

# Abbie Cardwell: RSD, Morning Pages & being diagnosed to 11

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## SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Abbie Cardwell

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Abbie Cardwell 00:00

In my entire music career, I've had very stark chapters of hiding. And that rejection sensitive dysphoria plays a big role in my life. And as soon as I got the diagnosis within that first week I went that set the single I've been sitting on for a couple of years has to come out, I have to do it. And then I realized that the song sounds like an ADHD song, because it's about going underground till you can design



Katy Weber 00:42

Hello, and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school, jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens and it has been nothing short of overwhelming. I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who liked me discovered in adulthood they have ADHD and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Okay, before we get started, I would like to share with you an excerpt from a message I received from a listener a few months ago. Dear Katie, thank you for everything. Your podcast has helped me beyond words. You guided me to that incredible book, a radical guide for women with ADHD which shook me to my core and propelled me to chase a diagnosis like no tomorrow. The best part is I finally felt brave enough to return to my music career six weeks after being on medication after several years of hiding from my music career. The song was written years ago, and now I know it explains my life's struggle with ADHD when all this time I just thought I was a failed sensitive Piscean creative that was too old to be relevant anymore. Thanks for your part in showing me the truth. I can't thank you enough love Abby. Now Abby also sent me a link to the song she wrote called underground, which I've included in my show notes so you can listen to it too. I was so moved and touched and thrilled that I immediately reached out to her to have her on the podcast. So here we are at Episode 121, in which I interview Abby Cardwell. I soon discovered Abby is an accomplished musician from Byron Bay, Australia. She has won several

awards and was also a competitor on season one of Australia's the voice. In addition to her music, she also runs Abby's alchemy, a gorgeous line of eco friendly cleaning products. Now she's currently only shipping within Australia. So if you are an Australian listener, make sure to check out her website and Abby is offering a 10% discount for listeners of this podcast when you use the code dopamine love. And you can find all of that in the show notes. Abby and I talked about the experience of rejection sensitive dysphoria as an artist and how that can lead us to hide from the things we love most in life. We also talk about getting out of our own way and rediscovering our passions, we talk about hyper arousal and feeling like we are dialed to 11 I really enjoyed this conversation. I hope you do too. So without further ado, here is my interview with Abby Cardwell. so heavy I was so touched and thrilled when you sent me a message recently on Instagram talking about your your diagnosis journey, but also a return for you to a music career that you had taken a hiatus from and I was just so touched. And then you sent me a link to your song, which I was a little hesitant to listen to, because I thought Oh no, what if it's terrible. And it was so good. You remember my response? I was like, holy shit. He was such a good SOG and I just immediately pounced on you. And I was like, Oh my I have to hear your story. So thank you for joining me that say lovely. So yeah, so why don't you kind of talk me through how long ago you were diagnosed or what was happening in your life that you really started to put these pieces together and think this this could be ADHD?

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#### Abbie Cardwell 04:24

Well, I tell you now I'm like how did I never How did anyone never even to jest anything? It's mind blowing. But I I'd had a friend that was diagnosed seven years ago. And I didn't really know anything about it, you know, and she would talk about her problems and I've given you a bit that's no I'm not I'm a bit similar, but because I, you know, bless her. She's a little bit of a hot mess. And I was often helping her. I just assumed that I didn't it wasn't me at all. But it wasn't until another one of my side businesses had many, many of them to support my music, because music is hard for everyone. Well, most people. And it was this year I was I had meetings with marketing people, bookkeepers, I would sit with them, I would know what they'd want me to do, then I'd come home, and I would just be frozen. And I felt like I was going absolutely crazy. And then it dawned on me how I think this is what people are referring to is maybe ADHD. And as soon as I had that, thought it my, it was like the rug from my whole life pulled out from underneath. And I found your podcast. And when you mentioned that book by sorry, sold the women with ADHD, I got the audio book, I listened to it twice. And I just was absorbing all the information I could and was just completely broken apart. Absolutely, like my whole life. And I think because I'm an emotional Piscean and a musician that had a very turbulent childhood, I just put it all down to that. And when I realized I needed to get diagnosed, and the waiting list, some of them weren't even taking anyone. The way the the first waiting list, I had to wait till March next year. And I just felt like my whole life was at stake, relationships, business, sanity, everything. So I kept going to the doctor and getting more referrals. And I went on a cancellation with with a lady that specializes in ADHD with children. And of course, the children they cancel a lot. So I got in very quickly, it was within maybe six weeks. And in that first meeting, I had found a book online, a pre diagnosis thing, and I did all of it, which I hate paperwork. But I did the whole thing and just handed it to her. And within that first session, she said yeah, okay, let's, let's try some medication and see what happens. And it was night and day. The I think, for me, the biggest thing was in that salary Solden book, where they talk about hiding. That's where I realized, in my entire music career, I've had very stark chapters of hiding. And that rejection sensitive dysphoria plays a big role in my life. And as

soon as I got the diagnosis within that first week, I went that set the single I've been sitting on for a couple of years has to come out, I have to do it. And then I realized that the song sounds like an ADHD song. Because it's about going underground. Till you can sign.



