what auDHD actually is. And some of the ways that ADHD and autism tend to interact with each other. I'll first talk about ADHD, then I'll talk about autism and then the combo meal, along with some common experiences that I've noticed in my auDHD clients over the last two years. I also wanted to share that I just opened up a new program that will be starting at the end of June called AuDHD Summer Camp! This is a six week virtual program. (So there's no actual woods or bugs involved) where you'll get to join an online community of other auDHDers as we go through weekly topics that will help you better understand your auDHD brain, learn how to set your life up, set up your life in a way that honors said brain and tap into your inner child's sense of play, so that you can put the fun back in dysfunctional. It costs \$750 to join and there is a payment plan available. Plus, if you sign up by May 24, you will get a free one to one coaching session with me. And I will share that link in the show notes if anyone is interested in learning more and signing up.

So what is auDHD? there is a really big misconception that ADHD and autism are like similar conditions or some people even say that they are on the same spectrum. That's actually not true at all, they are very, very different and very unique neurotypes. They are so different, in fact that you actually could not be diagnosed with both until 2013. So before that, they thought that you could either be autistic or you can have ADHD, but not both, just because both conditions are so kind of like contradictory and like often opposite of each other, which I think any auDHDer can kind of back me up on that. So the big reason for this misconception that they are similar is based in observational psychology. So in other words, modern Western psychology has this thing where they only count what they can literally physically see and observe as data. And they don't really take internal experiences into account. I could do a whole nother episode on the issues with Western psychology like this. But I digress. So while it's true that some ADHD and autistic traits can seem similar on the outside, often what is different is the internal experience of it, and the reasons that we have for exhibiting those outward behaviors. And in my personal and professional opinion, if you have both ADHD and autism, the combination of the two, create a neuro type that is so unique, contradictory and also compounding at the same time, that it pretty much creates an entirely new experience in and of itself. Hence why my focus is on the auDHD

experience always, rather than on one or the other. I also want to say that given the very like vast, multifaceted experience that is being an auDHDer, I am definitely not going to cover like everything about the auDHD experience in this one podcast episode. But I am going to do my best to kind of give you all a really good, like foundation of knowledge that you can then take with you and do more research look up more term specifically and all that fun stuff. So first things first, ADHD. So I think one of the, like, major traits of ADHD is that we have interest based attention. So contrary to popular belief, it's not necessarily a lack of attention. But it is a lack of control of attention. So in other words, we don't really get to choose what our brains will focus on. So if you don't have ADHD, supposedly, like you know, you need to pay attention to and you can just kind of like flip that switch in your brain. And that's what you're focusing on. We cannot really do that. We do have the ability to focus, but our attention is kind of very, very sticky, and again, very interest based. So the analogy that I like to use for this is like the sticky hand analogy. I feel like my attention is a lot like those sticky hands that you would get out of a vending machine and the 90s were like you hold on to the loop on the end and it's like connect to like a rubber ish string with like a hand on and you can like throw it to the window and it sticks. So when I'm paying attention to it, it's like the sticky hand is on that thing. And it's like really stuck to it, you can kind of tug at the string. But my attention is still stuck to the thing, if you really, really yank it, it will kind of go in the other direction, but then it will get very stuck to whatever was on the opposite side of it. So that's my fun little analogy. And just for some proof that we definitely do not lack attention, I think hyperfocus is really good evidence of that. So that is our ability to kind of like really hone in on something, and focus on only that thing for hours at a time to the point where we can even forget to go to the bathroom, eat, talk to people walk around, you know, all that fun stuff. We've all we've all been there. And because we have interest based attention, it can be really hard for us to actually pay attention to something that is non interesting to us for extended periods of time. So this is why ADHD or is often have trouble in like school and like calm workplaces and things like that is because there's just like, literally not enough there to make our attention stick to that thing. And our brain is going to kind of seek stimulation elsewhere. We also tend to focus on things that others might miss or don't pay attention to just because we're always kind of looking around our environment for things that are actually interesting. And this attention to detail can actually be very, very handy. And often leads us to unique, like creative problem solving solutions, or just going on adventures in general. It also means that we can be a little bit forgetful, especially around small details, like dates, and things like that. And it's also what leads to what is colloquially known as object impermanence. Now, it's not literally object impermanence, because that's something that develops, you know, in in infancy, and it's this idea that, you know, if you can't see something, you you literally forget that it exists, that does happen with us, but there's like, just not really a better term for it. Anyway, object permanence is that that phenomenon where like, say you put your phone down somewhere, and then immediately you just like, cannot find it. This is also due to something called habituation, which is like getting used to sensory input to the point where like, you don't even notice it anymore. So if you put something down, that something tends to like blend into your surroundings, so that your surroundings kind of become one, instead of being a mix of different things. And it's gonna even go so far as to make us forget that people exist. But on the plus side, we also get super, super excited when we remember that they do exist again. So you know, balance homeostasis, we love to see it. In addition to that, ADHD years are also we tend

to gravitate towards things that are like novel to us, or things that are exciting. So new things are very, very interesting to our interest, base attention, brains. And also, because of this, when we get bored, that boredom can actually be so under stimulating that it feels like either being tired or in some extreme cases, it can even be experienced as like, physical pain, like discomfort. And this is also why ADHD is always kind of seeking stimulation of some kind, hence why we tend to fidget and be hyperactive and all that fun stuff. Another aspect of ADHD is impulsivity. So a lot of us tend to act on things before we have time to really think about them. This can manifest in ways like interrupting others in conversations, without really meaning to, or quitting jobs. Suddenly, if you get you know, fed up enough during the day, and you just walk out without having another job set up, things like that. And, of course, with ADHD, hyperactivity comes into play as well. So, there are multiple different kinds of hyperactivity, there is hyperactivity of the body, which is like what we tend to see as like fidgeting, stimming that kind of thing and there can also be hyperactivity of the mind. So like the racing thoughts, you know, multiple thoughts at once jumping to like very far conclusions back and forth.

And you can have both, you know, hyperactivity of the mind and hyperactivity of the body or sometimes you can have like more one or the other. And if you are a late realize on ADHD or you probably kind of learned to hide this hyperactivity or make it seem smaller. are in some way. So, that could mean gravitating towards like more subtle fidgets such as like nail biting or leg shaking, I am a major fan of hair twirling things like that. We also tend to talk really fast like I had to actually be really intentional and train myself to speak slower because I've had, so I've been told so many times that I sound like I'm being fast forwarded, and I want others to, you know, be able to actually understand me, we also might learn how to be hyperactive in so called, like, socially acceptable ways. So things like being hyper productive, like joining a whole bunch of clubs all at once, or taking a lot of classes all at once, or just generally, really keeping yourself busy always having a project when I was in school, looking back now I call myself like a little hyperactive helper, because I was kind of the teacher's pet in most of my classes, I always was like the first one to volunteer to help the teacher when they asked for help, just to give me a chance to like get out of my seat in a way that I knew I wouldn't like get in trouble for ADHD years, also experienced something called time agnosia, which is basically we are not able to intuitively keep track of time at all. Like, have you ever had a situation where like, you're focusing on something, you're in hyper focus, and all of a sudden you blink and look up, and oh, my god, six hours has gone by when I thought it had only been five minutes. Or like you realize that something happened, you know, four years ago, when you could have swore that it was, you know, just last week, that is due to this time agnosia It's also referred to as like ADHD years experience time as now and not now. So if it's not, like seriously urgent, if it's not literally happening, like right now, it basically does not exist to me, this can be why like things like Excel, like long faraway deadlines can be challenging for us. Because it just like, literally, if it's not going to be here in like the next five seconds, I it's not in my radar, it's just not. Another way that I've seen this described that I really like is that we experience time, vertically, rather than horizontally. So most folks, non ADHD folks experience time sort of horizontally. So it's like a straight line going like back like, it comes from like behind you and also moves forward in front of you. And like they can kind of see themselves linearly on this horizontal line of time. Whereas for us, we experience time, vertically. So it's like everything that you know happened in our past

feels like it literally just happened, like we don't really have that sense of time space like non ADHD folks have. And that I think, sums up like the main points of ADHD. So now let's talk a little bit about autism. So the first thing that I have here in my notes about autism is hyper connectivity and neural pruning. So neural pruning is something that happens in all brains, whether you're autistic or ADHD, or or so called neurotypical, all brains experienced neural pruning, what this is, is as you as you age, you're you have certain pathways in your brain neural pathways. And as you grow up, and you learn things like language behavior, how to do things, you use certain pathways in your brain. And over time, your brain kind of notices which pathways aren't being used and kind of cuts them away at prunes them, kind of in the same way that you would prune dead leaves of a plant so that the actual alive parts can become you know, more nourished. However, studies have shown that autistic people as we grow up, we do not experience nearly the same amount of neural pruning as a non autistic or as an autistic brain would experience. So, the result of this neural pruning in autistic brains is that their brains tend to be pruned in like a lot of similar patterns. So if you take a brain scan of a bunch of different autistic people, their brains will tend to light up in a lot of similar areas and kind of pretty much have the same patterns and things like that. Where as if you take too like if you take autistic brains and compare them with the same brain scan, no two autistic brains are the same. So our neural pruning is a little bit more random. And this is why like a lot of autistic folks alike will be so so vastly different from each other. Like this is why they say that if you've met one An autistic person, you've literally met one autistic person, because all of our brains are literally 100% unique and different. I just think that's so cool. There is lots of research to be found on Google if you're interested in hearing more about this. But the one other thing that I want to share about hyperconnectivity is because of this sort of lack of neural pruning, our brains become hyper connected. So it means that like, we tend to have more brain activity, our brains are kind of working with spending a lot more energy than an autistic brain would, to the point where studies have shown that autistic brains actually tend to process 42% More information at rest than autistic brains. Now that's at rest 42% more information. So imagine how much of our brains are lit up when we're actually like, thinking and using them. It makes sense why, you know, we tend to get so tired at the end of our day is because our brains are literally on, they're working on overdrive all the time. So, as a result of this hyperconnectivity comes, you know, the other traits of autism. So, another big one is something called mono tropism. Mono tropism is the tendency to either be interested in or be able to do one sort of thing at a time. So because our brains are always processing so much more information, it makes it difficult to take on new information. It also, you know, kind of contributes to, like there's this conception that autistic people like have slower processing or have like delayed processing. Actually, that's not true. It's literally just because we're processing like way, way more information at one time. So of course, it's going to take longer to, you know, read a 30 page essay than it is to read like a five bullet point social media post, for example. And so it makes sense that we would have mana tropic brains, because when you're taking in that much information, of course, you're not going to be able to, you know, take an information on a bunch of different things at once, we really need to kind of focus our attention otherwise, we will, like literally overload our brains and will lead to like overstimulation, overwhelm, sometimes meltdowns, things like that. There are again, lots of articles on monitor tropism. It's like one of my favorite topics, I could do a whole episode, just on that highly recommend looking into that if you want to learn more about it. So another trait of

autism is what's called systems thinking. It's also called Gestalt processing. Basically, we tend to think very, very broadly. And we really need to understand like a lot more details about a thing, before we will feel like we have an understanding of that thing. But once we do, we can take like a very, very broad, big picture, like look at it. And we are also really good at kind of really seeing between the lines and being able to connect dots between, like things that an autistic person wouldn't really be able to, like, see the big system picture of it all. A really, really good analogy for this that I heard from a friend recently is, so if you play video games, you know how there's like a fast travel feature where you can just kind of jump from town to town really quickly. Or you can like choose to walk on the trails and like really explore, especially if it's an open world video game. So for all ballistic folks, they only have fast travel mode, they can only jump like between, like from small detail to small detail without seeing the big picture. Whereas for us, we can kind of pick and choose whether we want sometimes whether we want to fast travel to the thing, but we also have the option of walking and really exploring and getting like a really, really detailed in depth

understanding of a thing, which I think that's such a great analogy. So another trait of autism is that we tend to prefer like structure routine and things like predictability. Again, things like routines and predictability, create a lot of sameness in our life. It's also why we tend to gravitate towards like sort of the same foods, same type of clothes and things like that, as again, this processing power of our brains. We're taking in so much information all at once that of course we're only going to you know, we're going to want to keep everything like as same as it possibly can in order to protect our brains from having to do like even more work and deal with you know, changes and unpredictability and the overstimulation that can come with that. We also tend to have very strong like perfectionism and needs for certainty. So again, certainty predictability, we like to know what to expect, we like to know what's going to happen so that we can be prepared ahead of time, instead of having to kind of make a decision in the moment, which can be, you know, a really, really difficult way to live. Because unfortunately, most of human existence is not particularly certain. I don't know if anyone has ever noticed that before. And so when you have this really strong need for certainty, it can be really hard to kind of accept that unexpected changes and things like that are always going to happen. Another aspect of autism is that we tend to have a very, very strong sense of our own personal values. So a lot of people refer to this as a strong sense of justice. But I've I've seen a lot of conversations, especially with black artistic folks, that it's not really a sense of justice, because there's not really one, like overall objective definition of what Justice actually means. So like, what is fair for one person to another person, they might not think it's particularly fair. So instead, I like to refer to it as a strong sense of your own personal values. So if we see something that we personally, subjectively interpret to be unfair, it will like really, really get under our skin. And we will kind of try and do our damndest to make whatever change we think needs to happen in order to restore that sense of balance, that sense of justice. I think I've also mentioned this a little bit before, but we also find like things like change and transitions difficult. Again, if something is different, you're going to have to process a lot more information about it a lot different information, you might have to think about it in a different way. And so it's just really hard to get our brains and our bodies to switch gears, sometimes we have to often do it a lot slower, or like add some combinations on top of it in order to make it easier for us to manage. And also, of

course, there are a lot of social differences that come with being autistic as well. I'm trying to keep this episode under like 45 minutes total. So I can't really go dive deep, too deep into you know, all of them. But just as kind of like an overall view. So autistic folks tend to prefer like very direct, very clear communication. So we like to provide a lot of details and try and do our best to make sure that we'll be like 100% Understood, and there's leave kind of like no room for interpretation. Again, probably trying to keep up with that like predictability, making sure everyone's on the same page. We also tend to prefer discourse over dialogue. So dialogue is kind of a back and forth between two or more people where like one person will share a sentence or two, then the other person will share a sentence or two. And they'll just kind of go back and forth in conversation that way. Whereas for autistic folks, our conversations tend to be more similar to discourse, which isn't like online discourse, where like, it's just like fighting with each other. The objective definition of discourse is just like, you share like a longer like paragraph about something first, like you give a lot of information upfront all at once. And then you give the other person a chance to also give kind of a longer response to what you said. And it's kind of a conversation in bigger chunks, so to speak. We also tend to have very like information base and solution focused communication. So again, we try and provide a lot of details. If there is a problem, we are always interested in actually fixing it. Instead of like talking about the problem and wondering why the problem is there, we kind of just want to like fix it and move on. We also tend to focus on just words and information in a conversation, rather than other information like tone, facial expression, body language, things like that just really aren't on our radar like it is for all allistic folks. And so we tend to miss a lot of like, a lot of nonverbal social cues for that reason. However, it's something interesting, and it's the reason why I said that these are social differences rather than social deficits, is because these differences tend to kind of hinder conversation when it comes to an autistic person talking to an autistic person, a lot of things tend to get kind of lost in translation misinterpreted. But if you have like an autistic person talking to another autistic person, then the conversation becomes a lot more clear. Both people feel like they have a really better understanding of it. Because we just, we communicate in different ways. A lot of people have also compared it to like going to a different culture like experiencing a different dialect. Yeah, it's a language, it's a culture. And you know, when we meet others from our same culture, we tend to have better understandings with each other. I also like to describe autistic folks as like social cactuses, rather than social orchids. So most folks, I shouldn't say most folks, allistic folks are considered social orchids. So they need a lot of like constant watering, a lot of, you know, social interaction, maybe daily, they need to talk to someone at least once in order to kind of feel like their social cup is filled up. And they really need that like kind of constant line of communication. Whereas for us, we are a social cactuses. And so we really only need that social so called watering every once in a while. And once we kind of, you know, get enough social interaction, you know, maybe once a month, once every few months, we can pretty much stay like golden for for a really long time. So I really liked that analogy, too. So I also wanted to talk about some of the traits that are kind of similar in both, again, similar from the outside, but can kind of have different internal reasons or internal causes. So the first thing is executive function or lack thereof. Again, this is something that I could do like a whole other episode, and I probably will in the future. But there are sorry, I just had to pause this and literally count them. So there are there are eight executive functions in total. Again, this is something you can find a lot on if you just Google like executive function. The

eight executive functions are flexible thinking, self monitoring, emotional regulation, organization, planning and prioritizing task initiation, impulsivity, and working memory. So both Autistics and ADHDers tend to struggle with executive function. And we tend to have a lot of executive function differences or difficulties and things like that, especially when it comes to like task initiation. Procrastination, a lot of us also have a lot of arm emotional regulation challenges, which I'm definitely going to go into a little bit more in this episode. Another trait that exists in both is stimming. And the reason why it exists in both is because literally everyone stims every single human on this planet stims, but ADHDers tend to do it more often. So stimming is short for stimulation. And it's usually a sort of repetitive movement that your body does, as a way to either re-stabilize or energize your nervous system and basically like help your body move around. So for us stimming can look like fidgeting, like shaking. Like I said, before hair twirling, nail biting, spinning around rocking hand flapping, there's lots of different stims that you can do. But yeah, so both ADHDers and Autistics stim.

Another similarity between the two is that both are a little bit more susceptible to having a hypersensitive nervous system. So ADHD, Autistics, and Autistics contend can be either like sensory seeking. So you're always like seeking out sensory input stimulation and things like that, or a sensory avoidant, where you try and stay away from sensory input you try and like have as little stimulation on your body and your brain at all times as possible. Or you can kind of be a mix of the two. And if you're auDHDer you're probably a mix of the two. Along with this, you can be hyper sensitive to certain types of sensory input, which means that you are very sensitive to it, it's easy for you to feel it's very intense for you. Or you can be hypo sensitive to it, which means that you don't really sense it as much, you don't really feel it as much, and things like that. Sensitivity to different things can both like change over time. So your reaction to something might be different a year or two years from now. Or you can have different levels of sensitivity to different things. And so the types of sensory processing, again, could be a whole nother episode. But the types of sensory processing are visual, smell, sound, taste, touch, proprioception, which is the sense of where you are in space and time. interoception so internal feelings and sensations, and vestibular. So that's your sense of balance. And again, I think I said this already, but it's in my notes. I'm going to do it another Episode just on like sensory processing a little bit later. But another aspect of the like having a sensitive nervous system is that we can be more sensitive to both triggers and to glimmers. So you might know that a trigger is something that might remind you of something traumatic or stressful that happened in your past that tends to be like kind of a negative experience for you and brings up negative memories. A glimmer is the opposite of that. So the same way that we can have intense emotions, like intense negative emotions, we can also have really intense positive emotions. And so sort of like small simple things that we see in our day to day life can just like really add so much joy, and you know, happiness to our experience that other people like would have to actually work really hard to feel that joyful about things. So for example, a recent glimmer of mine, because it's like early spring is there were a bunch of like flowers on the trees and all the petals were just like falling off of the trees and it looked like colorful snow and it just like, oh my god, I love it so much. So yeah, we're more sensitive to both triggers and glimmers, again, balance, we love to see it ADHDers also tend to be a little bit more susceptible to trauma due to having this like sensitive nervous system. It's combination of a lot of things, but some of

the main you know, things that I've heard from clients and also just generally listening to auDHDers over the years are like being misunderstood and like being bullied or rejected just generally being like either mocked or shamed, rejected, criticized for showing like any hint of our auDHD traits and things like that. So in was the last episode, it was like a couple of episodes ago, but I talked about RSD. And so like that's, that's an example of a trauma response. Because like, when we experience something negative, the emotions that come with that negative thing are just like so much more intense, that it is a little bit more likely to turn into trauma eventually. I feel like I keep saying this. But again, I'm going to do a whole nother episode on trauma and like what that actually is later, because there's like, oh my god, so much I could say about it. But in addition to that Rhd dears also tend to have a lot of emotional regulation differences. So on the ADHD side, there are often like very, very intense and like fast moving emotions. So you feel your emotions very strongly. Sometimes they come on very quickly. And sometimes they can also go away pretty quickly. Whereas on the autistic side, your autism tends to get like overwhelmed by set intense, very fast moving emotions. And so you can literally like dis regulate yourself, just because you like got too excited about something for a second, for example. Also, our way of stabilizing our nervous system might look a lot different in us than it does to others. So for us if we you know are feeling anxious or like really need to help ourselves Calm down, we might stim talking out loud is also really, really helpful for us, especially if you're a Hypo hyper verbal processor. If your thoughts are like trapped in your head, they can't get out, they literally like need to get out so you can make sense of them. So talking out loud journaling, pacing back and forth, going into a dark, like quiet room to like help you process what is going on, etc. These emotional regulation differences can also lead to meltdowns and shutdowns. Once again, this is gonna be a whole other episode. But essentially, so a meltdown is usually caused by a buildup of like a combination of things that eventually trigger a very intense and overwhelming emotion and leads to a loss of control of ourselves. meltdowns can also be internal or external. So a lot of us hear the word meltdown. And we think of you know, a kid, you know, throwing things around the classroom and just like yelling, screaming, breaking things, all that stuff. That actually for me, my meltdowns, for a long time, were actually very much internal and it would kind of on the outside just look like I was, you know, having a bit of a mental breakdown and crying really hard. But what I would do is I would like go into a corner and like literally put myself into a ball like a fetal position. And just like cry and cry and cry for hours, meanwhile, thinking of like the worst thoughts about myself, kind of essentially beating myself up inside instead of beating up my environment. So there's something fun for you to think about for a little bit. And meltdowns can last anywhere from just five minutes to a few hours. shut downs, on the other hand, tend to come either after you have a meltdown or when you say Press a meltdown. So you just go right into shutdown, the shutdown, you kind of appear to be in a trance or like zoned out a little bit. You tend to like sort of withdraw and isolate yourself a lot, you might not want to talk to anybody during this. And this shutdown is basically your body's way of tuning out stimulation so that you can return back to baseline and basically feel like a human again, shutdowns can last anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks. Another aspect of the auDHD experience is the combination of a hyper focus and special interests. So ADHD, or is often have like hyper focus or hyper fixations, well, they'll get super into like a certain hobby or a topic or something, usually for like, a few weeks or a few months at a time. And they'll kind of like flit between different things, jack of all trades, master of

none, you know, all that fun stuff. Whereas autistic folks will tend to have like special interests, where there's only like, a handful of things that we tend to really do deep dives in and really try and learn like everything about we always want to be like engaging with it interacting with it in some way. And so when you have the combo meal, this tends to look like having a lot of different special interests, like maybe a handful or two of special interests, that you kind of experience through phases. Like a lot of times, if I'm trying to remember like, when something happened, what year it was, I'll think of like, okay, what hobby was I into at that time? And I'll be like, Oh, that was when I was super into ceramics. Okay, so that must have been in 2017. And I think like that, I tend to switch like every couple of years or so my my hyper focus slash special interest. So for the last part of the episode, I just wanted to kind of list some, like common experiences that a lot of my ADHD clients and also myself, have, you know, brought either to coaching sessions or that I've just heard about, because I think it can really be helpful to hear like, the real life examples of this, as opposed to like, the education is great, but like, what does this actually look like? So one of the most common things that I've talked about with my clients in particular is either having like a mis diagnosis, or an under diagnosis, due to the fact that our neuro types tend to kind of like balance each other out or cancel each other out. Like I know a lot of auDHDers have been misdiagnosed with things like BPD, bipolar disorder, dissociative disorders, things like that. And not saying necessarily, that it's bad to have those things like all the row types are valid and everything like that. But if you're treating yourself as a certain neuro type, when like, it's actually something else, it can actually wind up being very detrimental both to your physical and your, your mental health. So that's a very, very common experience with all of us, like I myself, was under diagnosed, I

thought that I just had like, quote, unquote, high functioning anxiety, until I was like, how even old was I 2829. When I found out that I was ADHD, I have a few clients who didn't realize that they were ADHD until their 40s 50s, even 60s. So that's really common experience. Another one is experiencing burnout eventually, from not knowing that you are on ADHD and giving yourself proper accommodations. So as you all know, I am on about year four, of burnout because it started at the beginning of the pandemic. And a lot of it was because I, you know, lived my life as a fully functional neurotypical person and kind of just like, rocked everything, never took time to ask myself, if anything, could be easier if any changes could be made or things like that, I was just kind of going for it. Until I frickin couldn't anymore. So that's also a really common experience. Another one is like really, really craving things like routines and sameness, unpredictability, but not being able to stick to it for the life of you. Like, say you find a routine that like works for you. And it's great for like a couple of days. But either eventually your ADHD is going to get bored of it, and you're not going to want to do it anymore. Or you're just going to completely forget that you put it in place in the first place and do something else and then the routine gets totally thrown off and you don't even want to look at it again. Another one I had in my notice, impulsive, but in parentheses, but not really. So like, we might look like we're impulsive from the outside. Like it might seem like we're making sudden decisions. But actually what I've noticed is that internally, our so called impulsive decisions for Rdh dears is often something that we've actually been like internally ruminating on for a while we've been kind of thinking about it more Get over for a really long time. And then one day, we wake up and decide, You know what, today's the day I'm going to do it. And then we just go and do it. Another really

common experience is like wanting to be social and wanting to make new friends make lots of friends. But our social differences make it really, really difficult to do this. I think the wanting to be social comes from the ADHD side, because again, like interest and novelty, what's more interesting than meeting new human beings, right. But again, our autism, kind of the differences that come with their autism plus, like the overstimulation that can come from too much socialization makes it really difficult to do. However, like I mentioned before, we do tend to communicate better with folks with similar neuro types. Hence why it's a difference, not a deficit. But yeah, so wanting to be social, but the social differences like make it really hard to another common experience is having like so called contradictory personality traits, which is also known as a spiky profile. I've also heard it referred to as a spider profile. But it's basically like, well have certain areas where like, we're really, really good at doing something. And other areas where we are just not good at doing something at all. Like another analogy I've heard is that you either have, it's like another video game analogy. So you know how you have like different, like personality traits or skills in a video game, an RPG game or things like that. And you can have like, anywhere between zero and 20, in that certain skill. So in for our skills, we were either at like a one, or read a 20. And there's really no kind of in between, which can make it really confusing. If, for example, you're like me, like I'm really, really good at talking about like psychology and trauma and all these like complex topics I could really like, I have a good understanding of this. And I can complex, these so called complex things, and they're simplify and explain it to a lot of people, which is very, very impressive. But the way that I can't actually remember to like feed myself every day, for example, without someone else reminding me tends to be really confusing for folks. It's like, how can we can figure that out, but not that well, auDHD, baby, that's why. So another auDHD common experience is like the combination of our systems thinking, and the system's thinking that comes from the autism and the very, very fast and very, very plentiful thoughts that come with the ADHD also means that a lot of us have at least one area where we have like a really thorough understanding of something and can connect the dots between those things like a lot faster than other folks, it's one of the reasons why I freaking love talking to ADHD or so much is because like, we know so much, and we can, like connect the dots really fast. And it's just fascinating to hear, like, how people think about things and like their thought process between things and what they're interested in why and all that stuff. Another common experience is your ADHD, writing checks that your autism can't cash. So our ADHD is often really like sensory seeking, it's looking for stimulation, it's looking for exciting things. So our ADHD will often agree to things like future plans or events or like, Sign us up for a bunch of things. And then when the time comes, our autism is like, Oh, actually, I would rather crawl into a hole and bury myself in the backyard forever and never to be seen again. So that's another really common, contradictory experiences, like we we part of us wants to do all the things we really want to go out in the world and explore but like our autism just like doesn't have the capacity or willingness to kind of keep up with ADHD. And last, but certainly not least, on my list of common auDHD experiences, is not feeling autistic enough, or ADHD enough for it to count. And so like I was saying earlier in the episode, I think this is also a big reason why so many of us go so long, like, decades and decades of our lives before realizing that we are on ADHD is because like a lot of us a lot of my clients and myself included in this have sort of considered whether we might be at least autistic or ADHD for a few years prior because like there are certain hints that you see as you go through life, but we're able to kind of like,

suppress those thoughts or like explain them away, partly due to like internalized ableism not really fully understanding what it means to be autistic and ADHD. But also because like for example, I considered whether or not I might be autistic for like a really, really long time like most of my 20s but I would always say that like oh well I can't be autistic because I really love talking to people and I really love you know Hearing about people and having conversations about deep things and like there's no way I could be autistic because autistic people don't really like that, oh, lo and behold, if your auDHD like that a whole hell of a lot. So that said, I do want to let you know that if you are an ADHD or listening to this, who feels like I just explained, like every aspect of your life and you're feeling very seen and heard, and want to let you know that you are in fact, autistic enough, you are ADHD enough. If you are relating to the things that I'm saying, honey, I gotta tell you what self diagnosis is valid. And if you're not an ADHD, or you're really not going to relate to a lot of the things I'm talking about to be honest with you. So that said, I see you I hear you, you are valid. I hope that this episode helps you understand a little bit more about your own personal experience. And as always, feel free to leave a comment in the comment box. I think there's a comment box on Spotify. I'm not sure if there's one on Apple. You can leave a questions, comments, thoughts in the comment box. I really love hearing from you. I'm sure folks are gonna have a lot of questions about this episode. It was very dense. I tried to fit as much information as I possibly could while also keeping it at like an okay time length. So hopefully I did a good job. As always, thank you so so much for listening, and I will catch you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. As one of our members said about our calls: "I never imagined I'd be standing in my kitchen hearing my struggles come out of someone else's mouth, and then someone else's. After a lifetime of feeling like I just don't make sense... it's revelatory, and it's everything." You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

005: The Tribulations of Transitions

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Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello, hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of UnShaming auDHD. It has been a few weeks since I released an episode. And I just wanted to not apologize for that. But just like acknowledge that. And so the reason for that is kind of twofold. So one, I've been very, very busy putting together auDHD summer camp, which I'm super excited for, and starts on June 24. And I'm gonna put the link for that in the show notes. And I also this week started a semi new part time job at the bakery I used to work at ironically, it has been very interesting, going back to the same job that I had, before I realized I was autistic and ADHD, and kind of noticing how different my reactions are to things that used to like, really, really bother me. But that's going to be an episode for another day. Before I get sort of this one, I also want to announce that I've added some new tiers and payment plans to summer camp as well to try and make it as affordable as possible. So you can now join for \$400, \$750, or \$1,000. And there are payment plans available for each tier. I also added a bonus integration week. So it's now a seven week program with a bit of a break in the middle just to give folks a chance to relax and absorb all of the information that you will get when you sign up.

However, I do also want to mention that this is an anti FOMO space. And if you can't afford to sign up for summer camp at this point, it will not be the end of the world. I promise. That is exactly why I have this podcast and my social media accounts and my email list and everything like that is because I'm trying to provide as much free and valuable help as I can, while still creating a sustainable and thriving living situation. For myself. I won't be talking about anything in that program that I'm not also willing to share for free here. But what you're paying for when you sign up is having the information organized into PDFs and audios as well as getting access to individualized coaching from me, both during our coaching calls and in the online community. I would love to have you join us if you're able to. But please Don't pressure yourself into making a decision that will cause you financial stress. I promise you, no program is worth that. And if anyone tells you differently, frankly, they're lying to you. I only want people to buy from me if they're glad to do so.

And so without further ado, I will now transition into the topic for today's episode, which is transitions. Haha, see what I did there. So for this episode, I'm going to talk about transitions and some of the reasons why we struggle with them as auDHDers. Plus, I'm going to share some personal experience that I had with a major transition that I experienced at the beginning of this year that is actually still very much impacting me now that it's like mid June.

So first things first, why exactly are transitions so difficult for us? First, we have our very good friend monotropism, which I've mentioned before, but just as a reminder, monotropism is a phenomenon where ADHD and autistic folks are only able to focus on or think about a small number of things at one time, usually one thing or maybe two if we're lucky. And this phenomenon of monotropism creates something that is referred to as attention tunnels. So monotropism gives us a fair amount of quote, unquote, tunnel vision in our brains. So basically, what that means is that when we are focused on something, or when we're doing something, we are very, very focused on that thing we are doing only that thing to the point that anything that isn't the thing that we're actively focusing on, basically, like ceases to exist for us, like I have forgotten that my surroundings exist, I have forgotten that people exist. You know, all of that fun stuff. I'm sure if you're listening, you're and you're an auDHDer you're familiar with that. And all of this, the attention tunnels, and the amount of monotropism is due to the hyper connectivity that we have in our beautiful auDHD brains. Basically, in our brains, we do not experience nearly as much neural pruning growing up as our autistic and neurotypical peers do, which means that we have lots of different pathways in our brains that we have to sort of sift through and connect together before we're able to switch tracks. And on that note, I also want to mention this train tracks analogy that actually my pre wife came up with I think is really, really helpful when it comes to explaining this stuff. So basically, our brains are like a network of train tracks. And for the most part, those pathways are pretty set like wherever they are is where they are. And that's the path that the train is going to take. But in certain places, there is a lever that we can use to switch the direction of the tracks so that we can get to different pathways in our brains and start focusing on different things other than the path that we're already on. So when you transition, you basically have to find the right lever to pull in order to change your train of thought. But until you find that lever, you will keep continuing down the same path that you're already on. And all of this leads to what is known as autistic inertia, which is the tendency for autistic people to want to remain in a constant or fixed state, even if that state is uncomfortable for us. And the thing about transitions is that big and small transitions can be stressful for us. It's not just big changes, like moving or getting a new job or losing a relationship or anything along those lines. Transitions can be as small as going from being asleep, to being awake, going from being at home to being at work, being at work to being at home, getting out of the shower, to getting in the shower, even going from sitting down to standing up. Those are all examples of small transitions. Some other examples are like when you're in a conversation, and you have to go from being a listener to being a speaker, especially in like classroom settings. Like if you're at a lecture or something. And then all of a sudden, like, especially in zoom, this is like, I'm so allergic to zoom breakout rooms, like when I have to switch from just like listening to whoever's presenting talk about the thing to Okay, now we're all gonna get into discussion groups with like four or five people and have a small conversation and then jump back to the lecture. I'm like, Oh, God, no, can I please just like not. Another example is like when you're shopping, and you

have to go from just like shopping and browsing and looking at things to all of a sudden, you need to ask an employee for help. Another example of just like sudden human contact when your brain isn't ready for it. Another example of a transition is like when they replace an actor on one of your favorite TV shows or movie series. Like for me, I used to watch Roseanne all the time growing up. That was before it came out that she's Trumper and kind of went off the deep end, I don't really interact with that show anymore. But I remember I always had a hard time focusing during like the later seasons, because they got a new Becky. And I just like couldn't focus on whatever was happening in the scene because I was just like, that is not Becky, where's Becky, like, what's going on? Like, it was just I just could not let it go. Even so called positive changes are stressful for us. Because our brains are our brains are very intelligent in some ways, and a little bit not intelligent other ways. And so for example, our brains really don't have the ability to differentiate between good, different and bad or different, all they see is just different. So for example, at the beginning of this year, my three wife and I actually moved into a house, they went through the buying process and the signing process and all that stuff, and took me with them very lucky. And it's a you know, a very, very exciting change. Overall, it's a bigger place. There's lots more plays for both of us and our three cats, like there's lots of room we have the very fortunate privilege of owning our home. So now we are paying into equity instead of flushing it down the toilet to rent every month, which is definitely very nice. But the thing about all of this is it is very, very different from what we were both used to before which was renting a tiny single wide mobile home like we went from a tiny little mobile home to a two story house. And as a result of all of this change, I have been in a bit of a like dysregulated freeze state for going on six months now. I feel like now that it's been six months I'm like slowly starting to like get used to the house I have a little bit more energy than I used to, which is why I was able to start that part time job recently.

