Alejandra Kottke: Impulsivity and the importance of sunshine...

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SPEAKERS
Alejandra Kottke, Katy Weber

Katy Weber 00:00
Awesome. All right. Well welcome Alexandra. I'm so excited to have you join me today.

Alejandra Kottke 00:05
Thank you. I'm so excited to be here. This is my first time ever doing anything like this. So I'm a little nervous. Don't know what's going to come out of my mouth. I've, I'm hoping, nothing embarrassing.

Katy Weber 00:18
Well, that's the beauty of having a podcast about women with ADHD is I find that like, we can get away with a lot more in, in this arena. Because you know, if we're interrupting each other, or if we're stumbling over our words, or if we lose our train of thought mid sentence, we're just like, yeah, that's all part of the ADHD. So yeah, nothing to worry about. Okay, so you are also fairly newly diagnosed, right? Yes. So, a couple months, that's fine. So I'm, I'm calling us pandemic diagnoses.

Alejandra Kottke 00:53
Right? The tic Tock variety.

Katy Weber 00:56
Right. Okay. Okay, I'm gonna ask you about whatever some of your favorite resources are. But first, I want to ask you kind of what led up to you first thinking that you had ADHD? And kind of what? Walk me through what led up to your recent diagnosis?
Alejandra Kottke  01:15

Okay, so when I said the tick tock variety, I mean, that’s literally the first time that the light bulb went on, I was and I was starting to connect the dots. So I, I saw this one tick tock, and it was she was using the the audio from a podcast called I have ADHD. And she was talking about executive function, and what it looks like, and everything that you know how in tic toc, they, they point to the air, and then the words come up, and it shows you the words, you know, like the the specifics to the executive function issues as she was, you know, using the voiceover from the from the podcast. And I’m like, Oh, my gosh, that’s me. That’s she’s talking about me. And so of course, curiosity, the hyperfocus thing. So then I go and find this podcast. And I started listening, I start bingeing it from the very first one. And it was like an awakening. I thought, like, I always felt like I was an oddball, like I was all by myself, my, my peculiarities were all my own. And there was no one in the world like me, it was just me. And I needed to figure out myself, so that I could function and release all the greatness that is inside, you know what I mean? Like you feel so I was, like, Oh, my gosh, there’s a whole bunch of us. Oh, yeah, it’s, uh, so that was, that was the beginning. And as I started to, every, like, I don’t think I had language before, really, for all of the little things, and all of the big things, I don’t think that I, I understood that there was, you know, what I mean, all of basically, it’s just a jumble. And you’re trying to work through your own jumble, I was trying to work through my own jumble. And then when she basically started, she had like, a podcast on each thing. And it unraveled and gave language to the things that I had been struggling with. And the great things as well, and, and it was, it was amazing. And so after that once realizing, you know, okay, this is real, this isn’t just, I have some things in common, then I, you know, started consuming, like some of the resources that she had mentioned, and then I, then I thought, it’s time I need to, I need to call my doctor. So I called my doctor. And I took all of these surveys, you know, just to see if, so I could show up with some information that so that she didn’t just think like, oh, you’re crazy. And, and I took all of these, like tests in the back of this book. So I took that to my doctor. And, and she didn’t really, you know, she was like, Oh, okay. Yeah. And it was really actually easier than I thought it was going to be. I thought it was gonna be like, okay, a lot, a long process. And it really wasn’t.

Katy Weber  04.20

I had a very similar experience. I also I took the self tests online, and I took one with attitude magazine, the one that the self test for women, which I got almost a perfect score on. And so I printed that out. I definitely wanted to bring that to my doctor. And then I had another checklist that I had found in Tracy out sukkah has ADHD for smartest women, her facebook group and her resources. She had a pretty extensive checklist that I also brought in because it feels like the stakes are high, right? Like you sort of right like if my doctor doesn’t agree with that, I have this diagnosis of something that suddenly makes my whole life make sense. If my doctor doesn’t validate that, then what do I do? Like I felt a lot of panic, that she was gonna say, Oh, you know, you’re crazy. Don’t be silly. This is, you know, you’re just stressed or it’s just the pandemic or, you know, right. And then it went really easily, you know, like, I was there with all of my papers. And, and, and she was really sort of like, Oh, yeah, yeah, let’s, let’s get this diagnosed. And let’s get this treated. And I was like, Oh, well, I wasn’t prepared for this, for how it was gonna be. So just to clarify, this is the the, you were listening to the I have ADHD podcast with Kristen Carter, right? That’s right.