Katy Weber 08:39

Oh, absolutely. Right. I feel like a file that under the signs were there all along?



Abbie Cardwell 08:46

Yeah, yeah. So you know, here I am. And my other side business, which as well has a similar story, like I was basically, when I first moved to the paradise of Byron Bay, I was needing money fast. And I cooked up this idea of doing very fancy posh cleaning for the stars. And in order to get me through that, which was at the time, it was a really, you know, I just come from being on the voice and I was in a movie in Mexico and I've done all this stuff. And then I was cleaning so I started making products that made me want to clean and I was putting crystals in them and they were plant based. And so then, you know, that creativity came out and I started this business called Abby's alchemy and so now I have this dopamine filled cleaning business. She's hilarious



Katy Weber 09:59

ya know? Oh, absolutely, I think it's you know, it's funny to me, that's actually really clever going with, you know, looking up clinics that work with children because of the cancellation. I think that's really brilliant. I'm like, hopefully somebody out there can take a chapter of that book. Because I feel like that's also one of the agonizing things about seeking this diagnosis is the waitlist that's happening right now to so many of us, right. And that feeling of like this, we have such a sense of urgency around the validation we need for the dog with the diagnosis and how it feels physically painful to have to wait. And it's like that, in itself is the diagnosis. Like if it feels physically painful for you to have to not immediately have this. You know, this, this revelation validated in some way. I'm like, Yeah, I think you're on the right track.



Abbie Cardwell 10:50

Yeah, I did it first wonder, Should I get diagnosed? What difference does it make? And that's what little I knew about it at that time. But I really think that it is invaluable to have that compassion that it allows you is everything and my partner. I think at first he was like, No, you're not because his idea of it was pretty limited. But then we both started to notice all the things that I do that annoy him. Pretty much that like talking a lot info dumping in the morning, upon waking. And trying not to talk when we're watching a film. And, you know, when I'm cleaning my house, it's a bit different. I get distracted. So there's usually 10 different things happening at once.



Katy Weber 11:56

Interesting, right? It is so much easier to clean somebody else's space than our own. Yeah

interesting, right? It is so much easier to clean somebody else's space than our own. Yeah. Now, now, you had mentioned that you had a tumultuous childhood, and I think I saw somewhere maybe it was one of your Instagram posts, you had talked about growing up spending some years in Singapore, right. So what was what was your childhood like? And what were some of the things when you were having connecting these dots where you looked back over your life and thought, Oh, my goodness, it was ADHD all along?

A

Abbie Cardwell 12:32

Well, I think that, you know, like I had my parents separated when I was young, which to me was fine. I just had suddenly had two homes. And but it got tricky when the parents were not getting on. My mom and stepfather moved to Singapore, and they were three years there, and then three years in England. And then when I was 12. I chose to leave my mother because I didn't feel safe with my stepfather. So but then my dad's fourth, I'm pretty sure my dad was ADHD. He married five times. So he's, my dad's then wife decided she didn't want to be a stepmother. So then I went and lived with guardians. So that rejection sensitive dysphoria when you're young. I think I just put it all down to what happened to me as a kid. But, you know, I think the RSD it makes sense of why I have reacted to friendship, breakdowns that they just devastate me cripplingly and even when I went on the voice, I knew it was a TV show, and there was every chance I you know, get kicked off, but it's still devastated me. And it was just not logical. And then I started learning piano about a year and a half ago, and my teacher in her very traditional French way got kind of firm with me, and which is fine for most people. But I left like a toddler in tears, and never played piano again. And I look back at that, and I go, that is rejection sensitive dysphoria, totally because I wanted to be perfect and write and do this song that I was obsessed with. And she wanted me to go from a certain section of the song, and my brain wouldn't allow me to do that. I had to do it from the top and goes True. And so it was, I look back at that and go, Oh, my brain was working differently, and I needed more encouragement. And I do love the piano, and I want to pick it back up again. But I might need to find a more playful teacher or something. Right.