But for the last six months, everything has just felt like I am forcing myself to do it no matter what. Whether it's like just standing up brushing my teeth taking a shower or whatever it is. It's it felt like it was taking up so much energy both physically and mentally, like it was just really, really rough. There were times where I sort of questioning like, am I you know, slipping back into burnout? Am I getting depressed again, like what is going on? Until I finally you know, kind of brought it up with my, my therapist who asked me you know, will have I experienced anything overstimulating or overwhelming recently, and I was like, Oh, wait, we moved into a house, that's probably kind of messing with my nervous system a little bit. And so over the last, you know, six months when I have been left to my own devices, and I've been having such a hard time motivating myself to do things, I just straight up have been zoning out into video games for like, hours and hours and hours. And I'm feeling like, I'm not particularly in control, and all that fun stuff. And one of the conversations that kind of keeps playing in my head is like, I don't want to say I'm arguing with myself at this point, because I've done so much work over the years on like, my inner critic, and being self compassionate and things like that. But I will start thinking to myself, like, Hey, Jess, like, this is actually really exciting. You have a whole house to decorate, and you have all these plans? Like, why don't you just get excited? Why don't you just have fun, like, this is a good change, this is good, how come you're pretty much acting like you're depressed and just like zoning out into video games all the time. And it's like, well, brain, it's because like, it's all different, my nervous system is dysregulated. And being able to sit down

and play a video game, especially a predictable video game is very calming to me. And it's helping me, you know, basically not spend as much physical mental energy on like trying to focus on these changes. And so I've been, you know, being very compassionate with myself giving myself a lot of grace, taking it very slowly. And because of that, because of all that self compassion, and just kind of letting myself be a mess for the last few months, I am now slowly, like I said, at the beginning of the episode, slowly, kind of regaining some of my energy, I'm able to make, you know, do some of the like design things that I've been wanting to do, you know, slowly, but surely, we're moving up in the world. But it takes time, especially with a big transition like this. And, you know, I basically know at this point that beating myself up for it is going to have the opposite effect of what I want. So all that said, what actually helps with transitions, because that's always the good part, right? It's like, okay, yeah, we struggle with this. This is why, but what do we actually do about it? So, the fun thing about transitions, especially for auDHDers, is that kind of like the auDHD layer at all this is that if our ADHD is always craving novelty, and change, and newness and exciting things, but our autism always prefers things to stay the same. What the hell do you do in that situation? What I find both with myself and with my clients, is that often, we just have to find some way to compromise between the ADHD and the autism, when it comes to things like this. So for example, taking turns between like giving the ADHD new things every now and then, and then keeping some of the things the same for the autism and kind of just working with both that way, because, of course, both are equally valid. Yeah, sometimes compromise just needs to be made. Another thing is, you know, trying to keep as many things the same as you possibly can, especially during big big transitions. So like, when we moved into our new house, I did kind of suspect that the transition will be rough, it's been a lot rougher than I had originally thought. But that's how things always go. So when we moved, we made an effort to keep a lot of our same routines that we had in the old house. And we're like trying to keep it the same as like we literally physically possibly can. So a big one is like every single morning, we still go to our local coffee hut and get coffee together and drive around in the morning. Although we did have to find a new route, we definitely still do that every day. And that has helped a lot. We also tried to put our things in like the same spot as they were in our old place or like as close to the same spot as we could get it because like the house, the layout is different and all that stuff. But basically just trying to keep as many things the same or similar as you possibly can. Another thing is to make transitions as easy for yourself as possible. So any kind of like small preparation you can do for yourself, like for example laying out your clothes for the next day the night before, so that you don't have to make a decision about what to wear in the morning. And you can just get up, get dressed and go. Anywhere you can find like a step that really doesn't need to be there or anywhere you can sort of chunk things to simplify them or make them as easy as possible can be really helpful. Another one is making your environment in general, as comfortable as possible. So like for me, when I go to take a shower, especially during the winter and the colder months, I use a space heater in the bathroom, so that I don't have to like freeze before and after I get in and out of the shower. Because I feel like that's one of the worst parts. For me, it's just like before you get in, you know, you take your clothes off, and you're thinking it's cold in there. And then when you get out, it's all wet. And so like the space heater kind of helps it so that I don't have to dread either transition. Another bit of advice is making the transitions more fun, and like just kind of sprinkling some dopamine on top of it. So for example, in college, I would listen to music on my headphones as I walked between

classes, to help regulate my nervous system and like dance a little bit as I walked, kind of to kind of help ease the transition a little bit. I have a client one time who told me that she really struggles to like go from being in the house to like getting in the car and going somewhere. And so she'll just play like one of her favorite hype, dance songs, and will literally like dance her way out the door, which I love that so much. So yeah, just like kind of making them a little bit more fun. And then another thing that I've found helpful is to kind of set up like warnings for yourself when you know what transition is coming. So like, for example, for me, when I'm playing video games in the morning, I try and stop by like 10 or 1030, because like I do have other things that I need to do during the day. So what I'll do is I'll set a timer on my phone for like 30 minutes before I need to stop 15 minutes before five minutes before and then when it is time to stop. And that kind of helps me get used to the idea that like I'm going to have to transition out of the video game soon and into doing you know, whatever other tasks I have planned for that day. You can also you know, if you have someone that you trust that you live with, or a friend that can call you or whatever have them call you and let you know that like hey, you're going to have to start switching out of whatever things soon, whatever way works best for you and the way your nervous system works and all that fun stuff. Last but certainly not least, self compassion. I always feel like a broken record when I say things like this, but even just knowing that you know you're not weird or broken or defective or whatever. If you are particularly bothered with change, like while it's not fun to deal with at all it is a very normal part of the audio HD experience and you do not have to beat yourself up for it. You're allowed to be frustrated by something without being mean to yourself about it. And if you do happen to notice that you are beating yourself up, apologize and forgive yourself because nobody is perfect. And that concludes my episode on the tribulation of transitions. I hope that you found it helpful. As always, please feel free to leave a comment in the comment box if you're on Spotify or send me an email with your thoughts about this episode. I love hearing from you. And if you're interested in more in depth support when it comes to navigating life as a late realized audio HD or please consider signing up for my audio HD summer camp which starts on June 24. The link to that as well as the link to my social media email list website etc. are in the show notes. Thank you so much for listening, and I'll see you next time

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. As one of our members said about our calls: "I never imagined I'd be standing in my kitchen hearing my struggles come out of someone else's mouth, and then someone else's. After a lifetime of feeling like I just don't make sense... it's revelatory, and it's everything." You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

Bonus Episode: AuDHD Summer Camp Orientation Sampler

Published: July 2, 2024

0:02

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hey, folks, so I'm going to do something a little different for this episode. I haven't been able to spend much time on podcast episodes because I've been working on writing my summer camp program, which also incidentally, has been postponed to start this Friday, July 5, rather than the date I mentioned last episode, I postponed it because when I first scheduled the program, I wasn't expecting to also start a part time job back at the bakery. And that wound up taking up a bit more mental energy than I thought it would. So I decided to practice what I preach and give myself some more time to work on it in a way that I feel good about. That said, I recorded the orientation recently. And I honestly think it's so good and is full of some great philosophies for life in general, not just for summer camp, so I decided to release it as a podcast episode. Think of this as a little sampler of what you can expect if you join auDHD summer camp. And even if you don't mind up joining, I fully believe that you will still benefit from listening to some of the philosophies that I encourage campers to try out. Before we dive into the orientation, I also want to mention that I've been getting a lot of messages from folks asking if they're a right fit for the program. Here's the deal. I designed this program to be helpful for people, no matter where you are on your auDHD journey. Whether you're still in the questioning phase, or if you're newly identifying as auDHD. Or if you've known for years, you absolutely without a doubt belong here. I also designed it with burnout in mind, because that's also a pretty big part of being a late realized auDHDer, you'll hear in the orientation that there is absolutely no pressure in this program. And you will have access to the materials for life. As long as you have the motivation to make things even 1% easier for yourself and be even 1% more compassionate towards yourself. Summer Camp is for you. That said Please enjoy the welcome and orientation module of auDHD summer camp. The link to join will be in the show notes because we would love to meet you on auDHD summer camp. welcome and orientation. Welcome to auDHD summer camp. I am so excited that we'll be spending the next eight weeks together during orientation. I'm going to introduce myself and then we'll go over some of the practices and guidelines that will help you get the most out of this program. So first things first, who am I? I am Jes and my pronouns are she they it's fun you get to pick. I am an auDHD coach and I mostly work with clients on understanding their autistic and auDHD brains, uncovering shame and finding ways to take life less seriously so they can spend more time and energy on what's important to that. I teach using a combination of my educational background, personal life experiences and the life experiences of others with different identities and marginalization than myself. The privileges

that I hold that impact my lens are I am white native English speaking. I'm a US citizen college educated straight sized, and I can pass as neurotypical straight and able bodied when needed. I am also bisexual and non binary slash audit gender. And I have multiple physical and mental disabilities including autism, ADHD, CPTSD hyperlexia, dyscalculia, aphantasia prosopagnosia hEDS, scoliosis, IBS and TMJ. My background like I'm sure a lot of yours has many twists and turns. When I started college I originally wanted to be a physics teacher, but I quickly realized that the math involved was not in my wheelhouse of skills due to my then unknown dyscalculia I left undecided to pursue a degree in baking and pastry arts at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, where I got to hone my skills and learn from renowned master bakers from all over the world. Meanwhile, I was also in an emotionally abusive relationship at that time. For five years from age 16 to 21. I was with someone who wouldn't let me hang out with anyone if he wasn't there was always accusing me of cheating and would even threaten to kill himself if I ever left him. Midway through pastry school, I realized that my relationship was in fact abusive thanks to being introduced to feminism and misogyny on Tumblr, and gained the strength to end the relationship and walk away. Leaving him would be the catalyst to a now over a decade long journey toward radical self love that I am still very much on today. After graduating from pastry school, I had a hard time finding a job in my field. And I actually did a brief stint as a real estate agent before finding a job at a bakery, where I worked on and off for about six years. But after a few years, my ADHD, which I didn't know about at the time, and started getting bored, and I decided to go back to college for a third time, this time to become a psychologist. I spent another few years studying psychology and graduated with a bachelor's degree in December 2019. Also in December 2019, I met the love of my life and things finally started to seem like they were going according to plan. I was in a loving relationship with plans to work at the bakery for another few months before starting grad school in the fall to pursue a master's degree in social work and become a therapist. And then, well COVID happened. I went from running on all four cylinders being very gogogo all the time, to coming to a screeching halt. When I was at work one day and we got the news to shut it all down and go home for an undefined amount of time. We sent the customers home, emptied out all of the perishables and closed the doors. I then entered what I now know was severe autistic burnout, and became very depressed, unmotivated and fearful of the outside for a long time. The bakery did reopen after a few months, but my anxiety was so high that I put off going back for a while. And when I finally reached out, all the positions were full, I wound up picking up a few jobs, one of which included being a teacher's aide in an autism classroom. That turned out to be my most traumatic job experience yet, there was very little training for that job. And so every single day felt like a guessing game. Plus, even though I didn't know I was autistic at the time, it was very hard to watch some of the ways they would talk about an act towards the autistic students. I won't go into detail about what it's like to see a child go into crisis when you have no de escalation training, but it's not fun. So in spring of 2021, I eventually did make it back to the bakery, where I would stay until I started grad school at my new postponed date of fall 2021. Then, in a few weeks of a break, I gave myself between working and grad school, I realized that I was ADHD and my whole world began flipping upside down. I started ADHD medication in the hopes that it would make my schoolwork easier. And it did, but something else was still going on. After a few months getting my ADHD a bit more under control. My autism started shining through and I realized that I had the combo meal while I was in an online graduate school program. I tried to

stick it out and finish school. But now that I recognized my audio HD burnout for what it was, it became harder and harder every day. Then in January 2022, I started an internship and was placed at the very last position that I would have chosen for myself, a program dedicated to helping children who have experienced sexual assault or have exhibited sexually problematic behaviors. This wound up triggering a lot of my own personal trauma from childhood and trying to deal with that, while also keeping up with my schoolwork soon proved impossible. And I made the hard decision to drop out of school.

9:57

I didn't have a plan for what I would do next but I knew that if I stayed any longer, it would have permanent effects on my mental health. Shortly after that, I discovered coaching and decided to open up my own business to help other Rdh Sears deal with the tumultuous identity crisis that is late realization. I've been an ADHD coach for about two and a half years now. And it is hands down the best decision I've ever made for myself. I love working with other Rdh dears so much. And it brings me an immense amount of joy when I'm able to help someone be even just 1% more compassionate and kind toward themselves. In a world that is anything but outside of coaching. I now live with my pre wife and our three cats in our new house that we moved into at the beginning of this year. I consider myself to be spiritual in that I believe there are energies and forces in the universe that guide us if we're willing to listen. I read tarot and I am also currently learning astrology. And I also love video games I play Stardew Valley Animal Crossing spirit fair Mario Party horizon forbidden West and more recently, Fallout four. My passion for baking is still alive and well. And I actually just went back to the bakery again, part time at the beginning of last month. There's a lot more to my story than what I could include here. But this should give you a good idea of who I am and some of the things that have led me to being here today talking to you. So without further ado, let's talk about some things to keep in mind in order to get the most out of this program. First approach with curiosity. Curiosity is my number one value when it comes to anything mental health or trauma related. When you approach with curiosity, you're freeing yourself from the boxes that things like judgment, shame, or trying to find the right answer keep you stuck in. Think of yourself as a scientist, rather than as a detective. Detectives look for concrete shore evidence that they know will lead them down the path to finding the one true culprit behind a crime. They know their job is done when they've gathered all the evidence found the person who done it and justice has been served. On the other hand, a scientists job is never truly done. Sure, they might hypothesize about certain outcomes. But their main goal is always to experiment, to try on a bunch of different ideas and techniques and figure out objectively whether or not the results support or disprove their hypothesis. A scientist is always gathering data, and learning new things by integrating that data into what they already know. They're excited to come across a new perspective, especially one that challenges something that they thought was true, because it's an opportunity to expand their knowledge and grow. Scientists also understand that nothing is ever truly 100% Certain. That's why scientific theories are called theories. They are simply ideas that exist and have yet to be disproven, not necessarily concrete and permanent things. Even the theory of gravity is still a theory. We're pretty sure it's true. But true, scientists will tell you that somewhere out there, there could be evidence that disproves it. And it wouldn't be the first time something like that happened either. A scientist knows that just because an experiment turned out

unexpectedly. It doesn't mean they are a bad scientist. It just means something can be learned and adjusted accordingly, the next time they attempt it. In fact, most scientists look forward to quote unquote, failed experiments because they will get to learn something new. In other words, the point of all of this is not to find out all the right good, true answers for yourself. The point is to learn to be open to growing and expanding, learning new perspectives, trying things on and not beating yourself up for it if something doesn't work for you, because you can always try on something else later. There is a lot of information in this course. But it's definitely not all the information you'll ever need. Likewise, my perspectives are most certainly not the only perspectives on anything I'm going to cover in these next few weeks. I am not some infallible expert authority on anything. I'm a human just like you and some of the things I say may not apply to you, whatever you hear or read during this course, be curious about whether it does in fact apply to you or seem like it would work for you. If it does, great. And if it doesn't, it does not mean that you're not doing it right, or that you're the one who's broken or anything like that. If you have any other perspectives to share, or if you'd like to hear another take on something, please don't hesitate to bring it up either in the group or during our calls. That's exactly why this is a group experience, so that everyone can hear diverse perspectives and different experiences. So we can all gain as holistic of view as possible. On that same line, if I say anything that is offensive, or harmful in any way, I am 100% open to being called in and corrected, especially if you are a member of the global majority. I appreciate the labor that goes into this and understand that as a white person, I will always have something to learn. This whole approach with curiosity thing goes both ways. And the next guideline is you don't have to do everything. This is an anti hustle slash grind culture space, meaning there is no pressure to read or listen to absolutely every one of the lessons in this program. And there's certainly no pressure to do every one of the exercises and activities that you'll find here. My intent over these next few weeks is to give you a solid foundation that you'll be able to build off of and come back to for the rest of your life. Like I talked about in the last section, the point of life is always to be learning and growing. That's the fun part of it all. So rather than try to pressure yourself to go through and absorb everything this program has to offer within the next eight weeks only to never look at it again, you may find it much more sustainable and effective in the long run, to take things slowly at your own pace. In fact, I designed this program specifically so that even if you go through just one lesson, or hell even if you just go through this orientation, and apply that to your life moving forward, you'll already be miles ahead of the vast majority of folks on the same journey as you are. While I am certain that everything you'll hear in this program will help you in some way, shape or form. I'm also very certain that you do not need everything in this program in order to have a happy, shame free aligned sustainable life and healing journey. None of this is meant to feel like some big giant to do that ever looms over your head just waiting for you to finally get it done. You have lifetime access to this material. For this reason. Not only is it unrealistic to expect to absorb all the information here in this amount of time. But Sometimes life happens, and you don't always have as much time or energy as you thought you would. It's totally normal to go slow, or take breaks. And again, I literally designed the program to account for things like that. The only real time constraints here are that the coaching calls, and the online community will only be open until August 30. At which point you won't be able to make new posts in the group. However, you will have access to old posts as well as the material for as long as possible. And if you have questions for me after the program, you can always send me

an email and I'll try to get back to you as soon as I can. All this to say if you start to feel stifled or overwhelmed or pressured at any point, I encourage you to listen to yourself and slow down, even take a break if needed. Trust me, it will benefit you much more in the long run to do the course 1% at a time and actually be able to absorb and integrate things rather than try to do it all at once and wind up burning out.

19:32

Our next guideline is believe that you belong because you do if you are reading or listening to this right now, you belong in this space period. Almost every Rdh dear I've talked to has one thing in common and it's that historically we've always had to work to fit in to places no matter where or with who we We've been told where too much and not enough to this to that too sensitive, too weird, too blunt, too fast, too slow, too loud, too quiet, you get it. But that is not the case here. You don't have to fit in at audio HD summer camp, because you already belong here. You don't have to claim a seat at our table, because we've already made space for you around the campfire. You don't have to hide or minimize any part of yourself. Because your whole messy, wonderful human self is welcome here. Your anger, your grief, your sadness, your joy, your pride, your desires, your stims, your quirks, your weirdness, your info dumps, all of it is welcome here. When you think about posting in the group, or speaking up in a coaching call, imagine that you're talking to a room full of friends who admire you who respect you, who truly want to hear what you have to say, because we do whatever you have to say, is already inherently worthy and valuable, because it comes from you. And you are inherently worthy, and valuable. I know it's not always easy to show up, especially after a lifetime of facing rejection, criticism or even real threats to your safety, just for being who you are. So if what I'm saying here, it feels like a reach, I see you. And I invite you to try and use this space as your sandbox over the next few weeks to play around with the idea of what it feels like to belong even. And especially if this is one of few places you are able to do. So. This all applies to whether you are creating a post in the group, as well as replying to other's posts. This is a group program because we all have the ability to help and support each other. I am not the sole knowledge holder here. I will try to respond to posts within 24 hours except for Saturday and Sundays. But I encourage all of you to be open to hearing from other campers as well as demonstrated by the classic American film, High School Musical. We're all in this together. And our final guideline is have fun. Speaking of sandboxes my last but certainly not least bit of advice for how to get the most out of this program is to have fun, you are doing something amazing for yourself right now. You're about to embark on a journey that will come with twists, turns, new perspectives, Revelations, ways of thinking, ways of being and everything in between. Today's world is serious and depressing enough. And one of the hills I'm willing to die on is that it's a radical act in itself to bring as much joy, fun and happiness into your life as possible, even and especially in the face of Desperate times. We're going to cover a lot of things through these next few weeks. And some of those things will be heavy topics, you'll hear me say over and over that the messy and ugly parts of life are unfortunately, unavoidable, the bad will come no matter what you do. That's the easy part. The hard part, the actual work is getting used to the good parts, and bringing intentional joy into your life in as many small ways as you can. I truly and deeply believe that humor is one of the best coping mechanisms there is. In fact, one of the big moments of trauma healing for me was when I realized that I was able to laugh at myself, rather

than always being on the defensive. Be serious is one of the worst boxes you can try to put yourself in my opinion. Everyone, especially on ADHD ears is silly goose and silly geese do silly ridiculous things sometimes. Basically, what I'm trying to say is, don't take any of this or yourself too seriously. Very few things in life are actually life or death no matter how much our anxiety tries to convince us otherwise. Please notice that I said very few things and not know things. Yes, serious things exist, which is evidenced by the multiple genocides and horrible things happening all around the globe. I am not denying that for one second. But what I am saying is that sometimes as frustrating as it is, is at least a little bit funny that Some of us can't move on with our day unless we've had our very specific hot drink out of our very specific hot drink cup. It's actually been proven that laughter and humor are great ways to help process trauma. Laughing. Even if you just visualize yourself laughing, produces dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins that are known to be helpful when it comes to processing information in the brain, and can help stabilize your nervous system if it's activated. Additionally, especially when you're talking about heavy, traumatic things, being able to break the tension with a joke actually helps create a bit of a disconnect from the trauma itself, it can help you gain more of an outside perspective of what happened. Being able to disconnect slightly is also helpful when it comes to processing trauma. Because you're not stuck in it, you're able to step out a little bit. Change is difficult. Trauma, healing is difficult. And it can also be really, really fun. If you give yourself permission to have a good time about it. over these next few weeks, allow yourself to play here. The grounds at Adi HD summer camp are nothing but a giant playground, a virtual sanctuary where you're free to do whatever and be whoever you want, as long as you're not hurting yourself or anyone else. Here there are no rules to adhere to no shoulds are supposed to use or have tos. There aren't even any expectations. There is no right way or wrong way. And it's impossible to be behind. Because there are no deadlines. This place is meant to be a respite. All you have to do is breathe, and enjoy yourself. However that looks for you. Conclusion and invitation to share. So to sum up, my advice for how to have the best time in this program is to lead with curiosity, aka be the scientist. Don't pressure yourself to do everything and go at your own pace. Believe that you belong here, because you do and have fun and create joy while you're here. Now that you've finished orientation, I would love to invite you to introduce yourself to the group by telling us what your favorite part of the playground was, or is your favorite to play on. enjoy getting to know the space. And I'll see you in the next lesson. And there you have it, folks, I hope this episode was helpful for you. AuDHD summer camp opens this Friday, July 5, doors will stay open up until the last day of August 30. So if you're listening a little later, there's still time to join us as long as that date hasn't passed yet. To learn more and sign up, head to the link in the show notes. I hope to see you there.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. As one of our members said about our calls: "I never imagined I'd be standing in my kitchen hearing my struggles come out of someone else's mouth, and then someone else's. After a lifetime of feeling like I just don't make sense... it's revelatory, and it's everything." You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

006: Neuroqueering Your Home With Art: Beyond Dopamine Decorating with Elinor Trier

Published October 18, 2024

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello hello everyone! I'm so excited to be back from a brief and relatively unplanned hiatus with another special guest interview. In this episode, I had the pleasure of talking to Eli Trier - a neuroqueer auDHD visual artist, writer, podcaster, YouTuber, and founder of Elinor Trier Studio. We had an amazing conversation where Eli teaches all about how to transform not only your home, but also your mind, using art. You can learn more about her at her website and check out her beautiful artwork at elinortrierstudio.com. That link, as well as links to her instagram and youtube, will be in the show notes.

So without further ado, here is the episode!

Jes Diverges 0:04

Hi, Eli. It is so so nice to meet you. I'm so excited to chat with you today.

Eli Trier 0:09

Thank you so much for having me. It's lovely to be here. Of course,

Jes Diverges 0:13

I was so excited when you reached out to me. Your work sounds amazing. Um, so the first thing that I'm going to ask you to do is just introduce into that, oh my gosh words. Introduce yourself to the audience, tell folks like kind of about the work you do, who you are, and then we can dive into the good stuff. Fantastic.

Eli Trier 0:33

So my name is Eli Trier, and I am, well, most of the time, I'm an artist. I'm a visual artist, but I also I write. I do YouTube, I have a podcast. I kind of run the gamut, really. And I my work is all about helping people who feel different to feel connected and seen and celebrated, usually by some, you know, quirk of the universe that tends to be people just like me. So I am neurodivergent. I have autism, and I'm also, I also have ADHD, and I'm also probably what you would describe as neuro queer, which sort of means that my experience of my of my gender

and my sexuality, and all of that is colored by my neurotype. So straight doesn't really cover it, cis doesn't really cover it. And that's something that I'm still very much in, sort of in play with and in exploration of and discovering where I sit with that? Um, so, yeah, so my work is very much around translating my experience as as a person with a different brain type, basically a person with a different neurotype, and describing those experiences visually and often taking kind of very complex, like tangled swirly emotions and turning them into something that is both beautiful to look at and also kind of emotionally resonant for people at the other end,

Jes Diverges 2:14

right on that is so needed. I know all the folks listening are going to relate so hard to those, like, swirly, tangly emotions. And I really love what you said about, like, translating it into, you know, something that, what was it that you said that it's not only beautiful, but it's also resonant,

Eli Trier 2:33

yeah, yeah, exactly. It's interesting, actually, because I sort of started out when I was doing this, because my work has always been about, like, expressing who I am and how I'm feeling and all of that, as you know, many artists do. And when I first started out, I found that I was like, trying to explain myself through my work to neurotypical people, people who, you know, fit in with the world and all the rest of it. And that was a lovely experience. But it wasn't until I started having other kind of neurodivergent people, other queer people, kind of come along and go, Oh, my god, me too. When I realized, like, oh, okay, this is what I'm doing. I'm making us feel like we're connected. I'm making us feel like we are having the same experiences. We do fit in somewhere.

Jes Diverges 3:22

Yeah, that's always such a magical moment when you find that other, like neurodivergent person, who just automatically gets it, especially after so much you know, communication with neurotypical folks who you know, bless them. I'm not knocking the neurotypical lifestyle. Um, but yeah, the communication just hits differently. I think when it's when it's too neurodivergent folks?

Eli Trier 3:43

Yeah, absolutely. I read a, there was a study recently, I don't know how recent it was, where they discovered that neurodivergent people have absolutely no problem communicating with other neurodivergent people, right? We have, you know, neurotypical people, neurotypical people that works, and neurodivergent people and neurodivergent people that also works. It's literally just the kind of the crossover where things get a little bit jangly, yeah, yeah. I

Jes Diverges 4:14

actually heard about that study. It was just to kind of let the audience know what, what it was about. They had a group of so it was a study about autism specifically, and they had a group of autistic people, which is people without autism, and a group of autistic people, and they all basically played a game of telephone. So the group that was just neurotypical people didn't really have an issue with the telephone game. The group that was a combination of, I should say, allistic and autistic people had a lot of communication issues, but the group that was just

autistic people, again, did not have any communication issues. So I think that's a really important story for folks to be aware of. Like, it's not that we have a. Communication deficit. It's just different. And you know, different is not bad. So I think my next question for you is going to be you mentioned in your email to me about like, the the science behind like, how colorful artwork can actually, like, spark joy and help, like, change your mood. Do you want to say a little bit more about that? Oh, I

Eli Trier 5:27

love this, because it's something that we all sort of instinctively know. You know, if you stand in front of something that's beautiful and colorful and vibrant, you automatically, kind of you feel something you know, and what it's actually doing is it's actually changing the chemistry in your brain. So not only is it releasing dopamine, they've found that looking at colorful art has the same sort of impact on the brain as food and sex and all of the other kind of like the basic fundamental needs of being human. So we get we get serotonin from it. It lowers our cortisol levels. Cortisol being the stress hormone, it basically helps us to regulate our emotional state, and which is something that for a lot of us, neurodivergent types, whether you know whatever flavor of neurodivergent you might be, is something that is a huge struggle. And having an object, an item, that you can use as a tool, you can go to it, it serves as a sort of emotional anchor point that when you look at it, you can regulate your emotional state. You know that it's doing all of this stuff to your brain chemistry you can feel. You know your stress going down, your your serotonin going up, your dopamine going up. And what that does by having this kind of concentration point for it, it means that you have somewhere you can go. You can have somewhere that you can go and stand behind. If you have like a small piece, you can pick it up and look at it. And I think, personally, I mean, this isn't scientifically proven what I'm about to say, but I think because so many of us have these sort of strange relationships with objects themselves, a lot of us sort of anthropomorphize objects. We have these kind of we imbue them with feelings and personalities and all the rest of it. It can be a really beneficial way to be in relationship with something, without it being, you know, somebody who can, you know, talk back to you, or require anything from you. And I think that's absolutely fascinating. It'd be really, really valuable thing to know that, like, you can go and you can you can go to this object, and it can give you something in return.

Jes Diverges 7:54

Yeah, oh, I love that so much. And it makes so much sense, because, oh my gosh, there's so many things I want to say to what you just said. One of the main things I was thinking of as you were talking is how this kind of goes along with something I often talk about with my coaching folks, especially in the combo platter, is like ADHD folks, we have a tendency to intellectualize our emotions, intellectualize our feelings. We really stay stuck in our head about things. And a lot of times, you know, those thoughts, they get all jumbled because, like, our ADHD is giving us 20 thoughts a minute, and our autism is just like ruminating on them until the cows come home. And so I always try and work with folks to find sort of like an external way to help process those emotions get, like, actually reconnected with your body, which is extremely difficult, especially for autistic folks. So our brains are literally always trying to keep us, like, up in our head. And so I think having like an object that you can come to, that you know, is going to help regulate you,

you know is literally going to help change your brain chemistry, and all you have to do is, like, look at it and interact with it. I think that's so great, especially for autistic folks, because, you know, logically, we know that, okay, I'm dysregulated. I need some support. A lot of times, the idea of actually needing to talk to another human person, no matter too much, right? Literally, no matter, like, how much you love them, how much you trust them, sometimes it's just a lot. And having a little object that you can be attached to without shame, by the way, like, I think that's one, one thing that ADHD ers tend to shame ourselves for is how much we do wind up personifying objects. We get really, really attached to certain objects. Like I have, like, I literally always have, like, a tube of chapstick in my pocket, and if I don't have it, or if I like, lose it, I've literally cried over losing chapstick before. So just to, like, normalize that. And, yeah, I think it's great to have. I. Yeah, just like an external object that you can go to to help with that, so you don't have to worry about trying to communicate with words if you're not ready to

Eli Trier 10:06

yet, exactly, exactly. And I think they can also be really sort of talismanic as well. I know one of my collectors has one of, like, one of my small pieces on her desk, and she runs her own business. Whenever she has something scary to do, she draws strength from this little this little painting, and she says that it reminds her that she's brilliant, that she's a badass, that she can go off and she can do all of these things like she literally draws strength from it. And that, when I heard that, I was just like, Oh my God, my heart's gonna explode. That's so amazing. Oh,

Jes Diverges 10:43

that is so so great. And it just goes to show too, how important artwork truly is. I think it's something that is so undervalued, especially in western like capitalistic societies, art is seen as like a waste of time or a luxury or things like that. But it's, it's literally a a necessity, just as much as, like, sanitation, food farmers, you name it. We need artists for that reason to keep that, that magic alive in us. Yeah?

Eli Trier 11:15

And, I mean, I always think whenever I hear something like that, it's like, if you tell the person who has said, who just made that statement to live without the television that they watch, the music that they listen to, you know, the the shows they go and see, the the cinema they go to the, you know, even just like advertising and, you know, so much of of of that sort of capitalist stuff that we're surrounded with, a lot of it is beautiful artwork as well. You know, just like the choice to paint a fence yellow instead of gray is, you know, that's, that's art. That's our humanity, exactly,

Jes Diverges 11:53

exactly it is our humanity. And that get up on my anti capitalist soapbox for a second, like the whole idea behind, like, all these big, um, like, I think it's Audre Lorde who refers to them as the big three, right, patriarchy, capitalism, white supremacy, yeah, at the at the core of all of those is just straight up dehumanization, removing the humanity from everyone, and any effort to get Back to that humanity, to get back to that, you know, community that we all need as human beings, I think, is a fight worth freaking fighting for. Absolutely,

Eli Trier 12:32
absolutely. Yeah.

Jes Diverges 12:36

Um, so one of the other things that we were going to talk about today, you mentioned that you have like, a five part guide for choosing art that speaks to your soul, which I'm I'm so interested to hear.

Eli Trier 12:50

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think it's something that people are a bit frightened of, of art, of interacting with art, of buying art like it feels like something that is very, or can be very, sort of elitist or very out of reach, you know, it's, it's, it's got this sort of place in our brains as as a cultural phenomena where, you know, it's often very expensive. It's often displayed in these, in these very austere, exclusive environments. And I think like bringing it back down to to objects, to surrounding yourself with the things that you love, is, I think it's a really kind of crucial, crucial piece of the puzzle. So I'd say the first part of that is look for emotional resonance. Like, look for something that gives you a little, a little jolt or a little buzz. Like, if you see something you know when you're scrolling, if you see something you know, if you go to an artist's website or something and you see something that just gives you a little Oh, you know, that's that's valid. Like, you don't need a degree in, like our appreciation to understand, like, your own feelings. So that's, that's the first part of it is really look for something that gives you that emotional something you don't need to be able to explain it. You just need to have a little like, oh. The second part of it is look for something that makes you happy, like you don't. It doesn't need to be important arts, like it just needs to be something that, if it makes you smile, if you look at it and you find yourself like chuckling a bit, or like you're just having a joyful reaction to it like that's something to look out for as well. Um, I'm gonna bear with me a second, because I've done the very autistic thing of somebody asking me a question, and my mind has gone completely blind, limbic

Jes Diverges 14:56
hijacking. I love

Eli Trier 14:58

the. So bear with me a second. I'm going to put it up on screen in front of me, because

Unknown Speaker 15:09
there it is.

Eli Trier 15:15

Yes, sorry. Thank you for your patience. There

Jes Diverges 15:20

no worries. It happens to me all the time. We forgot everything I ever knew about. It's

Eli Trier 15:26

like, when you go away on holiday and you come back after a week and you're like, how do I work my computer? Right? My job? Exactly. Okay. So we've got emotional residents, we've got the joy test, then we're looking at sort of personal symbolism. So are there any kind of motifs or colors or anything in there that reminds you of something? So for me, I mean, I don't know if this is just an artist thing, but I think it's, it's something that people can relate to. Is there are certain, certain motifs, certain even color combinations that that I feel like are mine, certain places that I feel like are mine. Cats, for me, is a big thing. You'll see cats kind of coming up across my work. And a lot of the people who buy my work, they're also like, Oh, like this. You know, weird, abstract purple cat reminds me of my cat, like I get people sending me photographs, and it's lovely. Oh, you know, this color reminds me of this dress that my mum always used to wear when I was little. You know, that kind of we all have these personal things, like a friend looks out for butterflies wherever she goes. So she'll always, she like, she'll snap photo if she sees like a graffiti, or she'll see, like a butterfly print on a on a piece of wallpaper, or, you know, and she finds them everywhere. And it's, it's glorious, and it's like this special sort of, yeah, something that's talismanic to her, so look, look for art that the way you see yourself in it, in that way. And I think it's nice to have these kind of personal, personal symbols, really. I think that's something that that that you can, yeah, you can look for that, and you can find it in in in art. And I think you can find it even in abstract art as well, like, I mean, certainly with color combinations and things. But the beauty of abstract art is that your brain will show you all sorts of things, even if something, you know, we're pattern spotters, you know, we have that sort of, what's it called pareidolia? I think it's pareidolia, which is the human kind of tendency to see faces in things. So if you you know, like the you see them on Instagram all the time, like the house with the two windows and the sticky out winch thing, and it looks like a face. I think that's the right word to look that up. I'm fairly sure it is. But yeah, we do this as humans, and you can do that in abstract art as well. Like I often, I will, I will see cats in things. I will see, you know, faces and things, even in a completely abstract piece. So don't discount that if you're kind of looking for for your personal symbols.

Jes Diverges 18:20

I love that. It makes me think of I noticed anytime I look at like I'm gazing at the clouds, I can find a dragon. Yeah, no matter what, pattern recognition is so cool for that.

Eli Trier 18:34

It's amazing, isn't it? It's so good. So the fourth thing is, is the conversation starter, and this is sort of where the sort of the identity affirmation, kind of piece of my work comes in, is that if you imagine yourself explaining the work to a friend, say you've got a friend come around and you're sat on your couch, you're having a cup tea, and they say, Oh, you've got a new picture. Like, what? Why did you get that? What's that all about? Can you imagine yourself explaining it to them in a way that makes you feel expanded, that opens you up and allows you to sort of share something of yourself with them? Can it give you something that that you can have a conversation about maybe it's a way to broach a difficult subject or to explain a complicated feeling. I know that some people you know, when I did a collection recently called Tassi, which

was about alexithymia, which is when you have difficulty processing and expressing identifying emotions and being able to sort of put that down in paint and then kind of share it with people. It's very easy to kind of be able to point to something and say, I feel like this, like, I feel like this yellow swirly bit, and then this pink bit, and it's all hot and intense. And that's how it feels inside my body. So being having a tool to explain those things to people as well is is, you know, that can be a really useful thing. So, yeah, so how can you imagine what the conversation would be like if you're explaining this piece of work, on the flip side of that, there is also an element of kind of your secret friend. So if you have a parent or somebody who's sort of in your life who doesn't really get you or doesn't accept you completely for the way you are. You can have a piece of art in your home, which, when you look at it, you know what it means, and it can give you strength. But on the on the surface of it, it can look like something completely innocuous to other people. So one of the things that that I really love, and I found this out through one of my collectors. She bought one of my my flower paintings, and when the people in her life see it, they're like, oh, you know, nice flowers. And she's like, Yeah, but if you actually spend some time with it, you look deeper, there's all this other stuff going on. She says it's such a symbolic piece, because for her, it's this celebration of her identity. It's got, you know, the colors in it. It's got all of this stuff. She says it's like drag like it's, it's got its nice flower outfit on, but underneath it, there's all this other stuff going on, and no one will ever know apart from her. So she's able to, sort of, you know, it makes it a little bit easier to maintain these relationships with people who are, you know, coming in and out of her home, because she's got this thing that she can hold on to, that that helps her, reminds her of who she is, even when you know external forces are telling her that she can't be that.

Jes Diverges 21:56

Oh, I love that, too. I love a little secret. I think little secrets are like one of the best sources of joy. Oh, you think it's just flowers, but I know all the secrets, little messages and riddles that are hidden inside of it

Eli Trier 22:11

so good. It's so good. It's like this special little thing that you can hold to yourself to keep you warm, you know, yes, for knowledge, yeah. So that's, that's a kind of a big part of the puzzle as well. And the final thing is, what I was talking about with my friend, who kind of keeps this little piece on her desk, and that's the sort of, that's the power up effect. And this can be another way of that kind of where that identity affirmation kind of thing comes through when you have a piece that reminds you that you're awesome, that reminds you of your brilliance and of the power and creativity that you have in you and that you can literally draw strength from. So again, it's a lot of this is very somatic. So if you look at a piece and you're like, Oh yeah, like, you can feel your your shoulders go back. You feel your spine straighten a little bit like makes you feel powerful, like, that's that's a really, a really big piece of the puzzle as well. So I think, really, the the choosing, choosing an artwork to have in your home, there are all these things to consider, but ultimately it comes down to how you respond to a piece. And sometimes it's just, I really like this, and I don't know why, and other times it can go deeper than that. And I think that's where being sort of in in conversation with, or in relationship with an artist whose work that you enjoy can be a really kind of powerful thing. Like you don't necessarily have to have a friendship with

them, but like being able to find somebody who understands you, who who you understand and and kind of diving deeper into the world that they've built, that can be a really powerful thing. And it can be a living artist, or it can be, you know, a dead artist. You know it could be someone who was alive and painting in the 17th century, but you feel a kinship with

Jes Diverges 24:09

that is so interesting. Could you, could you maybe share more about that? Because, like, as you were talking, I was like, oh, because my favorite artist is Vincent van Gogh, who I highly suspect was autistic. Yeah, definitely. I just love the way he uses colors and everything. And I always choose him as, like, Who is the one? Like, dead person you would have dinner with. So I would love to hear some more about what that actually means. Yeah,

Eli Trier 24:35

I think there's, there's so much in this, in this idea of sort of, it's not, I mean, it's not a parasocial relationship, but it's a sort of kinship that can stretch across, you know, time and space. There was a book, gosh, about 1015, maybe even 20 years ago, by a woman called Barbara Sher. She wrote wholesome. Series of books about what she called scanners. And I think what now would be people with ADHD, okay, and they were, they were really affirming books about, you know, scanning through different projects, jumping from thing to thing, like being multi passionate. And one of the things that she recommended, as you know, one of the exercises in this book was to choose a council of mentors, and your council of mentors. It's basically the same principle, I don't know, I don't know how old you, I don't know if you grew up with this, but there was always this thing when I was a kid of, what would

Eli Trier 25:36

Madonna do? Okay,

Eli Trier 25:41

you know. So if you were the, if you were the best, most badass version of yourself, kind of, how would you behave and then to embody that? And the Council of mentors kind of builds on that, in that you're looking to people that you admire, people whose work you admire, people whose lives you admire, people who seem to have thought in the same way that you do, and you call on them as your as your council of mentors, as the people that you look to for for guidance and wisdom and advice and all the rest of it. And the more that you find out about people. I mean, there's so much written about so many people. You know, it's, it's not that difficult these days with the internet to delve a bit deeper into somebody's life. And you know, how they lived and what they did, how they how they struggled, how they fought, how they triumphed. A lot of the written material exists for so many people that we know of today. So yeah, it's, it's, it's about finding a kinship with these people and recognizing kind of where your kindred spirits are. And that can be a really sort of, oh, it can be so valuable. And I find the same as you the ones that, the ones that I feel the most kinship with, they're always the misfits. They're always the outsiders. They're always the rebels. They're always the ones who are doing things, you know, completely outside of of the mainstream. Yeah, probably neurodivergent, even though you didn't have that sort of language back then,

Jes Diverges 27:18

right? Yeah, I always love, I love a rebel. I really do. And I think that is such a great segue to our next topic, which is the way you put it, beauty as subversive rebellion. And about like neuro queering your home with your artwork, which I love, the term neuro queering, by the way, like, it's definitely one I've heard before, but it's one of my favorites, because I think it's so well encompasses, like, especially the autistic ADHD relationship to self, to not not only just sexuality and gender, but to like the way you interact with The world, the way you interact with art. Yeah.

Eli Trier 28:03

It covers like, all your identities, basically all the ways in which that that you identify and interact with the world, all of your sort of intersections. And I it just makes so much sense to me that all of those things are colored by how your how, what your neurotype is, how your brain works, like, of course, they are, and goes a long way. I mean, looking at the gender and sexuality aspect of it, it goes a long way to explaining why so many young, just young, but everybody, so many queer people, are also neurodivergent, like there's such the Venn diagram is practically a circle. I think that's, you know, it's because this up here affects everything. You know, we don't fit into those norms, right? Um, so, yeah, so doing that in your own home, I mean, neuro queering is, is, I can't remember the exact definition, but it is basically that the act of subverting and liberating your yourself from the societal expectations, basically, and I think being able to do that in your own home, being able to really kind of show who you are in your home. You know, we all have a sort of a personal style when it comes to putting our clothes on, and a lot of us kind of stop there and live in these homes that don't feel like we really inhabit them, like we've done the right. You've done it right. We've got the proportions right. We've got the colors right. We might have a few things around that we really like, but there's no kind of inhabitation like filling it out to the edges, is how I always think of it, you know? Yeah, and the when we live in such a cap. A list sort of trend driven world. We're bombarded with these messages of consumerism. We're bombarded with all this new stuff we have to buy that's out of date, that needs to be new, that needs to be updated, you know? But when you when you look within at at who you are and what you care about and what you love, and the things that bring you joy, and you start to bring that into your environment, it has a really transformative effect on your mental health, like your environment plays such a huge part in how you interact with the world, and you can, you can kind of see this in sort of microcosm when you look at sort of how you feel when your room is messy versus how you feel when your room is tidy. You know, you can see that very directly for me, like, if things are messy, if things are cluttered, I can't think straight. Like, I literally can't think straight. And even though my home is very It's very colorful. There's lots of stuff like, I'm definitely a maximalist. It's not buttered, it's not messy. Everything is intentional, everything is chosen. Everything is there because I believe it to be beautiful or useful, and that in itself, is a rebellion like that means I have things that are horribly outdated, but I still love them. I have things that, you know, I rarely buy new. I mean, I was, I've been buying secondhand stuff since the since the 80s, you know, since before vintage was a thing,

Jes Diverges 31:39

right? Since before it was cool. That's before I was cool, right?