Alejandra Kottke  05:40

Yes. wouldn’t talk to her. Okay. Yeah. And it’s so funny, because when you say that you said it made your whole life makes sense. I heard that I listened to your previous podcast. And when you said that, I get goosebumps. Because that’s literally how I described it. I all of a sudden, thought, like, my whole life made sense. Going back all the way back to even being a kid. It just snapped into focus, like so when you say that I’m I still even right now. I’m getting goosebumps. Because that is literally the statement that describes this whole discovery. It was as though I found the missing piece of the puzzle that helped me to understand myself and my whole life.
Katy Weber 06:24

Yes, and I think, if anything is an indicator that you have ADHD, it would be the that overwhelming rush of, of recognition. You know, it's one thing to watch those Tick Tock videos and be like, oh, haha, I struggle with that. But I think it's another thing entirely when you when you bring in this feeling of like, I had this one narrative my entire life. And now this is probably one of the most important revelations I've ever had about who I am and my identity. That's probably an indication that you have ADHD, you know how important it is for you to be able to reframe your life because I think we go through our whole lives with this sense of who we are. And it's often very negative. And there is a lot of that negative self talk and self depreciation and then just be like, Oh, my goodness, there's an explanation for all of it. It is so life changing. Absolutely. So what are some specific things then when you look back at your life growing up where you think, Oh, yes, that was obviously clearly ADHD.

Alejandra Kottke 07:33

Okay, so my Urbanus memory that I can really pinpoint, because I've really thought I've really thought about this. When I was, I think in kindergarten, I was sent to the school psychologist, because my teacher thought there was something odd about me, she and I have always tried to understand, you know, what was it like, what was the deal, so I know that I, I would finish my work quickly. I feel like I was pretty bright. And school wasn't something that was super hard for me. But I would finish before everyone else, and then I would turn around because I was impatient. And I needed to help everyone else. Hurry up and finish so so I would disrupt the class. So then I got sent to the school psychologists they did whatever things that they did, I don't know, you know, I played with dolls and played in sand and did different things. And she really didn't say that there was anything the matter with me. She just said, you know, she's bright and she gets bored. And then other things think you know, that I think we're maybe indicative. My, that kind of showed my impulsive nature. So one of the things that I was obsessed with, and also maybe hyperfocus. Okay, maybe possibly, um, is I was obsessed with water. And so if there was a body of water that I could climb into, I would do that. So I my parents would tell me stories of how I would literally I was in Mexico, we were my family's from Mexico. And I would jump in the water trough like at the ranch where the horses drink. If I saw water, I was trying to get into it. The other funny thing is that I would always wear my bathing suit underneath my clothes. And I would try and I always wanted just to get into my bathing suit. So I was ready for the water. It's just so weird. And I don't know if this is just me being a weird child. Or has anything to do with ADHD but I'm just thinking through you know, what are the different traits you know, with the impulsivity, the hyperfocusing another thing on the hyper focusing I would have a I would get obsessive about certain things like I went through a period of being obsessed with making bracelets and making jewelry. And so I one whole summer, I amassed all these beads in an elastic and I would sit in front of I would go to my grandma's house and I watched The Little Mermaid because that's another obsession. I was obsessed with the Little Mermaid. And I literally watched it on repeat from the time that I woke up to the time that I went to bed making bracelets and then I would sell these bracelets. So I don't know, I don't know if that was just me being peculiar, or if that was, you know, showing the the traits. I'm still learning so much. So the water

Katy Weber 10:24

one is fascinating. I don't have an answer for the water one, maybe somebody out there will, I think the making bracelets and then also selling them definitely was like a flag went up for me because I thought I feel like I'm learning so much about other women in their childhood and that idea that we get, which is like you some suddenly you're interested in something, and then you're gonna do it all the time, and you're gonna make money on it. And this is going to be how you like get rich, you know, like, you take it you go from zero to 100. Really cool. Yeah, it comes through interests. And so I love how many women I've talked to who had like childhood businesses. Oh, yeah. And we're, we're already making that connection as kids.
Alejandra Kottke  11:09
Yep, absolutely. And we did we, we had a pool, and I created this club. So basically, all the kids would pay me dues, I would go and buy all of the, all of the the pool like toys, and then the kids could come over and, and, and play in our pool. And I was always doing that, okay, the or like, I would play, we had restaurants. So I would play restaurant. And I would create, like a whole restaurant environment in our garage, because we always had leftover restaurant equipment and things. And, and then I would actually sell lemonade. So we’d set up our little, you know, lemonade stand on the on the corner, there was always something it was always organizing people to create a business to make money. And then it would it was just like, you know, basically my life, even to this day.

Katy Weber  12:09
Yeah, I think there is the organization element. Definitely. I feel like I relate to that a lot. And still, even as an adult, I mean, I feel like I’m in a constant state of organization without ever actually feeling organized.

Alejandra Kottke  12:22
Totally. Oh my gosh, that’s so true.

Katy Weber  12:26
Now, when it came to comes to school, and studying and your grades, how was that for you?

Alejandra Kottke  12:33
Um, you know, I didn’t ever my parents were never super involved with my school. So I but I was internally motivated to do well. And I don’t think that it was ever really I don’t think that I ever really struggled with school until high school. And I had and it was algebra, and it was when math started to get more complicated and where it was concepts, building upon concepts. And if I would just tune out, because I could not I had no idea what was going on. And if I missed because I tuned out, I would space out and miss one concept. And then I would be it would forget it, you know, you’re screwed, because few didn’t catch that one. And then you’re not catching the next one.

Katy Weber  13:20
I feel like I hear that a lot with with math and also the kind of impractical cut impracticability of it what’s the word I’m looking for, like the inability to kind of give it a practical application and your mind immediately, I think is also difficult at that age. Right? Just sort of that boredom, which is like, why are we learning this again? Right, exactly. And then you tune out?