Eli Trier 31:43

I remember, you know, going to jumble cells and picking up incredible treasures for like, 20 p A lot of them I still have, like, 40 years later. So wow, it's, yeah, it's about this idea of the creating that atmosphere that you want in your home, creating an environment that makes you feel the way that you want to feel.

Jes Diverges 32:07

I love that so much, and it is actually super relevant to me right now, because my fiance and I just moved into a new house at the beginning of this year, and the way imaginations. Thank you so much. I'm almost like, ashamed to tell you this, but like, our artwork is, like, still in a box in a closet. We haven't hung it up yet, and it's something that I've really been kind of like battling inside of myself and my in my executive dysfunction of, like, well, hang up your art. Like, this is your home. Like, the reason why it still kind of feels unfamiliar is because I don't have my stuff out, and I think it's such an important thing, especially for all DHD folks and neurodivergent folks, to have that comfortable environment and literally fuck anything anyone else has ever told you about the way your home should look, how you should decorate. I think that millennial gray is a plague, like it's and, you know, the way that we have totally stepped away from, like Artisan ship and like an appreciation for the actual craft, like, and I'm not knocking artwork from Target or anything like that. God knows, I have so much stuff from like Target and Five Below and stuff, I can't help it. But I think there's really something to be said about like, what you were talking about, about getting back into that relationship with the artist, with the person who created the thing, feeling the soul of the human who created the thing in whatever is now hanging up in your home or sitting on a shelf or whatever? Yeah, it's so important, definitely a needed reminder. I'll probably go and hang up all my homework after we're done talking, because I'm like, Okay, now I have a real reason. It's science based stuff up.

Eli Trier 33:55

You do? You really? Do? You really do? I think it's a very kind of interesting way of of when you're looking to that sort of artisanal craftsmanship, it really kind of brings you into community with something like the meaning behind it and the, you know, it's had hands on it, you know. And I think I don't know if you feel the same, there's something for me about being in community with people without actually having to physically be with other people. So I love being surrounded by people that I don't have to interact with. So I live on a fourth floor apartment right in the center of Copenhagen, so there are people around us all the time, like, where there's people noise, there's stuff going on, and I love it, but I have no desire to go and join in. Yeah, I'm legendary for having parties and then going, like, I'll go outside, I'll get. A bunch of people together in the pub or something, and then I'll go outside and I'll watch them through the window and feel kind of like warm and lovely. Like, look at all my people together. Yes,

Jes Diverges 35:08

I literally love doing that. Like, I My friends always kind of pick on me, because I'll always just be like, the kind of quiet one in the corner, just like watching everyone. And they'll be like, Jess, are

you okay? Like, are you feeling alright? Do you need anything? And I'm like, No, I'm literally having the best time of my life. You all interact with each other.

Eli Trier 35:30

Yeah? I was so glad I'm not the only one. Yes, yeah. I get that same kind of feeling from, you know, having art on my wall from my, you know, Council of mentors, like people who died hundreds of years ago. Like, I get that same kind of, like, I can be a part of something without actually having to be a part of something. Yeah,

Jes Diverges 35:52

that makes so much sense. I love the way you put it. That like, oh gosh, yeah, being in community without actually having to, like, what a great accommodation, too. Because I know, I know there's a lot of ADHD ers who are like, working on trying to be a little bit more social, trying to create those, those human connections that, like, even though a lot of autistic people are like, okay, being alone, a lot of us actually really, really needed our alone time, and value our alone time. The end of the day, we are still humans, and we need at least a little bit of social interaction to kind of nourish our soul. So the idea of literally connecting with the souls of the people in the art in your home is so beautiful. I literally have goosebumps like, oh my gosh, that's so cool.

Eli Trier 36:42

I love it. I really love it. And I love the idea that I can make work in my little studio, you know, tucked away in the rooftops by myself, and I can send it out into the world, and somebody else can be, you know, tucked away in their little corner. And we can have this connection that transcends, you know, eye contact,

Jes Diverges 37:00

yes, oh my gosh, connection that transcends eye contact. I need that on a poster.

Jes Diverges 37:14

Oh my gosh. What a fantastic conversation. I think. Oh yeah, there was one final No. I think we already talked about this a little bit, though. Um, but the way you worded it in your email, I really liked is, like, make, make your walls, your personal cheerleaders.

Eli Trier 37:31

Yeah, I think, I mean, I think it's sort of an extension of everything that we've been talking about, like this idea that you can imbue an object with with power and with strength, and you can have this sort of relationship with with something that serves as a talisman. And I think, I mean, I don't know if kids still do just but I remember, like when I was when I was at school, like when we were doing exams, like everyone would have their little kind of exam mascot, and they'd bring them in, and people would have, like a little tchotchkes, or like little plushies, and that kind of thing that would be there to bring them luck. I love that. Maybe it was just kind of where I grew up, but it's always been something that's really stuck with me, and especially as we were talking about, like, this anthropomorphization of objects and things. Like, there is something in having

an object of power, like something that you can touch, something you can hold in your hands, that makes you strong, like it anchors you. It's like, you know, those electric balls with all the lightning inside, and you put your finger on the surface, and I can't remember what they're called, but you know, all the all the lightning goes to your finger is that kind of principle, like you can hold something and it anchors you, and you can, you can imbue it with that power. You can, you can transfer that power into it, but you can also find things that will do it for you, sort of naturally, and that's where this kind of the personal symbolism comes in, and looking for the things that have meaning to you,

Jes Diverges 39:11

right on, I love that so much. One more thing that I'm kind of just generally curious about is what is sort of your your process when it comes to creating art? Like, do you kind of see it in your head first? Do you get inspired by other things? Because, like, I have a Fantasia, and I'm always fascinated by, like, artists, because I have a hard time with that.

Eli Trier 39:36

Yeah, yeah. No, I have, I don't see things like crystal clear. I get a sort of fuzzy, blurry thing. I'm also incredibly short sighted. So my sort of my vision is very fuzzy, blurry anyway. So i i. An idea, and I can sort of see it like it's through water or something, and and then I when I try and kind of bring it into life, then I rely very much on on the inspiration of my materials. So painting in particular is a very sort of, it's like stimming. It's a really kind of physical enjoyable experience for me, just like the physicality of the materials and the Yeah, all of it, the color, the texture, the smell that all of it is informs the work that happens. So, yeah. I mean, I work in in sort of overarching concepts, so I have a sort of quite the beginning part of the creative process is quite intellectual. So there's a lot of thinking. There's a lot of composting. Sometimes it comes from things I've seen other people do, but most of the time it just come. It will come from somewhere completely random, and yeah, and then I'll get to actually making the work. And that's a completely different process. That's very much like thinking shuts down, and it's very much about, how do these materials interact with each other? How does this marry up with what I had in my head, what's actually possible, versus kind of the the crazy idea I might have had, you know, and and then afterwards, I'll look back, and then then the thinking comes back in, and then I'm like, Oh, I joined up that thing and that thing and I didn't realize, or like, oh, that's why I made it This way. And then, you know, there's more meaning in that comes through at the at the end of the process as well. So it's kind of all over the place, but it seems to work. It's really hard to explain it out loud, actually.

Jes Diverges 41:55

Thank you so much for that. I thought it was a lot of sense. And I think it really, it really greatly exemplifies, like, the ADHD tendency to kind of flip flop between logic and somatic. Like, I almost wonder if, like, our all or nothing nature means that, you know, it's really, really hard for us to find a balance, like, it's hard for us to be logical and emotional at the same time. It's gonna be one or the other one. I think your process really is a great example of,

Eli Trier 42:28

I love that. I've not thought of it like that before, but you're absolutely right. Yeah, that's really cool. Our

Jes Diverges 42:33

brains are so amazing. Like, I love it so amazing. Wow, we've been talking for flew by. Oh, I've so enjoyed talking to you about all of this. I learned so much. Um, is there anything that we didn't get a chance to touch on that you kind of want to chat about, or any final thoughts?

Eli Trier 43:00

I think the thing that I really want people to take away is the the idea that community doesn't have to be going out and joining in with groups of people like we need that social interaction. We need to be connected to other people, but that can look however you want it to look. And I think exploring what that looks like using art, and it doesn't have to be visual art. It can be film, it can be music. It can be, you know, the opera, if that's your thing. It can be literature, like I have so many friends that only live between the pages of books, and I love them, and every now and again, I'll pop back and see how they're doing. I'll reread a story. And you know, it brings you into community. It brings you into connection with other people. At times when maybe going out and actually having person to person interactions might be too overwhelming or too much, because often that happens when we most need connection, it's just too much to deal with. So I think there that's that's a really important idea to sort of take forward, like it's, it's completely valid if you're happy just going and visiting a friend between the pages of a book or or interacting with an artist that you love, like, that's That's enough. I feel

Jes Diverges 44:28

like that's going to be such a transformative and like, weightlifting realization. What am I trying to say? I feel like it's going to take a lot of weight off of folks shoulders to hear that, because there is so much pressure. Of like, well, if you're going to socialize, you literally need to speak to another person. Well, no, that's not always the case. Like, I actually even feel a little bit lighter now that you've you've put it in those words. So thank you so much for that. And where, where can folks find your your website, your artwork, working with you and. Anything like that. Yeah.

Eli Trier 45:01

So the best thing to do is to come to my website and get on my newsletter list. I send out a weekly email, which where I collect basically weird and wonderful things that I find around the internet, and I share them with you. So I share some of my favorite kind of artists, misfits and weirdos through history. I'll share, like, kind of, what's inspiring me behind the scenes, which is often very weird, very interesting. I'll share, kind of, like, tips and tricks articles about neurodivergence, like, interesting, you know, just bits and bobs for weirdos. Basically, it's a really lovely space. It's a really lovely, sort of, it's a really lovely community. Like, it's a way to be connected to other people and and to keep in touch with me. And the way to do that is to go to ElinorTrierStudio.com/KeepInTouch. And you can, you can find the sign up page there. Have a look around my website, like, I've got a lot of art is up there, not everything, because it takes so long to upload everything to the internet, but there's a whole bunch of stuff there. I launch new collections a few times a year. I have prints that are available all year round and and, yeah, if

you sign up to the newsletter, you get 15% off as well. So something and you like it, you get a little treat.

Jes Diverges 46:20

Good to know. Yeah, I will definitely be hopping on that email list. That sounds so, so cool. And all the links that Eli mentioned will be in the show notes for folks who want to look more into her work. I highly recommend it. I checked out her artwork a little bit before the show, and it is seriously so beautiful. I love it. I'm probably going to buy one myself too. So a huge, huge, huge fan. I'm so glad we got a chance to talk

Eli Trier 46:42

me too, me too. This has been really, really lovely for

Jes Diverges 46:46

sure. All right, folks, thank you so very much for listening, and I'll catch you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you're an auDHDer looking for ongoing support with unshaming your brain and living a more authentic, joyful life, my Combo Platter Community may be for you. As one of our members said about our calls: "I never imagined I'd be standing in my kitchen hearing my struggles come out of someone else's mouth, and then someone else's. After a lifetime of feeling like I just don't make sense... it's revelatory, and it's everything." You can learn more about that at jesdiverges.com/comboplatter. That link as well as links to my social media platforms and email list can be found in the show notes. I'll see you next time.

007: Interview With My Partner: A Personal Account On Navigating Our Queer Neurodivergent Relationship

Published February 11, 2025

Jes Perkins 0:00

Hello, hello everyone, and welcome to another episode of UnShaming AuDHD. I am very nervous, but also very excited to share this episode with you, because I sat down with my partner of five years to talk about what it looks like for us to build a strong and healthy relationship as two traumatized, autistic and variably neurodivergent individuals. I really hope you all enjoy getting to know my wife a little bit and seeing a slightly different side of me. I also want to note that they've asked me not to share their name, but I definitely forgot that at points, so I'll be dubbing over that with the name Luke, because they're basically the lesbian version of Luke Danes from Gilmore Girls.

One last thing before we get into the episode, I want to mention that I have another round of AuDHD Summer Camp starting up on March 4! Summer Camp is now a four month virtual program made specifically for autistic ADHDees who want to better understand themselves, learn to overcome shame and people pleasing, and be in community with others who get it. We'll spend those four months together in an online virtual summer camp where I'll teach you almost everything I know about how to live authentically, compassionately and shamelessly as an autistic ADHDee. Together, we'll work through how to hold space for the big, dark, scary things, while also continuing to live your best life in a way that makes sense and feels good for your neurodivergent brain. It's possible, I promise.

There will be 12 group coaching calls, an online community for you to connect with other members, plus six modules about understanding your auDHD brain, managing your capacity, advocating for your needs, relationships and communication and so much more. Tiered pricing is available, but access spots are limited, so be sure to grab your spot if you need a lower price point to learn more and sign up go to jesdiverges.com/audhdsummercamp. I'll put that link in the show notes as well. Now without further ado, please enjoy this conversation with my amazing partner.

Okay, I pushed record,

and now we're seeing what happens.

Luke 2:32

Seeing is all we're doing right now, cuz we're sitting in complete silence *laughter*

Jes Perkins 2:37

Okay,

okay,

oh, my God,

Luke 2:42

an intro?

Jes Perkins 2:44

yes,

I feel so weird doing it in front of you.

Luke 2:54

And the better part is you just made a predator noise instead.

Jes Perkins 2:57

Did I?

Luke 2:57

Yeah,

Jes Perkins 2:58

okay, I'm probably going to include this,

all right, anyway.

Luke 3:05

Oh, that's right. You have to pretend almost like you're a different I don't know this person following I know I have to be coach. Jes, I don't have to be coach. Don't have to be but just be regular. Jes, it just like, feels weird. Well, they also don't know my Jes fully, right? They don't know. They don't know, baby, I don't know who Jes is, right? Government name. I don't know who that person is, your baby, which maybe at some point will forget that the microphones here and they will get to meet that person.

Jes Perkins 3:37

Okay, so now that we've done that for a couple of minutes. Hi everyone. I have a very, very special guest here with me today, and it is my wife, who I have been with for almost five years now. This Saturday is actually going to be our five year anniversary, which is very exciting. And we figured, you know, with that coming up and with Valentine's Day coming up and everything, now would be a good time to actually, like, bite the bullet and record this podcast episode, because we've really wanted to kind of have a conversation for you all for a while, because I feel like we are both uniquely, I don't want to say, uniquely qualified. We both have a hefty amount of life experiences that give us a lot of really great knowledge on basically how to how to create and maintain a healthy relationship as two traumatized, neurodivergent individuals.

So with that said, I guess we'll go ahead and get started. Um, I don't know if you want to kind of introduce yourself a little first, or if you want to just jump into Yeah, well, they definitely don't know me. So.

Luke 5:00

Like Jes said, I'm her wife. We've been together almost five years now. Um,

I don't really know God, which details who wants what details on things, because it's not supposed to be a fun, salacious time, but

we definitely

our relationship had an interesting start, because we were starting as my marriage was ending, and so we sometimes it feels like our relationship got a different type of Forge in the flames, because I often feel like you got to see me at some of my literal worst moments and my behavior sometimes that wasn't the best, but like you got to see just me going through it, and you still said yes through all that. And that was always interesting. I

Jes Perkins 5:55

always think it's interesting when you phrase it that way, of like I saw, I saw the worst parts of you and shows you anyway, because, like, from my perspective, and I guess, you know, we'll, we'll tell a little a nutshell version of of how we met, because it's quite the it's quite the Hallmark, not Hallmark movie, like Lifetime movie, it's a freaking

um. But what I saw during that time was somebody who was very self aware, who was in a crappy situation that was mildly out of their control, who had so much love in their heart, and I saw you only ever trying to do the best for everyone around you and For yourself,

and I just, I wanted better for you, and I wanted to

do whatever I could to help. Because, especially, you know, the situation you were in

so similarly mirrored my own abusive relationship that I was in for five years. And I think that is also a really special part of kind of our relationship is because I feel like what I went through and like everything I learned about, you know, abuse and trauma, and not even just abuse, but like relationships in general, whether they're toxic or healthy,

I feel like if I hadn't gone through that, then I probably wouldn't have been able to help you in the ways that I did, and we probably wouldn't be together.

Luke 7:27

And for that, I'm kind of grateful for my own drama in that way. You know, we started this saying, Oh, I actually don't know Coach Jes, but now that we're looking back, I do, because I very much

remember that one night we ended up going out just for food after you pick me up from something, and you're like, are you okay? And I was very trying to carefully talk about my situation in the least biased way I can, because I'm still doing everything I could to like,

always step with the singular most amount of kindness for that other person, barring my own space. And so I'm trying to describe her situation to you. And you very calmly, just you could see it right across your face. You just shifted a little bit and was like, Oh, this is who I'm talking to right now. And you calmly looked at me and said, Okay, I hear you. Can I ask you a question? And I said, Yeah. And you said, Have you ever heard of a book called Why does he do that?

So a big part of your coaching has always been book recommendation. And let me tell you what she's she's always had it, folks, that was definitely a book too. I was going through and, like, even just the introduction chapter I'm reading and going, he does that. He does that. And like, page three, this was not funny anymore, yeah.

Great book. Great recommendation for folks who are in situations like that, but also for folks to understand other individuals in situations like that, of like, why don't they leave this is part of some of that answer as well, and it was deeply helpful. Just a quick shout out, yeah, again, that's called, Why does he do that? I can't remember the author right now, but I know that the PDF is available freely online.

Jes Perkins 9:16

Highly recommend that book. I'm always recommending books. You're absolutely right. And that's actually funny that you bring that up, because I think that up, because I think that was that I'm not I think I know that was the first time that I even kind of fully,

not really let my guard down, but like kind of lowered the boundaries that I had learned to set up at that time, which I guess is kind of a good segue to like. So how did we meet? How did this relationship kind of get started? Because I think in order to understand where we are, now have to understand

where we started. So for me, I first met Luke in Well, we both met in December of 2019, and for me, that was the last month of my.

Undergrad program.

And at that point in my life, I had, like, truly and fully,

just like completely, let go of the idea of finding a romantic partner of any sort. Like I was like, 2827 at that point, and I had done the dating game for a long time on all the apps and all the terrible shit.

And I think dating as an autistic ADHD er is like a whole other difficulty in and of itself. But at that point, I had, like, genuinely given up. I was like, I'm literally not gonna look for anybody

anymore. Like I'm done with these apps. I'm done with all the games, the playing around if someone happens to come into my life and fall into my lap. Who, like, is somebody that I vibe with, and we have similar values and things, sure, but like, fuck it. I'm I'm over it.

And

then,

so I was in the pride club at the time, and my partner's then husband, was also in pride club with me, and we were we decided to go hang out at the pool in the sports center. Totally normal hangout. We were all just chilling, and I knew that he was going to be bringing his wife, and like, there was part of me in the back of my head that was kind of curious, like, I'm always excited to meet a new person. I knew they were funny already because he had posted a video of them doing a perfect impression of the what did I sound like? Chocolates, Lady SpongeBob in the group chat. And basically what happened was they both walked in, and the second I saw Luke, god damn it,

I'm gonna have to, like bleep on a I'm gonna have to, like bleep, that's what I'm saying. Like, I'm just gonna, if I happen to say their name, I'm gonna just bleep it, y'all, because they don't want that out there. And I fully respect that. I'm just, I'm probably gonna say it more time, so I'm just gonna wind up leaving it so, just so you know that's gonna happen. Um,

yeah, I saw I saw them, and I turned directly to my friend who was right next to me,

and I said, Tom, pull me back. They

did not hold me back.

Speaker 1 12:20

Um, and I thought that I was being super chill that night. I definitely made a point to, like, go over to them and, like, introduce myself and talk. I thought I was being normal. But then later, I found out from you that apparently I was not being chill at all. You were very enthusiastic. What I was experiencing was a very ready person. So I'm in the pool just swimming around, just casually, like just

Speaker 2 12:49

little people floating, I don't know what to call it, and

Luke 12:53

different folks are coming up to talk to me. "Oh, you're this one's wife. Hi, how are you? It's so nice to meet you. He talks about you. How's it going? Oh, what do you do," and there comes Jess, like, right between these people. Just, "yeah, what is it? What do you do? Where do you work? Do you like it? How long have you done it? Have you always wanted to do things like that? That's so crazy. Do you have passion? How much passion Do you have? Wow, it's so

interesting. You have work like that. Tell me everything. When were you a child? Did you have thoughts about helping other people? It's so interesting that you're interesting." And I'm just sitting there going, Wow, she is nice.

That doesn't mean anything at all. Um, at one point somebody is like, trying to give me a compliment, and they're like, "Oh, you have really pretty eyes." This one comes out of nowhere, dog piles this one, nearly drowns this poor person in the pool, goes, "I also agree with that. I agree completely. They are very good. And I wanted to tell you that before somebody else did, but now it looks like I'm just agreeing with things."

And meanwhile, again, still, I go into back to the vehicle, going, she's just nice. She's just excited, because people don't see butch lesbians. That's all it is, nothing more.

Jes Perkins 14:05

Yeah, I was excited that you were a butch lesbian, but for very non platonic reasons. Also, I realized I left out a very key part of this, which is that I also knew that their marriage was polyamorous. So just to let everyone know I wasn't, like, eyeing somebody else's wife just because, like, they were, they were in an open relationship, so I knew it was a possibility at the time. Just want to throw that out

there. Um, and so I guess, long story short,

I wound up texting their husband, and then

we were we texting before Tinder? Or was it? No, it was before Tinder.

I've tried. I got this the I got your number. Best I can say is,

Luke 14:54

we went over your house and I brought the peanut butter pie at the peanut you came over our house, I made breakfast.

Jes Perkins 15:00

yes.

Luke 15:01

And you kept following me to the kitchen to chit chat again and again and again,

Jes Perkins 15:01

yes.

Luke 15:03

And then came some texting,

Jes Perkins 15:10

yes,

Luke 15:10

because that took because you came over. And then we got the correct numbers

Jes Perkins 15:14

right. Oh, yeah!

Luke 15:15

And then came the tender. And then that's when we found each other on the Tinder, and then you we, I was just like, oh, okay, we can kind of change some of the context of the texting. Now,

Jes Perkins 15:28

I completely forgot about the phone number thing, yeah, because I had asked him for your phone number before, and he gave it to me, but like, one of the numbers was wrong, and I had texted you, I think, a couple times, and I just thought, you like, weren't responding. So I was like, Oh, they just must not be interested. You know, makes sense. They're probably busy and they're super hot. They're probably dating so many people like, whatever. I'll just keep moving on. Because again, at that point, I wasn't, I wasn't outwardly searching for a relationship. You just happened to fall in my fucking lap. But what happened was your husband, your ex husband, wound up basically, like pushing us together. He kept, like, encouraging, encouraging you to reach out and like, trying to convince you that I actually liked you and that we both had crushes on each other. And

I'm trying to, like, not give all the details away, because it was a very like, it was a rough situation

Luke 16:26

I can summarize it in the kindest way for both of us.

Jes Perkins 16:30

Please do

Luke 16:31

unfortunately, I think it was a great lesson in honesty for both he and I, on how to be honest with ourselves, to be honest within relationships, to be honest with our partners on what we want, what we don't want, and who we are and who we aren't, and then the kindest, most, easiest respects, it was just two people who were very ready to love each other who perhaps should not have

Yes, I think that is very well put. That's, I think that's the easiest, simplest part thing I can say about it all. Yeah,

Jes Perkins 17:09
yes. So we will

leave it at that.

We wind up dating for a couple of months, and then you wound up getting a divorce, like a couple of weeks into

Luke 17:23
the pandemic,

Jes Perkins 17:24
COVID, which was another

Luke 17:26
Oh yeah, my 2020 was rough, new job, marriage downhill, divorce, getting him out of the house, pandemi.

Jes Perkins 17:35
yeah.

Luke 17:35
Oh God. And then grandma almost died.

Jes Perkins 17:37
yeah, yeah, that was a rough, it was a rough year, um, but, yeah,

Luke 17:45
but that was the other thing about it. So that's the start of our relationship. So already it was 2020, I already had a lot going on, the world had a lot going on, and we were still together,

Jes Perkins 17:57
yeah.

Luke 17:58
And so I know sometimes, like, looking back, I'll talk about our dating, and I'll like, i The only regret about early dating I have is, like, we couldn't go out and do more things. We couldn't have that really easy dating period.

And even if, like, the marriage wasn't crazy, like, the world shut down.

Jes Perkins 18:23
Yeah,

Luke 18:24

the world shut down. Where were we to go? Um, but through that,

mildly, it was just the loss of the opportunity to go places. And I know what I'm about to say. It was the loss of the opportunity to go places. We are home bodies, so we were able to make something out of that space. And that's also looking back on our time,

this is something I see. We got to try things differently. We got to just do things still differently than tradition at points, um, like making our own... We had cheeseburgers for Thanksgiving.

Jes Perkins 18:59

Yes, that was so good.

Luke 19:01

We made all the sides, but we had cheeseburgers for Thanksgiving

Jes Perkins 19:05

because Turkey tastes like napkins.

Luke 19:07

Yes, you're right. Like, you're absolutely right. We just didn't have to do that. And, like, we have this, like, mild Christmas Eve tradition. You and I know, like, we make pizza and like, that one's from your family and like, pizza and shrimp, but like you and I end up, like, almost taking, like, a nice annual, like, relaxing bath every year too. Like, everything we did in that year was insane. Some of it should never have happened. However, because we did it together, it was, it got to look a lot different. And part of it looking different was also because, like I said, like, in my marriage, I learned a lot about honesty. So even coming into our relationship,

we got to be together because and things got to be different. We got to try these things because.

I was at a different level of honesty with myself, to be a different level of honest with you as well.

Jes Perkins 20:06

Yeah, you know, I never really thought about how, like, I thought about how the pandemic affected our early relationship, but I didn't really think about how it also kind of has now, like, the shortcuts and like, weird pathways we had to take during 2020, in our early dating life are now ingrained in our traditions,

Luke 20:33

yeah.

Jes Perkins 20:34

And I think that's neat. That's really cool. And yeah, the honesty factor is, I think part of what has made our relationship such a good one, such a strong one, like, I remember being amazed that, you know, we just kept surviving everything that was thrown at us, including a freaking global pandemic like, and I think it was because both of us are autistic. So my wife is autistic, and I am autistic and ADHD, which I think also creates a fun dynamic.

Let's add the dyspraxia too on my end, that too. So while you have speedy go-go's with rules, I have rules that are going. Hold on. Now, hold on. We're confused. We got to put it up the chain real quick. We'll get you an answer three to five business days. But please know we hate this.

Yes, yes. So you're, you're autistic and dyspraxia, dyspraxic, which I think is a combo meal in itself,

Luke 21:37
yeah.

Jes Perkins 21:38
And I'm ADHD and autistic, which speedy go-go's with rules is the best way I think, to put it. And what else was interesting about the early stages of our relationship is neither of us knew that we were neurodivergent. Neither of us knew we were neurodivergent when we first started dating.

Luke 22:00
No

Jes Perkins 22:01
at all. As far as I was concerned, I was perfectly neurotypical. I had no mental health issues whatsoever, like I was always the rock, the hyper, independent, whatever, whatever, like completely ignoring all of my struggles and problems. Um, turns out that's very much not the case. But you, you've said before that, you could kind of tell that I was, like, spicy in a way,

Luke 22:32
yeah, because after, and I think this is a fun, interesting note, but like, queer dating, yeah? Um, you meet a lot of different folks, and with queer people, it's statistically true, we are at a higher risk for adverse childhood experiences. Therefore, we're more likely to have trauma just there's the trauma of growing up gay, the trauma of not figuring it out for a while, the trauma, what coming out even looks like. And so you end up dating, you are a traumatized individual dating other traumatized individuals. So sometimes you can pick up on that and see through what some of that trauma is hanging out with you. I was like, okay, I can see where some of that, like trauma spicy is, but there's another spice here. And I remember early dating. I'm like, There's telling you that because we're gonna be honest, we're Block levels of honesty anymore. And I'm telling you you have a spice about you. You're spicy, but it's not cayenne. It's like clove. I wasn't wrong.

Jes Perkins 23:42

You were not wrong. You were not wrong. I was gonna go somewhere with that. I can't remember now. I think my point in bringing that up - *laughs*

Luke 23:55

Just wavin' goodbye, I'll miss you.

Jes Perkins 23:59

Goodbye to the thought. I think my intention in bringing that up, though, was just to kind of point out how, like, a key part of our relationship, one is the honesty and then also accepting what you get when you are honest with each other, yeah, and, like, truly accepting the other person and meeting them where they are at. Because, like, I was also at a point in my dating career, I guess that I knew that I was not gonna be able to change a person if I was with a person, and I thought to myself, Oh, I like them, but they just need to change X, Y and Z thing, and then everything will be perfect. Like, no, that's not gonna happen where everyone's a grown adult in this situation and like so at no point was I trying to change anything about you, was I looking for anything to change. I was truly just getting to know you, and I think you were doing the same thing.

Luke 24:55

So much of our dating, or early dating, felt differently just completely, completely off the bat because of moments like that. We weren't trying. This didn't have to mean anything. We really were just not caring. And then it was just oops.

He accidentally, literally, put the two of the most similar people together on accident, oops. These people worked too well together. I remember one of the like early dates. I was at your house, and you got me a cup of coffee, and it was in the fridge, and I went and opened it, and the butter suite was open, and the butter fell out, and I picked it up, and I looked inside of it, and there was only one stick in the box. And I took it, the stick out, and I put it in the suite, closed it, and I immediately broke down the box, and I turned around. I said, Where's recycling?

Jes Perkins 25:51

Oh, oh.

Luke 25:54

And then I said, Oh, I don't live here. I'm sorry, but you weren't.

Jes Perkins 25:57

No, I was not. That was literally the moment that I was like, Oh, I could be with this person for the rest of my life, I think.

Luke 26:03

And like, on the flip side for me, like it was like little moments exactly like that, like, yeah, I have to watch you, yeah. I don't have to think about you. And the things you're doing that are just you are, like, awesome. Oh, cool. I can be around this. Oh, I would love to see this for every and

like, every inch of us. Then being together, especially like when I moved in, was just me trying to consecutively, always just say yes to like the concept of you when it was like, of course, effective, beneficial. Like, no, she wants to wake up and go. We need 24 chocolate puddings right now. No, that's not happening, actually. But like normal, reasonable bounds, she's deeply reasonable, like nothing you've never asked me, was ever, well, hold on, actually, that one time we had a mild, I don't even want to say it was a disagreement. It was just a strong conversation, really,

Jes Perkins 27:03
about the thing?

Luke 27:04
yeah,

Jes Perkins 27:04
yes,

Luke 27:05
where you're like, "we need to go do this other thing, and not yours" "but your family, my like, major event!" "What's happening is in the way of a barbecue," and she looked at me and was like, "you could tell me if I'm wrong," and she's coming at me with a strong tone, and I'm like, just this is also the relationship where I'm like, fully trying to be honest, and also own space. And I'm like, in a chair, and mind you, I'm also bigger than her, and I'm in a chair just going, "I think I would like to go to the once in a lifetime family event over the hot dogs," and she's like, "that's okay and completely fair and reasonable. How would you like your eggs?"

"I get breakfast?" and I'm on the verge of tears,

Jes Perkins 27:52
oh my gosh, because like, and that, that's kind of why I wanted to talk about that fight? I guess? it was kind of a strong conversation, because I think that was a great example of like tone. I think tone was a major point of contention, and still is, especially for me, because I

am flat sometimes, so monotone sometimes, but when I am expressive, I'm like, super, super expressive, yeah, and like that. That is such a great example of, like, the autistic saying, of like, please don't listen to my tone or my body language. Please listen to just the words that I was saying. Because I remember I was I was really angry, and I was not aware that I was, like, being aggressive towards you in that moment. I did kind of hear myself at a certain point, which is why I literally stopped. And was like, but if I'm being an asshole right now, you can totally tell me and like, I will listen. I promise. Like, and it was just like that, um,

Luke 28:57
and I'm like, okay, just trust her. You have to do that. That's how relationships work. I just trust her,

Jes Perkins 29:01

right and and I think, you know, at a certain point you have to, kind of, like, take the leap in that moment of like, just, I'm just gonna trust this person. I'm just gonna say what I want, even though it's terrifying, even though it goes against every other relationship I've ever been in, and every other way I've tried to deal with something like this right now. Let me just do the scary thing and say my truth, and the right person will listen.

Luke 29:31

That was a lot of our early relationship, just like, Okay, I need to trust her on this. I just need to trust you. When you say this, I'm going to say this, trusting that you're not going to be like, explosive at me, you're not going to try to turn this around. I mean, you're just going to try to listen to me. And that was a lot of our early relationship. But yeah, I remember the tone. There was one or two other times too, that had a couple times, actually, yeah, and you were like, You need to stop listening.

To the tone I understand what you're doing and why you're doing it, but that does not work for me singularly, and that explanation that just was also a lot of our basis for so many things. After that mild fight, it's like strong conversation, because that's exactly what we just started trying to figure out, okay, I know what I'm doing by doing this, but is this applying to you? Yeah, and pick poking and slowly

doing that, and yeah, it there's points. It's uncomfortable, yeah, because you're trying to do something you're not used to doing, and it's scary, but like,

we consistently kept showing each other, we can do this scary thing with each other. Yeah,

Jes Perkins 30:50

yeah, that's it. And I think that this is something that comes up a lot in like coaching calls and conversations with clients and things like that, is it's not necessarily about completely avoiding problems in your relationship. It's not about completely avoiding harm, never ever hurt any other person and being perfect towards each other. 100% of the time, it's being with someone who can make a mistake in front of you and with you and seeing what they do, like, after the fact, like the whole cliché, like, it's not about the destination, it's about the journey. It's not what you're doing. It's how are you getting there? How are you getting to where you both want to go together?

Something else I'm thinking of while we're on a topic of, like, our early relationship is how it was different. Because even though we didn't know we were both autistic at the time, we acted very autistic towards each other. We did, and both of our like, specific flavors of autism, I think, happened to work really well together. Yeah, I do want to say that, like, it's not automatically a guarantee that, like, if you meet another autistic person and you day, you're going to get along like, absolutely not the case at all. But for us, it wound up working out really great. I think a good example of that is the list of questions that you literally typed up on your computer and printed

out and brought over to my house to go over and discuss each one in detail before you decided to move in with me.

Luke 32:28

Even better, it was months before I even actually did yeah. So this was a precursor to let me think about, put me in contemplation about thinking about, yes, moving in is even better because I lesbianuhauled and I did not want to do that again, yeah. And so I said, you're going to think about it this time. And yeah, I am. I'm an MPH, meaning I have a master's in public health. So my job is survey making and question making and finding things out. And so I did what I do best, and created a 30 question questionnaire and brought it over. And it was like, Is this something? Can we sit here? Can we do this? Do you want to do this together? And she was like, Oh, absolutely. Do you want to do it before or after dinner? She's like, Can we eat? Can we have dessert? And I'm like, Oh yeah, I don't care at all. She's like, Great, okay, hold on, let me just get my stuff all right. And we sat there, and we just, yeah, we did it, and we had every single conversation. And I really wish I still had it, because it would probably be helpful for some people, because it had a bunch of questions of, like, what do you think? Um, equal breakdown of housework hold work like housework looks like, Who do you think is taking out the garbage in your brain? Okay, who's doing it now in your own house? But even questions that are at that level, but we even had, I even had questions on, like, intimacy. So like, moving in, what do you think is, like, the amount you're expecting sex to work at? Do you what would be too much for you? What would be not enough for you? Ranges like that, and to cover a lot of things before we even started?

Jes Perkins 34:15

Yeah. I think one of my favorite questions on there was, like, asking about having people over,

Luke 34:21

Oh, yeah.

Jes Perkins 34:22

And, like, we literally laid down our parameters of, like, Okay, if either of us wants to have somebody over, like, that's fine, but we need to give the other person, like, at least 24 hours notice or something of like, Hey, I'm gonna have so and so come over, and they're gonna come over for X amount of time. And I think we also had a rule that, like, they had to leave by 8pm something like that,

Luke 34:42

or something like that

Jes Perkins 34:43

and it was like little, little details like that. And it wasn't necessarily that we were like, setting these rules in stone, either, which I think is another important, important thing to point out, is like we weren't. We weren't like writing these down and then strictly adhering to them forever. It was more so just like a starting point of like, okay, where are you at? What do you kind of think of

this? And then as our relationship, you know, continued, we've adjusted those things. We've talked about them a little more certain. Things have changed a lot, of course, um, but I freaking love that you came to me with those questions. I was so ready.

Luke 35:19

You're like, this one's different.

Jes Perkins 35:20

I was like, Oh my god. Finally, someone who might actually be as anal retentive as I am.

Luke 35:26

I'm like, I clearly am not good at this. I need the most amount of data I can going into situation just I'm asking for you gonna give it to me?

Jes Perkins 35:35

Like, oh, it was so good. And another great example too, of like, just open communication and just like being so straightforward and honest and trusting the person, especially when it comes to something like a romantic relationship or living with a person, something with, you know, a significant amount of commitment in it, because, especially for autistic folks like we need to know what to expect. We need to feel like we are prepared. And, you know, again, it's not about, like, when I say prepare again, I don't mean like, completely plan what's going to happen and write out the rules and it's going to go this way and everything's going to be 100% concrete. But I say prepare in that, like, just exploring a situation a little bit taking some guesses as to where you might go, figuring, like, Oh yeah, it's probably gonna look like this. It's probably gonna look like that. And just having kind of that a little bit of of preparation as a treat, so to speak.

Luke 36:34

I think one of the things also, it was helping give me, like, early access to and then, like, I started coming around a lot more, I would spend a lot more time, and I got to see, like, the early precursors of what we now know was your ADHD, yes. And so for like, me, yeah, I'm trying to figure out what I'm stepping into, not to prevent it, not to stop it. But like, even knowing, like, the early bits of your ADHD, let me know it was going to just happen. Yeah, too. So I'm not trying to come in and go, you need a planner. You need a schedule. Do you Why don't you? You like I would stand there go, why aren't you using these things? Yeah, and you go, because they don't work. Doo, doo, doo.

And they didn't these things don't work, even if we have whiteboards that best, they are not made for planning. They are for writing random crap. We have set out loud down, and we have, like, that's funny, write that down. That's a memorable note. Now, yep, and that's so and that was also an interesting part over time, especially when you did figure these things out, your ADHD was the first thing to figure out. And like, I don't know how to phrase this, but like,

letting you just release and disengage from the environment and handling it and trying to manage keeping up with it and like,

it was almost better for both of us to have you less involved in the actual care keeping the ball.

Jes Perkins 38:11

Yeah

Luke 38:13

Because now yeah, I clearly Yeah. You can say autism. You can say your social control freak, cool. Let's say both. Let's acknowledge that I'm not going to stop being Control Freak now I get to be now I don't have to be right. And now we're both happy in that, you know the house is clean. You know there's food. You know what's there. You know when to get it. You know what to expect in your own home at all times now. And I also do that, because I am doing it, yeah,

Jes Perkins 38:45

and I think that. So this is what I was kind of talking about, of like the interesting dynamic between like you with your autism and your dyspraxia, on me with the ADHD and autism, because the ADHD really throws a wrench in so many things. And something that we've talked about a lot is like, how, like from the outside, if, if we were to, like, explain, like, for example, how how chores and stuff are split in our house, it would sound so one sided, so co dependent, so like, toxic, unless you actually understand that, like, No, we're actually not co dependent. We are just interdependent on each other because our both of our disabilities play off each other in certain ways. They give both of us weaknesses, and they give both of us strengths. And I can admit that, yeah, my wife does most, if not all, of the cleaning in the house. You do all of the grocery shopping, all of the like, Bill stuff now is yours. I help when I can.

Luke 40:00

Hmm.

Jes Perkins 40:01

And like, I do do some, like, bigger project stuff, like, if my ADHD, if I get a hair up my ass, I'll just, like, go and, like, reorganize the spice cupboard or whatever. But I think the majority of my labor comes from, like, more so emotional labor, yeah, which I think is also a loaded term these days, but it's just how it winds up working out. Because I don't like cleaning. I don't want to clean. I don't care if the house is clean. It does affect me, and like I do, feel better when you do clean, which is why I'm so appreciative of you doing it. But it's just not something that occurs to me. And you just accept that. And you also, like, are okay with cleaning, and you like doing it. And like,

Luke 40:49

Yeah, emotional support is very true. And like, I think anybody listening to this is going to be like, Oh yeah, probably that one is half shouting. And I am, I know. I know exactly how I sound. And even during this, the range you and I have showed in voice, call back to tone. But like tone in this, like, I need that. I need somebody to stay rock solid. I need somebody to be a little bit more disconnected than I am. I don't need somebody to plug in and feel things the way I feel them, in

the volume I feel them, because that's called catastrophizing, and I can't save us both when I'm drowning, and the amount of times I've been so deeply thankful that I feel like I'm emotionally losing control of the situation, and I turn around and you're just like, dang, that is so not about me. Are we ordering Arby's tonight? I would love a beef and cheese.

Jes Perkins 41:55

Yep, literally!

Luke 41:57

Strawberry milkshake, and it's sometimes, it's just so like, different from the emotional reality I'm living. It's just grounding. It's just halting, and it makes me stop every time. And I'm like, dang, the world truly does just, just keep turning. Huh? I could get tenders. I Yeah.

Jes Perkins 42:23

And I think that's also what, what kind of makes our relationship special is, is we both, we are so similar in so many ways, but also so complete freaking opposites in so many ways, yeah. And I think in the same way that I'm able to kind of like, stay grounded in those moments and sort of like, make you realize that you're, for like, a better term, currently flying off handle a little bit. Yeah, you also helped me during my like, sort of more impulsive and like, overly optimistic moments.

Luke 42:59

I feel like, if our emotions are on a bell curve, I feel like my bell curve is like a normal distribution, and yours is a skewed end distribution to where-

Jes Perkins 43:08

Oh, bitch

Luke 43:09

if you are - I know!

Jes Perkins 43:10

how dare you, this is my own podcast.

Luke 43:12

I know so, like, if you're showing emotion, it's literally because you are on these extremes. And actually, there's a problem. Now there's probably a problem, meaning, if you're excited, you're excited as that's probably okay, but however, you're right. What steps are we skipping? what are we signing up for? I get how much is this, and did you look into this? how? Who said that? Let me see the thing. For how many months, and you can't do this anywhere else, and then on the opposite side, if you're sad, and I start seeing you're sad, I literally only have, like, five minutes to intervene before you stop talking,

Jes Perkins 43:47

yeah.

Luke 43:48

And you exist on these ends. And so, like, it's actually then beneficial for me to stay in the middle, because now I need to start feeling for you, especially when you're sad. Like, it's helpful for me to be able to put things in these words, and for you to actually just start agreeing. And then there's good when I'm able to do that, and there's points you're able to agree with, you're able to then start disagreeing with me when I start saying something that's not correct, yeah, and that's easier for you also to then to work from and then you start talking to me,

Jes Perkins 44:19

Yeah, yeah, especially during those moments where I kind of-

Luke 44:25

You get in the syrup,

Jes Perkins 44:27

oh, shoot, I can't remember what term is. It's not going nonverbal. Just during those moments where I lose my words, I guess because I do, when I get upset, like my voice shuts down, like

Luke 44:41

all of you, does you just pull right in

Jes Perkins 44:43

and it's, it's like, I literally, like, just completely, totally go inwards and, like, even if I wanted to form words, I literally can't get my mouth open. And I know that if I do force myself to speak, because I've done it in the past, I'm gonna be a fucking bitch, not because I'm mad at the other person. But just because of, like, my nervous system state, and in those moments, like your like, hyper empathy, I think really comes in handy, because the way that you will literally like exactly what you said, tell me how I am feeling because I can't like, I have so much like dissociation because of my trauma, that, like, I just like, don't I feel that I don't feel I know I'm upset. I don't know why I'm upset. I don't know what in what way I'm upset. But you just like, know me so well, and you pay so much attention that you just like, give hand me these sentences. And I'm like, oh, yeah, you're right. So, yeah, interdependence, I'm trying to think what else.

Luke 45:49

Yeah, I know me too, because we've had five years together, but we've made so many modifications to so many different little things. So like, I remember at one point now, I do all the grocery shopping, but that's just because now your work schedules changed, but when they did the grocery shopping, actually, you would drive me and I would just go in.

Jes Perkins 46:10

Yeah, that was a good system.

Luke 46:12

And that was like, another easy little system there, of like, that's just what I did. And it because I hate driving. And it worked out. I'm like, I cannot navigate the death trap, nor do I want to, that is the Wegmans parking lot. Why are we backing out of a space 40 miles an hour, you need to go find yourself with God before you do that again, yeah, um, you can handle that. Because, again, you're like, that's not about me. Can you get me a bialy? Don't give me the pizza ones. I don't like sauce, um, and then I am a lot better to go into the grocery store, because I can actually handle some of the simulation as well.

Jes Perkins 46:54

Yeah, that's definitely a key point in, like, neuro divergent relationships, not to, like, keep bringing like, the podcast lingo, but like, also that's just how I talk. I feel like,

Luke 47:05

yeah, you're just a professional in your field, my love

Jes Perkins 47:07

um, but yeah, it's about playing to each other's strengths and, like, seeing where you can kind of break up the bigger tasks into like, different parts. Like, I think we're we're really good at that. We're so good at that that we have trouble even thinking of, like, Wait, what is it that we do? So, yeah, that was one thing. Is like, I would drive and park at the grocery store, and you would actually go in. Um, a lot of times -

Luke 47:28

You do clean, actually. So you say you think you don't do a lot of cleaning. And we've done this one before, and I always got to remind you of this. You start a lot of projects.

Jes Perkins 47:39

Yes,

Luke 47:40

I finish them,

Jes Perkins 47:41

and that was what I was about to say. So I because I finally am remembering now I'm like, Well, I will, I'll, like, start the laundry. I can put the clothes in the washing machine. I can change them over to the dryer. That part's No biggie. It's the taking them out of the dryer and the folding them and the putting them away that I have issue with, which is then where you kind of step in, or, like, I will load and start the dishwasher, and then later you'll put the dishes away, like, little stuff like that. So yeah, I do do some things around the house. Yeah, I guess I should be a little bit more graceful towards myself, or something, whatever.

Luke 48:16

And then, even then, if we set up systems for something, you do the system, yeah? So like easiest one, I put a little basket on the back of your toilet upstairs, because you would put in the toilet rolls just all along the back of the toilet haphazardly, and so there's this messed up system. So I just put a basket there, and I said, put them there. And you said, Oh my God, that's so nice.

Jes Perkins 48:39

Yes.

Luke 48:39

And now you just blindly put them in there, and don't even think about what's going on in the basket. What's going on in the basket.

Jes Perkins 48:43

Yes, I have a basket of toilet paper rolls on the back of my toilet

Luke 48:46

because I know what's going on. I'm not gonna get them for a while, and who's up here? Its you and the cats

Jes Perkins 48:52

And again, Again, that is what radical acceptance looks like. It's not, how can I change this about you? It's, How can I make this easier for you? How can I help you with this? Yeah, and if there is something you can do, great, awesome. If there isn't anything you can do, also awesome, like,because at a certain point too, you have to kind of just let shit go.

Luke 49:20

Yeah.

Jes Perkins 49:22

Like our saying shit sucks and that doesn't that's written on the whiteboards just one of the whiteboard sayings, because sometimes shit just sucks, just sucks until it doesn't, until it doesn't,

Luke 49:35

that's a big one too. Like we'll end up getting or I know I know I will, will get so mad that something's happening and I'm mad that it's just happening. Yeah. And as autists, we can both get stuck in a very similar loops of that, depending. Doesn't even matter the emotional level, someone could get stuck on a rational level, well, it just shouldn't be happening. Because it shouldn't be happening. Great. Cool. It is. Okay, but I hate it. All right, great. But shit sucks until it doesn't

Jes Perkins 50:04

Yep

Luke 50:06

and that's always nice. Now we actually have, each of us now has, like, another person to know. We can look at Yeah, even during all of this and go, Well, shit sucks till it doesn't

Jes Perkins 50:19

Yeah. And I think at least most of the time, both of us are, like, having a high emotional experience at different times, yeah, so like the other one can kind of step in and go, Oh, it's my turn to help co regulate now and then, because we know the other one is gonna have to take their turn eventually, too. Yeah. And on and on we go.

Luke 50:41

That was something my parents on their better days. Um, did say to my sister and I have, like, the one of the better things for a relationship is you need to take turns being crazy.

Jes Perkins 50:56

Yes, oh, my god, literally, literally, though, take turns. That is true. It's like, especially if you're a neurodivergent person, you got crazy bones. You do. At least one or two of them in there, I promise. And you just gotta let yourself go nuts every now and then, you have to let yourself throw a fit. You have to let yourself throw a little temper tantrum, have a freaking meltdown.

And you know when these things happen in relationship, like when you're when your partner, for example, is like going through high emotional states, having that meltdown near you or in front of you, also knowing that, like, it's not about you. You do not need to take anything personally, understanding that even if they do happen to say something hurtful towards you in that moment, having the grace to know that it's because they're in that state and not necessarily that they're meaning to do that, and then also being willing to, just like, have an open, open conversation after the fact, yeah, and just truly accepting those, those parts of your person, because it's like, do, do I want to be with this person who has this part and that part and that part And that part and that part

Luke 52:19

Yes, and that brings us right back around from the beginning, where I said it was like you were looking at the worst parts of me,

Jes Perkins 52:30

yeah.

Luke 52:31

Like, that's all you. But like, yeah, you maybe not the worst parts, but you were definitely looking at the messiest. And maybe that's the phrase, you were looking at the messiest and you were like, This is reasonable to the experience that is currently happening under current context. Okay, this is probably a normal person, actually

Jes Perkins 52:54

yeah, yeah, because everyone has messiness.

Luke 52:58

Yeah.

Jes Perkins 52:58

Everybody does. Everyone is going to come with their own set of trauma and baggage and patterns and attachment issues and whatever else. Again, it's not about finding a perfect person. It's finding somebody who, not even only who makes the work worth it, but who makes it so you don't even think about the work

Luke 53:25

Yeah,

Jes Perkins 53:27

because our relationship is, it's not hard. It takes a lot of work, though. We put in a lot of work. We put in a lot of effort for each other. Not because, and this is another difference too, between, like, this current relationship and both of our past relationships, as we put in the amount of effort that we do because we want to, because we genuinely desire to, not because we feel obligated to or responsible for it. We don't feel like, if we don't do this for the other person, then the other person is gonna like, fail or be mad at us or do this like we can we can trust each other to be responsible for our own individual lives. It's just we want to be together so that we can make each other's lives a little bit better, a little bit easier. It's that, that obligation part you have to look out for. It's like, if you feel like you should do this for your partner. You feel like you need to do this for your partner. You feel like it makes you a good girlfriend or a good boyfriend or a good partner, wife, whoever, to do X thing, that's a red flag. That's something to be explored. But if you want to do things for your partner, just because you want to, go ahead.

Luke 54:42

I'm trying to say yes, and I'm like, so ready to say yes, and because yes, yes, yes, that's exactly so much of it. And it's just that I'm also at a point in my life where, like i have i i Finally, thank God, value my life. I find value in my life. And things that I bring to my life, and the people that I bring to my life. And if I'm deciding to bring a person like you, and I'm bringing you this close to me in my life, then I also need to value you. I need to value the same thing that you're doing, the same thing I am, that you are investing time and energy in me. That also means something to you as much as it does to me. It may again, of course, differences in relationships. This is where the value, difference in value happens. Relationships don't work good, but that's the thing. I value this just as much as you are valuing this. Um, and so when I'm out and about, you're right that it's not I'm thinking of like I'm doing something, not because I think I should, but I'm literally sitting there going, if I had to deal with this thingy, if I only washed none of the Tupperware lids and only the tupperwares, I would be annoyed to come home and need lids and they're all dirty. I wouldn't want to put you in that. So I just wash the lids like it's so it's little things like that where I know this would be annoying if you had to do it. I just, you don't have to do it. I can just do it. Yeah.

Jes Perkins 56:15

Yeah, yeah. I think the maybe the Yes, and it is like, have a relationship where you don't have to think about the work, and find somebody that you're willing to be burdened for.

Luke 56:31

Yeah.

Jes Perkins 56:32

And when I say that, I mean, like, there's, there's that common phrase like, Oh, you're not a burden. You're not a burden. It's not hard to be with you. Sometimes it is a burden to be with another person. Sometimes it is a burden to help another person, to have to wash all the Tupperware lids instead of just doing the tupperware. But it's like, is this burden worth it for this person?

Luke 56:52

And like, a lot of the work too, is like, realistically, I know, if you weren't here, who would do it? Me, right? It's gonna get need to get done. So sometimes I view it as like, I then am leaving things for you to do. Yeah, of course, if you lived alone, you would have to do it. If I lived alone, I would have to do it. But we live together, we don't have to keep assigning, like, assigning tasks, doubling things down. And just like being a we are still, at the end of the day, roommates, right?

I don't want to be a bad roommate to you.

Jes Perkins 57:28

Oh my god, they were roommates.

Luke 57:30

I know. And like we're and that's part of the whole bit of like commitment, is that we're constantly working towards something a little bit every day, even if that the thing we're working towards is just have a better day. Make bagels today. Cool. We are still working towards something consecutively, together every day, building something that's almost like a co worker, in a sense.

Jes Perkins 57:54

Yeah

Luke 57:54

I don't want you to have to do work that I can just so simply do that. We can focus on main quests. Yeah. Like we can have, we can do main quests and do the fun side quests while I take care of the side quests. That's like, I don't know, seeing the lawyer getting you on the deed and things like that.

Jes Perkins 58:16

Yeah. So there's like, main quest side questions, and there's like, errands.

Luke 58:20

The errands! Fetch quests and yes, the errands and fetch quests. Yeah, that's too Yeah, yeah,

Jes Perkins 58:27

the grinding, yeah, I like that metaphor.

Luke 58:30

That's good. You picked up a lot gaming.

Jes Perkins 58:34

gaming?

Luke 58:34

Yeah, you're right.

Jes Perkins 58:42

I think that's actually a pretty good spot to end. There's so much more we could talk about.

Luke 58:49

I know we can even get into at another point. And I think this would be a really interesting conversation to get into, um, just more openly and candidly, like

the nursing home.

Jes Perkins 59:03

We could talk about that, if you would like

Luke 59:05

And my time in healthcare, and not just what it did to me, but more specifically, like our relationship.

Jes Perkins 59:12

Yeah, I honestly wasn't sure how much you wanted to get into that. But yeah, we can definitely talk about that, because you well, we can end it a little bit of a cliffhanger. Oh, um, especially if you're gonna come back, but, yeah, you literally got CPTSD from that place. My My wife was a just real quick plug. I'm not sure when they're gonna come back, but they, during the COVID pandemic, were an infection preventionist in a nursing home, yeah, um, so I will let you all do your imaginations with that what you will.

Luke 59:48

There's a lot of research coming out.

Jes Perkins 59:50

There is a lot of research coming out now, which is great, especially for like trauma and healthcare, because, oh my god, watching you go through that was like, could be multiple podcast episodes in and of itself, so I guess we'll leave it at that. Look out for part two. I don't do deadlines, so it'll be eventually TM

Luke 1:00:11

we could or, you know what we could do nursing home. I'm sure folks may have a question or two now.

Jes Perkins 1:00:18

Oh, you know what that could be fun, yeah, yeah.

Luke 1:00:22

What about some questions?

Jes Perkins 1:00:23

Yeah, that's a really good idea. So since they're gonna come back eventually, if anyone has any questions for us about our relationship, like you know, what would certain things look like for us? How do we navigate certain situations, things like that. Please feel free to send them to my email that is Jes@jesdiverges.com I'm gonna put all the links and stuff in the show notes as always. Um, I guess is there any like Final thought that you want to leave folks with?

Luke 1:00:59

Well my final thoughts are almost always of you, I don't know if I want to leave them with them. They're mine.

Jes Perkins 1:01:04

Gayyyyyyy!

Luke 1:01:04

Okay, well, Aren't you lucky?

Jes Perkins 1:01:12

I think my final thought would be, be friends first. Oh, yeah, be friends first before literally anything, make sure that you're with somebody who is a friend exactly like what just happened here, because, like, the romance and even the intimacy and stuff comes and goes, but like, we're literally always going to be best friends.

Luke 1:01:36

Yeah

Jes Perkins 1:01:36

Always. All right, folks. Thank you so very much for listening. We'll see you next time. Bye.

Thanks for listening to unshaming auDHD! If you found this episode helpful and want to learn more about building relationships as an auDHDer, my AuDHD Summer Camp program is for you!

In this 4 month program, I'll teach you almost everything I know about how to live authentically, compassionately, and shamelessly as an autistic ADHDer.

There will be 12 group coaching calls, an online community for you to connect with other members, plus 6 modules about understanding your auDHD brain, relationships and communication, and so much more.

To learn more and sign up, go to jesdiverges.com/audhdsummercamp. That link, as well as some other links to my website and content, will be in the show notes.

See you next time!

008: Juggling Life's Balls & Befriending Inner Demons w/ Emme Kay Kennedy

Published March 6, 2025

[transcript currently processing, will be posted soon]

009: Masking, Misdiagnosis, and More w/ Javelin Laurence

Published April 30, 2025

Jes Diverges

Hello hello everyone and welcome to another episode! I am so excited to share this conversation with you today, but before we dive in I wanted to announce that I am bringing back the Combo Platter! The Combo Platter is a monthly membership program for late-realized autistic and ADHD adults who want to connect with other auDHDers and share advice, gain new perspectives, meme dump, and generally just hang out together. There will be monthly Q&A calls with me as well and those will be recorded and posted in the community. And the best part is, it is now 100% pay-what-you-can, starting at just \$5 a month. I'm well aware of the financial hardship that folks around the world are currently experiencing, and I think support like this should be as financially accessible as possible while also ensuring I make enough income to sustain it. I'll also be using the calls from Combo Platter to help create future content for my blog and podcast, so you'll be helping contribute to much needed resources for the auDHD community at large.

If you'd like to sign up, please join my Patreon at patreon.com/jesdiverges and choose the price that makes most sense for you. I'll put that link in the show notes. From there, you'll get instructions on how to join our community on Discord. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions, and I hope you'll join us there! I can't wait to meet you.

Now, without further adieu, I'm thrilled to introduce you all to Javelin Laurence. Javelin, whose pronouns are they/them, is a coach for artistic neuroqueer humans who want to make change in a way that makes sense for their brains and they are the founder of Alchemy Divergence Coaching. When we spoke before, we connected over our mutual special interest in psychology and how that has informed our outlook on the world, and so that's what we'll be talking about today.

If you're interested in connecting with Javelin after this episode, which would absolutely make sense because they're freaking awesome, you can find the link to their website and socials in the show notes!

Hi, Javelin, it's so good to see you today. I'm so excited for our conversation.

Javelin
Me too!

Jes Diverges

So I guess first things first, I'll give you a chance to kind of introduce yourself to my audience. Tell us a little bit about like your your human self, also your professional self, and then we will dive into our conversation.

Javelin

Hello, Jes's audience. My name is Javelin Laurence. My pronouns are they/them. I am coming to you from Canada, so I don't know where all y'all are at, but I am in Alberta. I Let's see, I am an actor. I am a science fiction nerd. I am a coach, and also, kind of like dabbling in the group facilitation space these days, which is very exciting. I am the founder of Alchemy Divergence Coaching, which is a business for Neurodivergent, artistic, neuro queer humans who are looking to make change in a like low pressure way. You know, I'm all about experimentation and play when we do these kinds of things. You know, for science, yeah, I also am, like, a little bit of a witch. Sometimes I know very exciting too in my off time. Oh, so many good connections and learning how to garden from my partner. So there. Oh, I love it.

Jes Diverges

What do you what do you what do you garden? Um,

Javelin

so right now I am growing a hoard of garlic. Oh, I know, yeah. Last year I got like a little organic bulb of elephant garlic from a market up here, and I pulled it apart and grew it into five individual bulbs, and then I split them all up, now I've got 24 so, oh, exponential growth is happening.

Jes Diverges

That is awesome. I am a huge garlic fan, so that's so cool. So I was so thrilled when you emailed me because I read a little bit about you, and I was like, Oh my gosh, we're gonna have so many things to talk about. And there were a ton of things that came up when we met before, and one of them was our mutual special interest in psychology, which is always so fun to meet a fellow Audie H dear, who like, also as obsessed with psychology as I am, like, I'm so excited to get into this. And I think we wanted to talk about kind of how that impacted, like our understanding of the world, and also like our realizations as time went on. Of like, how socially influenced Western psychology is especially Yeah. So given that my first question for you is, when did you first become interested in psychology?

Javelin

When you know what it's harder to pinpoint the moment, than it is for other interests that I have. But I think it, I think it was sort of born out of my interest in acting the two sort of feel like the same thing to me, but from different directions. So this has been ongoing for a long time. I remember reading, like, personality books as a young person and distributing the personality tests to my family members over Christmas break. And I must have been a teenager when I was doing this, but I was like, wanted to understand everybody through the lens of their Myers Briggs profile classic. So clearly that was pretty early on. I remember in high school talking to my to a like a teacher, and being pretty sure that I was either going to pursue a degree in

psychology, or I was going to pursue a degree in acting, but I was really torn between the two. So it feels like it's always been there to some degree, people are fascinating, endlessly fascinating and endlessly confusing to my little ADHD brain as well. So I think it, yeah, I think it was really born out of a desire to understand. So, yeah,

Jes Diverges

I love that. And it's so interesting how you've tied it into acting too. Because I realized, like in retrospect, looking back on my life, like knowing that I was, you know, autistic and ADHD the whole time, I realized too, that, like, part of my special. Just in psychology, was also in acting, and like, studying human behavior, learning how to act like an exaggerated human being. And I also remember, like, all the personality quizzes, like the buzzfeed quizzes we would all do all the time, like, which waffle flavor are you? That stuff I love that you gave it to your family members too. That's so great. I think I remember asking them to do it. I don't think they're ever interested in actually following through though, which, yeah,

Javelin

yeah, a bummer. The thing that I found was the trick was that I actually, like, asked them each of the individual questions, so I didn't, like give them a piece of paper. I like, sat down and interviewed them, and I was like, how would you answer this question circle and then tally up at the end? So it was sort of a, like, interactive experience.

Jes Diverges

Oh, okay, okay, I'll have to remember that. I'll have to remember that maybe I'll get them next time. So how do you think that your interest in psychology like impacted both your view of yourself and like your view of the world around you growing up?

Javelin

That's a good question. I know for certain that since I was a young person, my view of myself was tied up within with a like understanding that something was different about me, not necessarily different from my family members, because we are a neuro divergent bunch, if I've ever come across it, but definitely different from, like, classmates, definitely different from other humans in like social situations outside of the home. And there was always this like deep desire to understand why that difference existed, what it was, and what I could do about it. And I think that started off as like a What's wrong with me, sort of situation, which I think is really common for ADHD kiddos who don't have the language to describe what they're going through. So, like, there was an interest for me in, like, self diagnosing something, so that I'd have some answers. And, you know, bit of an ability to manage the feeling of being on a roller coaster, right? Yes. So I toyed with a number of different potentials, and that was especially the case when I was in my undergrad in psychology. I was like, maybe it's this, maybe it's this. And sometimes it felt real, but, but there also was sort of this feeling of like, oh, well, if this is the case, then I must adapt my behavior to fit this category more. I don't know how else to describe this. And I was like, Oh, I'm pretty sure, pretty sure this was bipolar at one point. And so then I was like, well, a bipolar person would do things this way. So this is how I do it, because this is my understanding of

myself. So I was still masking even as I was trying to self diagnose, right, wild, that understanding themselves always been tied up with this. Yeah,

Jes Diverges

I think that's so interesting, because I know a ton of ADHD ers and neurodivergent folks in general who have struggled with either misdiagnosis under diagnosis, and have found these labels that do like sort of fit in some ways. Would you be able to say a little bit more about, like, how you wound up kind of using those to, like, mask a little bit more? Because I think that's going to be something really relatable to a lot of folks. Yeah,

Javelin

I like, I remember the, the the the like the day that I decided I was going to start masking because I knew I needed to in order to have social connections. And it was relatively young. It was somewhere in like grade six or grade seven, where I pieced together that how I was unfiltered was not acceptable. It was not making me any friends, and so I switched schools, and I was like, I'm gonna try just like, reflecting the behavior of the people around me and being a yes person. And that worked incredibly well. I switched schools and acquired a like, little group of friends, and most of the time was really an acceptable part of that group. Occasionally, we're teased for some odd behaviors and things that I just couldn't mask, like food preferences, that kind of stuff. But that coincided with a lot of like identity work that young humans have to do, like you're going through puberty. I didn't know I was. Was non binary at the time, and the experience of puberty was incredibly sensory, overwhelming, but I didn't have the language to describe it at the time, so I was just feeling like I was on this roller coaster of hormones. And so that became trying to understand that dynamic, along with the masking dynamic, along with the I feel terrible most of the time, but then sometimes I feel really good, turned into that. Maybe it's the bipolar question. And so when I, when I clicked on to that in an abnormal psych class, I did a very autistic thing of perseverating on the idea that this was what was going on. I got stuck with this topic, it became a hyper focus for a second, and I like voraciously devoured content about it. And in devouring that content, went, Okay, well, if this is my identity, then these are the ways that I perform that identity to people, because my only understanding of identity at the time was performance. You know, yeah, I'm not really sure how else to to put it, but I think there was a, there was a piece in there. I was like, well, that's not completely my experience, but maybe I can. Okay, okay, okay, organizing my thoughts. Do you remember in your psychology study, there was this, this way of knowing things about yourself by observing your own behavior and then drawing a conclusion out of that? I don't remember exactly what it was called, but at the time that I learned it, I was like, this doesn't connect with me at all. But the longer I've lived, the more I've been like, oh, actually, this is almost entirely how I know myself. I notice how I behave, and then I draw conclusions based off of that, as opposed to being like, This is who I am, and then behaving out of that understanding. I feel like that was what was going on with this. I was noticing some behaviors, drawing conclusions based off of those behaviors, and then going, Okay, I understand who I am. Now I'm going to try and behave more in line with that thing, which is very confusing when you accidentally pick the wrong thing or one that doesn't quite fit. Does that make

Jes Diverges

sense? Yes, it absolutely does. And it's getting me thinking about one of my biggest pet peeves with modern day psychology, which is that a lot of it is based on like this, external observation, like I remember in so many of my psych classes, there was so much emphasis on like, if you can't see it, if you can't actually observe it, if you can't get like, physical evidence of it, then it can't actually be measured. And it basically doesn't matter. This

Javelin

is, this is the father of behavioral psychology, Skinner, I don't remember what is to be a Skinner, or that BF, Skinner, he is haunting us to this day, because that whole belief system really was that the brain is a black box. You cannot look inside of it, so don't even try. Let's just observe the observable things, which completely discounts the internal experience of people, yes,

Jes Diverges

and then when you're an ADHD or a neurodivergent person, gifted, twice, exceptional, etc, etc, and have such an intense internal experience that is also so different than everyone around you, of course, it makes sense that we feel so different and so confused, and we're taught to essentially learn how to just gaslight ourselves, not trust ourselves, and then find these supposed frameworks of like, oh, well, this kind of seems like it fits. And I guess I do that, and, oh, I could start doing that more, if it that means that I'm this. And have you know, something that defines this nebulous thing that other people are calling a human being.

Javelin

Totally it makes me think about the like, Oh, damn. The Thought has just snuck away from me, but I was thinking about something, and now it's disappeared. It'll come back if it's important.

Jes Diverges

Shoot. Okay, I hate when that happens, like a little butterfly. It's like no way to go, exactly. But I also think that is it becomes such an issue because you wind up ignoring so much information that could be useful, yeah, and, oh my gosh, there's like, so many things I could say right now that my brain is like, doing that, like, screech thing. It's like, Wait, which way do I go? Um, yeah, I. Well, I think actually this, this ties into another question that that I did have for you, which is, Do do you think that your interest in psychology, I think you've answered this a little bit already has helped or hindered your understanding of your own neuro divergence? Hmm?

Javelin

I think initially it hindered in the sense that the interest in psychology combined with the interest in acting turned into some really complex masks, some of which I think are like, true reflections of part of myself. So I have long periods of time where, like, I learned about autism in my undergrad, and I remember a couple years ago, just before I was starting to think about, like, potentially being autistic myself, reading a book about someone's autism experiences and going well, that's not me, therefore I must not be autistic in the, you know, classic literal if I'm not exactly this person, then I can't be that thing. Yes. So I think, I think initially that interest sort of misdirected me. But once I was like, Oh, wait, this is starting to make a lot of sense. It was really

helpful in the process of self diagnosis to be able to do so in a really in depth way, and have some capacity for like, reading studies about these things and understanding the language in it. I remember early days I talked to a psychiatrist who told me I couldn't be autistic because I wanted friends and experienced loneliness as a child, and that's I know. Listen, if y'all could see Jes facial expression right now, the shock and the indignation.

Jes Diverges

I Yeah, it's not the first time I've heard something like that, but I'll tell you what, every damn time I just Yeah, yeah, oh, okay, it's

Javelin

it kind of makes me think of that emoji of the of the melting face.

Jes Diverges

Yes, that's literally, literally. So she

Javelin

told me that, and it took me about three days to figure out how angry I was about that, because during the conversation, I was like, oh, okay, yeah, all right. And generally speaking, I take anywhere between three to seven business days to sort out how I feel about things. So this one took a break Exactly. Took a few days. The processing speed is, you know, moderate. And once I figured out how pissed I was about it, I went, I need to go and find sources to support myself. So I read like heaps of studies that indicated that actually autistic youths are more prone to loneliness than their allistic counterparts, right? That it's like almost a loneliness epidemic within our cohort, because we severely come across humans that we feel like we can truly connect with, you know. So I felt quite vindicated, and I think my interest in psychology helped me to go, okay, I can now back up my indignation. If that makes sense,

Jes Diverges

it does. Yeah, it does. I it's a lot similar to to how I kind of look at my own relationship with psychology, because I also learned about autism and ADHD, you know, in abnormal psych, and the way that it was talked about, plus the way it's just talked about generally. It's like in society in general, I was under the impression that, like autistic people especially, were just like suffering all the time, just in like excruciating pain every day, like and like all of these other like, you know, all this other misinformation that I now know is untrue. And I also think it's a little bit funny every time I hear about an autistic person who thinks they might be autistic, but then they find like one piece of information, or they hear like one type of like autistic person who like it, doesn't really relate, and then they autistically think that because they don't meet, like, 100% of the criteria that they must not be autistic.

Javelin

Because I feel like it's the height of irony that Autism is a spectrum, and therefore, like, yes, a gray zone, and who tend to think in black and. White,

Jes Diverges

Oh, do we joke here? God, Oh, my God. When you put it like that, that is literally, that is so funny because it is. It's one of the most like, nebulous and difficult to define and really difficult to even categorize. Like. There's been a lot of really valiant attempts, but overall, like, you can't even really define it. Meanwhile, we are the people who are always desperate for, like, the most correct, accurate definition that there is

Javelin

exactly, yeah,

Jes Diverges

oh gosh, I

Javelin

think the neurodevelopment neurodivergent gods are laughing at us. Oh, 100%

Jes Diverges

it's I think to be ADHD is just to live eternally in paradox, always with multiple seemingly contradictory truths all at the same time. But another, another thing you said that I related to as well is that like, like, Yes, I think it hindered it at first, because just my understanding of ADHD and autism, mental illness, mental health, neurotypes, mental illnesses in general was just so shallow and, like, dehumanizing, frankly, and I also, like, I literally had autistic friends too, but because, like, they had different experiences than me, or maybe, like, struggled a little bit differently than I did, had a little bit more intense experiences. In some ways. I was like, Well, I can't call myself autistic because, like, you know, I'm so different from them. However, I am also grateful for a little bit because it has so helped, like me, being able to understand ADHD and autism now that I'm actually getting accurate information and listening to mostly folks with actual lived experience of one or both of these neurotypes and aren't using these like deficit based observation focused lenses, yeah, then I'm able to kind of Combine that with what I learned previously, and then see exactly, like, how I need to turn it and where in order to be like, Oh, actually, it's this instead, not Yeah, that

Javelin

I like the gesture that you made there with the like, moving the object. It reminds me of a Rubik's Cube. Yeah, feels like a good image for this, because there are so many facets to it that are movable, but are still related to each other, connected, you know. Yeah, very interesting.

Jes Diverges

Yeah, definitely, I think too. And I wonder what, what your thoughts on this might be like, one of the big things that I've realized was so wrong about the way that we're taught psychology in like undergrad and grad school, whatever is how interconnected everything is, is how it is basically, like this big Rubik's cube that, like, I had to connect dots between like certain topics and like ideas myself, but they the way it's taught is so siloed, is so like, well, this person taught this like, we associate specific, like themes to specific, you know, areas of psychology, like B of Skinner

and his, You know, behavioral psychology and Freud and his psychoanalysis and Piaget and child development and derail

Javelin

the conversation. Please do for a hot second, I have a deep and unwavering desire to do a drag character of Freud

Jes Diverges
same right?

Javelin

Instead of call Me Mother, it's Tell me about your mother.

Jes Diverges

Yeah, I need this. I need this. I need this yesterday,

Javelin

three piece suit, little beard, bald cap kind of situation, in a pipe. Oh, and just going off about Oedipus complexes. And, yeah, yep. Oh, the possibilities, the potential. I think it'd be a really good snatch game character.

Jes Diverges

Oh, my God. Oh my god. I my gay heart is reeling right now. I literally did. I hate Freud so much. I literally did a presentation when I was in public speaking about how Freud is actually a fraud and like, really shouldn't be given any credit at all for any of his studies, because he literally like. I made it all up. Yeah, I anyways, I don't want to sidetrack. Is too much, because then we'll just be bitching about Freud for the next two hours. For the next two

Javelin

hours, this is not the content you signed up for.

Jes Diverges

Yeah, but yeah, I wonder what your thoughts are on just realizing how much more interconnected everything is, and how ineffective it is to, like, try and separate everything, yeah, okay,

Javelin

hot take coming in here. Yes, I think what you're talking about, but realizing the interconnected thing, ness of like, mental experience, is a decolonial view. I think that the tendency to compartmentalize is something that's really inherent in colonialism. That is true of patriarchy, of white supremacy, of, you know, the four horsemen of colonialism, yes, refer to this is also true of capitalism and to some degree of Christian nationalism. But anyway, that's going to get heck and controversial. So I think the realization of the interconnectedness of things is a decolonial view, because it's moving against this sort of Western perception, that that there's a duality to

human, that body and mind is separate and different functionally, when actually your brain is a part of your body, and your experience as a human is so deeply connected to your experience of having a body that we can't tease things apart the way that colonialism would like us to, so that we can put everyone in their correct spots. You know, things are a lot messier and more nuanced than that, and a lot of indigenous cultures had that wisdom and knowledge way before we've come to realize this now. So, so to some degree, that realization that how I learned about psychology in the undergrad is not necessarily true, or the full picture came in like coinciding with the realization that the dominant narratives in our culture right now are not the truest reflection of society, either. They're they have a political agenda to them. You know, it's all so even that is interconnected, and you can't tease it apart. You know, I can't tease apart my experience as an able-bodied person from my experience as a queer person, from my experience as a white person, from my experience as an able-bodied person. So I need to constantly be doing the work to connect those dots and remember that that this is a, you know, a ball of yarn that's all must up. It's not pretty easy little boxes, you know?

Jes Diverges

Yeah, I do know hot take. I love it. Me personally. I feel I don't feel like that's a hot take, because I'm totally on the same page, like I, especially in the last few years, am so grateful for all the people of the global majority, all the you know, black women and other indigenous women and people of color who are you know, speaking about things. And I've been learning so much. I've been interested in, like, social justice and what I now understand as decolonization, for like, a long time, and, like, slowly, I've been, you know, realizing just how ingrained it is in literally everything, like, right down to, like our textbooks, the TV shows we watch, The songs we listen to, like the laws that are created, you know, all of this stuff. And one thing that enrages me about Western psychology, especially like now, because it is like popular psychology is starting to talk more about like, things like mindfulness and, you know, community building and what else, things like EFT tapping is getting really popular. Polyvagal theory. These are all things right now. These are all things that indigenous communities and cultures have known about have been studying and researching for literal centuries, and all these white guys that I just mentioned, like literally looked at that it was like, Nope, I think this is wrong. I'm going to invent a completely new framework. It's. I have to pathologize everybody for doing anything related to being human being. And I'm correct. And everyone has frog and like, excuse my German accent. That was horrible. And then now it's taken, like, 150 years for psychology to be like, Oh, wait, actually, I think these, these folks were right the whole time. Let's real quick shift gears, and maybe nobody will notice. Well, hey, I'm noticing. We're

Javelin

noticing, and it's really like, it's in a lot of ways, the primary structures aren't even trying to really shift gears. They're trying to like COVID some of these ideas, but still insert them into individualist right perspectives. You know, it's like mindfulness and a lot of psychotherapy these days are about solving and fixing problems within yourself without any recognition of like societal or community care needs and those kinds of things. So, yeah, it's always both in the same I'm also reminded that that the, you know, human with German accents, the Freudians, and also, like the, you know, Leo Canner, the guy who quote, unquote, discovered autism did

most of their work with, like, socio economically wealthy groups, yes, also, like a class sort of situation that's going on here, where so much of what we think of as, like foundational psychology knowledge isn't necessarily generalizable,

Jes Diverges

yes, across

Javelin

identities or experiences.

Jes Diverges

Yeah, it's wild. It's wild. Yeah, like it was all literally made up in a way that would be most convenient for the most privileged group, which is all the white Christian landowners, hetero CIS, hetero men, and absolutely nobody else. Is there like any specific moment that you remember or like instance, where you kind of started to realize, like, hey, wait a minute. I think all this stuff that I'm being taught is actually a huge load of BS.

Javelin

Again. I don't think I've got a specific moment here, but there's, there's like, like moments on a timeline throughout, as I started to learn about things like Disability Justice and the history there, things like queer rights and the history there, and the connection to racial justice, which is all tied up in there and is outside of my experience, but that makes it extra important for me to pay attention and learn, going on those learning journeys, and then at some point, seeing The patterns or the connections to my understanding of psychology. It took time, and it was pretty gradual, but it was all connected to each other, like every time I have an opportunity to read a book or watch a documentary or learn something more about the history of like marginalized identities, whether I inhabit those identities or not, there's another piece of information that contradicts those, like, easily definable categories, um, that we absorbed, you know, and I do think like I'm not, I'm not ready to, like, completely throw out everything about Western psychology, right? Do you think that there is useful information in there, but not dissimilar from, like, God, I had a metaphor, and it's gone now, not dissimilar from any other complex topic. There's many facets to it, and you're not seeing the whole picture, if you're just focusing on one little section, right when? Okay, rewind, when I was figured out my queer identity and was finally in a place of being like, I'm comfortable with this, because it took me a little while. I grew up as an evangelical Christian, so I had a lot of unpacking to do. Yeah, I suddenly had this like voracious appetite to learn about queer history, because I had never learned it growing up, even though I was alive in the 90s, so at the tail end of the AIDS epidemic and those kinds of things, I missed all of that because of how. Sheltered I was so I devoured textbooks on queer rights in North America, and I ate up documentaries and content from people who had lived and experienced it there's feels often like there's so few queer elders to connect with because of the AIDS back epidemic just consumed so much knowledge there, and in consuming that knowledge and seeking to understand in a hyper focused kind of way, there's the neuro divergence poking its head up again. I learned a lot about the ways that that like dominant narratives in society can change by the efforts of a relatively small number of people. And then

this weekend, I had the exact same experience, but about the history of autism, I read this book called neuro tribes by Steve Silberman, which is his efforts to, sort of like, put down modern history of autism and the growth of the neurodiversity movement from like inventors in the past who, based off of the information we know about them probably would have been diagnosed as autistic through like the messiness of Hans Asperger and Leo Kanner and the like people who, quote, unquote, discovered these things into the present day and the connections that we have on the internet, Like I found you by googling like ADHD podcasts. Right? So we've got a connection and a way to connect that never existed before. I felt like I was learning the same kind of history and seeing the gaps there as well, where a lot of the voices that exist in this book are white and straight still. So the answer is, in a really long and convoluted way, that learning about our history can teach us about our present and hopefully about how to avoid repeating it in the future as we repeat some of that stuff right now. Yeah, yeah. So I don't have like a single moment to tell you. I have a like, a lifetime of learning and a lifetime more of needing to learn more in order to understand more fully how these things are connected.