Alejandra Kottke  13:44
Yep. That’s exactly right. And it happened in college with the same I mean, I, my whole associate’s degree was delayed. Because I could not pass the stupid class to retake it like three times. I think. I think I did end up pass. I don’t even think I actually I don’t even think I did end up passing it. Oh, Lord, yeah. So my whole education got stuck on
Katy Weber  14:11

With college, I actually there’s you can get like the three year degree, or the four year with honors, and the four year with honors was really necessary if anybody wanted to go on and do their master’s degree. And I stayed in school for that fourth year, because I didn’t really know what I wanted to do with my life, and everybody else was staying for their fourth year, but I knew I didn’t want to go on and do my masters. And halfway through my last semester, I got a job as a journalist and working in a newspaper, which was what I wanted to do. And I ended up just stopped. I just stopped going to all of my classes and I got F’s in all of the classes have gone last semester, because I didn’t I was like, well, I already got the job. You know, like I was like, what’s the point? And so it’s always been this thing that I carried with me secretly my whole life, which was Like, I got a diploma. But my grade point average just was destroyed by that last semester. And I look back now and I’m like, Oh, my god, that’s so ADHD of me to just be like, Nope, not interested. Sorry. And then like, just stop going to all my classes, because that’s fine. You just, it just wrote what you were talking about college. It just reminded me of that. And I was like, Oh, yeah, I don’t think I ever made that connection. Anyway, so then how did you know you were You said you had a brick and mortar spray tan business? That he did have to close in 2020. How did you get into that business? And tell me about that?

Alejandra Kottke  15:44

Okay, so this is so ADHD, it’s hilarious. Okay. It was the summer of 2016. I might, okay, so just some background. I’m from California, and I live in Illinois now. And we moved here 2011. I have two boys. And my husband also has his shoe. So we’re a blended family. But my two boys, they go home to California every summer. And every summer that they go home. It’s as though I’m caught completely off guard. And I don’t know what to do with myself. Because Who in the world am I without my children. And I so knowing that this was going to happen, I anticipated this to happen. And instead of being caught off guard This time, I wanted to really spend the summer reuniting with myself, and remembering who I am and what you know, who I who was I who am? And who do I want to be you know, so part of my process was one of the things was that I, I really wanted this is just simple. Like, I mean, I we have a big, we live in the country, I have a big yard. And I never wear pants. I mean, I never worked. I never wear shorts because I never want to show my legs and my legs had not seen the light of day for probably since I probably since I lived in California. So I my legs were so paper white. And I wanted to be able to wear shorts to mow my lawn. But it’s in Illinois summers it’s hot, it’s sticky. There’s bugs, like you’re not going to sit outside at least I wasn’t going to sit outside and wait to get a tent. So I went to the nearby little town of Winnebago and I found a little tanning salon there. And I I started going and so what I found in this process of going to the tanning salon and laying in a tanning bed was that the sunshine of that that experience just gave me it was like a reset. For me. It just felt like I was just being like, loved on by the sun for a few minutes. I mean, not not abusively, you know, not not like burning or anything like that. But it just felt like a reset. So I really enjoyed how that felt. And I really enjoyed going. And if I was having a difficult day, I would go when I would when I would go I felt like it was a resort to my day. So anyway, so I’m enjoying this process I and then I tell the lady there at the own salon and like oh, you know, I really, I’m really glad that I found you guys. That was I’m really enjoying. I’m really enjoying coming. And mind you this was just part of my process a whole summer was like, you know, a lot of a lot of this is so funny. So I started also doing yoga. And, and like trying to be still in my mind because my mind felt like it was a runaway train, and I could not get it to stop. Now in hindsight, I realized holy crap. Like you, your mind is totally ADHD and I was so basically I was trying to find tools to manage the the chaos in my mind, in my brain. So anyway, going back to the thing, so that’s how I discovered this business. Then she so when I tell her this, that I that I really am enjoying this process, blah, blah, blah. She’s like, yeah, you know, we’re we’re selling the business because we’re going to be moving back home and, and I was super bummed because I’m like, No, I just found you guys You can’t leave. And that and that weekend, my husband and I took a trip to cornucopia, Wisconsin to go see a friend of his it’s like an eight hour drive. And so I’m telling him what,
you know, what happened? And we both kind of like looked at each other, like, you know, thinking the same thing like, would that be a good opportunity for us and so And then we’re like, okay, like, we were like, okay, just name $1 amount that would make it even, you know. And so we’ve kind of went through this whole process. And we were both on the same page on every single thing. And so then that, I mean, that’s kind of how the ball started getting rolled, you know, and it’s so ridiculous because how impulsive is that? I knew nothing about this industry, I knew nothing about this kind of business. And I just knew that I loved that experience of it. And I’m suit like, I’ve, I’ve been in business before our family is not, you know, you know, like, with the way that our brains were always creating businesses out of things. And I just knew that I’ve been I’ve done it before, like, I’ve gone into something before that I knew nothing about and learned on the fly. Because that’s how I’m super resourceful. And I love to learn new things. And I love to create something. And so I yeah, I just, I mean, if I think about it, if like, if a if a person who is like a logical thinker, It would be a background in business, were to evaluate my process, they would think I was crazy. Because I didn’t have any numbers, I had no reason to believe that this could work. All I had was the desire to create something beautiful, and the desire to test myself and to bet on myself and to take this risk. Knowing that I would figure it out. So that’s so that’s how I ended up in this business. It was, it’s a tanning salon and boutique. And so there was tanning there were spray tanning. So in the process, I became a spray tan artist. And of course, I had to go like, all the way and get my master certification and, and really perfect it and all of that and, and then there was the boutique portion of it as well. And then I started doing workshops, you know, like fish and board workshops, and I got into, you know, CBD, and then we did a CBD workshop. And I was just super involved in the community. And, and just, it was amazing. It was awesome. And then COVID happened. And, um, and that kind of forced, it kind of forced a decision because my lease was coming up, it was almost like the cute like, it was like 1000 roads intersected and I had to make a decision. But and at first I didn’t have enough information. And it was really difficult. And I was, you know, I just was so it was so traumatic, it felt so traumatic, because it’s not, you know, you have to answer questions that you don’t have enough information to answer. It was just a lot of things. So anyway, regardless, now I’m very, very grateful because I know that I made the right decision to close that business, and to shift completely. And so now I’m just doing spray tanning out of a studio that I have here it it’s like building separate from my house, kind of like the Granny house. Super cute, but I get to keep my one on one clientele. I get to do what I love. And I’m not, I don’t have all the extra stress of the entire you know all of the facets of the business with you know, so it’s perfect. And now I get to do some get to dive into some other things that I want to do. And I get to have some time with exploration. So I feel like it just talk and talk and talk and talk. I’m sorry, you can interrupt me at any time. I’m

Katy Weber 23:47

trying really hard not to interrupt you. So I’m like taking note, please, that I want to say later because I love everything you’re saying it’s so important that I think it’s so insightful into how our brains work. First of all, like the relationship with the sun. And the tanning, I thought was really interesting because I’ve heard so much about the importance of being outside in nature. And for people with ADHD and how much we respond to that outside. But I never really made that connection with the importance of the sun. I don’t know if it’s vitamin D or what it is, but like, I always have really bad seasonal affective disorder seen and, and I wonder if that is common with a lot of people with ADHD. And I used to love when I worked nights at a newspaper. You know, my I always worked from like, like four to midnight though that was like my ideal shift because I could have as much daytime as possible to be outside in the sun and then I would do you know that I would work at night when it was dark and it was like the perfect setup for me. And I loved it and I did it for years and years and years until I had babies and then I couldn’t do that anymore because babies make you wake up At 6am no matter what. And so that’s really interesting. I never made that connection, but I bet you There is something about mood and the dopamine and that satiN, you know, and that importance of tanning. And then also just the the different sides to impulsivity, when it comes to starting a business, you know, like, I think the fact that we are so impulsive allows us to go with our gut and go, right really listen to those moments where we’re like, this is gonna work, you know, and, and we don’t overthink things. We don’t sit back and make, you know, pros and cons list even though maybe we should, but’s, you know, it’s just our lot in life. And it’s how we make our decisions. And I think it allows us to really lean into that intuitive nature that a lot of people can lose. And then I just love how you have stayed positive throughout this whole thing. And I think that’s also
something that is also that I’m seeing a lot with other women in ADHD, which is like this mentality of like, yeah, I screw up all the time. But like, everything happens for a reason. And now look at all the things that this decision has brought me and it’s not exactly where I thought I was going. But like, we’re so easy, we’re really good at pivoting. And it’s something that we need to do a lot of in our lives because we get bored, and we change our minds a lot. But I think that ability to really kind of look back and think like, if it wasn’t for ABC, I wouldn’t be where I am right now. So,

Alejandra Kottke 26:31

right. And you know, something else that’s so funny is I love the process of envisioning something, and then going to work to create it. But once that’s done, it is like pulling teeth. And it was I was at that point with my business. I don’t think that I had, you know, part of it, you know, they say like you’re not always aware of your thoughts. Or you’re not always aware like you You sometimes like you you’re not really aware of something until hindsight, right. So it’s, I think I was at the point of in the business where I had finally Creek because it I mean, it took time to create the the entire experience that I wanted to create, I mean, I had a vision very, very specific of what I wanted to create. And and because I didn’t have like a ton of money I was I didn’t have like, a bunch of money to infuse at the very beginning. So what I did was I just kept reinvesting reinvesting until I created what I wanted to create in my mind. And then when that was done, the actual day by day process of just walking it out, was I it was not enjoyable at all at all I could find, and I would make I never try to like, I would create all of these, you know, I know that this is where I need to do next. I know that this is my plan. But I just could not figure out how to walk this out every single day, it was almost like the exciting part was over and now was the part of actually, you know, walking out these specific things that I know, this is what the business needs in order for it to grow even more and to do bah, bah, bah. But it wasn’t that that part’s not exciting to me. So it’s funny how now I can look back and be like, okay, I realize now that that’s all part of it as well. Also, you know, the whole executive dysfunction of not being able to figure out like I would, I could not figure out how to start something until I had the external pressure of a deadline or, you know, this event that was coming up. And now I like I I you know, I think God that he sent me such an amazing team all throughout all the different seasons of that business. Because I probably stressed them out so cuz, you know, they’re, they’re like, okay, just give us direction. I’m like, I’m trying to do this is part of my process. I’ve got, you know, like you have to get the chaos has to go through this funnel before it can be, you know, before you can have the plan, but I can’t have that process doesn’t happen for me until there’s time pressure, then the time pressure, then all of a sudden, it all snaps into focus. And now it’s time to run. And I can I’m so good at that. And I so I, I know my process, I know that I will always pull it off. I’ll pull it off, like the day that you know, the day that it’s supposed to happen. It’s gonna happen. It’s gonna be amazing. But between now and then I’m gonna stress everyone out. Because, you know,