Jes Diverges

That makes sense, and especially, especially that that last part, I think, is worth repeating, that the answer truly isn't about learning about your history, whether you're also a queer person, whether you know learning about autistic history, ADHD history, neurodivergent history in general, like seeing where we came from, reading stories of those folks from the past who, you know, we can sometimes so easily see ourselves in. And, you know, realizing too that it's also much bigger than we are, yeah, and, you know, just kind of knowing that, like, oh, actually, we have existed for this entire time. We're not just a thing that was invented in the last five years as a trend. Yeah. Like, no, we've been here. We're going to continue to be here, yep. Because

Javelin

no matter, no matter what people trying to do diversity is a central aspect of humanity.

Jes Diverges

It is, it is, and they've done a really good job at trying to guess all, to forget that right and put ourselves in all these individualistic boxes and disconnect us from everyone else. But I am so grateful for folks like you in the world who are like, literally actively deconstructing these things and helping folks learn, like a different way to live. Because if there was a time to decolonize and therefore re humanize, it is now

Javelin

truth? Yeah, absolutely, I did have, how are we doing?

Jes Diverges

God guy, this is so amazing. I feel like we could talk for hours and hours about so many things, right? I did have like, one last question for you written down, and that is, what are it's kind of a two parter. Mm. Okay, so what are some things that you wish audhd, ers and people in general understood about the world of Western psychology, and what do you wish the world of Western psychology knew more about ADHD folks? Oh, hmm,

Javelin

oh, another good question. Make Me Think.

Jes Diverges

Take your time to

Javelin

the ADHD folks. You are the only expert in you. Yes, yeah. So no matter who you're talking to about your experience, you get to sit in the position of power in that context as the expert. I wish I knew that as a younger person as well. I think I would have looked to fewer others to define me. Yeah, to the world of Western psychology, about ADHD ers, there's so many things to say. I hell we only in the like last 18 years, figured out that you can be ADHD and autistic at the same time. So I feel like I have a lot of like, complex and beautiful things that I want them to know, but first I'd like everybody to know that you can be both of these things. Yes, I don't think that message has gotten out to everybody, you know, and it's, I don't think they're,

Jes Diverges

yeah, it's something that seems so obvious too, but there's still so many mental health professionals, and, you know, general health professionals, that still don't think the two can coexist, when, in fact, They're anywhere between. Like studies have shown 50 to 80% CO occurring. Yeah. Hard agreed.

Javelin

Yeah. So after that, I would say the world of Western psychology, I want you to also know that the only expert in the room on a person's experience is that person

Jes Diverges

there? Like, I couldn't have put it better. Oh, gosh, this was such a good conversation. I think folks are gonna get so much out of it. Thank you so much for coming on and sharing so much about, you know, your personal experiences and everything. Is there anything that we didn't touch on that you really wanted to like mention while we're here? Anything you wanted to say more about,

Javelin

you know, I don't think so. I, honestly, I came into this conversation just excited to see where it was going to go, because it's not, it's not every day that that I get opportunities like this. So I'm just so grateful to you for welcoming me in, for this conversation, facilitating it. Yeah, it's been an absolute delight to be here, and I hope that your audience gets something meaningful, even if it's just a single thing, beautiful success.

Jes Diverges

I'm sure they will. I'm sure they will. And, yeah, thank you so much. Where can people find you? If they want to get in contact with or work with you, people

Javelin

can find me. I have a website, alchemycoaching.ca that's the Canadian in there, so check us out there. There's also a weekly blog that I write on topics not dissimilar from the ones that we're talking about today. So you can get on that mailing list, and then you don't have to go looking. You can also find me on Instagram @AlchemyDivergenceCoaching, which is where you'll find me. Mostly occasionally I do some tiktoks @JavelinLaurence, but that's rare and and there's lots of space between them, so don't expect much.

Jes Diverges

That's great. And I will put all those links in the show notes for folks to check out. I highly encourage it. Javelin is a great human being. I'm so excited to meet you, and again, I want to say how great this conversation was, and I look forward to hopefully many more, because we don't have so much to talk about. Okay, folks, thank you so much for listening, and I'll catch you next time you.

010: Adjusting Your Lens for Disability

Published June 2, 2025

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD: a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello, hello everyone, and welcome to another episode of UShaming AuDHD. This is the first solo episode that I've done in quite a while. I'm not even sure when I- when I released the last solo episode I did, but I am a little bit nervous, but also excited to be chatting with you all today, or I guess at you all. I'm a little extra nervous for this episode because... drumroll, please... it will be the intro for a book that I'm publishing! I still can't believe it, but a couple months ago, an admittedly very small publishing company reached out to me to turn the "AuDHD Explained" episode into a book. I've always really loved writing, and I've always wanted to be a published author, so my inner child is literally like squealing with glee right now. My publishers did ask/recommend that I add some things just to help round out the podcast episode into a full book, and one of those suggestions was a section explaining how I actually view disability and the lens that I use to talk about ADHD and autism. I tried to sit down at first and just type it out, but I was honestly having a really hard time, like I always do honestly with writing. It's always taken me a really, really long time to actually get words onto a page, and I'm now coming to an understanding that it's probably because spoken language and written language happen in two different parts of the brain, and I kind of get stuck trying to translate the words that my brain is speaking into written words. So given that, I decided to "write" the intro the same way I quote, unquote, wrote the rest of the book by just recording myself talking about it and reading off some notes that I wrote and then going into edit later. I think this way of writing works so much better for my auDHD brain, and I wanted to kind of share that little bit of like background information, just in case it helped someone else out, too. Plus, I think it would make a really great podcast episode anyway, because I do realize that I talk about autism and ADHD a lot differently than most folks tend to. That's kind of the point of why I made the podcast in the first place. Okay, so now, without further ado, let's talk about how I view disability.

As with literally anything I ever talk about on this podcast, there is a lot I could say about all the different frameworks that have have been and are currently used to view, diagnose, and manage disability, but today I'm just going to focus on three of those models, because I feel that they provide a pretty solid foundation and starting point for anyone who is interested in learning more about this after you listen to the episode.

Those three models are: the medical model of disability, the social model of disability, and, my personal favorite, the holistic model of disability. Each of these models claims that disability is caused by a certain factor. So in the medical model, it's said that disability is caused solely by individual biological differences. In the social model, it's said that disability is caused solely by the rules and customs that are created by society and culture in general. And in the holistic model, it's said to be a combination of both, plus other factors.

So I'm going to go a little bit deeper into each model, some criticism of the models, and why I personally think the holistic model makes the most sense. And I'm also going to include an article in the show notes that I read that initially helped me learn about all these models and kind of, you know, compile this information and form the way that I currently view disability.

So let's start with the medical model. According to this model, disability is caused by individual biological differences, whether it's simply the way a person was born or a disability that they developed later in life.

This is the model that is most widely used by most Western medical professionals and psychiatrists and things like that. And it is the model that I personally have the most beef with for a lot of reasons. One of those reasons is that it just puts all of the like responsibility and even blame on the individual to deal with their disability, and doesn't focus on like any sort of other environmental or society changes at all.

This model also pathologizes both disability and human beings. And what I mean by that is that people who follow the medical model believe that neurological differences or physical disabilities are inherently wrong, or they mean that a person is broken. This is seen by how we often refer to different neurotypes and conditions as "disorders" and "impairments" instead of differences, and it's automatically assumed that it's bad if you're disabled.

The medical model is also really deficit-focused. A lot of the language used around disability using this model uses a very deficit-focused lens, and frames a lot of characteristics that come with especially being autistic and ADHD in a negative light when they're not inherently negative, it's just different, and a lot of times it can be very, very positive.

Again, it assumes that there is a "correct" way of doing things, and if you do things a little bit differently, it's automatically negative, no matter if it brings you a benefit or if it works for you, like different equals bad, period. That's basically what the medical model boils down to.

So, an example of this is a study that they did about autistic people and morals. And again, I'm going to link this paper in the show notes for anyone who's interested in reading more about it. But basically, the way they set up this study is they were trying to see, like, how like, how autistic people use morals differently than allistic people. So they placed- they created a group of autistic people and a group of allistic people, and they gave them both sort of a test. So they gave them this, I'm pretty sure it was a fake charity to donate to, and they saw how much money the participants donated to the charity while they were being watched, versus how much money

they donated when they thought that nobody was going to know how much money they donated. And at the end of the experiment, they found that in the allistic group of people, which is non-autistic, they tended to donate more money when they were being watched and they donated less money when they thought that no one was going to be able to see it. Whereas in the autistic group, they pretty much donated the same amount of money whether they were being watched or not.

Now, for me, I hear this, and it tells me that autistic people tend to have stronger- a stronger sense of their own personal morals. They tend to be more, um, oh my gosh, I can't think of the word... more steady, I guess, with their morals. More consistent, consistent is the word I was trying to think of consistent with the decisions they make. You know they're not going to front as much, maybe, and they have integrity at the end of the day.

However, the researchers who did this experiment, since they were using a deficit-based lens, they were using the medical model, they basically blamed it on like, the way they phrased it in the study is that autistic people have a social deficit in that we have a quote, unquote, "insensitivity to social reputation." Basically, they were saying, oh, autistic people are so weird because they don't really care what other people think. They don't do things based off of what other people think. They just do things based off of what they think is good, and apparently it's weird to not care about what other people think.

So that's just an example of how skewed really the view of autistic ADHD and other neurodivergent folks is, in general. Also real quick trigger warning: if you do go on to read that article, they use a lot of actually really awful deficit language about autism in it. So just so you're kind of aware of that. I, I got, I got a little heated even reading it. So just so you're prepared for that, it's a little rough.

So another criticism of the medical model is that it aims to simply cure or change a disability, instead of just like trying to understand it and provide the person with accommodations to just increase their quality of life and live with the disability. Instead, they're like, "Nope, you have this thing. It's bad. We got to get rid of it. It's got to fucking go."

Because of this focus on needing to cure or change it, a lot of- there's a lot of focus from medical professionals on going straight to pharmaceuticals first, again, instead of getting to know the person's lived experience, seeing you know if these things actually are problems for the individual, or if society just thinks they're problems, and they will often just try and give folks medications to see if they can make the problem go away, when maybe it doesn't actually need to go away. Maybe they just need to learn how to live with it.

And I would be remiss if I wasn't going to sit here and criticize the medical model without also talking about all of the issues with the DSM itself, which, for those who don't know the DSM is the actually don't know what DSM stands for, but it's the diagnostic, something manual, that mental health professionals use to diagnose different neurotypes, mental illnesses, etc.

The issue with the DSM is, number one, it was almost entirely written and decided on by a bunch of rich, white, heterosexual, cisgender men in like the late 1800s/early 1900s. If you listen to my podcast episode with Javelin a few weeks ago, we go into a lot about, like, the issues with that. So number one, it was written by all those folks who just really, yeah anyway, and because it was written by a bunch of rich white men, it's also full of, you know, systemic racism and ableism, a lot of that sort of thing is literally built into so many of the diagnoses in the DSM, and it has a history of just pathologizing and demonizing things, claiming things are mental illnesses that are totally not seen that way today.

For example, queerness used to actually be considered a mental disability, and you would get, like, a diagnosis for that, and potentially, you know, get taken away and all that horrible stuff, just for, just for being gay. Of course, we don't view queerness that way today at all. However, given the fact that so many mental health professionals viewed it that way for so long, the remnants of that are still very, very visible in society and in the mental health world today.

Along with this, in a book called Decolonizing Therapy by Dr Jennifer Mullan, which I highly recommend that book. I'm about a little more than halfway through it now, and it is so fascinating. In it, she discusses the history of the DSM and talks about how most mental health diagnoses actually were literally originally created as a way to try and oppress and control people who basically just didn't want to follow the rules created by white supremacy, or didn't understand that there were white supremacist rules in the first place.

An example of this is something that's known today as Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Dr Mullan talks about how black children are very disproportionately diagnosed with this just because their normal behaviors in a classroom are interpreted as aggressive by white teachers and doctors. Like, a young black boy can act the same way in a classroom as a young white boy, and he will be punished you know, yelled at, taken to the principal's office, and possibly even diagnosed with ODD just for the color of his skin. And she goes into a lot more detail, a lot more examples of how it's so very deeply embedded into it. I'm actually getting a little angry right now thinking about it, but yeah, highly recommend that book again. It's called Decolonizing Therapy.

So, because the medical model demonizes and pathologizes these normal human behaviors just based on a person's status in society or the color of their skin, etc, it creates a lot of unnecessary barriers for neurodivergent people, especially neurodivergent folks from other marginalized groups, such as if you're a person of the global majority, because these differences are basically just blamed on, like, behavior problems, instead of being addressed as the neurotypes that have specific needs. So, a lot of neurodivergent children, especially wind up just getting either punished or ignored for exhibiting their neurodivergent traits, rather than having them be accepted, understood for what they are, and accommodated. And then you can imagine, you know, how much shame and blame and guilt a neurodivergent person develops when they're being told that they're, you know, just being disruptive or bad, or, you know, causing trouble, just for being themselves, or just for struggling or just for having a hard time.

I personally, and I know a lot of you folks can relate to this, I did not realize that I was autistic and ADHD, despite literally having studied both in school, like, I have a whole degree in psychology, just because of how deficit-based the language was that was being used to talk about these neurotypes. Like, the way that I was taught about it, I literally thought it just meant a life of constant struggling, constant suffering, literal physical pain and just complete and total dysfunction because of the way it was talked about, which is riddled with so much ableism, both internal and external.

So yeah, those are some of my criticisms of the medical model and why I really, really don't like it, and I'm doing my damndest to help make it go away a little bit at a time, one podcast episode at a time.

So now let's go into the social model. Now I like the social model just a little bit better than the medical model, but I still think it has some flaws, and it doesn't quite do the job as well as the holistic model.

So in the social model of disability, they believe that disability is solely caused by the rules and customs that are systemically created by society. The social model originated in the 60s and 70s as a part of the civil rights movement, when disability rights activists began questioning the medical model, which was deserved and like rightly so, and they began fighting for social change for the disabled community.

However, the issue comes when some folks take it so far as to claim that in an ideal society, we would be able to accommodate all disabilities to the point where individuals are no longer disabled. Especially when it comes to autistic and ADHD individuals, there are a lot of folks out there who say that like, "Oh, we just need to put in all of these changes in the world and in society, and then it won't be a disability. It'll just be a super power and everything will be fine!" I very much disagree with that for a lot of reasons that I'm about to get into.

But first, I do want to point out some of the truths about the social model, because I can't disagree with it entirely, like there are absolutely certain aspects of society that are inherently disabling, especially considering the fact that we all live under things like capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

So some examples of things that I think if they were changed in society, it would at least make it a little bit less disabling to be autistic and ADHD are certain like social rules, like politeness, which often requires you to understand social rules in general, making eye contact, being expected to sit still and like thinking if you're not sitting still, you're not listening or paying attention. Social rules in general too, like they're very dependent on culture, and they're not inherent for everyone. So certain cultural differences, for example, if you immigrated to a different country, or if you're a person from the global majority who's going to a predominantly white school, some of your differences might be interpreted as deficits in that way.

Also, I mentioned this a little bit before, but neurodivergent children from marginalized communities are often just not recognized or given the accommodations that they need in order to have actually equal opportunities or do things in a way that work for them and their brains. So if we just stop seeing everything as like, oh, that kid is just having a behavior problem instead of oh, that kid's being themselves, and let's see why, that could be a lot better for us.

Another example is grind culture, which is very predominant, especially in America and other capitalist societies where we're expected to, like, for example, stand all day for eight hours, often longer, without being able to sit down at all for no reason.

We also, because of capitalism, ignore the natural rhythm of seasons, and we tend to work all through winter. We don't really take breaks in the winter, like humans have historically done for 1000s of years before the Industrial Revolution came into play.

Also the fact that we have such limited sick days, we have such limited vacation. We're always expected to just like work, work, work, constantly and consistently, without honoring the natural ebb and flow of both of our bodies and of the seasons.

I do realize that a lot of my examples here are US centric, because, you know, I do live in the US, and this is my lived experience, but you get my point.

So those are all well and true, and I do agree with the social model that some social things could be changed to make things easier. However, claiming that all disability is caused just by social rules and culture straight up ignores the experience of higher support needs people who are simply going to be disabled no matter how quote, unquote "perfect" of a world that we build.

And by the way, quick aside, the whole idea of like being able to build a perfect world, and that a perfect world exists is actually itself a tenant of white supremacy, ironically. There are 15 tenets of white supremacy that I learned about from a woman named Rebecca. She's known on Tiktok as the White Woman Whisperer, and on her Patreon, she has a whole series where she dives really deep into all 15 tenets. Highly recommend signing up for that and listening to that. She's wonderful, taught me a lot.

But the whole idea that there could be a perfect world where no one is disabled is just false and not true, especially for folks like I often think of, you know, non speaking Autistics who have a hard time communicating their thoughts and needs, whether they have AAC devices or not, like it's always going to be difficult for them to communicate, no matter how many changes in society we put in place, no matter how much judgment we remove from it, like, it's going to be hard no matter what. And along with that, even if you are, you know, quote, unquote, "low support needs," which I put quotes around that, because I have a hard time believing any autistic or ADHD person is really low support needs. But anyways, I digress. Just because there are, there are still things that are inherently disabling about being autistic and ADHD. For example, for me, like no amount of social change is going to make it so I suddenly have a sense of linear time and don't need to set multiple alarms for myself when I have appointments, so that I don't just

completely forget them and not go. Or, there's no amount of you know accommodations that I could put in place that won't make it so I won't still forget certain things or get upset if my coffee order is wrong or, you know, all that stuff, like you're still disabled. Like it's okay to be disabled. It's just like certain things can be changed, and certain things are just the way they are, and it's better to accept them than tell yourself that, "Oh, if only in this ideal world, like I wouldn't struggle this much," because at the end of the day, it still implies that it's a bad thing to be disabled. And I don't think that's true. It just means that there are certain things you can't do. There are certain things you do in a different way, and that's fine.

So now that I have explained the medical model and the social model, let's talk about the holistic model. So as the name implies, the holistic model takes a more whole and complete view of what it means to be disabled, what causes a person to be disabled. And the holistic model states that it's realistically a combination of both biological differences, societal factors and also other factors, like there are so many things that go into what makes a person disabled.

The holistic model is also referred to as the biopsychosocial model. That's all one word. So it's basically your biology, so like the way your body is literally built, the way your body works psychology, so the way you think, the way your neurons are set up, etc, and socialization, so the way that society is set up, culture, family dynamics, etc.

The holistic model believes that there are multiple layers of both identity and positionality in society, in combination with the natural born characteristics that a person is born with that create an intersectional experience of disability that is different for each person. So in other words, disability is caused by a combination of all kinds of different factors, some that can be changed, and some that simply cannot.

The holistic model acknowledges that there are definitely disabling aspects of society that make life more disabling than it needs to be. So like I said before, social factors such as ableism, racism, and transphobia can just compound on top of disability and create a huge amount of barriers, and the more marginalized communities that you are a part of, the more barriers that you're going to naturally and systemically run into. The holistic model also recognizes the biological and medical elements that go into having a different neurotype, such as ADHD or autism. So like, yes, there are some ways that society views a person like me who is auDHD that make it a little bit more disabling, like people interpreting my lack of eye contact as rudeness kind of sucks when it comes to getting job interviews and things like that. But there are also certain ways my brain is wired that are just really frustrating and annoying and make it so I can't do things in the way that I would prefer to if I was autistic or if I wasn't autistic.

The holistic model also talks about creating a balance of individual accommodations and quality of life improvements, while also working towards those small societal changes that will make disabled folks lives easier overall.

It also acknowledges the truth that some medical interventions obviously work great for a lot of disabled people, especially things like ADHD medication can be super helpful for ADHDers.

There are a ton of folks I know who are very helped by that. There are a lot of other people I know who are also very helped by their psychiatric medications. There are a lot of folks who go through, you know, physical therapy, etc, etc. That's just plain helpful. While some folks also do get along fine just by putting in some environmental changes. And that's fine too. It just more so encourages a balanced approach to disability using a combination of societal change and education, self advocacy when it comes to accommodations, and reframing what we've all been taught about what it means to be disabled and neurodivergent. And if anyone knows me, you know I love me some good balance.

And that is the end of my notes on that. So thank you so much for listening. If you enjoyed this episode or if you got something out of it, please feel free to leave a comment, as I love hearing from you. And if you really like my content and want to help support me further, you can join my patreon community for as little as \$5 a month. You'll be helping me make even more resources for divergent adults all over the world, plus you'll find exactly the kind of weirdos that you have been looking for all your life, I promise. You can find that at patreon.com/jesdiverges, and that link will also be in the show notes as well. Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you enjoyed this episode and want to support the podcast, please leave a comment or review, letting me know your thoughts and consider sharing it with someone else who you think might enjoy it. Word of mouth is the best way to support me and get the word out. And if you're interested in more support from me, you can sign up for my email list at jesdiverges.com/newsletter for updates on my latest programs and offers. That link, as well as links to my other content and social media can be found in the show notes. Take care of yourself, and I'll see you next time

011: I Think I'm AuDHD... What the #&@! Do I Do Now??

Published: July 9, 2025

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD: a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

So, you think you're an AuDHDer. You've been saving the social media posts and reading the books and listening to the podcasts, maybe even my podcast, and you're like, "Holy crap, I think I'm actually autistic and ADHD after all this time! I'm pretty sure I am but like, what do I do? I feel like I have to re-evaluate and rebuild my entire life!!"

Well, that's exactly why I wanted to make this episode. I almost want to say that it's long overdue, but that's not necessarily true, because there's not actual deadlines here. I did that on purpose. It just feels like it's long overdue, because I've been wanting to make an episode like this for a long time, and I'm so glad that I'm doing it now.

I also want to turn this into some sort of downloadable PDF for folks to use at the beginning, or even the middle (because realistically, there is no end) of their auDHD journeys to help with that whole, "oh, my God, my entire life just got turned upside down, and I have no fucking idea what to do or how to move forward" situation that so many of us find ourselves in when we are late realized as adults. This episode is also going to wind up being a section of the book that I'm publishing later this year that I mentioned in... I think it was the last episode, which is still very exciting, and I still can't believe it. But anyways, okay, so.

The first thing that I want to talk about today is self diagnosis versus official diagnosis.

Lots of folks feel compelled to pursue an official diagnosis, especially when they are first figuring things out and they feel like they basically just had the carpet ripped out from underneath them. There's lots of reasons for this.

You may not feel like you can be confident in calling yourself ADHD or autistic without an assessment from a mental health professional.

You might feel like you need an official diagnosis in order to access or even learn about potential accommodations and support that you could get, or maybe you feel that pursuing an official diagnosis would help you learn everything you need to know about your auDHD brain,

answer all the questions you have about yourself, and find out exactly what you need in order to accommodate yourself.

Or you might have run into folks, helping professionals, even, who don't believe you when you confide in them your new identity, and have the belief that, "Well, if you were really autistic and ADHD, you would have known in childhood, or you would do this, or you wouldn't do that, or da, da, da, da, da," and so you feel like you need to prove it to them in some other way.

Maybe you're a parent who suspects your child might be auDHD, and you need to be able to access accommodations for them at school. And by the way, if that is the case, I do highly encourage you to also maybe explore it for yourself, as the neurotypes are about 80% heritable. But I digress.

There are a ton of reasons why you might want or even need an official diagnosis. This is a very deeply personal choice, and the benefits versus the risks (and yes, there are actually risks) will be different for every single person based on things like support needs, class, race, location, etc. I always, always, always encourage people to use their own discernment when it comes to this decision, and just ensure that whatever decision you make is an informed one.

Given that, whenever this topic comes up, especially if you are a late, realized adult auDHDer who is no longer in school, I highly encourage you to first research the potential benefits, as well as the potential cons of getting an official diagnosis in your country. Particularly an autism diagnosis.

I say this because there are, unfortunately and unsurprisingly, a lot of very real systemic drawbacks to having an official autism diagnosis on your record. I, myself, have an official ADHD diagnosis, but I actually decided to forego being assessed for autism for the reasons that I'm about to explain.

For example, I have had clients be rejected from jobs that they are perfectly qualified for because they disclosed being autistic, or requested certain accommodations during the hiring process. Yes, this is technically illegal in a lot of countries. Yes, it still happens. No, there really isn't much we can do about it, especially if you are unemployed and you can't afford a lawyer until you have a job. Do you see where the problem is?

Another more, slightly more intense example is, say you get into an accident somewhere, and you wind up in a hospital where the doctors don't know you. If a particularly ableist doctor sees an autism diagnosis in your medical records, they could decide right then and there that you are incapable of making your own medical decisions, or they may not believe you about your own symptoms. They may even decide to transfer you to the psych ward when not medically necessary, so that someone more quote, unquote "qualified" can quote, unquote "treat" you. You get the idea.

Another example is, if you have children with someone and you somehow get into a custody battle with your co-parent. The court could decide that you are unqualified to care for your children and give you limited access to them.

There are also certain countries that will not let you immigrate to them if you have a diagnosis on your record, because it shows that you will be a quote, unquote, “burden” to their society. Given the current state of the world, I know there are a lot of folks all over who this may impact. If you are someone who's been holding leaving your country as a possibility for yourself, I would seriously do your research about where it is you want to move to and their regulations around this.

I want to be clear that I don't say any of this to fear monger or try and make you afraid. That's really not what I'm trying to do. But I want to make sure you are aware of the potential consequences of this very official diagnosis and what it could mean for yourself, so you don't go in without this knowledge and can make an informed decision.

Before you go straight to a doctor, first spend some time looking up what supports or programs there are in your area, and if any, also check to see if an official diagnosis is actually required in order for you to join. There are actually quite a few programs geared toward neurodivergent adults nowadays, especially online (my own included) that do not require an official diagnosis and are 100% willing to accept self diagnosed autistic and ADHD folks.

And unfortunately, but again, unsurprisingly, there aren't very many support programs for adult autistic folks anyway. Once we turn 18, we're basically expected to just go out and figure everything out for ourselves. Fun, right?

If all you're seeking from an official diagnosis is validation and confidence in that self diagnosis, and there aren't any specific supports that you're trying to qualify for, I highly recommend waiting one year and seeing if you still want that piece of paper. I'll say that a majority of my clients with an official diagnosis say that by the time they actually got to their appointment (which usually is going to be months and months, if not years, down the line, anyway) it was actually pretty anti-climatic, and by that time, they were much more sure of their self diagnosis than they were at the beginning, and they kind of wish that they hadn't gone through with it, because it actually is a fairly stressful process. It could be very, very long, and it requires like, hours and hours of testing. There are parts where they intentionally, like, exhaust you so you can't mask like it is really, really stressful. It's not, it's not a fun time. And so folks are really just like, “I actually wish that I just hadn't gone through with it, because I just understand so much more about myself now.” And this is not true for everyone, of course, and I have certainly had folks be grateful for the diagnosis and what they learned about themselves during the process. But this does happen less often, and mostly with folks who live outside of the US.

And if there are certain accommodations that you need, either at school or at work, you may be able to just get an ADHD diagnosis and forego the autism assessment like I did. A lot of the accommodations that will help your autism are usually available for ADHDers as well. So this

can be a workaround if you do need accommodations, and you do need paperwork to prove that you need those accommodations, but you don't want to risk getting an official autism diagnosis.

“But Jes, if I don't get an official assessment, it's going to take me forever to learn about my auDHD and figure out how to actually learn what my needs are so I can accommodate them! Are you some kind of mad woman?!”

Of course, I'm not suggesting you just go off into the world on your own without taking any steps to learn about yourself. There is a lot of things you can do in order to better understand your auDHD self through this new lens that you can easily do, whether you decide to get an official diagnosis or not.

First and foremost, you can learn so much about yourself by the plethora of self-assessments available online, particularly on embrace-autism.com. There's a whole bunch on there, but here's a handful of some of the ones that you'll find, and some of the ones that I did at the beginning of my own journey that I actually printed out and I have in a binder somewhere.

So the first one is called the Autism Spectrum Quotient, which is just a general questionnaire that will give you an overall score that indicates the presence of autistic traits.

There's also the RAADS-R, which you might have heard of. This one is useful for identifying masked or so called subclinical autism traits, meaning that they are not necessarily severe enough to count according to the DSM, but they're still very much autistic traits.

There's also the CAT-Q, which does specifically measure how much masking you've done, or do. This one can be particularly useful for us late-realized folks who also tend to be very high-masking.

There is also the in-need-of-a-new-name Aspie quiz, which nonetheless is very helpful for seeing where you fall in each category of the autism spectrum, as well as identifying potential co-occurring conditions.

There's also an ADHD self-report scale on there, which, you guessed it, measures the presence of ADHD traits.

And there's also, like, a lot more very interesting assessments on there for you to peruse. I really, really love this website because a lot of the assessments have actually mostly been translated to be better understood by the neurodivergent people who actually take them. And they also include explanations of like, what they're for, how to take them, how to interpret the questions, and how to actually use the results that you get.

A second step you can take to learn more about your new found auDHD identity is to find community with other auDHDers, either online (like mine!) or go and meet them in real life.

As of the time of writing this, which is July 2025, I currently run an online community for autistic ADHDers and other neurodivergent adults called the Combo Platter Community, where we meet monthly for virtual group coaching. And there's also a discord full of auDHDers to chat with and get peer support from in between calls. It is honestly such a great, creative, kind, resourceful community of folks, and I truly can't recommend it enough if you're looking for a place where you can just go and feel like you belong without trying to fit in, for once. It is pay-what-you-can, because I know it's rough out there, and it starts at just \$5 a month. And I would be absolutely thrilled to have you join us, especially if you enjoy this podcast. I know for a fact that you will get along with the folks in there.

I also have another round of AuDHD Summer Camp starting at the end of August, which that is a four month virtual summer camp with weekly group coaching, plus six modules worth of material from me that includes just about everything I know about how to be more empowered and self compassionate as a late-realized autistic ADHDer. A couple episodes back, I actually posted a sample from the program that you can check out if you're interested. And I'll also put the link to that in the show notes.

Aside from my programs, which you know, no hard feelings if you decide to go somewhere else, that is always totally fine. But you could also search for other online groups on for example, Reddit, there's a lot on there. Facebook has a few groups that I think are still pretty active. There are other Discords, and you can follow certain hashtags on social media as well that might help you find other groups. So those hashtags are: #auDHD, #actuallyADHD and #actuallyAutistic.

You can also search for like, quote, unquote, "neurodivergent adjacent" groups, either online or see if you can find one locally, if you're interested in meeting people that way. These are groups of people that may not necessarily be directed towards like autistic, ADHD, or neurodivergent folks, but you will definitely find your people in these groups, I promise. And really quick shout out to combo platter member Meike for the following list. So some groups you can check out, either online or in real life are: non-monogamy groups, kink groups, RPG, LARPing, board games or game nights, knitting, crocheting or other crafting groups, reading groups, book clubs, roller skating groups, discussion groups, self-help groups, improv groups, jam sessions, lectures, trivia nights, and you can also try subscribing to newsletters in your areas of interest to be notified of certain events, to see if maybe someday you'll be able to make it. There are actually a lot more out of us- Oh, wow - there are a lot more of us out there than we've been led to believe. And I promise you, you will find your community as long as you go out and look for it, literally or virtually.

A third step you can take towards getting to know yourself and helping yourself have a little bit of an easier and more comfortable life as an autistic ADHDer, is to simply just start accommodating yourself as though you are. And I think this step will actually tell you the most about yourself and the things that you actually need to know. Because here's the thing: if you start accommodating yourself like an auDHDer, and you find those things helpful, then it's like most likely that you're correct in thinking that you're auDHD. And, if you start accommodating

yourself thusly and you don't find it particularly helpful, then it's most likely something different, and you get to keep exploring that.

So, how do you start accommodating yourself? I am so glad you asked!

First, I want to point out the fact that you've actually been autistic and ADHD your entire life, and you probably do know more about how to accommodate yourself than you're currently giving yourself credit for. Trust the ideas that you come up with, and don't be afraid to experiment and try things out. If it sounds like it might make your life more comfortable or easier, go for it!

Some general examples, just to get you started, in case you're totally like, "But I literally have no clue what to do right now."

So there are certain sensory accommodations you can put in place. Those ones are usually fairly easy to do right off the bat. So those are things like noise canceling headphones, ear plugs, sound machines, wearing sunglasses in the grocery store, getting blue light glasses, (those are one of my personal favorite accommodations that I use) just having lower lighting, generally, like using lamps instead of the big light, getting yourself some fidget toys, paying attention to clothing textures and like not forcing yourself to wear anything super uncomfortable, things like weighted blankets, letting yourself just eat your safe foods, staying inside when the temperature outside sucks, things like that.

Some executive function supports that you can put in place are setting up timers just to help you keep track of the day, visual schedules, body doubling, breaking tasks into smaller steps if they're overwhelming, making boring tasks more fun using music, podcasts or other creative solutions.

Some other general examples are like giving yourself permission to leave social events once you start getting tired instead of trying to force yourself to stay and then getting irritated later, asking friends and loved ones for advance, advanced notice of plans or changes, asking people to text you instead of call you or vice versa, creating a calming space for yourself in your home, where you can go and ground yourself or just spend some time alone, giving yourself more breaks throughout the day, if that's available to you, and letting yourself unmask when you're alone.

Something else you could do that I personally found really helpful at the beginning of my journey, and that I help clients with all the time is actually taking the time to ask your inner child what they would like to do, what would be fun for them, and what would make them feel safe or comfortable. So some questions you can ask yourself are:

What textures did you love or hate as a kid that you might have learned to ignore?

What activities brought you joy before you learned that they were "weird"?

What environments made you feel calm and safe? Personally, I loved being inside of, like cardboard boxes and small tents when I was a kid. I still do, honestly, it's my favorite thing in the entire world is just to be in like a tiny little... a tiny little space in the dark by myself.

And of course, disclaimer that everything does not work for everyone. Just because a certain accommodation that you try out doesn't work for you, that doesn't mean that it, or you, is broken, or that you're not "really" auDHD, or that you're just not trying hard enough, or whatever else your inner critic tells you during this process. It just means that that thing didn't work for you, and now you get to know that and move on.

It's also normal if some things work sometimes, but not other times. None of this is going to be cut and dry, because you are not cut and dry. You are a multi-layered, multi-faceted human being with moods and upswings and downswings and left turns and right turns and spirals and roller coasters in smooth periods.

Most of what you'll be doing - what all of us are doing, really, it's just that most of us don't want to admit it - is figuring it out as you go along. This is normal, and you are, in fact, doing it right, because you cannot possibly do this wrong.

My second to last piece of advice, of like steps to take on your auDHD, self-discovery journey is to give yourself space to grieve. To grieve the life that you thought you'd live, the person you thought you were. Grieve for all the times you worked so much harder for no reason, or told yourself you were broken when the whole time you were just different. For the relationships you thought you'd have, the time you spent masking who you are just because others told you it was weird, all the acceptance and understanding you never received.

It's a lot. I know it's a lot. I know, believe me. And if you can give yourself space to feel that grief, to experience it, and let it move through your body the way it needs to, it will open up doors to understanding yourself that you didn't even know were there.

Of course, this is not a one-and-done process either. Anyone who knows me knows that I don't ever claim anything will be one-and-done. Especially with grief, it's gonna come in waves, and it will probably keep coming up in different ways for a really, really long time. But, you can give yourself permission to take that first wave and let it ride, even though you know it'll be uncomfortable, because you know there's some feelings under there that need to come out.

It doesn't have to be a lot, either. I've processed a lot of grief while just driving in my car and blasting an emotional song while I sing along at the top of my lungs, knowing no one can possibly hear me. Don't underestimate the power of just singing loud to a song or dancing or those so-called "simple" somatic things that are actually really important for us.

But if you are interested in, like, a more in-depth exploration and want to set aside some time to, like, really explore this and let yourself experience and process and think about it, here are

some questions that I borrowed from my Summer Camp program to help you get started on this: What am I not letting myself be angry enough about?

How old was I when I started learning to mask and change myself to make others more comfortable? What do I miss about that version of me?

What do I wish someone had said to me when I was younger and feeling alone, broken, weird, disruptive, not enough, etc.?

Is there anything that I am mad at my past self about? How can I give that version of myself 1% more compassion or understanding?

What loss currently feels the biggest?

What does my body need in order to move through this grief? (and try not to think too hard about this one. Trust whatever comes up first, and go with it to the best of your ability.)

Once you start giving yourself the space to feel, process, and let go of some of that grief, you will then create the space that you need in order to start growing into the person that you actually are and want to be, now that you are letting go of whatever was holding you back from that in the past.

Think of it like a plant where the dead leaves are the parts of yourself that you are leaving in the past. If you leave those dead leaves on the plant, they will keep taking vital resources from other parts that are still alive, and will prevent the plant from being able to grow more and flourish. But if you prune away those dead leaves, aka, let those feelings of grief process, then the parts of you that are still here will have all the more space to grow and move into what you actually are.

And if at any point the grief process becomes overwhelming, remember to reach out to a trusted friend, a loved one, someone in your support system, or seek professional support via therapy, counseling, coaching, etc.

I know it's not always easy to access therapy, but there are a few places online where you might be able to find one in your area that is actually familiar with neurodivergence.

The first one I'm gonna mention is [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com). That one probably has, like the most number of therapists on it, and there are a lot of filters on there where you can specifically look for someone who's familiar with like ADHD, autism, trauma and certain other co-occurring conditions that you might have.

Another one is a newer resource called the [Liberatory Wellness Network](#). This is a resource for melanated and other marginalized people who are trying to find professionals that are specifically committed to decolonization, liberation and collective healing, who are like unpacking, unpacking things like white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism in their practice and

are being more more human, centered about it. And again, that's called the Liberatory Wellness Network.

Another resource, or another couple resources, actually, that I found just by Googling “neurodivergent therapist directory” is neurodivergentpractitioners.org or ndtherapists.com.

I, myself, while I'm not listed in any directories quite yet, I do also offer one-to-one coaching, and you can actually sign up for a free 30 minute consult on my website to learn more about that if you're interested. And of course, I will put all of these links in the show notes as well.

My final note about embarking on your journey to understanding your auDHD self, is to prepare to spend the rest of your life experimenting.

Try things out, see if you like it, and if you don't like it, change your mind.

Nothing is meant to be set in stone, despite how much our monotropic brains wish otherwise.

The goal is not to have it figured out. I personally still don't even have it figured out, and nor do I really want to. I actually can't imagine a more boring existence than just having it all figured out and having no problems to explore or solve.

Instead, the goal is to get comfortable with figuring it out, with trusting yourself not to get it, quote, unquote “right” right away, whatever that means, but trusting yourself to keep trying, keep recovering when you inevitably tire yourself out, or make a quote, unquote “mistake,” and ultimately, just keep being there for yourself, however that may look on any given day.

It may seem overwhelming right now, thinking about how much breaking down and rebuilding you need to do. Again, believe me, I know. But it will be okay. Breathe. You do not have to figure everything out right now. You have the whole rest of your life to learn and take your one next step at a time, whether that's 50 years, or 20 years, or five years, you have plenty of time.

Just focus on 1% at a time, and before you know it, you'll be looking back surprised at how far you've come.