Katy Weber 29:44

do you remember that post in the female entrepreneurs Facebook group, about implementation and there was a woman who had said, you know, it feels like standing on the edge of the cliff and you see the other cliff and you just don’t see the bridge right ABS About I think about that, that allegory all the time when it comes to, you know, not being able to figure out you know, where you want to go, you know how you need to, you know, but you, right, you can see the big picture in a way. But you just don’t know how to take those first steps. Right. And then like you said, once you have the time restriction, eventually you just like jump. Right. You know, once. I think it’s that, I think is why we probably work so well, when it comes to like, really, really strict deadlines is because then you’re not kind of looking for all the ways you’re supposed to do things. You’re just like, as grown. I’ve got to do. I think about that cliff analogy all the time.

Alejandra Kottke 30:43

It’s so true. I had one of my, one of my clients turned into one of she he turned into, well, it’s so funny. These people
were the most amazing people. It was Carrie and, and her husband, Mike, and they were my clients turned teammate
turn, and then the husband ended up mentoring me for a little bit. And he was I think that the both of them probably
knew that I had ADHD before I did. Because, you know, there. I laughed, because my gosh, the things they had to go
through with me. But Mike, he would always tell me, he’s like, Okay, he’s he was always trying to help me create
systems to help me rein in, rein myself in. And he’s like, it’s like, you go to the grocery store, and you go in you, you
buy all the ingredients to make spaghetti and you come home and you realize you don’t have the pots and pans to
make it. He’s like, you need to make sure the pots and pans before you can go to the grocery store and buy all the
ingredients. And the funny thing is, is at that time, I had no I didn’t know that I had ADHD, but no idea. And I just was
like, What is wrong with me that I feel like I’m a kid still, and I’m constantly trying to create systems to keep myself
together. But you know, but yet I have these amazing results in my life. You know, like I, I, I go into things not knowing
how to do things, but I throw myself into it. And then when I look back, I’m like, dang, look what you did. That’s
amazing. You know, but at the same time, it’s like, Why do I feel like I’m working so much harder than the average
person just to function like a normal human being and I’m failing at that. Oh, it’s crazy. It’s so funny. So now like, just,
I mean, I’ve only had really two months to process all of this. So I’m still even right now just processing this out loud,
just realizing holy crap. Like it was so obvious. And I’m sure that it was obvious to everyone else. You know, before it
was obvious to me.

Katy Weber 32:51
Yeah, I remember hearing that metaphor of like, it felt like everybody else got the manual in life. And I never got it.
And that’s like, that’s kind of how you feel in so many different situations. It really is really difficult to describe. I think
you’re doing a great job of it. I think a lot of people are gonna relate to how you’re talking about it in terms of, you
know, doing the work, reading the books, and yet still feeling like there was a part of you that was irreparably broken.

Alejandra Kottke 33:17
broke. Exactly. That’s you’re using another one of my words. Oh, my gosh, did I

Katy Weber 33:22
write I’m feeling it right from your answer with the What do you love most I like you said I loved it. It said, as you said,
I thought I was irreparably broken. I read all the books. I listen to all the podcasts. Yeah, but all the courses now did
so much work. And yet I still felt broken.

Alejandra Kottke 33:38
Yeah. Yes. And see, this is what’s this is the beauty of having the diagnosis of knowing now. That it’s just how my
brain is wired. It’s how God made me. I’m not broken. Like, you have no idea how liberating that has been for me
because I lived with so much shame. Like I could cry, I lived with so much steam thinking there was something wrong
with me. And I and, and you know, there’s there’s also there’s, there’s a part that trauma plays in, in all of the story
to for me, I had to unravel and do a lot of like, so starting that last four or five years, like I said that summer that was
the summer that I became very intentional. And it was it continued this whole last four or five years has been a
continual process of just surrender. And, and instead of like I always say like it felt like I was always either running
away from something or running towards something. But I was never just still I never would just let God do the work
in me that needed to be done like I I wasn’t surrendered, you know, and I was afraid of facing the trauma I was afraid
of, of, of thinking about it. The things that had happened, you know, because there’s been a lot of things that a lot of
dark seasons in my life, you know, and so I thought that maybe on the other side of the trauma work, maybe when
you know, when I'm healed of this, maybe when I've released and let this go when I've processed all of these things, but when I had done all of this work on my heart, and I had, and I had, I felt like, I got to the point where I was like, Lord, like, why do I still feel so broken? You know, and it was so painful. And I just thought, I started to feel hopeless, like, I'm just gonna be this way forever, I'm always gonna lug around this anchor of sadness. And, and feel like, I'm not worthy. Like, I'm not good enough, like, I will never be enough, you know. And that is a burden that is so heavy. And when I realized that, I was, like, sound like Lady Gaga, when when I realized I was born this way, like I was designed this way, that I wasn't broken, that I'm different. And that's just the way that God made me like, that was so freeing, because I, it just, it was as though I could let go of that shame of feeling like I wasn't enough. And that I would always be this way.