And, you can also take a break from self discovery, if you need to. I'll say that part again: you can take a break if you need to. Breaks are also part of the process. In fact, they're a very necessary part.

And remember, it's not that you have to relearn how to be yourself, how to take care of yourself, but you get to.

Thank you so much for listening. If you enjoyed this episode or have any comments or questions for me, please leave a comment or send me an email at Jes@JesDiverges.com, I love hearing from you, even if it's just to say “I liked the episode!”

Take care of yourselves, and I'll catch you next time.

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you enjoyed this episode and want to support the podcast, please leave a comment or review, letting me know your thoughts and consider sharing it with someone else who you think might enjoy it. Word of mouth is the best way to support me and get the word out. And if you're interested in more support from me, you can sign up for my email list at jesdiverges.com/newsletter for updates on my latest programs and offers. That link, as well as links to my other content and social media can be found in the show notes. Take care of yourself, and I'll see you next time

012: What Is Unshaming?

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Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD: a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. I'm your host, Jes Diverges, and I'm here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. My goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello hello everyone! I'm so happy to sit down and record again, it's been a while.

Now that I'm about a year and a half into this podcast, I figured it was a good time to explain what I mean when I say "unshaming auDHD." A lot of what I now teach about shame has been built on what I've learned from David Bedrick, who first introduced me to the word unshaming during a workshop about 3 years ago. Since then, shame has become a central part of the work I do with adult auDHDers, and I've spent a lot of time learning how to recognize it, work with it, and lessen the impact it has on my clients and, of course, myself as well.

If after listening to this, you're interested in learning to put some unshaming practices into place for yourself, I do have some individual coaching spots open right now. I also talk a lot about this in AuDHD Summer Camp, which is now available as a self-study program if you don't have space in your life to attend coaching sessions. I actually borrowed a lot from Summer Camp to write this episode. There will be links for both of those in the show notes if you want more details.

The topic of shame is something that comes up with just about every single auDHDer I speak to - even the ones who don't think they experience shame.

Actually, one of my favorite moments that happens when coaching is whenever I bring up shame, and the client says something along the lines of "Oh, I don't think I have a lot of shame. It's just that I have all of these inherent flaws and negative traits that make it so I'm terrible at being a functioning, normal, happy adult human person. It's not shame, I'm just broken and need to learn how to fix myself so I can not be broken anymore." and I have to go, "my friend, that *is* shame."

And I say this because I also have struggled with shame for a long time without realizing it. I spent most of my life carrying around an enormous amount of shame with me at all times, but if you'd asked me I would have told you I was super confident and nonjudgmental about myself.

The thing is, I believed that I could do it, whatever "it" happened to be at the time, as long as I worked at it and tried hard and didn't slack off and get lazy like I usually do, or make one of

those stupid small mistakes I always make, or accidentally do the whole thing wrong because I missed a tiny detail.

All of those “small” criticisms are actually signs of shame that I believed to be totally normal, and thought that everyone dealt with. Turns out, that’s not the case. It’s just that shame is a lot sneakier than we’ve been led to believe.

I think one of the main reasons why we often don’t recognize shame for what it is, is because there’s a misconception that shame is an emotion, when it’s actually not. Shame is a witness, a lens through which we are taught to view ourselves.

Shame is like an umbrella that casts a shadow over all of the mental health struggles that we already have to deal with, and it just adds so much extra weight that turns an already difficult situation into an almost impossible one.

Shame is that voice in your head telling you to stop shaking your leg because it makes you look like a weirdo.

Shame is the thoughts that start when you say something that didn’t get the reaction you expected, and so you automatically think the other person hates you.

Shame is that urge to keep working on a project until it’s absolutely perfect, otherwise the whole thing will just be a failure.

Shame is the thought you get after a meltdown that you’re a monster who needs to just be locked away forever because no one should have to see you act like that.

Shame is the lump in your throat that pops up when you swallow your opinion for the 15th time that day because you think no one wants to hear about it anyway.

Shame is the way you keep chasing that one piece of information you know is out there somewhere, that will explain everything and finally “fix” you.

Shame is a lens through which others see us, and that we in turn learn to see ourselves through. It is a learned behavior that has been passed down to us through generations of all of our undiagnosed neurodivergent ancestors who experienced societal oppression that led them to learn to be smaller, quieter, friendlier, more productive, and more “normal,” so that they would continue to be accepted by others.

It stems from systems that assign moral values to things that are actually inherently neutral. For example, the capitalistic idea that if you aren’t being the most productive you can be at all times, you are automatically a bad member of society and don’t deserve to have basic necessities. Or the white supremacist idea that something has to be perfect and “proper” (aka bland, behaved, and beige) in order to be considered valid, people included. Or the ableist idea that if you prefer to move around, fidget, stim, and make noise, that you are a nuisance to society and need to be kept away from the others.

The reason why I focus so much on shame in my work is because when we view ourselves through a shaming lens, that shame conceals and hides our deepest, truest, most authentic, most intelligent parts under a shroud of darkness and fear. A lot of my clients come to me wanting to work on things like being more productive, having better time management skills, or figuring out how to get out of and/or manage burnout.

And the thing is, there is quite a lot of content and resources out there already that talk about how to get things done, a hundred different planners and apps that claim to help you manage your time, and articles on ways to conserve energy during burnout. I could choose to walk my clients through things like the pomodoro method, habit stacking, body doubling, etc., and I definitely have - don't get me wrong, strategies like these can absolutely be helpful at times. But I know from personal experience, and from spending the last 4 years working exclusively with other auDHDers, that *none* of those strategies will stick, or will even work at all, if you're implementing them from a place of shame.

From a place of "I need to figure out how to do all the things I want or need to do or else it means I suck at being a person."

or "I just need to learn to craft the perfect, most predictable schedule ever that will stop me from being so lazy all the time."

or "It's been two months and I should really be over this burnout already, I've rested enough and I need to get back to 'normal!'"

So how do you tell if you're operating from shame? Here are some, but definitely not all, signs of shame:

One sign of shame is that you don't trust yourself, your intuition or your instincts, to be correct, and so you rely on external input to tell you how to feel and what to do. Rather than trusting your own answers that come up inside of you, you'll look to others for validation and direction.

For example, say you're with a group of friends and someone says something to you that rubs you the wrong way. However, your reaction to this is to believe that your instinct is wrong and so you look at those around you who are just laughing and continuing the conversation. You assume they're right, and don't say anything, keeping your feelings to yourself. Then later, you wind up frustrated with yourself for not speaking up, which starts the shame cycle all over again.

Another sign of shame is that you're always trying to "fix" yourself because you believe there is something "wrong" inside of you that can be solved by the right book, teacher, coach, therapist, podcast, job, etc.

You might constantly be searching for new resources, trying to find the "one thing" you know is out there somewhere that you're missing that will help you not be this way anymore. Now, I'm not saying that you should never look for outside help as there is a lot of helpful information out there, and no one is expected to do everything on their own.

However, the issue comes when you're viewing it as a way to fix yourself, or because you believe that you aren't capable of finding the answers inside of yourself. Likewise, by telling yourself you can't be the way you are now and insisting you need to change, you're stopping yourself from getting to know and understand your current experience. You're sending yourself the message that who you are and how you feel now is bad and needs to change, rather than giving yourself a chance to just *be* where you are.

A third sign of shame is that you might fail to protect yourself from harm because you don't trust your internal senses to guide you and will in turn invalidate your own experiences.

Think of all the times you've thought to yourself "Oh, it's not *that* bad" or "It's not *that* hard, I should be able to do this" only to wind up getting hurt or overexerting yourself. Then, you wind up shaming yourself with things like "Ugh, why do I always do this to myself? What's wrong with me? Why does this pattern always show up?" You blame yourself rather than just recognizing that you're being hurt.

I mentioned earlier that shame is a witness. All those thoughts in your head telling you you're wrong or bad or need to be better are the voices of a shaming witness, which you learned from the way others have seen and spoke to you throughout the years. In fact, shame is the main reason that trauma and CPTSD develop. It has nothing to do with the intensity or severity of the event itself. There are people who've been through horrific, devastating things that didn't necessarily develop trauma from it. Not that they weren't upset by it, to be clear, but it is possible to process and move through a stressful event without it turning into a trauma. For them, the event was an injury that they recover from

And it's not always a "big" event that causes trauma either. Trauma can be caused by literally anything, big or small. The difference between an injury and a trauma lies in how the people who were around you when the event occurred reacted to or *witnessed you* in that moment, or when they heard about the event later if they weren't there.

For example, say there's a kid at a carnival with his family. He's having fun, but at some points the noise level gets too loud and so he covers his ears. His parent could then become a shaming witness, or a loving witness, in that moment.

A loving witness would see him covering his ears and realize that it's too loud for him, saying something like "Hey, I noticed that you're covering your ears. Is that because it's too loud? Do you want to go somewhere quieter?" Here, his pain is seen and validated by someone else, and he gets the message that his discomfort matters, and that the people around him are willing to help him. His need for quiet is recognized, and he's able to accommodate it by bringing noise cancelling headphones to potentially loud places in the future.

A shaming witness would see the child covering his ears and say something like "Why are you doing that? It's not that loud. Don't be so dramatic. Stop being rude, you're ruining everyone's fun." Because his pain is not seen or validated, he gets the message that his discomfort isn't important, and that expressing discomfort also hurts other people in the process. His need for

quiet noise levels gets hidden under a veil of shame, and he learns to hide it next time in order to keep the peace.

Unfortunately for late-accepted auDHDers, we often grow up with a metric fuckton of these so-called “small” moments of shame and invalidation, meaning that our authentic selves, our needs, our desires, the parts of us that make us “us,” get blurred and hidden away, never getting a chance to be seen again.

Which is a real shame - no pun intended - because those parts of us often hold the most intelligence, the most wisdom, and the most real, authentic, human parts of ourselves.

So how do you make those parts feel safe again to come out? You start building a practice of creating your own loving witness, to be just as loud if not louder than the shaming witness. Whenever you catch yourself thinking shaming thoughts, ask yourself what you would say if you heard someone talking like that to someone else, and speak to the shaming voice that way.

You can also start by think of times from your past where someone else shamed you for something. What do you wish someone had said to them at the time? What do you wish you could say to your past self, if you had been there?

Building a loving witness is something that takes a lot of time, practice, and experimentation. Your shaming witness has been developing for years, so it's natural for the loving witness to also take years. But stick with it, 1% at a time, and I promise it'll be worth it.

The final point I want to make in this episode is to talk about what I mean when I say the intelligence behind your shame. Now, I'm not saying the shame itself is intelligent, but I am saying that shame will hide something, a piece of knowledge, a kernel of truth, usually as a way to protect whatever is behind it from being seen and therefore hurt again, or getting some other need met. Every time you are doing something, or not doing something, you *are* doing something, even if it doesn't seem like it.

This right here is really the main focus of my work with auDHDers, is figuring out what gems, jewels, and rocks we can dig out that have been buried under a mountain of shame for their whole lives. It's like those toy dinosaur eggs you can get that you chip away at until you find the surprise inside, except instead of a tiny plastic dinosaur I'm helping people find their most authentic parts of themselves that they can then bring into the light and remove all that heaviness and darkness from, and live in the way they really want to, rather than the way their shame tells them they have to.

For example, something that comes up a lot with my clients is the concept of procrastination. They claim that they spend their time doing “nothing” instead of anything they actually want to or need to do. My ears always perk up when I hear them say this, because I know this is exactly where the gold is.

At this point, I'll ask them "When you are doing nothing, what are you doing?" and very often they reply "Literally nothing, just sitting scrolling on my phone watching the hours pass by and thinking about everything else I could be doing"

So I ask, "When you're scrolling, what are you doing?" And low and behold, we find out that whatever they happen to be gravitating towards when they use their phone is actually a key need that they are just not tending to in other areas of their life, and their brain and body is making sure they get it through their phone.

Sometimes, it'll be that they don't really let themselves have fun or take a break ever, unless they're scrolling on TikTok watching funny videos, and that's the one source of joy they have in their life.

Sometimes, they'll be going down rabbit holes of research articles on various topics, because they have a passion for learning new things and aren't giving themselves permission to make time for it during their days.

Other times, they'll realize they are constantly refreshing their social apps looking for messages from their friends, because they're craving human connection but don't realize it because their brains are clouded with thoughts of "I'm just procrastinating."

There's *always* a reason for whatever thing you're doing that you keep shaming yourself for. When you can recognize the shame, take a step back, and get curious about what's truly going on, you can find that intelligence, and then find ways to get that need met that are more aligned with who you *are*, rather than who you think you need to be.

And that concludes my episode on what I mean when I say "unshaming." There is, of course, a lot more that I could have talked about, but I hope you walk away feeling at least 1% more able to understand and work with your shame.

And if you'd like support in finding out what intelligence might be hiding under your shame, or where your shame even lies in the first place, I now have spots available for individual coaching. I also have a self-study program called AuDHD Summer Camp that will guide you through working with your shame, as well as a bunch of other topics made to support late-realized auDHDers. Those links will be in the show notes.

Thanks so much for listening. Take care, and I'll see you next time

Thanks for listening to UnShaming AuDHD. If you enjoyed this episode and want to support the podcast, please leave a comment or review, letting me know your thoughts and consider sharing it with someone else who you think might enjoy it. Word of mouth is the best way to support me and get the word out. And if you're interested in more support from me, you can sign up for my email list at jesdiverges.com/newsletter for updates on my latest programs and offers. That link, as well as links to my other content and social media can be found in the show notes. Take care of yourself, and I'll see you next time

013: What's in a Hobby?

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Jes Perkins 0:03

Hello Hello and welcome to UnShaming AuDHD: a podcast for autistic ADHDers who want to remove shame, blame and guilt from their lives and replace them with curiosity, compassion, and joy. We're your hosts, Jes Diverges and Javelin Laurence, and we're here to help you reconnect to the authentic and unapologetic version of yourself that's been hidden away by systemic, interpersonal and intergenerational shame. Our goal with each episode is that you walk away feeling at least 1% More seen, heard, valued and loved. Because you belong here, you have always belonged here. Let's get into it.

Hello everyone. Welcome to another very, very exciting episode of Unshaming AuDHD, because I am here with my new co host, Javelin Laurence. You may remember them from a couple episodes back. I just enjoyed our conversation so so so much. And I've been wanting to add a co host for a really long time. I thought that you and I would just five together really well and have some really, really great conversations. So I'm so excited to have you here.

Javelin 1:11

Welcome. Thank you. I am delighted to be here, delighted to be co hosting with you just and having an opportunity to have some more conversations with you, because it's good times. So I'm excited.

Jes Perkins 1:23

Hey, me too. Definitely good times. So this week, we decided, since it's kind of the beginning of the year, maybe some folks had some new year's resolutions going on, maybe starting a new hobby. Maybe your therapist has recommended you get a new hobby. Things like that. We would talk about that as it pertains to being an autistic and ADHD individual, yeah?

Javelin 1:48

Because I think our relationship to hobbies can be unique.

Jes Perkins 1:52

Yes, yeah, very unique. That's a good word for it. So I think one of the questions that I had in my notes that we could maybe talk about first is, like, how do you, Jes, like, define a hobby?

Javelin 2:09

Oh, yeah, that's something was on my list as well. Like, what do we mean when we say hobby? Because I think some people talk about it like everybody's got their own, like, definition for words internally. You know, I think when I think of hobby specifically, I think of something that you are doing for fun, quote, unquote, what fun means to you, and that probably it's like considered leisure time when you do it, yeah, so you're not necessarily like doing it for your job,

for work, and it probably also isn't necessarily like house maintenance stuff, but there's, I think there's an asterisk next to that, because, like, probably doing dishes isn't a hobby, but some people are, like, really into interior decorating, which might be considered A hobby. Yeah, you know, so, so I think, I think the edges of hobbies are maybe a little bit um vague, but generally speaking, you're probably doing it for leisure and not for other reasons. Probably, probably Yeah. What are your thoughts? What do you think a hobby is?

Jes Perkins 3:20

Yeah, I think same thing. I've also kind of, well as you were saying, I've noticed, especially in the last few years, as I kind of unpack and examine things through, like a more neurodivergent queer lens, that there are a lot more blurred lines than I originally thought. But for purposes of, like, trying to come up with a succinct definition, I would say it is something that you do mostly for fun or because it's interesting, something to pass the time, and generally not for money, although, and this is definitely something we can get into, I think Those are some of the blurriest lines Yeah, in hobbies, especially in like a capitalist society, where money is kind of necessary for survival, and sometimes we have to monetize our hobbies for survival.

Javelin 4:11

Capitalists are just getting our grubby little mitts on everything,

Jes Perkins 4:15

grubby little myths, yeah, yeah. But I would say generally, hobby is something fun that you do purely for enjoyment or interest, sure, sure.

Javelin 4:28

Yeah, yeah. I think within the category of hobby, we can probably differentiate between hobbies that like are a skill and hobbies that are are maybe not a skill, yeah, yeah. But I don't think that a hobby has to be a skill, but it can be Yeah. That makes sense.

Jes Perkins 4:50

Yes, I do. And I actually wrote down three, like sort of categories of hobbies, as I was kind of thinking about that story. Um. Yeah, so I decided to go with passive, active and creative.

Speaker 1 5:05

Oh, interesting. Okay, so, and

Jes Perkins 5:09

I'd love to hear your thoughts on these. So, like, passive would be something that you don't really have to do anything during. So like, Sure, watching TV, reading books, things like that. Maybe watching YouTube videos, something you just kind of turn on and you can engage with, but it's not super active. Which then brings me to my next category, which is something that you do so things like sports, rock climbing, you Lego I was kind of, well, I guess it could go an active or creative category, because you are making something and you can invent Legos. But it's also something that can be like, like, the instructions are kind of just like laid out for you, yeah. And

then creative would be like You're literally making something so like crochet, baking, ceramics, painting, writing, so many other things, woodwork, woodwork, that's another one, right?

Javelin 6:17

There's a lot that's interesting, because it sounds like even those categories have some flexibility. Interestingly, as you were talking about them, some of the things that were in the passive category, I'm not sure if I would qualify them as hobbies so much as things that you might enjoy doing. Yeah, but this might just be my own internal interpretation of what a hobby is, but I wouldn't necessarily think of like watching television as a hobby, certainly at pastime, certainly something I really enjoy. I'm a big fan of television, but I don't know that I would call it

Jes Perkins 6:54

a hobby. I also have been thinking about that of like, is that a hobby? Is it not a hobby? Which is kind of what brought me to the like, what is a hobby? Question? Yeah, yeah. I think it bore so depend. Like, I think you can call something a hobby if you feel like it is a hobby. So, like, maybe, like most TV watching is just so you kind of have it on. You're not super engaged with it. But there are some people who are like, so, so into television. They know all the actors, all of their, like, backgrounds, all the other things they've been in. They know, like filmography. They're able to, like, dissect scenes and the way they're set up and things like that. So then, I think, is when it kind of can teeter into hobby category. So, so there's even nuance in, like, specific things could be a hobby or not, depending on interesting.

Javelin 7:44

And it sounds like that, that increase in engagement might be considered like an increase in active, like, like, thought around the task, or the thing the hobby I'm curious, like, like little, like brain, you know, divergence, as you were talking about that, I just to, like, start moving into the sort of ADHD direction of it all. How does hobby interact with special interest? See?

Jes Perkins 8:14

And that is where I think a lot of the lines kind of get blurred, especially when you're an ADHD individual. Because, like, like, kind of what I was saying with TV, like, if your special interest is in television, film, things like that, something that your show, yeah, or a specific show exactly like it really depends on how intensely you are engaging with it, which is why, which is why I always, which I is why I said, like, if you think it's a hobby, it is, if you like, whether you want to call it a hobby or a special interest or a hyper fixation, which I don't really like that word particularly, but for purposes of language, we have Sure, and I Think that can also be a source of a lot of kind of shame and, like, inner criticism for us is because we do have hobbies where, like, some people are like, Oh, that's not a hobby, but, like, it can be a hobby for us. Sure. Yeah, absolutely.

Unknown Speaker 9:16

Does that answer your question? I feel like

Javelin 9:20

I think so. Yeah, I also think that, like a place where societally shame can start sneaking up in these areas, is when we engage in hobbies in a way that is considered too intense. You know, that's where the special interest sort of piece comes up. And I think that's a part of where some of the like social otherness exists for ADHD folks and autistic folks who aren't ADHD as well. When an interest that we have or a hobby that we have seems to be like, more consuming or more like, like, too big, according to some you know, a for morphs. This. How interested in your hobbies you should be, right? You know, so like, yes, there's, there can be the like, judgment around well, that shouldn't be considered a hobby, because XYZ, when someone engages in it really deeply, and the, you know, societal shaming that can come up when you're like, well, you're too into that, like javelin, you probably shouldn't own that many tarot decks. You're too interested in that, or you're too into Bob's Burgers or whatever it happens to be, you know,

Jes Perkins 10:29

yeah, yeah, exactly the word obsessed comes to mind. Yeah. We often get called like, obsessed, or like, yeah, you're too much with this. Like, why do I need to add a SpongeBob quote into every single conversation that I have? Like, why you think about SpongeBob

Javelin 10:47

so much? The gift reactions you use Muppets. Every single one is a muppet. Every single one is a muppet. Like, come on, amazing.

Jes Perkins 11:01

And I think too, speaking of like, different ways that we engage with them, I think a lot of us have, like, a word I like to use a lot is floopy when it comes

Javelin 11:09

to tell me what floopy means. Do you think about Spy Kids?

Jes Perkins 11:13

It was actually from friends, which is another one of my special interests, Phoebe buffet uses it. I can't remember the exact quote, which I can't believe right now, I always have the direct friends quotes, but right now I'm blanking, but she uses it, and I just love it so much. And so I use it to explain ADHD, because it's so like, a lot of things we do are so chaotic, but there's also, like, they're not 100% chaotic. There's like a madness to our method, but there is a method there. So I think floopy is a good word to use here,

Javelin 11:49

a great word for that. And I think a similar, but not quite related, language that I use is I usually describe us as having Roomba like qualities. Yes, you know where you're sort of bouncing between exact things, but you're still accomplishing and like doing something at that, at that same, you know? Yes, watch it long enough. There might be a pattern to it.

Jes Perkins 12:12

It's like, Oh, I see what you're doing there. Okay, yes, flippy little Roombas, all of us, oh, my goodness. Loopy little Roombas.

Javelin 12:22

Amazing. Okay, hashtag, floopy little Roomba.

Jes Perkins 12:26

I am, like, picturing, like, stickers and T shirts and like, just this happy little guy. Okay, anyways, side

Javelin 12:33

track, oh my gosh, the merch of it all.

Unknown Speaker 12:37

See immediately jumps to monetizing.

Jes Perkins 12:40

Oh, God, capitalism, no. Okay, so back to the floopiness as it pertains to hobbies, which I think could be another source of, like, the societal shame around it is because, like so many of us, like, will engage with something super, super intensely for like, a couple of weeks, like, we'll go out and buy all the things, and we will, in ourselves, be so certain that we have finally found the thing that we are going to do for like, the entire rest of our lives that's going to just never go away. And of course, I'm going to invest hundreds and hundreds of dollars in supplies up front, because I'm going to be doing this forever. And there's no, I can't even imagine a world wherein I'm not interested in this thing anymore. And then we'll do it for a couple of weeks, maybe even a couple of months. We'll make some really, really interesting things maybe, or maybe we won't. And then we drop that shit, like Andy dropped Woody and Toy Story. Never look at it again, or maybe circle back to it in a couple of years, right?

Javelin 13:45

Yeah, maybe if the if the hobby gods are kind to us, yes, yes, this is okay. So you're hitting on something that I wrote about in my notes, which is okay, Asterix or, or do? Um, disclaimer, that's the word I was looking for. This isn't necessarily based off of like research or like super empirical data or anything like that. But the feeling that I have is that when you have combination of ADHD and autism, you've got two experiences or two neuro systems that have preferences. An ADHD nervous system has a preference for something that is new and engaging. Dopamine, that's where the distractibility comes from. It's not necessarily because you're not interested in things in front of you, but because something else has got more shiny, you know hits the novelty, or the competition or the whatever you know thing is going to draw your attention. You've got that distractibility piece. And then you also have, in the autistic experience, a preference for depth in the things that we're learning and exploring, right? So when. Where, where these two things combine. Now you've got distractibility, plus a preference for depth. So in these explorations of different hobbies or past times, you're, you're doing this thing, but you're doing it super deep, and then you switch to another thing, and you're doing it super deep. So

that's then you've got. You're spending a million dollars on all of these different equipments for it. You've got a ridiculous amount of theoretical knowledge, but you've maybe actually practically done the thing for like, a month or two tops, you know? Yeah. And then you move on to the next thing, and you do it all over again. You get all the equipment, or you do all the research in order to figure out what the absolute best piece of equipment for this is. I'm thinking about the amount of research that I did before I started making kombucha, and that kombucha phase is over. I yeah, I can't even drink it anymore. It bothers my stomach. It's dead. Oh no, yeah, but yeah. So does that make sense? There's that, there's that, like, tendency to switch between things, plus a desire to go really deep in those things,

Jes Perkins 16:01

yes, it's the like, hard and fast, deep diving. Yeah, it's just spending so so much on the research phase, which, like, I think I said this when we were talking about this topic at our last meeting. But it's like, what one of my hobbies that I definitely count as a hobby is researching hobbies, learning about, yes, hobbies, because when I gave myself permission to just like it's actually okay to just learn about something and not immediately buy all the things, not that I won't someday, but it's like right now, I can just learn about this and engage with it, Watch videos about it, without putting that pressure on myself to like do it.

Javelin 16:45

I love that as a reframe for what a hobby is, because we, as we were defining it at the beginning, we were trying to walk around this idea that it's something that you do to pass the time, that's something that's interesting to you, and it's leisurely, it's fun, but you don't necessarily do it for money, and research ticks all of those little boxes. The enjoyment that consuming knowledge about an area that is unfamiliar to you can bring can be immense, but I think particularly for ADHD individuals, and in that sense, I feel like if I were a dragon, I would hoard knowledge. That would be the thing that I would sit on top of.

Unknown Speaker 17:24

You know, yes.

Javelin 17:27

Have you ever heard of this concept called information hunger?

Unknown Speaker 17:32

No, oh,

Javelin 17:34

your eyes just got so big. I feel like

Jes Perkins 17:36

I know what it is, and I immediately I'm like, Yes, that's me, yeah, but please go ahead.

Javelin 17:41

I don't remember where I read it, but it might have been in a paper somewhere. It could have just been on a Reddit post, but somewhere somebody was talking about that experience of like hungering for craving more knowledge or information about something specifically for the knowledge sake, not necessarily because you're going to do anything for it, because you need to know more, you know,

Jes Perkins 18:03

yes, oh yes. I was literally just about to say that if I could get paid to just go to college and collect degrees and just take whatever class I wanted, like that would literally be my ideal life. I just want to learn all the things. Do something every now and then, but mostly I just want to learn. It turns out, a lot more things, a lot of things, are way more interesting to learn about and read about than they are to actually do, because doing often takes a lot of practice before you can get good at a thing to the point that it's enjoyable. And that's really hard for my perfectionist. ADHD, yeah,

Javelin 18:45

okay, this leads me next, really neatly, to my next thought on this concept, which is hobby as a pursuit of perfection. Because I think there are some hobbies that I have engaged in where the purpose of them, or the reason why I was so deeply engaged in them was because I was trying to reach a sort of mythical This is how it should be, and this is often how I engage with baking as a hobby or cooking, is that I'll go back and do reiterations of a single recipe over and over until I've made the best of it. Yeah. So anecdote, there's a hot second in my youth where I thought I was going to own a bed and breakfast as an adult, that that was going to be my my life calling. And so I thought, well, then I should probably get really good at making breakfast foods, right? So I started like methodically going through different breakfast foods, and I'd have phases with each of the breakfast foods, making them over and over again, multiple times a week, making small tweaks and adjusting and like writing notes about how that, like, shifted things until I felt I had reached the perfect frittata, the perfect French toast, the perfect. Pancake. And I think that's as far as I got. I was like, starting to circle towards Eggs Benedict, but then I discovered, like, hollandaise sauce. So I Okay, fair. Then it was dead to me, yeah. But that, that hobby experience, was specifically about making the best version of each of these things, and some hobbies, that's the way I tend to engage with them. What does that think? What does that make you think about

Jes Perkins 20:26

i Okay, I love that you brought this up. I have so many thoughts about this, because I think that it can be really fun to like, pursue this perfection, this like, pursuit of mastery, of something like from a place of enjoyment, as opposed to like from a place of like. I need to be perfect at this. Otherwise I'm a complete failure and I suck at life. Which is why? Which is, which is the way. Speaking of perfection, I always stumble over my words when I'm talking about perfectionism. I think it's so funny. Oh, funny is that's how i i used to engage with pretty much everything, which is why I think a lot of my hobbies sort of fell to the wayside when I wasn't immediately good at them. But now that I've done a lot of unpacking of perfectionism and gotten to the point where it's like, okay, sometimes I can let myself try and be a perfectionist at something, as long as I'm

doing it like for fun, and as long as it's something that, like, it's possible to create, like a perfect version of something, or maybe not even a perfect one, but like a best version of something, like baking, I think is a great example of that, because, like, there's so many different tweaks you could do, so many adjustments, so many things you can play with. I actually love baking, because it's like, such a great combination of art and science in that way. Yeah, but yeah, I think it's totally fine to do that for fun, like, just because you want to be perfect at something, I think

Javelin 22:03

you're highlighting something important, which is the motivation behind the perfectionism. Yeah, and maybe in that sense, perfectionism is not quite the right word for what I feel like I was doing. The motivation wasn't necessarily to, like, make the perfect thing, because then that means that I'm worthy or whole, or, you know, insert self fulfillment goals that can often be attached to perfectionism. But it was more about the experimentation process and learning, seeing how tweaking the temperature or tweaking the amount of leaven or leaven or in the you know thing, yeah, tweaking that, how that makes changes, and whether those changes are are a net positive or moving me further away from the goal or the intention? Yeah, yeah, those are the only times that it's really enjoyable, is when it's about the experimentation and not about the perfection.

Jes Perkins 22:55

Yeah, yeah. And I'm so glad you said that out loud, because I think I was like, I was thinking about that, but I wasn't like, totally pinpointing it, and it's like, yeah, and it's like, yeah, that is the difference is, like, it's not about like, the pursuit of like, the perfect thing or the best thing. Isn't even about the end result. It's about the process of learning, the process of doing it. Like, all the different things you get to try to do, like, yeah, when you can value the process over the end result, so many things become so much more fun, because it doesn't matter if you mess it up, that just means you get to

Javelin 23:26

try it again. Yeah, I think that's the thing that I like about the experimentation language, and this is the language that I use when I work with clients as a coach as well, which is that we're doing experiments, which means that success and failure are both useful results, because they both give us information, right? Yeah. So I think I use that in baking all of the time. I oftentimes, when I'll sit down with something that I've like, baked, I'll be like, if I did this a little bit different. Oh, and when I did this, this is what the result was. The information is still useful, whether or not it's moved us in the right direction, quote, unquote, yeah,

Jes Perkins 24:03

yes, exactly. I do a similar thing with my clients. I call it like being the scientist of your own life. Like just coming up with a hypothesis or not, but just like trying things out, letting yourself experiment and like, no matter what happens at the end of it, you're gonna have had an experience, you're going to have learned something that you can bring with you, and it's never going to that, like that knowledge is never going to go away, nice, like you could always bring it

Javelin 24:30

forward, amazing. Okay, to take stock. Hobbies are things that we do for fun. Hobbies may or may not be about or engage with things that society as a whole thinks should be a hobby, because ADHD humans can get really deep in all sorts of different things. Hobbies may be connected to seeking perfection or improvement, but it. Important that the journey is the purpose rather than the product, because then we can get into some dicey areas. Yes, is that a good is that a good taking stock?

Speaker 1 25:13

Yeah, yeah, you thought summed it up. Impressive, amazing.

Jes Perkins 25:19

So where do we go from here? Where do we go from here? Let me see, oh, my gosh. We already talked about so much, yeah, oh, I know I would love to hear because you told me about these three rules for hobbies that you created, yeah, that I've been dying to hear about ever since you told me about them weeks ago. So how about that?

Javelin 25:48

I'm so excited to share. As I sat down to think about my hobby rules, I think I have four hottie rules. I thought there were three, but as I thought about it, I was like, No, there's actually four. One of them I just was doing without really thinking about it. Okay, let me set the stage for you. I, as I am sure many of us in the audience, an ADHD person, spent a lifetime thinking to myself, ooh, it'd be really lovely to do that, or to be good at that, or do that thing. Would buy a whole bunch of stuff for the thing, do it for a little while, and then lose interest immediately. And so much so it was causing me financial problems, but I still wanted to try new hobbies and new things to to engage with stuff. So I decided to do an experiment. A couple of years ago. I was going to start a new hobby that I was interested in, but I was going to follow a handful of rules in F in an effort to protect the hobby. Okay? The first rule was, you cannot monetize this hobby for at least five years. Oh, I know big one, you can after five years, but until you've done it consistently for five years, it's off the monetization front, you just can't, okay, two, you cannot force yourself to engage with it. You shouldn't ever be doing the hobby because you should do it. You only do it when you want to. Yeah. Three, you must have a strict budget for purchasing things related to this hobby. And you also need to be aware of how frequently you're purchasing things related to this hobby. Okay, budget line and number four, you can have a maximum of three projects within this hobby going at any given time, but once you get to three, you have to finish one before you can start a new one. Do? Okay, that's one that I didn't say out loud to myself, but that I was accidentally doing on purpose. Now allow me to explain the context. This is how it happened. I was going to get into embroidery because I liked the idea of the like detail, and because I was specifically, at the time, looking for a hobby that didn't require a screen, because I have a lot of hobbies that require a screen. I enjoy video games. I'm really into some TV shows. Love the research thing, that kind of stuff. But I wanted something that I completely disconnect with, and in this context, bring on a camping trip with me. So I got a little like introduction to embroidery kit that was a couple of like, pre made things. And I decided before starting this one that I was not going to monetize it for at least five years, because I knew that

when I try to monetize the hobby, it tends to kill the joy. Capitalism tends to kill the joy. For me, some other people may be like, Oh, I'm more motivated if there's money attached. Cool. Good for you, not for me, it's dead. I didn't want to force myself to engage with it, because when I start having, having to do the thing, then I start resenting having to do the thing. Yeah, yeah. So I was allowed to, like, put it down and pick it back up and put it down, pick it back up. Having the budget was a really intentional way of making sure that I didn't accidentally drop a whole shit ton of money on it before i Excuse my language. Okay, fantastic. I spent a whole bunch of money on it before I knew that I was into it, because that's another thing. Sometimes it's just a passing fancy, and that's okay. And the minimum number of projects, I wanted to make sure that I didn't accidentally make my hobby starting a project, you know, yes, it has been, Oh God, I. I think it'll be three years in the fall, but it might actually be four years in the fall. Since I started embroidery, it still brings me joy. I would say I still have some phases around it, so I'll do it like consistently for a couple of months, and then it'll go away for a few months, you know, do something else, but then it'll come back. I have never sold a piece attached to it, and I still don't think I will. I just enjoy it too much. I don't even take commissions. And people have started to ask me if I take commissions. I say no, but I've got a whole box of completed embroideries now that if somebody wants one, I'll just give it to them. So I've like, I've given up go away for gifts. I've sent them in the mail to people like these kinds of things, because they're all just there, and I don't really need them once they're finished, because the hobby is to finish them. And it started to branch out now into some more niche types of embroidery. So it continues to like evolve in terms of like. This feels new again, because I'm learning specifically sashiko embroidery right now, which is a traditional Japanese form of embroidery that is different than your like. Let's embroider a flower on a thing. You know. Those are javelins, rules for keeping a hobby alive.

Jes Perkins 31:20

I love them. Genius. No notes, okay.

Javelin 31:27

Oh, so this is my question. Connected to them, then I know that you identify as experiencing PDA attached to your neurodivergence. I'm really interested to know if these rules feel like demands.

Speaker 1 31:40

Do not well.

Jes Perkins 31:49

Oh, see, okay, maybe a little bit now that I thought about it, please. So like, so I'll go with the one that I like for PDA first, which is, like, don't force yourself to engage with the hobby. Because, like, as soon as it becomes a should, like, I I always encourage people to, like, tag the word should in their head. And, like, literally, anytime you're saying that word to yourself about anything, you're like, Okay, should, what? Like, where is this? Where is this coming from? Why do I think I should do this? Like, what is it that I want from this situation? Like, who's who told me I should do this? Like, where are these rules coming from? Where is this application coming from? Because I think that's such an important part of it that kind of ties into, like, what we were

talking about before. Of, like, how our engagement with hobbies tends to be very cyclical and like, phase based. And a lot of us probably try and like, force ourselves to, like, continue a hobby past, kind of its like expiration date, which then leads to like, even, like, negative dopamine kind of coming from it, instead of, like, just not in the

Javelin 33:01

first place. Stain Yes. Stain for the thing,

Jes Perkins 33:04

yeah, yeah. Or even, like, resentment, which then leads to, like, now I'm thinking of that picture of Pingu, The pig went, like, literally hard, and he's like, so mad. God, I love Pingu. So I definitely like that one. I also really like the like, don't monetize this for five years. Yeah. Because like that just like, triggered so many thoughts in my head of like, like to monetize or not to monetize a hobby, because, like, sometimes it's okay to do that. And I really like the idea of, like, not doing it for five years, because then it assures that you know something that you're you've at least done for that long. So it's like, slightly more likely that you're going to continue doing it. You know enough about it to the point where you can probably figure out how to do it in a way that's not gonna suck the enjoyment out of it, like,

Javelin 34:09

and, yeah, yeah. Well, it gives you an opportunity to develop the skill outside of a requirement that it make money for you, right, right? So you can So then you've got some freedom to experiment. Because if you're in a space, and I'm learning all this about being a small business owner, if you're in a space where your goal is to make profit off of something, then you're going to inevitably move towards making the things that are more likely to make you profit, right, which sort of stunts or or directs your experimentation towards things that other people will want, as opposed to things that just bring you joy, right, right?

Jes Perkins 34:50

Exactly. And that's, that's exactly what I was going to say, is because I think so many of us jump into, like, trying to monetize it right away, which then like, exactly what. You said, leads to just going for the most like, profit making thing that's probably not going to be the most fun thing for you to do. It takes all the experimentation out of it. It puts so much pressure onto a thing like it, like something else, I've also learned as like a business owner is like, it is so freaking hard to be creative about something when there's the pressure to make money from it, like, it makes it damn near impossible to do anything, and so I think that's such a good thing to keep in mind. Of like, no, let me have this thing be fun and interesting first, let me, like, not put pressure on it and just like, engage with it for the fun of it. Because I'm like, I'm going through this right now with my, like, I started my sourdough journey a few months ago, and like, I'm it's interesting because I'm also, like, a professional baker, so technically, it is a hobby that I've, like, already monetized. But like, I feel like sourdough is like a completely separate thing, even though it's kind of in the baking realm, sure, but because I am also a baker, I keep, like, one my own self keeps being like, well, what if you just, like, opened up a little micro bakery in your house and went to farmers markets and sold like, 20 loaves of bread every other like, Saturday or whatever, and it

could be so much fun. And what if we did this, and I also have other people who will eat my bread, which is a huge compliment. I really appreciate hearing it like, don't get me wrong, but, and they're like, they're like, you should sell this. Like, this is so good. Oh my gosh. Like, and I keep having to be like, no, no, no, no, no, don't even sit down. I'm not doing it. I don't want to do it. I'm already fighting myself about it, because of that, like, experimentation aspect of it, and because, like, I just know how much more work it's going to be if I start trying to do it for money as opposed to just doing it for fun. And so, yeah, I do like, that rule, although part of my PDA, like, as I tap into it and, like, ask it specifically what it thinks means and wants is, like, well, that kind of sounds like a challenge. Like, what do you mean? I have to wait five years. What if I just wait one year? Yeah, like, I'll show you or I can monetize this hobby, and I won't suck the fun out of it. I'll just do it forever.

Javelin 37:19

Well, and that's the key thing. Is, it's not about whether you can monetize it or not. You know, you could be like the Most Excellent the rule is about, for me, someone who does not have PDA, decidedly, I love a rule. Give me a good rule and I will follow it. Oh, delicious. So good, especially, like it has to be one that I think makes sense, or I see the logic behind but I just have always been that rule following autistic kid who got super distressed when other people didn't follow the rules. So that's my brand Okay, and I've learned to use that as an adult to give myself rules, which then takes the pressure off of having to defend my decision or think it through and make it over and over again, and it like eases some of the decision fatigue. So for me, by saying you cannot monetize this for five years, I have completely sidestepped any thinking about having to monetize it, planning, problem solving, all of those kinds of size it doesn't matter. I'm not allowed to do it for five years, so I don't have to think about it. And that is an incredible relief. So that that's a way that I use rules, actually pretty regularly, by making it a rule. Now it's easy for me to say, well, I can't sorry. And then if someone asks me, oh, you should definitely do this, I can say, can't Sorry, it's rule. And they'd be like, well, we should I'm like, doesn't matter. You can give me all the best explanations in the world about it. It's a rule. I can't break it. So this is window into javelin's own brain. I've used this for like, having no expectation days, which is one of my like key strategies for overcoming burnout is to have periods of time where there are no expectations from myself or from others. In order to do that, I have made it a rule that in a no expectations day, you cannot have expectations. You're allowed to do whatever you want, but you cannot have to do those things you know.

Jes Perkins 39:21

Fascinating. Right? And that makes so much sense

Javelin 39:25

too, and might not work very well for someone with PDA,

Jes Perkins 39:30

yeah, and I, I'm thinking like, dang, I kind of wish my brain worked like that. I just like my brain, or what, to change anything about myself, that all that stuff, but like, I feel like, with the PDA and I would be so interested now to hear, like other folks perspectives on this is because, like, I can

put rules in place for myself, especially as I've, like, learned a little bit more about my PDA and, like, what it is. And. Like, for the actually, I don't know if I've talked about PDA on the podcast at all before, so like, really quick, PDA stands for, I probably mentioned it in passing, but it technically stands for pathological demand avoidance. Some folks also call it persistent drive for autonomy. I personally feel that both terminology kind of makes sense for me, but that could be an episode for a different day. I don't want to get too too sidetracked, but essentially, it is a nervous system difference that is quite common in autistic individuals. I don't know of anyone who has PDA but isn't also autistic, but it could probably occur, um, but it's most often in autistic folks and like, it's basically a nervous system difference that makes it so certain, like demands, expectations, like being told What to do, literally triggers in autonomic nervous system response where you like can literally go into fight, flight, freeze fawn. There's a bunch of other ones as well, and it can be really hindering when you like have to do things. But yeah, we'll have to do a whole other episode explaining it. But so the more that I've learned about PDA, especially looking at it as a nervous system difference. And some folks also say that it's not only a nervous system difference, it's like a specific like trauma response. Been looking at it that way, and like working with my like, PDA part is what I call it. And so nowadays I am able. So what I was the point I was getting to is nowadays I am able to put rules into place for myself, but they have to make biological sense. I feel like that's something that's pretty common with most autistic folks, it's like, Yeah, we like rules, as long as they make sense. We have to know, like, why is this rule in place? Like, what is it for? But, like, I can put rules in place that make logical sense, but I'm always going to be having a conversation with my PDA part about it. Yeah, yeah. Like, whatever that, like that, fuck you. Like challenge voice comes up of like, well, I don't have to wait five years. I can do whatever the hell I want. I have to go, Well, listen. PDA, Yeah, true. You can do this. But remember what happened last time we tried to monetize a hobby right away. Remember how hard it got. Remember how you didn't do anything. Remember how we didn't touch it again for like, a

Javelin 42:42

decade solid. Gentle parenting of your PDA part, there

Jes Perkins 42:45

lots of practice and vast knowledge of child development and psychology. But yeah, I'm always, always having to have those back and forth conversations in my head about it, but I can follow a rule if it makes sense. I just have to, like, talk myself down. And then every now and then I do rebel. Because, of course, I do. I'm a human of course, but

Javelin 43:10

absolutely, yeah, I think, I think also the key point here, at least with my rules, is that if I break them, it's not the end of the world. Yeah, you know, I haven't for this particular hobby, for embroidery, I could see that being more challenging for different hobbies, you know, different rules will be different more and more or less challenging for certain hobbies. So for example, if I wanted to take up skiing as a hobby, I am sure I would struggle with the budget, because that's an expensive ass hobby, right? Yeah, but it probably be pretty easy not to monetize it, because I

don't have any illusions about becoming skilled enough at skiing to make money at it, you know, a little bit different to craft, right?

Speaker 1 43:58

So, yeah, yeah, but

Javelin 44:01

they've worked for me so far, as long as the asterisks at the bottom of those four rules is always it's okay to let go of the hobby if you don't like it anymore, that's a failure. You know? Yes, it's that a failure. Yeah, the purpose of the rules, I think, is more about creating a container where I can find out if I like the thing before anything else influences it, and if it turns out I don't like the thing, fantastic, right? Exactly, more and you haven't spent \$300 on it, yes,

Jes Perkins 44:39

yeah, yeah. The budget rule is another rule I like a lot that I can foresee. I can foresee many, many fights with PDA about it. But that one is so real because I've like, especially before I knew I was ADHD and I was just like, feral in the world.

Javelin 44:55

Yes, yes, that's a good word for it. Like

Jes Perkins 44:58

I literally have. I brought it out, I have, let me point my I have my leaning tower of hobbies. It's just chock full of so many things I have, like, I bought a cameo for cutter for, like, stickers that never got made. It's still in the box, like so many things purchased and then never used again. So I really like the budget rule. It could save a lot of ADHD deers wallets, for sure.

Javelin 45:34

Yeah, my budget for embroidery was pretty small too. It was like, it was like \$50 a month, Max. So it was pretty small. And these are Canadian dollars too. So for listeners, that's like, that's like 3538 US or something somewhere in that space, I think. So, yeah, something like that. It was a pretty small budget, but embroidery materials are relatively inexpensive, get a little schemes of thread, and I would go to like fabric land to get, like scrap fabric to use, or if I had clothes that I wasn't going to wear anymore, I was going to donate. Instead, I would cut it up into material for embroidery. So there, there were ways to get more stuff out of it without spending the money. But the task of, like, figuring out how to get more materials or things was also an enjoyable part of it.

Jes Perkins 46:26

Yeah, I was gonna say I think that even adds some, like, a little bit of gamification to it too. Of like, How can I spend less than, like, 40 or \$50 on this hobby? Like, how can I be even more creative with this thing, and even more resourceful, because, like, one thing audhy brands can do is think of out of the box solutions for absolutely, pretty much

Javelin 46:48

anything creative, problem solving. Just love us. Yeah, amazing. Should we show some of our hobby stuff for the video folk?

Jes Perkins 46:58

Sure, I did gather some things around. I realized, though, that a lot of stuff is so packed away still, because we moved two years ago and we still have not unpacked a bunch of stuff. It's so bad, but it's here somewhere. But I did dig out a couple of things amazing.

Javelin 47:22

I brought out my collection of embroidery threads because it's very esthetically. I love that really. Happy to report that one of the enjoyable parts of embroidery is just taking out and organizing your threads. Yes, that's just a nice

Unknown Speaker 47:39

time. Awesome. You know what?

Jes Perkins 47:41

I have something so similar to that, but I think it's somewhere in a box. But I also have a box like, exactly like that of so much thread

Javelin 47:50

for the folks who are just listening and not watching. I have got a little like fishing tackle type box that has all of these little like spools of embroidery thread in a color coded sections in spectrums of color. And it, it makes my little sorting heart very happy.

Unknown Speaker 48:11

It is very satisfying to look at.

Jes Perkins 48:15

But I do have, though is a similar plastic tackle box full of so this is washi tape, yes, just a whole bunch of different patterns that I bought so so many. I've probably used a total of

Unknown Speaker 48:32

maybe six feet of this. But as you can see, I bought a shit ton

Javelin 48:38

from it's nice to have some nice little things sometimes,

Jes Perkins 48:42

you know, and that's the thing too, is like, I've, there's been so many times, like, just the other day, I needed a safety pin for for something I don't remember, oh yeah, to hold the curtains closed because the sun was in my face. I was like, wait, I think I have one somewhere. And sure enough, it was in this purple tower of things. And I found it right in there. I was like, Ah,

perfect. Like, I do encourage having a small collection. I think it's a necessity as the ADHD or absolutely that was from my bullet journal endeavor.

Javelin 49:14

Oh, yeah, that's a classic. Yes. You know, thinking that the bullet journal is going to solve all of your life

Jes Perkins 49:20

problems as well, 100% I even have one of my bullet journals. This was from. This was pre dire divergent knowledge days. So this is when I was so convinced that I had everything together and could just organize my life and have everything just be perfect and also super esthetic all the time.

Javelin 49:43

It's beautiful, folks. For those of you just listening, it's really beautiful.

Jes Perkins 49:46

Some sunflower reaction. Oh, I'm sorry I keep forgetting to describe some stuff. But yeah, I have these nice, like, blocked out days with these stencils I got. This is a forest theme. So we have a mushroom. It's squirrel. Some trees. Jes, my little tracker. The tracker is actually hilarious for me, because if you look so these are all the habits that I'm trying to build. And for all the one time I did some things and no times I did other

Javelin 50:14

fantastic Okay, so question for you, how long did you keep up with this particular bullet journal before it was this?

Jes Perkins 50:22

One, I actually used it for a long time. Oh my gosh, my Copenhagen notes are in here too. Anyways, this one, this hobby, actually lasted a long time, a lot longer than most. I think I did bullet journaling for like two years, because I did it mostly when I was like during my last two years of undergrad, because I needed it to stay organized for school, and school also helped me create this giant illusion of organization, because I can take all of the like syllabuses and things, and I know exactly when things are due ahead of time, so I can plan far, far ahead and make myself feel like I know exactly how my life is going to go, even though It took so many twists and turns within that time, always. But, yeah, this one was actually a couple of years, which is impressive, nice for me. And I think it was because it's just so satisfying to like, like, I love tracing things and drawing. I love office supplies. Like, I think another hobby of mine is just like office supplies Period, end of best

Javelin 51:27

time of year was back to school so that you could go shopping for new office supplies.

Jes Perkins 51:31

It was literally my favorite time of the year. Like, I freaking love going to Staples. It is my favorite place in the entire world. Give me all the pens and all the highlighters and everything. So, like, this was a pretty good culmination of that. I haven't done it in a long time, though I don't really have enough going on to fill a whole bunch of graphs, but maybe something I do is definitely still have all the materials and such

Javelin 52:03

love that. But do you want to see some embroideries? Yes, okay, so this one is a little embroidery of kind of head from Howell's Moving Castle.

Speaker 1 52:15

Oh yeah, it's pretty cute. So cute.

Javelin 52:19

Yeah, I like him. His ear, his eyes got a little weird, but that's fine. This is a frog that says arson,

Jes Perkins 52:29

hell yeah, oh, hell yeah, hell yeah, hell yeah, hell yeah, hell yeah. I love it. Pretty good. I would hang that up.

Javelin 52:36

I love that. I Yeah, yeah, that's fair. And then this is a Sasquatch wizard.

Jes Perkins 52:43

Oh, pipe with my God, these are freaking awesome.

Javelin 52:48

So okay, so I'll tell you what I do. I go on Pinterest and I find tattoo flash, and then I print those out the patterns for the embroidery. This is a clearly a working robot who's having a time. He's out on a smoke break.

Jes Perkins 53:06

He sure is, oh, my God, that's so awesome.

Javelin 53:08

And that's another reason why I don't think I would ever sell them, because the tattoo flash artists are an important part of this. And I enjoy the complexity that you can get with that, that you can't get with other things, but I have no talent for drawing myself, so, yeah, just get to live in a little box in my house.

Jes Perkins 53:32

I love them. They're so cool. Some other stuff I had to show was so I got into ceramics because I took a so it was because, and this, again, is kind of like the Blurred Lines of hobbies is because, like, I did ceramics in high school, like, as an art class, and then I also took a ceramics

class at a community college when I went back to school in my late 20s. And I haven't done it, like outside of school, except for one time, my wife took me for my birthday to a pottery class, and it was so much freaking fun, nice. Someday, I do want to do it outside of school, but I still count it as a hobby, because I do, because they made it so absolutely this.

This is my absolute pride and joy. He's broken. Oh, but I made this. Oh, my God, in high school, that is a spin like 12th grade, and it is I'm trying to get, get it so the sun

Speaker 1 54:39

isn't so the light doesn't do weird things, glare. It's beautiful. Come on, sponge. Okay, there we go. You can kind of see it, actually.

Javelin 54:47

What if I hold it closer? He's got that. There we go. Quite a butt chin.

Jes Perkins 54:52

He's doing the you like Krabby Patties, don't you? Squidward.

Javelin 54:57

Yes, exquisite. I.

Jes Perkins 55:00

I'm so so proud of this. Like the edges are all like, this has come with me on so many moves. As you can see, his leg has fallen off. I've tried super gluing it back on, and it just falls off. So no, I'm just very careful with him. But this is the best thing I ever made. I'm never going to top this in my life.

Javelin 55:19

That's incredible. Put it back carefully.

Unknown Speaker 55:26

And then I also have, did not make this, but I

Jes Perkins 55:32

also have this, oh yeah, Squidward house that I also made in high school. Nice. Been obsessed with Sponge Bob for literally my entire life that goes back in there. And then this, I brought this up from downstairs specifically because that's nice in my college ceramics class. So this is a vase that's kind of in like an S shape. And I specifically wanted a curvy vase like this, because I wanted to see if I could do it.

Speaker 1 56:07

Yeah, and I could, and it's very heavy,

Jes Perkins 56:11

and I actually love it a lot, because the whole thing was supposed to be this teal color, but because I was at lazy College, the glaze wasn't, wasn't mixed quite as well as it maybe could have faced, but it left this beautiful, like, red streak on it that just, I think, improved it. I'm also really, really proud of this. So that's some of my ceramics

Unknown Speaker 56:40
puddle. Wow,

Javelin 56:43
look at us in our hobbies. Hobbies.

Jes Perkins 56:48
I also the cardigan that I'm making or making wearing. I made fantastic.

Unknown Speaker 56:56
Made this crocheted, yeah, that's awesome.

Javelin 57:05
Sweet. Well, we have talked about hobbies. Yes, we have. Is there anything I think we did pretty good. I think so too.

Jes Perkins 57:17
I think we pretty much covered it. I guess if there was one thing I would want to leave folks with when it comes to hobbies, is have fun and prioritize the process, I think that's what I got out of today. Yeah, yeah.

Javelin 57:39
I What did I get out of today. I think I got out of today that you can kind of define your own hobbies for yourself. You know, it can be about things that other people might not think count as a hobby, but it also can be a part of a hobby process, like just the research or just the experimentation. Yeah, but maybe the hobbies were the friends we made along the way.

Jes Perkins 58:07
You know, I think that, yes, yep, the hobbies were the friends we made along the way and on that. Thank you so much, folks for listening. Take care of yourselves, and we'll see you next time

Unknown Speaker 58:19
see on the Flippity flop.

Jes Perkins 58:23
Thanks for listening to Unshaming AuDHD. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a comment or review letting us know your thoughts, and consider sharing it with someone else who you think might enjoy it. And if you're interested in more support from either Javelin or myself, you can find us both on Instagram. My handle is @Jesdiverges, and Javelin is

@javelinlaurence and @alchemydivergencecoaching. Check the show notes for more info on how to connect with us. Take care of yourselves, and we'll see you next time.

015: How To Avoid Burning Out While Recovering From AuDHD Burnout

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[Jes Diverges] 12:07:31

Hello, hello, everyone! Welcome to another episode of Unshaming AudiHD. It's been a while since Javelin and I have been able to get together and record a podcast, so I'm super, super excited.

[Jes Diverges] 12:07:45

to beer today.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:07:47

Yeah, I am also excited to be here today.

[Jes Diverges] 12:07:51

So, as we were chatting before, we landed on, for this episode, the topic of.

[Jes Diverges] 12:07:58

Basically, how to not burn yourself out.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:02

While you are trying to either heal from or prevent.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:06

burnout.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:12

Vicious, vicious cycle.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:08:12

Hmm?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:08:13

Yeah, the vicious cycle

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:08:14

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:16

And the reason it came up is because it's actually been something that a lot of my clients.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:22

I've been talking about lately, both in like groups and individual sessions.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:27

Of like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:30

They get so tired from trying to keep up with all these, like, strategies, practices, exercises, inevitably forgetting to do them, not doing them quote-unquote perfectly.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:41

And they wind up spending just as much energy, if not more.

[Jes Diverges] 12:08:47

on trying to, like, recover from burnout than burnout in the first place.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:08:52

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And in that sense, the strategies become not super useful, and they just like compound the problem.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:04

And so the cycle continues.

[Jes Diverges] 12:09:07

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:09

Yeah, and I felt like it was, uh, topical as well, because part of the reason that we haven't connected over the last couple of months to do a podcast is because somewhere around May, I noticed some of my own personal warning signs that I was heading into a more intense version of my... of burnout.

[Jes Diverges] 12:09:17

Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:27

And so, based off of those warning signs, I took some drastic actions in order to sort of.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:33

avoid my own tendency or capacity to get back into that sort of cyclical nature.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:41

where things compound on top of each other, where they sort of like build on top of each other.

[Jes Diverges] 12:09:45

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:47

Yeah, so.

[Jes Diverges] 12:09:49

Yeah, for sure.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:09:50

I think it's a very, very relevant topic, um, and I wondered, in terms of, like, a place to start, um, if maybe we should actually start with defining what we mean when we say burnout.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:10:01

Just like going back to the beginnings. You know me, I love my defining terms.

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:02

Oh...

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:06

Yes, and I love that about you.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:10:10

I just think it's really useful because burnout is a term that is used in a lot of different contexts, and I think we mean something more specific when we're talking in the context of humans who are autistic and/or ADHD.

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:20

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:10:25

So, yeah. So, okay, question. Jess, how do you define the kind of burnout that we're talking about today?

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:33

So when it comes to specifically AuDHD burnout.

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:39

It's less of just a general, like, having been, like, overworked, having had too much on your plate, kind of running out of energy, and needing to take, like, a week or two off, and being able to come back to it.

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:52

For Audi HDers.

[Jes Diverges] 12:10:55

The typical burnout we think of is more like workplace burnout, just a little more colloquial.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:10:59

Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:00

And then on...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:11:00

career kind of like, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:03

Yeah, like career burnout, whereas Audi HD burnout is.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:08

a much more...

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:09

all-encompassing, multi-layered, and intense experience than just being a little tired.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:16

It mostly comes from a.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:20

like a mismatch of expectation versus reality and capacity to meet said expectation.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:11:27

Yeah, thank you.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:11:28

mismatch of expectation and capacity. Nice.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:28

And...

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:31

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:33

And, like, trying to, like, not only keep up with the productivity standards that we have in our lovely world of late-stage capitalism.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:42
but also attempting to.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:45
get through a day either having to mask or not being able to unmask.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:11:50
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:51
and trying to live up to these, like, neurotypical standards that do not make sense for our
AuDHD brains whatsoever.

[Jes Diverges] 12:11:59
Um, trying to come home and decompress from everything, but not being able to because
you're so overstimulated that it's, like, to a point.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:12:07
Yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:12:07
And then it eventually, like, literally...

[Jes Diverges] 12:12:10
Like your that your wires in your brain literally get like burned out is kind of how I think of it. Like
you literally can't.

[Jes Diverges] 12:12:18
certain things anymore. Your capacity goes way, way down. A lot of folks will experience what's
called skill regression, where you can't... like, you literally can't do or can't remember how to do
things that you were able to do before.

[Jes Diverges] 12:12:33
Um, it can lead to, like, not only exhaustion, but, like, straight-up fatigue, just, like, always being
tired, either... and either sleeping constantly, not being able to sleep at all.

[Jes Diverges] 12:12:44
It's a very big thing, that.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:12:47
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:12:48

happens to us, and often gets, like, underestimated because of the colloquial definition of burnout. Like, people think, oh, you can just take a couple weeks off, just rest for a little bit, and you'll get back to it. But in reality, AuDHD burnout can take...

[Jes Diverges] 12:13:03

Like, unfortunately, embrace yourself for this fact. It's an oof for a lot of people, but it can take you from like 3 to 8 years.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:13:07

Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:13:11

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:13:13

To like fully get back to baseline after.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:13:16

I mean, in my experience with these autistic burnouts, because I've had a couple of them over the course of my life, even though I didn't necessarily have language to describe them.

[Jes Diverges] 12:13:24

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:13:26

For me, which isn't to say it is for everybody, for me, the more extreme burnout experiences that I've had, I'm not sure that I have not yet gotten back to whatever the baseline was previous to that, and I'm not sure that I ever will.

[Jes Diverges] 12:13:38

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:13:41

Now, this is complicated by the fact that I'm also older now than I was before then, and those processes, because you say they can take so many years, aging comes into play, and chronic illness comes into play, and the tendency for ADHD humans to have other.

[Jes Diverges] 12:13:41

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:13:57

circles of disability or, or, um, need overlapping on top of each other also come into play. So, uh, um, it's a, it's a really complex, like, tangle to tease out.

[Jes Diverges] 12:14:04
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:14:10
But I really appreciate you referencing skill regression, um, because I think not knowing about skill regression can feed into some of this, um, some of this compounding stuff that we're talking about.

[Jes Diverges] 12:14:22
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:14:22
Because in my experience, burnout is a mismatch of demand or expectation on a system.

[Jes Diverges] 12:14:31
Mmhm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:14:32
Um, so when the demand and the expectation exceeds by quite a bit, what, uh, what actual capacity for, for, uh, um, an autistic AuDHD human is, yeah?

[Jes Diverges] 12:14:43
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:14:44
And the reason I say that is because.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:14:48
It, for me, is not just about external expectations, it's also about internal expectations.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:14:53
So if I'm internally placing expectations on myself that are outside of my capacity, that will also feed into the thing, um, uh, and continue to perpetuate the burnout. Uh, um, so there's this, there's this, like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:14:54
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:07
unfortunate reality that sometimes the call is coming from inside the house.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:11
You know.

[Jes Diverges] 12:15:12
100%, 100%.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:15
And when I experienced skill regression, that loudened the call, because there was an internal narrative that I had going on with, I've been able to do this before, why can't I do it now? I, you know, this doesn't make any sense, I should just push through. And that, of course.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:29
was like diametrically opposed to what was needed in order to recover from the burnout.

[Jes Diverges] 12:15:35
Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:36
So that's a little off aside. So my definition of the term.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:42
of burnout when demands or expectations largely exceed the needs or the capacity of an autistic or an ADHD person.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:53
to an extreme.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:15:55
it is different than career burnout, uh, um, that any human can experience when there's a sense of, uh... but there's a sense of mismatched demands that can exist in, um, uh, career burnout as well. And I don't necessarily want to minimize the experience of career burnout for humans of any neurotype.

[Jes Diverges] 12:16:08
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:16:14
Because it can be really distressing, um, because it can feel a lot like depression, which is a terrible thing to experience. Uh, um, uh, so that's, like, a real invalid and difficult thing to go through.

[Jes Diverges] 12:16:16
Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:16:27
and.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:16:29
Autistic burnout. ADHD burnout.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:16:36
can be devastating in that it is more disabling for a person. Yeah, it's a disability experience in a lot of ways.

[Jes Diverges] 12:16:47
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:16:48
And a lot of the things or the recommendations for somebody who's experiencing depression will make burnout worse. And so when an external person is like, oh, you're staying in bed all day, you should get out, and you should, like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:16:57
Hmm...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:17:02
Go on a walk, or you need to do this, or you need to do that.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:17:05
that may or may not be the most useful thing if you're experiencing autistic burnout. So, there's also a piece in here about wanting to differentiate between autistic burnout and the experience of, like, depression, or anxiety, anxiety, depression, like, cycles, right? So, this conversation about what we're talking about gets really finicky, because.

[Jes Diverges] 12:17:08
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:17:24
an autistic person could experience all three of these things. An ADHD person could experience all three of these things. You could be burning out from your job, and autistically burning out, and be dealing with anxiety and depression, so it gets really messy really fast.

[Jes Diverges] 12:17:28
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:17:39
It does. Very, very messy.

[Jes Diverges] 12:17:41
It's interesting how even when you like the advice for healing from burnout, there can even be a mismatch of expectation.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:17:51
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:17:52
Like, what you just said about, like, well, if you're depressed, the advice is, like, go out in the world, re-experience life, da-da.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:17:58
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:17:58
That creates a mismatch of expectation, though, for autistic burnout, which even further pushes you into...

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:05
burnout, which I definitely experienced, I feel like, 'cause my biggest, like...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:18:06
Absolutely.

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:12
like, most noticeable burnout, I suppose, was...

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:16
It started in like 2020 during the pandemic.

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:20
When we all went into lockdown and, like, everything stopped.

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:23
that was when I first noticed, like, okay, I don't have much energy, I can't really seem to, like, organize or write or read as well as I used to, like...

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:34
what's going on here, and it was often blamed by certain people, who I won't name, um, on, like, agoraphobia, and just, like, overall anxiety.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:18:44
Yep.

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:45
And, like you mentioned before, too, I had also internalized all of these ideas myself, because, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:18:49

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:51

Capitalism doesn't just exist in a bubble. We do, unfortunately, internalize all of the bullshit, toxic ideas.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:18:57

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:18:57

that we are inundated from since birth.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:02

But I would put these expectations on myself of, like, okay, if I want to feel better, I need to get out more, I need to do this, I need to do that.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:09

And I wound up just getting into situations and, like, accepting certain jobs.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:15

That just even pushed me back further into.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:17

Yeah. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:18

Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:20

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:22

Which is why we wanted to talk about this today so that folks can be aware of.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:22

Yeah, makes sense.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:25

That's why we wanted to chat about this.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:29

These cycles that we can create, whether due to society or our own internalized beliefs.

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:35

and recognize them and hopefully, maybe not stop the cycle entirely, but at least slow it down a little bit.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:37

Yeah, thank you.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:42

Or interrupt it long enough to recognize what's going on. Because I'll often say, I've been asked a couple of times, what's the cure for burnout? What's the thing that will help a person avoid burnout altogether?

[Jes Diverges] 12:19:46

Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:58

I...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:19:59

With no shred of a joke, always responds, universal basic income.

[Jes Diverges] 12:20:03

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:05

And people always laugh.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:06

But I'm not joking. I'm, I'm, like, being my characteristically blunt, um, and political self when I say that, uh, um, because the, like, demands on our systems as humans.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:20

regardless of neurotype, are exceeding our capacities often.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:27

Uh, uh, and become exponentially so when you're in a system like capitalism, where the expectation is continuous growth, continuous increase in productivity, continuous, um, more than last year, more than last year, more than last year, more than the last quarter, or whatever, you know.

[Jes Diverges] 12:20:35

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:42
metric you're using. That is fundamentally unsustainable for any living thing.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:48
So as we live in a system that becomes increasingly hostile to living beings.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:20:55
this reality of burnout is going to become more and more a thing for humans in general.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:01
Um, so in that sense, AuDHD humans, autistic humans, are the canary in the coal mine. We've been burning out, uh, this way.

[Jes Diverges] 12:21:01
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:08
Under less.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:10
Or like a smaller...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:12
external perceived amount.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:15
is it actually smaller, or is it just because we've got more needs that we've been managing our entire lives, and because of the, you know, pressure to mask and all that kind of stuff? That's a whole other question. Um...

[Jes Diverges] 12:21:24
Hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:25
But I do think I do think that this is going to become a more and more.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:30
common experience.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:33
Um, in that sense. But, you started talking about your experience with it, Jess, and this was my next, kind of, like, question on my list was, um, uh, what have our experiences with burnout been?

[Jes Diverges] 12:21:34

Thank you.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:21:45

Um, you talked about one in specific, is that the only time that you've burned out? It sounded like you didn't, that you, like, you've experienced it a couple more times than that.

[Jes Diverges] 12:21:52

Well, it's actually interesting, because I've never really thought to go back and try and see other times.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:01

where I've experienced burnout, but I think prior to...

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:08

2020...

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:09

I was always the type of person who refused to admit or acknowledge any sort of struggle or difficulty on my part.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:22:19

Mm-hmm. Yep.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:19

So, when I go back and think of times where I might have been burned out, all I can remember is just...

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:26

Like, literally ignoring it.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:28

And just pushing and keeping going on like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:32

Autopilot?

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:36

So I guess, yeah, that would be my experience of burnout before. Like, it isn't always necessarily that you can't do things, but can sometimes also lead to like this, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:22:39

Sure.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:45
kind of autopilot mode.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:48
Where you just continue to go through the motions, do the things that you're supposed to do, and just kind of ignore the fact that when you get home from work.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:22:48
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:22:54
At the end of a shift, all you can do is sit there and smoke weed and watch N.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:22:58
Yeah, yeah, we've got nothing left.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:02
Yeah, absolutely. I think that also the tendency of this to build up over time.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:08
100%.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:10
So as much as it might be tempting to want to isolate.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:16
individual experiences of burnout and say that they're unconnected from other ones. In all likelihood, those experiences where you're pushing through then led to the more catastrophic or intense one that showed up.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:24
Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:27
when during the lockdowns, you know.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:30
Oh, definitely.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:32
Yeah, it's cumulative.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:34

Yeah. Yeah. And it's not necessarily a definitive and, like, linear thing that happens either. Like, it is 100% just, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:36
In a lot of ways.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:41
A build up, a build up, a build up. And like some folks can last.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:46
A lot longer than other folks.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:23:48
Sure.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:48
with this buildup. Like, I've met folks who experienced this type of burnout in their, like, early 20s.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:54
My first big one was, oh, how old was I in 2020? Oh, God, math.

[Jes Diverges] 12:23:59
28? Yes, I did it.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:01
28 or so folks who've made it to like 45 and all of a sudden been like, wait, I can't work, I can't take care of my kids, I can't do anything.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:03
Sure, yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:06
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:08
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:09
Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:10
Anymore. Like, it's different for...

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:12
Everyone.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:14
Yeah, different thresholds for different people.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:17
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:17
Absolutely.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:19
which...

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:20
Speaking of different for different people.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:22
I'm going to throw the question.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:23
What's my experience been like?

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:24
Back to you. Yes, absolutely.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:26
Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:29
Um, I have spent some time sort of reflecting back, um, on my various experiences, because for, um, much of my life before I figured out.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:32
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:38
I am autistic. I had other explanations for a pattern that I developed in my life of doing a big push on something and then crashing.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:24:50
which I think is a pretty human experience as well. I work a lot as an actor, and so had been sort of.

[Jes Diverges] 12:24:53

Mmhm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:25:00

acclimated to a pattern of work where one does a big show and then one, you know, has sort of a post-show slump or sickness or something along those lines. And that's just sort of like a standard experience often in the theater.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:25:15

But if I... if I look at that pattern and say, okay, when did that start?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:25:21

You have to recognize that in...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:25:25

Somewhere in late elementary school going into junior high.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:25:30

Right around the time that the social expectations and school contexts started to exceed my capacity. And so I experienced things like bullying and like really not understanding social expectations of, you know, junior high humans. And so that was incredibly distressing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:25:43

Mmhm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:25:48

And confusing. Um, uh, I started developing this pattern, or this tendency, to every couple of months, every, yeah, every couple of months or so, usually around the time of, like, finishing a big expectation or doing a thing of some kind, I would get.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:04

Um, a pretty intense upper respiratory, um, infection. Um, always started as a cold and I would hope that it would turn into something deeper. I would physically not feel super sick, but I had a really deep, nasty sounding cough. And so that seemed like a good enough reason to stay home from school.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:21

for usually a week or two.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:24

And that during that period of time, I got rest from social expectations, because the rest of my family was also out of house doing their very sensory things.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:35

Um, uh, and...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:37

who's to say, maybe the burnout made my immune system weaker, and so I caught something, or maybe I was hoping for it, and...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:46

Playing it up a little bit. I don't know if that's true necessarily. A lot of times though, it was just the cough was the only thing that was keeping me back from school.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:26:54

Um, and that was such a relief to my system. I really enjoyed those periods of time, even though I was sick. I really enjoyed and needed.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:03

that period of time without the expectation of school. So that pattern.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:08

It persisted for a little while, and then somewhere in university, that, that, like, deep chest cough no longer became a good enough reason to not, um, meet expectations or go to school or, um, you know, attend classes or, like, work your job or whatever it happens to be.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:26

And so...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:27

I started noticing other things, like signs or things, and I would continue to have this sort of sense of, like, push and, like, do some really cool stuff for, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:37

6, 8.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:39

12 months, and then have a period of time crash, where I need to just, like, hide and phone it in as much as possible, um, uh, and, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:49

go dark, as it were.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:27:53

My first couple of experiences, or my first experiences of, like, this is burnout, also looked like mental health crises for me. One was in university, and I see, I look at the pattern there, and I go, ah, yes, this is when I took on extra expectations on top of school.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:28:11

Um, I discovered throughout the course of my university degree that I couldn't really manage a full-time caseload, or course load, uh, uh, and so tended to take courses in the summer in order to, like, alleviate that. I didn't have any kind of, like, letters or diagnoses, so I couldn't get official accommodations in that sense.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:28:29

Um, and I didn't think I needed them. I thought I was just being lazy, or disorganized, or not staying on top of stuff well enough. Um, and so surely this is all caused by the fact that I'm writing my essays the night before, or something along those lines, you know.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:28:42

All the kinds of narratives that we tend to have as ADHD humans.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:28:48

that internal battle between wanting to be hyper-organized and on top of things, and also the feeling of, like, these notes are confusing, and I lost that paper over there, and I was gonna do that... that way of keeping track of my calendar, but then I got bored, and so I stopped, you know.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:05

All that kind of stuff.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:07

My most extreme burnout experiences, though, and the one that was, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:12

biggest started when I moved to Toronto to be an actor.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:15

and I did not realize.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:17

that I had sensory needs that were directly opposed to living in the biggest city in Canada.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:27

Um, and so I spent about a year and a half there, and by the end of it, I was like a, a shaking, shriveled.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:33

shell of myself. I describe it often, um, in writing from that time as feeling like I'm coming apart, it seems.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:40

That's the sort of metaphor experience of mine. Um, I was experiencing some, like, chronic illness things that I didn't understand what was happening. I thought they were panic attacks, they were not panic attacks, or maybe...

[Jes Diverges] 12:29:43

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:29:51

They were related to them. I had lost a ton of weight because I couldn't eat food, and not because I didn't want to, but because, like, nothing was like, I just nothing was interesting anymore. My sensory aversion to food was so extreme that I was eating mostly crackers and, like, canned peaches.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:30:08

Can't survive on that! Um, completely fell apart, um, and ended up, uh, booking a ticket back home, moving into my dad's house, um, living in one of his spare bedrooms, and basically hiding for 6 months.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:30:22

And then very slowly sort of adding things back in.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:30:27

Uh, rebuilding a little bit of that capacity and starting to do things again until some new, like, life shifts happened. They weren't exactly pandemic related because I actually really enjoyed the lockdowns. It was one of the first times in my life that I was able to, like, not be expected to leave the house.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:30:43

but also wasn't having a mental health crisis at the time.

[Jes Diverges] 12:30:46

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:30:46

Um, so that's nice. It wasn't until things started reopening, and the expectation to go back out into the world came up, that I experienced the next round of burnout, which was even more catastrophic. Um, uh, and uh...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:31:02

ultimately led to a couple of different, like, chronic illness diagnoses, and ultimately figuring out that I was autistic.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:31:09

Because I didn't recover from that one until I started finding strategies that actually worked for me, which by and large, I'm sure we'll talk about. Spoilers for the future. Yeah. So to me, I see a pattern. I see that these mini burnouts, that was like a standard pattern of mine.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:31:26

And then they became more and more catastrophic. The bigger the expectations were, the more were on my plate. You know, when I left Toronto, I quit multiple jobs and just like stuffed some things into a suitcase.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:31:43

and left my apartment as it was, and continued paying rent for most of the six months that I was in Calgary hiding, because I wasn't sure if I was going to go back to Toronto or not. Because it seemed like it was just a pause, or like it ought to be just a pause in my life, but...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:31:59

It had actually fundamentally changed things, so.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:02

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:03

Yeah, so I became... I actually became an AuDHD coach. I actually got into this secondary career out of an effort to find something in my life that would not cause me to do that again.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:15

because they got more catastrophic the more times it happened, and I... and I don't relish the idea of having another catastrophic burnout. Um...

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:16

Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:28

It would be devastating, I'm sure.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:29

You know.

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:31

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:32

I completely hear that.

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:35

And that is actually a big part of the reason why I also decided to become an AuDHD coach.
And...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:35
Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:41
be able to have a little bit more control, a lot more control, over my schedule, my expectations, my demands. I do have to have a lot of...

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:52
very deep and sometimes long, heated conversations with CEO Jess.

[Jes Diverges] 12:32:59
Because...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:32:59
Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:00
like, those internalized beliefs are still there, they still pop up a lot, but...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:33:05
Of course.

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:06
Um, because I... when I finally realized, like, when I found the word burnout, specifically autistic burnout, and also realized that I was ADHD and autistic, like, that all happened around the same time.

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:19
That also happened to be my first semester of getting a master's in social work.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:33:26
Mm, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:26
And I was literally in grad school trying to keep up with all these assignments.

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:32
And watching all of these, like, mismatches between, like, what we talk about in class, and what we do in the assignments, and, like, not actually diving into.

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:40

like, the depth that I kind of expected from grad school. Meanwhile, trying to keep up with all these assignments, recognizing...

[Jes Diverges] 12:33:46

how difficult it was for me to focus on things. Like it wasn't because I was just lazy all those times or didn't work hard enough that I tended to put things off until the last minute. Like, no, that's just how my brain works and does things. And I eventually like looked around and I was like, you know what?

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:04

if I continue down this path, I'm gonna completely burn myself out, and it's gonna be totally not good.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:13

It's just going to keep compounding and it's not worth it. And I would rather.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:18

Drop out and open a coaching business.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:34:19

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:34:21

Yeah, absolutely.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:21

Like, which is colloquially one of the more.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:27

What word do I want to say?

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:30

unique and bold decisions one can make is to start a life coaching business on the Internet.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:38

But it has been so immensely helpful, and maybe this is the direction we could go in next, like, for me to...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:34:38

Amazing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:47

Be able to maintain the control over my life to actually be able to prevent.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:34:49
Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:52
Burnout again or at least a large burnout like I've definitely still had many.

[Jes Diverges] 12:34:57
Burnouts, for sure.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:34:57
Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:00
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:01
I actually... I... so I... I have a graphic saved somewhere on...

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:01
But...

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:05
Oh, yeah, yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:07
some device. Oh, shit, I was supposed to find it, wasn't I? Here, let me see if I can find it right now. Um, I... this is a graphic that I found on Pinterest before AI slop became a thing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:11
Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:19
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:20
Um, uh, which is an... it's a key piece of information, because, um, Pinterest is no longer my go-to for finding, like, useful graphics or descriptions of things, because, um, a lot of it is...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:31
Sort of AI sloppy in a way that isn't useful or doesn't say anything specific.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:37
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:38
specific enough to be useful.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:41
Here we go. Okay, let me make this bigger.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:42
We can't have any good things anymore.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:44
No, exactly. The Internet is dying, which is too bad because I remember when it was born.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:50
You know, used to be really cool and good.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:53
Okay, so I'm not sure if I'm mirrored or not. Am I mirrored? Is it.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:54
Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:55
Um, you are not.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:35:57
Fantastic. Okay. Um, so this is a scale, um, uh, all for the dopamine, um, made it, um, of, uh, sort of intensities of burnout.

[Jes Diverges] 12:35:57
Yeah, that's good.