Katy Weber  36:32

I feel like there is so much grief involved as well, in this diagnosis. And I've spoken about this, a few of my other guests, which is like looking back at your life and thinking, you know, feeling so much grief for that woman who went through all of the things she went through not knowing, quote, unquote, what was wrong with her and, and I remember when I first had my diagnosis, I was talking to my therapist, and I said, like, why is this called, you know, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is not a disorder. This is a superpower. And I was going on and on and on about how great it was. And she said, but it is a disorder, you still have to remember that you've been going through your life with a brick tied to your ankle, you know, and she said, you had to work so much harder than everybody else, because of this brick. And she said, Don't discredit the brick, you know, like, don't take don't deny the fact that the brick is there, that the grace order, is there a unit. Yes. Now you have the tools. Now you have the ways in which you can work around, you were kind of kind of fumbling and intuitively getting to them your whole life. And now you're at this place where you have a lot more knowledge and power, but the brick is still there. And you need to acknowledge that that that is part of your life.

Alejandra Kottke  37:56

Yeah, and, you know, something that when you were when you mentioned the break, I just resonated with that so much, because I remember writing in my journal that if I could, if I could just, how can I explain this? Okay, so it was almost like, we work so much harder, like you said, and so much effort to rise, so much effort to rise. And I thought, and my thought was, Well, okay, so right now I'm kind of like, you know, seeking I'm like seeking the anchors, I'm looking for the anchors, what are the anchors, I need to cut the anchors, because once I cut once I'm free from these anchors, with the amount of energy that I am outputting to rise, once you are like released from these anchors, holy crap, you're gonna rise like a rocket, you know? And, um, and so I felt like, okay, the trauma, those were those were all anchors. And I that's why I felt like why do I still feel like I'm tied to this thing? Okay, so now I know. Yeah, it is something that I'm going to be, like you said, we're always going to have this tie to our ankle. But the beauty of knowing is now like, you can you can, you can know what's going on. So like, for me, like, I, now that I, now that I understand what's going on, when things are happening, I'm like, Okay, this is what's happening right now. So now I know that this is what I'm doing, because I'm trying to avoid doing the final books for the business and because why because it's, it's hard, and I don't want to and it reminds me of something that is dead. And you know, think about and so I'm going to set a timer for 15 minutes, I'm just going to start. And so anyway, my point is is that Once you know what your anger is, you can work around it and you're empowered to, to overcome it. So it doesn't have to be just this thing that's holding you back that makes you feel like you're never going to get there. Do you know what I mean?

Katy Weber  40:18

Oh, yeah, you know, you've got this brick, but you just need to like, find the skateboard to put the brake on. Right?
Alejandra Kottke 40:23
Oh my gosh, it's so good. So good. I know we're killing it

Katy Weber 40:27
with the metaphors today. So now you're also pursuing a life coaching certification?

Alejandra Kottke 40:38
Yes. So I always this is okay, here I go again, I feel like you I can't just answer your question with a simple answer. I've got to give you the whole life story behind every

Katy Weber 40:54
all the pieces like all feel, I think you're used to doing that with people because all the pieces feel like they're not connected. But in your brain. They're totally connected,