[Jes Diverges] 12:36:03
Let me...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:36:11
Um, going from, like, less intense to more intense along the way. Um, I don't necessarily, um, experience all of these things exactly this way. So, like, for example, um, uh, their middle space, um.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:36:27
uh, kind of more into the blue area is to say, um, can't mask, um, having panic attacks, um, or hard to leave bed. Those things tend to happen a little bit earlier in the process for me.

[Jes Diverges] 12:36:37

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:36:38

Um, but, uh, uh, things like hard to eat are definitely far down there. And dread leaving the house is like, I would reorganize this for my own, for my own like process. But I like it because it indicates this sense that burnout isn't necessarily a destination so much as it is.

[Jes Diverges] 12:36:49

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:36:56

a cycle, or a, like, a spectrum, yes, of a, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:04

a dynamic thing.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:06

Um, that exists in stages, um, and gets more intense in one direction. Um, because that's a reminder to me that if I start to experience some of my burnout signals, it's not because I have failed.

[Jes Diverges] 12:37:07

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:17

Or because I am now permanently trapped in this, like, cycle towards going to a more intense place, those are signals to me to make changes to the way that I've got things set up, you know? So, like, in May, when we stopped doing podcasting things for a second.

[Jes Diverges] 12:37:18

Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:34

I was starting to see some of my signals that indicated to me I was heading in an unsustainable direction, so I needed to change things, uh, until those signals stopped showing up quite as much.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:45

Yeah, okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:37:46

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:37:46

For sure.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:47

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:37:48

Can you give maybe some examples of those signals and like...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:54

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:37:55

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:37:55

Like what you did to change things?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:00

Mm-hmm. So really good.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:02

first, st like first signal like this is. This is like a little.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:07

Yellow flag, we're not in terrible territory just yet, but we're heading there, is losing interest in cooking.

[Jes Diverges] 12:38:16

Hmm...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:19

If I am, like, when I think about preparing dinner, I'm feeling overwhelmed, and like, I don't know what to do, and I don't know what to eat, and I don't... I don't care, and I can't, and I should probably just order something. That's the beginning of... that's, like, the earliest warning signal. If I notice that, I go, okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:35

Doesn't mean I necessarily have to change stuff, because sometimes, uh, you've got to keep doing the stuff, um, because unfortunately we have to, like, earn livings and that kind of thing. Um, but if I'm starting to feel overwhelmed by, or, uh, um...

[Jes Diverges] 12:38:41

Mm-hmm.

[Jes Diverges] 12:38:46
Of course.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:50
uh, like, resistant to cooking, then I know that I'm headed in a direction.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:38:55
Now, this is important. Cooking and baking and those sorts of things in the kitchen are one of the places where I sort of express my autisticness. I really enjoy, you know, approaching things quite scientifically and, like, tweaking and fiddling and that sort of thing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:39:03
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:39:08
other autistic humans may have a disinterest in or a difficulty with cooking and preparing food for themselves as sort of just the baseline. That's standard experience. So by no means should other humans who are autistic say, oh, well, if I'm struggling to cook.

[Jes Diverges] 12:39:18
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:39:25
Then that must mean I'm headed into burnout. You might just struggle to cook, and that's a-okay. That can be a really standard, ordinary part of an autistic experience. For me, for my system, if I'm struggling to be inspired by or interested in food, I know that.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:39:41
I'm headed in a not great direction because my baseline is what I'm comparing against, not other people's baseline. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:39:49
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:39:49
There, that's my caveat. So at that point, I know to start paying more attention.

[Jes Diverges] 12:39:50
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:39:56
Um, to the demands on my system.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:39:59

And possibly to start lowering those demands slightly on a day-to-day basis in order to facilitate continuing to feed myself well.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:40:09

So sometimes that might look like ordering food in more often, which is not financially the most sustainable thing, but I firmly believe that fed is best.

[Jes Diverges] 12:40:21

Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:40:21

Um, uh, and so if the difference is, are you going to eat or not? Um, and the difference is whether you order the food in or not? Order the fucking food in. Because fed is best.

[Jes Diverges] 12:40:31

Amen to that.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:40:32

So that's my feeling. It applies to adult humans as much as it does apply to babies, because I think that comes from the infant debates that go on about whether you should breastfeed or formula feed a baby.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:40:47

And the rule is, fed is best.

[Jes Diverges] 12:40:48

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:40:50

So it's better to feed a baby something than it is to get caught in the weeds about whether formula or breast milk is best.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:40:57

Yeah. Anyway. Okay. There's my side.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:41:01

More serious things that I would determine as, like, being orange flags or red flags for me start heading the direction of, like, um, uh... uh...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:41:13

meltdowns, and my mental meltdowns tend to be a little bit more internal. They sort of feel like... they feel kind of like panic attacks. Sometimes they might be, but, um, but sometimes there isn't as much anxiety involved as much as it is just this sort of, like, sinking nauseous feeling. So there's some internal, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:41:28

cues that I get for a meltdown. If those are starting to happen, um, I, uh...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:41:36

more than once in a short period of time, so, like, if I've got more than one of those in a month.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:41:42

then that is an indication to me that my capacity is... is at. I'm at my capacity, and maybe even a little bit over it, um, uh, because those don't happen, um, super commonly for me.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:41:55

It's become even less common as some of my hormones have changed as well because that was something that was an easy way to trigger a meltdown for me. So those to me, if those are starting to happen, you know, a couple, if I've got two in a week or two or three over the course of a month.

[Jes Diverges] 12:42:00

Hmm. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:42:04

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:42:13

Uh, um, uh, then I, again, need to start paying close attention, and at that point, I'm gonna start renegeing, or, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:42:20

Counseling on any non-essential work or social activity.

[Jes Diverges] 12:42:21

Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:42:25

So that looks like me suddenly dropping off the map and not scheduling podcast conversations. Mostly my work capacity narrows right into what have I already committed to and what am I currently getting paid for?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:42:40

And if I were not to do these things, would I not get paid anymore? So I get really laser focused on what actually I need to do.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:42:50

Um, uh, and I start heading towards, um, my primary strategy of preventing and, um, working around my burnout, which is no expectation days.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:42:59

And these are days... yeah, so, okay, so, story time. When I was in the midst of my most intense burnout, uh, um...

[Jes Diverges] 12:43:00

Oh, yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:43:08

I don't remember what I, where I came across it. It might've been like a Reddit thread or something like that, but somebody was talking about not placing expectations on your, on your autistic neurotype. And so I turned that into an experiment where some days I would just say the rule today is that there are no expectations internally or externally.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:43:28

So that means I get rid of or I move away from anything that's going to place demands on me, silence my phone, put away devices that I can be contacted on, stick to devices that.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:43:40

don't have access to the internet, um, uh, or, like, stop scrolling, that kind of stuff. Anything that's gonna place a demand on my system externally, I set those things aside. I am uncontactable.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:43:52

Internal expectations are also not allowed, so if I start noticing myself saying things like, Javelin, you should do this, or you should probably do this, nope, that breaks the rule. No shoulds. We're not allowed. You can do stuff, but you cannot have to do stuff.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:07

Yeah?

[Jes Diverges] 12:44:09

Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:10

That rule for me was a lifesaver, and those no expectation days are what started me down the path of being able to recover from the more intense things. When I was in really intense burnout, I needed those regularly.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:23

Like I would say every three to four days I was having a no expectations day because I just could not, could not.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:31

Now, in my current state, I would say one a month or one every two months.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:37

And they're a little bit looser. The edges aren't quite so...

[Jes Diverges] 12:44:41

Mmhm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:41

defined. So it could be a no expectations day in the sense that I'm not expected to do anything, but I may still want to.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:49

cook an elaborate meal, or go out somewhere, or, you know, run that errand.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:55

The point is that you don't have to.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:44:58

Because the expectation, again, for my system, was the most draining thing. Sitting there and going, I've got to do this, and I've got to figure out how to do this, and I've got to think about all the steps that are involved in doing this thing, and I probably have to put clothes on, and I probably need to shower, and, like, that kind of shit.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:15

That was...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:16

Those are expectations. So we ease off on those.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:19

Yeah, okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:45:20

Mmhm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:23

There's one other primary strategy that I also used, and I call it task tiering, but I feel like I've been talking a little bit too much, so I want you to tell me about some of your signals and things that you do.

[Jes Diverges] 12:45:36

I would love to. I do first want to say I love No Expedition Days.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:37
Great.

[Jes Diverges] 12:45:41
They're my favorite day.

[Jes Diverges] 12:45:42
And I try and do those like literally every weekend.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:47
Nice. Excellent. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:45:48
There's a big part of.

[Jes Diverges] 12:45:50
my burnout management strategy now is, like, prevention at all costs. Like, if I can give my day... myself a day where I'm doing nothing, I'm going to, because, like, that prevention...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:45:55
Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:00
Like my wife is a master of public health and so they'll be proud to hear me say on podcast that like, exactly.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:46:06
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:09
Exactly. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and that's so true.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:46:16
Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:16
But...

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:17
Aside from that, my signs of burnout are...

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:23
A little bit similar to yours, like a disinterest in something that is normally interesting.

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:29

And I also want to second your caveat, too, that, like, any of these examples, like, just because you don't experience this same exact thing, it does not mean you're not also experiencing burnout. It is different for literally everyone. The reason why I try to provide examples is so that you can kind of see it in someone else and say, like, okay, well, I don't do exactly that, but for me, it could look like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:46:49

this. Like, really get curious about what these things could look like for you, rather than trying to adhere to, like, oh, well, Jess and Jeff said that, like, XYZ things are the signs of burnout, and I'm not doing those. Like, please, please don't do that with this. Please.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:46:53

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:47:01

Yes, very important. I read a book about an autistic person once at the very beginning of my journey into figuring out that I was autistic and because I didn't perfectly match.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:13

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:47:13

her experiences, I went, I must not be autistic. No, that was a very autistic thing for me to think.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:16

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:19

It was. You're even more autistic for that, actually.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:47:22

Yeah, points.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:25

Autism points, yay! Um, but yeah, so my signs of burnout, I don't quite have them as nicely categorized as...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:47:26

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:34

You do, in like the yellow, orange, red. But that could be an interesting thing for me to start, like getting curious of over the next.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:47:42
Sure.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:43
time as it potentially happens again.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:47:46
Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:47
But I think one for me is, like, a... like, if I can't have fun scrolling on TikTok.

[Jes Diverges] 12:47:54
like, if I'm just, like, watching videos and, like, nothing is, like, grabbing my interest, I'm just, like, sitting there not even watching one, I'm like, hmm, this isn't...

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:03
Abnormally high amount of apathy because I usually.

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:06
I'm such a ho for TikTok. I love it there.

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:10
But if I'm noticing, like, that I can't really get into watching TikToks or, like, whatever video game I happen to be playing, if I'm kind of like, oh, I guess I'll play this morning, but I'm not super into it, like, it's a general apathy, I'm like, hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:48:11
Amazing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:25
I wonder if I maybe have too much on my plate, or I look back and I'm like, what's been going on?

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:30
sometimes I know exactly what's been going on. Like, I think my most recent mini-burnout happened...

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:38
Um, in... it was in March, because that was when I...

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:42

Lost my job at the bakery, and also subsequently lost my best friend, who also worked at the bakery, and it was a whole...

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:50

Big, very intense, very.

[Jes Diverges] 12:48:54

sadness-inducing, anger-inducing thing that happened, and I knew at the time, like, okay, for the next couple of months, I'm gonna be...

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:02

Down for the count a little bit. Which actually was fine that your burnout happened to be timed at the same time because I wasn't feeling super up to doing many things either. How convenient. Which is why I love having Audi HD friends is because nine times out of ten.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:49:02

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:49:10

How convenient.

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:16

If we have to cancel something or we're late, we're like, oh, thank God, because I also want to.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:49:23

Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:23

I hope so. I'll do it later.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:49:25

Yes, dancing my way back to my bed where I will get under my weighted blanket and not move very happily.

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:31

Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:32

like, oh, no, we have to cancel our plans. Now I have to go back to bed.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:49:39

Yeah, exactly.

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:42

But, yeah, like, a general apathy towards things that usually capture my interest.

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:46

And then...

[Jes Diverges] 12:49:49

kind of contradictory to that, although not really, because our entire experience as AuDHDers is always contradictory. But I'll also be very, very quick to anger.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:49:55

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:50:00

Hmm. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:00

like really irritable and I'll notice myself like especially in.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:50:03

Yeah, okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:06

The mornings?

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:08

I am a different person when I wake up. Like, I'm the sort of person who, like...

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:14

Like, when I wake up, my brain is immediately going, like, thoughts are fine and working, but, like, the rest of my body has a loading time.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:23

And so.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:50:24

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:25

Um, I've always been this way, and my wife knows this now, that, like, you can't actually talk to me for about 30 to 45 minutes. Um, when I wake up, because I'm generally, like, I'm not into talking.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:39

During that time and if you do like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:41

It's going to be something very short and blunt.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:50:45

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:46

And I'll notice that, like, in the mornings, like, not only am I just, like, tired feeling and not really wanting to interact, but I'll get, like, mad.

[Jes Diverges] 12:50:53

about things. And I'll say, hmm, well, this is interesting, too. And it's, like, not just, like, a little bit mad, like, I will, like, turn red.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:50:54

Hmm. Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:50:57

Yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:02

at something like.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:04

so small. And I'll say, hey, Jess, are you okay? I noticed that you're kidding.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:08

Seems like you're having some big feelings.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:10

very frustrated about things that you don't usually get frustrated at. And it's okay that you're being frustrated, but what's going on? How's our energy? How's our capacity?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:15

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:22

It's another thing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:24

I think probably, yeah, the disinterest in eating.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:28

as well. I'm not only making food, but eating it. It's just like nothing sounds good.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:28

Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:33

And I will also tend to fall asleep very, very early.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:39

Okay. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:39

Like, 6 PM early.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:41

Sure, sure, absolutely.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:43

Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:45

Um, the meltdowns for me don't happen super often anymore.

[Jes Diverges] 12:51:52

Um, but that could definitely be another sign of just generally being, like, over capacity, especially since they don't happen as often.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:54

Sure.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:57

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:51:59

Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:02

And then some of the things I do.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:04

when I'm noticing this, or expecting it to come up.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:10

is pretty much the same thing you do. Like, I look at everything I have on my plate, and I... ooh, knocked my microphone over. Um...

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:20

I go into, like, I call it bare minimum mode.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:52:23

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:24

Of like literally what's the absolute bare minimum I need to do.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:52:24

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:28

to eat at least one time a day, ideally more, but at least once.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:52:34

Yep.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:35

Get sleep and make sure that my bills are paid.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:52:39

Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:39

And it's looking at, like...

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:42

commitments that I have, things I've signed up for, seeing when I can either move or adjust.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:48

And then literally giving myself permission to go like flying.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:54

full potato mode.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:52:55

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

[Jes Diverges] 12:52:56

Which is just like, I'm literally a potato, I'm on the couch.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:00

playing video games, doing nothing, as much nothing as I literally possibly can.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:02

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:07

Until...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:07

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:08

I get bored of doing nothing.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:10

You know, it's wild.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:10

Which is not my sign. Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:12

Yeah, so you get... when you get bored of being... of doing nothing, that's a sign that you're starting to...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:18

come out of it. Is that what you're about to say? Sorry I interrupted you.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:20

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:22

No, no, you're good. You're good. Please.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:22

Oh, yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:24

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:25

But yeah, I'll start to notice, which I think is why, like, I always put a lot of emphasis on, like, radical acceptance.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:33

in my coaching, because when you can truly accept, like, okay, I'm burned out right now, I don't have capacity, I can't do extra things.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:53:34

Yep.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:39

I'm going to just give my body and myself the time and space.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:44

To heal from this.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:46

You are actually able to then get the recovery, the rejuvenation.

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:52

From, like...

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:54

Doing the resting, whereas if you're resting and, like, trying to...

[Jes Diverges] 12:53:57

be like, oh, I wish this wasn't happening right now, or how long is this gonna take, or what can I do to get myself out of it?

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:04

It's just, like, elongating the burnout.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:54:05

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:54:07

Well, and because those in and of themselves can be internal expectations. I have to rest now in order to recover because I have to do things. That's, that's an expectation placed on, on, that's pressure and, and, you know, those sorts of things, right? So the, that expect, that no expectations for me.

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:11

Right.

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:18

Right.

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:20
Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:54:23
is part of that radical acceptance. We are where we are, and we will be here as long as we have to be here.

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:28
Yeah, exactly.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:54:30
That, I find, often goes hand in hand with the reality that there are some things that you just have to keep doing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:36
Well, right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:54:36
But, you know, that you that not doing them for long enough is going to result in consequences that that are potentially going to make this even worse, that kind of stuff. So that's where when you're saying make it the bare minimum, I'll also turn down the difficulty on some of these tasks.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:54:52
As much as I possibly can. And that's what I call this task tiering idea. It's where if you think of a little staircase with multiple steps and the the top step is the like ideal way of doing the task done to the best of your ability and in a way that feels like it's like, this is perfect.

[Jes Diverges] 12:54:53
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:55:08
Hmm... I don't know.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:55:09
And then you step back, making it easier and easier and easier until you're on the ground floor, which is the bare minimum.

[Jes Diverges] 12:55:16
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:55:16

of the task, you know? Um, because for my... one of my issues, which is, I think, a really common autistic issue, was to think of things as all or nothing in terms of completion of a task. So I either had to do it perfectly or not at all.

[Jes Diverges] 12:55:26

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:55:30

This got me into a lot of trouble in work contexts where I either had to be 100% my like customer service capacity, the best employee there, or I couldn't show up at all kind of thing, which got really messy real fast.

[Jes Diverges] 12:55:43

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:55:47

I also find that that's the case when I'm, like, in the more extreme ends of burnout. I'll start to struggle with things like hygiene and taking care of my body, struggle with things like eating, foundational stuff there. I will struggle to speak when I am burnt out enough.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:56:03

Communication becomes really difficult. Texting, making facial expressions, that's a sign that I'm in a really bad place. If a facial expression feels like demand, I'm like, okay, this is a five alarm fire now.

[Jes Diverges] 12:56:04

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:56:18

But at that point, those become things that I still need to do in order to live and survive, right? So there's still some need to do those things. I often end up needing support to do those things. I have a very supportive partner, which is wonderful. I have in the past had support from family members as well.

[Jes Diverges] 12:56:23

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:56:36

Um, uh, when I was that really intense burnout, moved into my dad's place, um, his partner cooked most of the meals, um, and I was getting... so I was eating really good food, uh, um, and at the time, it was also gluten-free food. I didn't realize that was a thing I needed to be doing, but that must have probably helped with my...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:56:54

Recovery?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:56:56

That's a whole other thing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:56:58

Oof.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:56:59

So you turn down the volume on all of those kinds of things. So what that looked like physically for me was that if I desperately needed a shower, but I could not shower.

[Jes Diverges] 12:57:07

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:57:08

then I would have a sink shower. And it's not ideal, and it's not the best, but it's something. That was a warm cloth under water and sink, and clean the hot spots, like, get to the stuff.

[Jes Diverges] 12:57:11

Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:57:21

My...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:57:23

body has a tendency or can be, um, prone to cavities, and that gets really expensive real fast. Um, and I didn't want the all-or-nothing thinking to get me into a pattern of not... well, it did a couple of times where I wasn't doing any of my tooth care at night because I couldn't.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:57:40

I couldn't.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:57:41

So turning the volume all the way down on the difficulty of tooth care looked like having my toothpaste and my toothbrush on my bedside table with a garbage can next to it, so I could just dry brush my teeth.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:57:53

With a little bit of toothpaste, sometimes no toothpaste because sometimes the mint was too much sensing and just spit into the garbage can.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:58:02

That is better than nothing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:02

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:58:04

And so that became the floor. Instead of not doing anything being the floor, the floor was just kind of, like, scrub my tooth a little bit with a teeth brush while in bed with my eye mask on and, like, listening to a Bob's Burgers episode, so I was trying to hold myself together, you know?

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:19

Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:58:20

It's something, it's still something. And that is a victory worth celebrating, instead of being like, beating myself up for not doing my whole, you know, dental care routine or whatever. It was a, hey, you did something.

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:21

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:34

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:58:34

No expectation for it to be more than that, you know? So that task tiering became really important, and I did it across a number of different skills or things that I was really struggling with, so that I was still doing something.

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:46

Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:58:46

Um, uh, and that helped to alleviate the sense of, uh, you know, I'm falling apart a bit.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:58:52

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:53

Yeah, 100%.

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:56

And...

[Jes Diverges] 12:58:57

I appreciate this clarification because like when I say do nothing, I didn't mean like literally do nothing. But it's this, it's like finding like, okay, what are the things that I have to do?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:59:04
Sure, yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:10
And how can I make that literally as fucking easy as possible?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:59:16
Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:16
Whether it's like just keeping a toothbrush next to your bed and running it over your teeth, spinning in the trash can. Love that idea.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:26
Um, I keep, like, baby wipes in my bathroom for the days that I don't particularly feel like taking a shower.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:59:33
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:34
or dry shampoo, or just like something to like, not make yourself.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:38
Do the whole thing.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:40
but just, like... like, I'm always bringing up the 1% rule, like, how can I do 1% of this?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:59:45
Yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:46
So that I can at least say.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:49
Like, okay, I did a tiny amount.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:51
And then give yourself that sense of like, okay, I did something that way you can.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:59:51
Yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 12:59:54
Keep going and make those voices a little bit quieter that are telling you that you need to be doing more.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 12:59:58
Yeah, absolutely.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:00
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:02
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:04
I want to acknowledge that neither of us have children.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:10
Um, so when we're talking about these kinds of things around burnout, the reality is, is that the humans that rely on us are either other adults.

[Jes Diverges] 13:00:10
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:19
or they're not human at all. They're cats.

[Jes Diverges] 13:00:22
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:23
Um, and... and while there are things that you still need to do in order to take care of a cat, they're relatively low maintenance, even in comparison to a dog.

[Jes Diverges] 13:00:29
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:31
And certainly peanuts in comparison to raising a little human.

[Jes Diverges] 13:00:36
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:36
Um, so there's recognition here that, that, uh.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:41
Parenting in particular.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:44
caring for another human, or caregiving of any kind. It may not be for little humans, it could be for elderly humans, it could be for other humans who have higher support needs than you do, or experience other disabilities.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:00:58
Those things also place demands, and some of those demands are non-negotiable.

[Jes Diverges] 13:01:03
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:01:04
You know, because other humans are depending on them for their survival. So this capacity to turn down the volume.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:01:12
may be limited by some of the places that you can't turn down the volume, or you need to be specific about it. There are some ways that you can turn it down, and there's other ways that you can't, you know?

[Jes Diverges] 13:01:23
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:01:23
You're hanging out with your kids, and you're wearing your loops, so that when they're screaming and having a lovely time, or a terrible time, it's not getting onto your sensory nerves as much as it would be, because you can't necessarily abandon them and their big feelings.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:01:35
Because you're their caregiver, right? So, like, it becomes really personal really quickly. And the questions of the demands that exist around you and how to turn the volume down on those in ways that don't compromise their responsibility becomes really, really personal.

[Jes Diverges] 13:01:38
Right.

[Jes Diverges] 13:01:42

Right.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:01:52

And honestly, is 90% of what I do with coaching clients.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:01:56

is sitting there going, what are your needs? How do we meet them?

[Jes Diverges] 13:01:57

Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:02:00

How do we meet them while you still meet the needs of the humans around you that you're responsible for? And what are the needs of the humans around you that you're not responsible for that you're taking on when you don't need to?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:02:11

That's like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:02:12

That's 90% of the work.

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:16

It is, it really is. Like, and it's, it's so important too, because it like, like we've been saying over and over again this whole episode, it looks totally different for everyone. Some people are able to change certain things, some people are not based on whatever reason, but my heart goes out so much to.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:02:30

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:33

neurodivergent parents of neurodivergent children for this reason, or any sort of, like, neurodivergent caregiver.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:02:37

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:40

Period. Like, it's tough to find the balance, especially when you're dealing with...

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:47

like, internal and external ideas of, like, what it means to be a caregiver or a parent, or even just a human being.

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:55

And...

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:55

I'm also a firm believer that it is possible for everyone to find a way.

[Jes Diverges] 13:02:59

to make their life and their needs work.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:03

for them. Sometimes you just need someone to give you.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:03

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:04

Or at the very least.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:06

Like, take a little bit of the pressure off. Like, I think that it can be better.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:09

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:11

Yeah, they can't be.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:11

You know, I don't know that it'll ever be perfect, but I do think that it can be better.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:15

Even if, like, all you can do is quiet the voice that's telling you you're wrong, or bad, or difficult, or a monster, or whatever, for having the needs or the emotions that you do have.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:24

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:27

Like that can make a huge difference as well.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:29

Yeah. Absolutely.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:31
Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:32
It's not easy.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:34
It's not easy figuring these sorts of things out. And sometimes the relearning looks like actually figuring out what those needs are. Because like, okay, I'm going to use a big term here.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:42
There.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:46
Hermetic justice?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:03:47
Have you heard of this? I know. Fancy! Okay, hermeneutic justice. Um, I'm... I am gonna fail to remember the human who coined it, um, but they were in the sort of, um...

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:49
Ooh, I have not.

[Jes Diverges] 13:03:51
Fancy, fancy.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:01
They were certainly working with a marginalized group. I want to say that it was disabled.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:07
disability justice, but it might have also been Black liberation.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:13
Hermetic injustice is this experience that, um, can exist for marginalized humans where the systems around us remove or take away the ability to talk about our experience.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:27
Whether that is the ability to talk about your needs, the ability to understand what you're going through, the ability to understand that others are also going through it. It's a removal of that knowledge so that the oppressed group or the oppressed person.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:41
doesn't know how to speak about what they're going through, and so cannot speak about what they're going through.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:48
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:04:48
I think autistic people experience this, um, both late diagnosed and early diagnosed, because autistic people tend to experience other humans saying, you don't know what you're talking about when it comes to knowing yourself.

[Jes Diverges] 13:05:03
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:05:04
We have all at some point, I'm sure, had an experience of someone going, it can't be that bad.

[Jes Diverges] 13:05:09
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:05:09
You can't be that sensitive to this thing. That shirt can't be that itchy. You can't be that overwhelmed by these tasks. You can't be, that can't be true. Other people saying you can't be having the experience that you're having, removing the ability for you to articulate your experience and say, I know myself and I know that this is what's going on.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:05:28
Yeah. So part of the work or part of the experience of burnout is that that removal of the capacity to acknowledge our needs, our experiences turns into having that experience, that lack of need meeting go on for a long period of time.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:05:43
Until we're in a place that we've got nothing less left to give.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:05:47
And I think part of the work of coming back from that is starting right at the foundation and saying, what actually are my needs?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:05:53
I need to identify them because I've spent an entire life saying that can't be a real need, so I'm going to ignore it or I'm going to push it aside or I'm going to push straight through it.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:04
That work takes brain power and executive function and that sort of thing. So those are all things that are in low supply when you're burnt out.

[Jes Diverges] 13:06:04
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:12
process is hard, it's not easy, and sometimes it means looking some of your, like, disabilities face... right in the face. Um, which includes grief and loss, because, you know.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:24
All of this experience is challenging. And also.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:28
It includes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:30
empowerment, and the ability to say, no, I know myself, and I need this. You know, yes, broccoli is spicy to me. Thank you very much.

[Jes Diverges] 13:06:43
Is it really?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:44
Raw broccoli. Yes, I find it very spicy.

[Jes Diverges] 13:06:47
You know what? Now that you say it, I can see that.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:50
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:51
Yeah. Not everyone experiences that. Maybe I'm lightly allergic to raw broccoli. I don't know. I love it cooked, though.

[Jes Diverges] 13:06:51
See?

[Jes Diverges] 13:06:53
No, uh...

[Jes Diverges] 13:06:58
Broccoli's, like, my favorite. It's one of the few vegetables that I can eat in whatever format it's in. But I can actually see how it could be a little spicy, maybe.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:06:58

Delicious.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:03
Amounts? Yeah. Fantastic.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:08
Very interesting.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:08
Yeah, my experience. That's the way my mouth experiences raw broccoli specifically. So I always cook my vegetables.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:15
Yeah, super valid. And again, demonstrating, like, it's different for everyone. Don't let anyone tell you that you don't know your own self, your own likes, your own needs, your own annoyances.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:17
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:21
Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:24
Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:25
Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:26
Your own pet peeves.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:27
like...

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:29
And I actually think pet peeves...

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:30
It can be a pretty good place to start.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:33
Mm-hmm. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:34

When it comes to figuring out what your needs are.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:37

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:37

like, the advice I often give folks when they are in this void of, like, okay, but, like, I know I have needs and accommodations that I maybe didn't know of before.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:46

Where do we even start?

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:46

what the fuck are they? How do you even... like, where... literally, where... where do you start? I ask them what, like, annoys them the most, or pisses them off the most.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:51

Yeah, yeah

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:07:54

Fascinating. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:07:56

like, throughout their day, because I'm like, okay, if something is annoying to you, or pisses you off, or is, like, too inconvenient for you to be able.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:08:03

Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 13:08:04

Then the opposite of that.

[Jes Diverges] 13:08:06

is whatever you need for that thing, whether it's needing to just totally avoid raw broccoli.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:08:09

Amazing. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:08:12

or needing to.

[Jes Diverges] 13:08:16

like, um, take the lid off of your hamper because it's hindering you from actually putting your clothes in there, you'll throw them on the floor rather than pick up the lid. Take off the lid. Like, anything that is even a little bit annoying to, like, totally pisses you off.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:08:24
Yeah

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:08:25
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:08:30
That is a great place to start.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:08:32
I gotta add that to my list of questions, because I usually start in the opposite direction. I'll ask humans about a time, um, clients in particular, uh, tell me about a time where you felt rested and at ease.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:08:45
And then we'll talk really in depth about that time. What did you see and hear around you? What did you feel? What was that like? What kind of thing was that? You know, get really deep and into the weeds of that one experience.

[Jes Diverges] 13:08:45
Hmm

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:09:01
Pull out from that some the themes that I hear like, oh, it was really important that I was outside or it was really important that, you know, insert those kinds of things and with the purpose of being like, let's start looking at what rest, what rest actually looks like for you because the like expectation around what rest is.

[Jes Diverges] 13:09:16
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:09:21
Uh, it's been highly commodified. I don't know that that, um, smelly candle or that...

[Jes Diverges] 13:09:24
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:09:28
\$3,000 retreat or insert expectation here is actually as useful as they claim it is. Certainly it can't be a panacea for everybody. We're too unique as human beings.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:09:44

Two opposite directions, but aiming to come to the same middle, which is what are your needs and how do you meet them?

[Jes Diverges] 13:09:44

Yes.

[Jes Diverges] 13:09:50

Exactly.

[Jes Diverges] 13:09:52

Yeah. And you can, there's so many different ways.

[Jes Diverges] 13:09:55

to go about this. Like, that can also be super helpful, is thinking of an actual time where, like, okay, when did I feel this way? When did this happen?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:03

Yeah, thank you.

[Jes Diverges] 13:10:03

And, like, you can even combine the two. I was like, okay, what do I, what do I hate? What do I love? Like, yeah, it's very, like...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:06

A hundred percent. That's why I say I got to add to your question. Yeah, yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:10:11

Yin Yang.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:12

Yeah, totally. Amazing. Now, things can get a little bit tricky when other humans in your life have their own needs and requirements. And so then the next step becomes navigating, meeting these needs.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:28

In ways that are going to be supportive to you and your community and system around you. And again, another place to spend a lot of time coaching.

[Jes Diverges] 13:10:38

Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:38

Because every system is unique just as much as every individual is unique.

[Jes Diverges] 13:10:44

Oh, 100%.

[Jes Diverges] 13:10:47

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:48

So, we started this conversation from the point of, like, wanting to talk about how not to get into this cycle of, like.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:10:57

trying to recover from burnout in a way that burns you out even more.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:11:02

We've talked about our own experiences and we talked about some of the things that work for us. We've made some definitions and those sorts of things. I'm curious.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:11:10

What if you could say like one thing?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:11:14

about sidestepping the, like, recover from burnout as a burnout process? What would you say?

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:25

I would say...

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:30

Give yourself permission to just be where you are right now.

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:37

Like, stop trying.

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:40

Which sounds weird coming from a coach, right? But, like, literally. Stop.

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:46

Trying.

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:47

to even sidestep.

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:50

the process. Like, just let yourself be. What do I need right now? What is possible for me right now?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:11:50
Yeah, okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:11:58
Let's just do that.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:04
What about you?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:07
I agree. Um, I think, uh, um...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:12
Be cautious of any should.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:14
Yes.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:16
That comes up.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:17
and interrogate urgency.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:21
Ooh, yes.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:24
Yes, I love that. Interrogate urgency.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:25
If there's something in you that says, I must, this is urgent, I must.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:28
Mm-hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:29
Ask some questions about that first before you.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:33
Some things might be.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:34

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:35

But I think most things aren't.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:37

Yeah, yeah, I think that was actually one of the most helpful things I did for myself to get out of this burnout is ask myself like, okay, what is the rush?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:43

Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:12:46

Yep.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:48

Does this actually need to be done right now?

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:50

And, like, 9 times out of 10, it does not. It can wait at least 5 minutes, if not a week, or a month.

[Jes Diverges] 13:12:59

Like... ugh.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:01

It reminds me of...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:03

When I worked in a bakery a long time ago, um, the manager would occasionally come into the back when drama was going down and say, it's just cupcakes!

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:13

Please, I cannot.

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:19

because that was me at my house like I wish we had a manager like that, because I was literally watching everyone freak out and panic about getting these sandwiches have to be ready in 30 seconds, or we're all going to die.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:24

Right?

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:33
We're not though.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:35
It's just cupcakes.

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:36
Like, no one's actually dying here. It is okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:41
We've all been brainwashed by capitalism to think that we need to get everything done right now, be in a big... go, go, go, go!

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:41
Yeah. Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:47
Ugh, and white supremacy, too. I think urgency is one of the, like, tenets of white supremacy. Like, this is...

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:51
It literally is.

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:53
Yep, says emergency.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:13:54
baked in. Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:13:55
is literally... which is also helpful, it's like, oh wait, that sense of urgency, that's literally one of the 15 tenets of white supremacy, which I taught a workshop on recently, if anyone wants to go on my website and check that out, totally can.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:06
Nice.

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:07
But literally, it's one of the 15 tenets of white supremacy. And you can say, oh, wait, that's white supremacy bullshit. I'm not doing that anymore. I'm gonna slow the fuck down.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:09
Yeah, yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:15

Or it's like Puritan, you know, have to always be productive nonsense, or it's, you know...

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:18

Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:21

Yep.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:21

Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:22

Like, what's the big three? White supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:22

A lot of nonsense.

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:26

It's going to be one of them.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:31

Probably.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:34

Wild, hey?

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:35

Wild.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:38

I...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:40

This could be cheesy as fuck.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:43

So, Jess, you have my full permission to edit it out.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:46

If you want.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:48

Okay.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:49
Are you familiar with the Mary Oliver poem?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:14:54
Wild geese.

[Jes Diverges] 13:14:56
Okay, yes, I am usually not a poetry person.

[Jes Diverges] 13:15:01
it just, like, I don't understand it, but that... I'm literally crying right now thinking about it. I
freaking love that poem.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:02
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:04
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:15:09
So much. I think I have it printed somewhere. I meant to put it on my wall. But yes, I'm familiar.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:14
Can I read it out loud for our listeners?

[Jes Diverges] 13:15:16
Please. Yes, please, please do.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:18
Let me do a little bit of my...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:21
Yeah, so this one is, um... I first came across it in an acting class, um, and we used it as a piece
of text that we, like, repeated over and over and... and worked with in an acting context, and it...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:33
Blew my heart wide open. Lots of tears that day.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:39
Mary Oliver, Wild Geese.

[Jes Diverges] 13:15:41
Hmm.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:43

You do not have to be good.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:47

You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:53

You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:15:58

Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:16:02

Meanwhile, the world goes on. Meanwhile, the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are moving across the landscapes, over the prairies and the deep trees, the mountains and the rivers.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:16:11

Meanwhile, the wild geese high in the clean blue air are heading home again.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:16:18

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:16:23

Calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:16:27

Over and over, announcing your place in the family of things.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:16:41

Thanks for listening, friends.

[Jes Diverges] 13:16:41

Thank you so much.

[Jes Diverges] 13:16:47

Yes, everyone, thanks so much for...

[Jes Diverges] 13:16:50

listening, and I hope this podcast episode gave you permission to be slightly more gentle, slightly more messy, slightly more...

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:01

Slower.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:17:02
Yep.

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:03
Than we've been taught to.

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:07
I do also want to mention a program that I have coming up, and Jeff, if you have anything too, you're more than welcome to also mention something, but along the line of like...

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:21
how to recover from burnout without actually, like, burning yourself out, which is something I see so often in folks, and it's such an important thing to talk about.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:17:26
Yeah. Okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:29
I actually have an upcoming program, which is called AudHD Allowed and Out Loud.

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:34
And it's meant to show you exactly how to go through the late-realized healing and self-love journey without constantly re-burning yourself out all the time.

[Jes Diverges] 13:17:46
What I've done is I've taken the best parts of my group programs from the past four and a half years. I've taken the feedback I've gotten from it, and I've refined all of it into a simplified, sustainable, low demand experience.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:17:46
Yeah.

[Jes Diverges] 13:18:02
To help you spot and stop patterns like sense of urgency, people pleasing, perfectionism, so you can give yourself that permission to slow down, be messy, find joy, and simply exist as you get to know yourself in your.

[Jes Diverges] 13:18:17
late realized ADHD identity, all while also in community with others doing the same thing.

[Jes Diverges] 13:18:24
It's a six month program. It goes from Monday, October 5th to Friday, March 12th.

[Jes Diverges] 13:18:45
And.

[Jes Diverges] 13:18:46
see what else do I have here? Oh, yeah, there's gonna be, like, 6 modules total, covering topics like getting to know yourself, creating safety, and living without shame as an AuDHDer.

[Jes Diverges] 13:18:56
Plus we will have a monthly group coaching call that includes a mini lesson from me to help supplement the content, give you a chance to connect with other members in the group. And there's also gonna be a group chat on Telegram so that everyone can chat in between calls.

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:12
As well, so you're basically gonna have a support group in your pocket for 6 months.

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:16
And if you're looking for more individualized support on top of all of that

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:21
I also have four spots left to add on to one-to-one coaching calls a month in addition to the group program so that we can dive even deeper into all of this could look like

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:33
For you specifically, as we talked about, it could be different for everyone

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:41
\$1.50 a month for 6 months, and the one-to-one add-on is \$3.50 a month for 6 months, with the option to pay in full if you are so inclined, and you can learn more about that program and sign up.

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:52
at justdiverges.com slash aloud and out loud. And that link will be in the show notes.

[Jes Diverges] 13:19:58
As well.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:20:01
Thanks, Jess.

[Jes Diverges] 13:20:03
Yeah.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:20:04

I know the thing that I've got going on right now that's really cool, um, uh, is...

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:20:09

really specific as well. Um, one of the organizations that I partner with, uh, um, do my coaching work, uh, has gotten a grant to support, um, uh, life coaching, life skills coaching sessions for queer artists.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:20:25

in Alberta, Canada. So if you are a queer artist in Alberta, Canada, any discipline, any letter under the alphabet mafia umbrella, you can head to my website and check out the free coaching program of five sessions for 12 artists across the province.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:20:42

will be completely covered by this grant. Um, uh, we're currently taking applications. So, um, that is very cool and very exciting. Um, and, um, also super specific. I don't know how many listeners are from Alberta and are queer and are artists, but if you're here.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:20:58

Welcome.

[Jes Diverges] 13:20:59

Hey, one way to find out, right? I'm sure there's at least one out there.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:21:02

Right?

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:21:03

Hopefully. Amazing.

[Jes Diverges] 13:21:05

That's so awesome that it's all grant funded and everything. That's freaking.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:21:08

Completely grant funded.

[Jes Diverges] 13:21:09

So cool. So cool.

[Javelin Laurence (they/them)] 13:21:12

Yeah, okay.

[Jes Diverges] 13:21:14

All right, my friends. Well, thank you all so much for listening and take care of yourselves. I'll see you next time.