Alejandra Kottke 41:02
right? Absolutely. Absolutely. So okay, so like I said, I've been through some things. And the only thing that kept me feel like it was literally what saved me was the belief that all things work together for the good, and that God was going to use the things that I've been through to help someone else. And so while I would be going through awful traumatic things, I would just remember, okay, Alejandra, you're the guinea pig like this is happening. But you can get through this. And when you get through this, you're gonna find you're going to be able to have a pathway that you know that you'll be able to help someone else go through this. And the thing is, though, is that I got to the point where I was just like, 100, we've been through all these things, but I don't think that you found the path. So you really can't help anyone. So that's where that's where I am now, though, where I'm like, Okay, so I've done a lot of hard work. I've done a lot of things. And now with this, this is another missing piece of the puzzle. So that's really awesome. But I've always, at the core of me, though, I've always wanted to help others, and I just haven't really known how. So one of the things is Yes, I am. I'm doing a life coaching certification. And I, I am working on that. It is not yet done. Because, among other things, I have a lot of things that I really Oh, god, I'm telling you, like, I had to create a Trello board, somebody introduced me to Trello. And it's amazing, because now I can put I created a board for all the courses. And then I'm like, Okay, so what do I want to pursue first. And it all would work together. But I think that life coaching certification, just I really would like to do and I really want to have, I really want to do a podcast. That's the other thing. So that's, but I'm thinking podcast first. Because why? I don't actually nobody's I have no audience, no one's gonna be listening. So I can just do it. So I can learn how to do it. And nobody needs to hear it, because there's nobody listening. And I think you're, if I just get started, and that's just the thing, if I, if I had, this is how I do everything, I just start. And then all the pieces will like all the pieces to the path will reveal themselves, and then it will become something beautiful. I don't need to know how I just need to start. So that's kind of I'm thinking my path forward is going to do the podcast first. Because I have no audience that would. But he needs to hear me fumble through and figure it out. And meanwhile, I'll work on my life coaching certification and figure out a way to help other women like me. If I could reach back to my, you know, past self, and help myself forward, I think that's what I would love to do is to kind of help other Alhambra's of the past.
Katy Weber 44:17
You know, I think there is definitely a reason why so many of us are coaches. And I think, because I think we share that sense of making connections, making like life altering connections and having these epiphanies and realizing it right, you know how important they are and wanting to help others get to that point and and really that empathy and that desire to help others I think is really strong in us. But we're also met with so much of that self doubt, which is like, well, who am I to coach? Anyone else? I'm so right. And so I know, I think a lot of coaches struggle with that impostor syndrome, but I think we make the best coaches because of the fact that we are able to make those connections and people see that in us, I think people see that excitement. And and they relate to that. I don't think you have to worry at all. I mean, I've, I've been talking to you, I'd have never met you before. And I'm just like, Oh, yes, you'd be such a good coach. Oh, just tell them I can tell it in your, you know, in your self awareness. And I think also just the light heartedness and the humor, I mean, your personality is, if that is what you want to do, I think you're perfectly suited for it. Oh, thank you. Sure, people would be drawn to you. And as for the podcast, I mean, that's 100% why I started this podcast was I wanted an excuse to interview people. Because I love I love talking to other women. And I know that interviewing other women, about this topic that is so fascinating to me, as that's just how I learn, I learn about myself from asking other people questions. And it's, you know, I think it's also, have you seen a lot of the memes about, like, I know, I'm interrupting you and talking about myself a lot. But it's like how I process information is bringing up, you know, finding how we relate to each other as human beings. So I was like, how can I figure out a way to interview other women that I don't know, I like wanted excuse to talk to them. So I'm going to start this podcast, fairly selfish.

Alejandra Kottke 46:19
Well, but you know, you're doing a really great job. That's awesome. Because so the ones that I listened to, they were so good. And you said, you have a great podcasting voice, like really, really good.

Katy Weber 46:29
Yeah, my 13 year old, I'm going to tell my 13 year old daughter because she says, You sound so depressed. You sound so angry all the time. But I'm like,

Alejandra Kottke 46:38
No, it's beautiful, beautiful voice. And there's so there's so easy to listen to. And the whole time I'm like, Oh my gosh, yeah. Oh my gosh, yeah. And to the point even where I was like, What am I gonna, I'm like, literally going to be her. Like, she probably isn't even gonna be able to use it. Because what am I going to have to say, for 45 minutes, like, women sound so intelligent and so self aware. And so, like, I learned so much about the, the, actually, it was my last I was on my way to my doctor's appointment, where I decided finally I'm going to take a break from trying medicines and just do supplementation when you were interviewing the lady about the supplementation and the importance of like, the gut, brain connection and all of this stuff. And I learned so much from that, from that episode. And I thought, Oh, my gosh, she's so smart. I don't know if she's gonna be able to use my podcast.

Katy Weber 47:33
You, Oh, my God, you just made my day. Because I think the one thing I'm loving these conversations so much, but again, I'm sort of like I'm putting them out there. And I have no idea if anyone else is going to want to listen to these
random conversations with women, but I just find them so informative. And yes, that woman, especially Karen minor heard, she just was like, blowing me away. She was really interesting, but I think I think this is one of the most relatable conversations I've had. Honestly, I feel like you are offering a lot and I think you really, you know, you have a really incredible way of just tapping into that feeling of, of that freedom, you know, like you were talking about with the anchors and that kind of excitement, about this new awareness and how you're going to live your life but also like a lot of sadness that comes with this diagnosis, which is like, wow, you know, like, I've really coming to grips with how difficult My life has been maybe anything, we weren't really willing to sit down and think about because we were working so hard to just get shit done. Right? There is there's it's there's so much to unpack, especially and especially when there's past trauma and that feeling of like, what is depression? What is anxiety? What is ADHD? I don't really know does it even matter if I know? So now do you feel like you're maybe your kids have it or get Does your husband have it or anyone else in our life so

Aleandra Kottke  48:59

funny. So, okay, so my son was diagnosed, I have two two sons. One was diagnosed when he was in second grade. The other one in fifth grade. His teacher thought he had add because his desk was just I mean, you couldn't he couldn't close it. He was like he's like the absent minded professor. He's super smart. And he's super, he hyper focused on things that that he was, you know, like trains. And he just was super, super peculiar in his own way. He didn't speak until he was four. But he was a drawing since before he was one. Like he was just such a I just was in awe of this kid. I just absolutely love them that we went to the took him to the doctor. She tried to give him like Adderall or whatever. He hated how that felt. So then she's like, Okay, I'm gonna refer you to a pediatric neurologist. He gets referred, he gets diagnosed with Asperger's with autism. And that made perfect sense. Um, with everything that, you know, I, it was what it was, again, one of those things, but then I had this crisis in myself, I thought, whatever he is I am, because we are so much alike. And so I had this period of time where I thought, Oh my gosh, do I have Asperger's? like do I have? Am I also autistic because, you know, like, just identify so much with all of his peculiarities, I thought for sure, then that must mean that that Me too. Um, and now that I have this, you know, now I'm starting to see I'm like, Okay, do you have Asperger's? Or do you have ADHD? Like, I don't know. But, um, but yes, definitely, both my boys have been affected. Their neurodivergent is the new word that I'm learning. And, and now like, so I one of the things that I learned was that ADHD is genetic. So more than likely someone in your family, right? So I look, I'm like, okay, both my parents like Which one? And then like, for sure, my mom, or my mom, and like, and you know what, also, I think my dad too. And so I had the conversation with my mom. I'm like, Mom, you're not going to believe this. But I have ADHD. And let me tell you why. And let me tell you what it means. And let me tell you what, how she presents itself. And Mom, I think you may have it too. And she goes, Oh, my gosh, Aleandra, she's like, I think I do. Like diagnosing my whole family.

Katy Weber  51:34

Oh, I know. I'm doing the same thing. Have you ever heard the term? You know, when mom's on a diet? Everyone's on a diet? Yep. So my daughter says the same thing about ADHD. She's like, what mom has ADHD? Everybody has ADHD, you know, because I'm evaluating everyday in my life. And I honestly I mean, I think the official numbers are like, 8% of people have ADHD in the US, but like, I think just based on how much I'm learning about it, and how much I'm learning about myself, and all the people I've encountered in my life, I'm like, it's got to be so many more people, right? What the more we really start to understand it and see how it presents itself so differently in different people. I mean, you had two sons, and you recognize it, and then we'll long before you recognize it in yourself. That's how far we need to come.

Aleandra Kottke  52:21
And it’s so funny too, because now that I now that I realized this about myself, I feel like I’m such, like, for one now I understand what they are struggling with, like so now it’s almost like shifted our entire relationship like, and not only that, but um, it’s so there’s so much there’s so much freedom there like now I’m not pushing a rock up a hill, like now I can just call it out, like, okay, here’s what, here’s what I, here’s the kind of I’m having, and here’s what’s happening. And, and so now I can also understand what they’re experiencing, and they feel so much more understood. And it’s just, I feel like we’re our relationships are so much better, like the harmony in my household is so much better. Because there’s this understanding and like, the funny thing too, when I first started talking about it, my son is like, okay, so you’re gonna like self diagnose yourself, like they’re both in high school. So he would, and he was like, yeah, whatever, like, just totally dismissing and being a little butthead. And finally did go and I, you know, I got the diagnosis and everything and, and it’s not something that it was just like, an idea that I had, because I have lots of like, you know, the hyperfocus like, you have the idea. And then you fixate on it for a little while, and then it’s gone. It’s like you forget about it. But it hasn’t, and it’s still here. And so now it’s like, Okay, all right. You know, he’s, he’s a little bit. He’s now he’s like, understanding that I understand him also. So it’s, it’s been really good. I don’t know if anything of what I just said made any sense. But all that to say it’s been really good.

Katy Weber  54:03

Yeah, absolutely. And I think the the diagnosis, the understanding alone is such a huge part of that freedom, you know, even if you’re not even treating it, or if your life isn’t necessarily immediately better. Right, just that awareness I was on another interview I had recently I likened it to like walking around your house with a foot of water everywhere. And you’re like, why is there water in my house? What is happening and like you kind of like you can get around it and you can ignore it. But every once in a while, you’re like, Oh, my God, why is there a foot of water in my house, and then somebody finally says to you, like, there’s a faucet on, go turn off the faucet, right? Even if you even if you can’t get to the faucet right away, just knowing that there’s a cause for this mysterious foot of water is makes your life so much better. Yeah. And that’s why I think it can be really difficult when you face that idea of like, well, maybe it’s not ADHD. Maybe I don’t Have it maybe somebody is going to think I don’t I think I’m lying like why we place so much. There’s so much at stake with that idea of like, oh, maybe this is all in my head because that’s right. lived our whole lives. Maybe it’s all in my head. So we’re gonna apply that to our ADHD diagnosis as well. Yeah. All right. So now you’re so you’re working with one on one clients? How can people in the Winnebago Illinois area find you? What’s the best way to reach you? Are you on social media?

Alejandra Kottke  55:34

Yes. So okay, so you can find me on Facebook, or Instagram. My name is Alejandra Kottke. For the my business for its Cornerstone sunless is the name of the business.

Katy Weber  55:50

Well, that’s super exciting. I really look forward to following your journey and either in the entrepreneur group or online in general, it’s been so much fun chatting with you and getting to know you and figuring out all the different parts underneath your umbrella that makes you you.

Alejandra Kottke  56:12

Oh, my goodness. Well, thank you. It’s been really, really nice to talk to you.