Katy Weber 15:20

I'd like to take a moment to thank better help for sponsoring this podcast. If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know, I am a big proponent of therapy therapy provides me the best opportunity for verbal processing something that is so important for my kind of brain and my sense of self. What I love about BetterHelp is that it's not a crisis line. It's not self help. It is professional therapy that's done securely online from the comfort of your home. They assess your needs and match you with your own licensed professional therapist, and it's available for clients worldwide. So you get access to a broad range of expertise that might not be available to you locally. It also tends to be more affordable than traditional offline therapy and financial aid is available. If you visit their website and read their testimonials. There are actually quite a few reviews that specifically reference help with ADHD as a special offer for listeners of the women and ADHD podcast, you'll get 10% off your first month, simply sign up at [betterhelp.com/women ADHD](https://betterhelp.com/women-ADHD), that's BetterHelp help.com/women ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp. I do feel like all of us remember exactly where we were the first time we ever heard the term rejection sensitive dysphoria. We were like, what's that? Let me Google that. And then that feeling of like, Oh, my goodness, this, this explains so much. You know, it was interesting, because I feel like we're talking about that the concept of hiding in the Sarasota Michelle Frank workbook, it's what was so interesting to

me, when I first listened to that book, and I had the same reaction, I listened to it, it was like, this is incredible. And then I went out and bought the book just to own it. And, and have read it several times at this point. But it's like, the thing that really amazed me about the concept of hiding was that I understood that, you know, we masked a lot, and that there were many times where I may have tried to put on this public front about who I really was. And I understood that concept of masking. But when I read the book, it was the first time I realized how much I was, I had pulled away from things, because I felt rejection sensitivity and that I you know that there were people who may have pulled away from me because I was too much or it wasn't, you know, it was a little didn't work. But I was actively pulling away from a lot of things in my life, you know, to protect, to protect, I think we pull away from things to protect ourselves emotionally from that RSD it's like we've been burned, we know how hard it is to feel and process those emotions. So we're like, I can't go there anymore, right. And I, and I feel like that's so tragic. And so many of the ways that we do kind of pull away from things that are important to us. Right, and then

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Abbie Cardwell 18:05

go ahead, all right, I was just gonna say it's made me think about my father in a different way. Because he wasn't really very present. And you know, he wasn't a great father. But when he died, I was very fortunate to be by his bed, I flew in and I was there. And, you know, he was basically kind of, he wasn't conscious, but I had the fortunate position of singing him over the line. And I feel that it neatly tied everything out that experience where there was so much love, that it healed that whole life of not feeling rejected by him. And I, you know, I think now, he, I'm quite certain that he did have ADHD or something like that.



Katy Weber 19:16

I think it's like, I feel like I've heard from other guests who have talked about, you know, how recognizing some of the struggles that, you know, our parents or grandparents might have had as a result of having undiagnosed ADHD feeling, like a failure, feeling lost, feeling like you're broken, and being able to feel it feel like you have a little more empathy for them in the way that they may have treated you realizing kind of where that's coming from. It sounds like that's what you were saying. Right?

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Abbie Cardwell 19:45

Yeah. I mean, what are your thoughts on Gabrielle Martinez approach? Nature versus Nurture?



Katy Weber 19:54

I mean, I think there's a lot of things I aligned with in terms of you know, I'm always quite streaming on this podcast, What even are we talking about what is ADHD and, and one of the things I really like about Gabor ma T's approach is that he looks at the brain as having a sort of, you know that the ADHD has been facilitated by some form of trauma or some kind of malleability of our neural pathways, right. And so, this idea that, like, you know, we're not necessarily born with ADHD, the ADHD is what comes from the way in which our brain is

reacting to things that have happened to us in our life. And maybe there's certain types of brains genetically, that you know what, you know, I had another guest call it sensitive wiring, right? I really liked that term, but just, you know, this idea of like, there's neuro divergence, which is how I kind of think of certain people who are born with certain brains. And then those brains react to experiences in a way that might then facilitate ADHD in the form of distracted pneys, or disorganization, or poor memory, or a lot of the those behaviors that overlap with some of the other also trauma induced mood disorders like OCD or PTSD. So I really like the way of that thinking. And I think that was really important and really revelatory when he started writing about that. But I also like when I read scattered minds, I had to stop halfway through, I've never finished that book, because I found it really misogynist. I found it really, as it's I just there's so much about trauma and the relationship with the mother that I felt very uncomfortable with as a woman and as a mother, where I was like, what it how is this benefiting us to put so much blame on on the bonds and the relationship with mothers, when mothers often are so you know, are in such a state of struggle and overwhelm to begin with? I was like, How is this benefiting anybody to be like, at the end of the day, it was all mom's fault. And I realized that's oversimplifying it, and I'm sure he would disagree with me. But I that was that's kind of why I never recommend that book. Because I feel like it's really cool. I well, and he's one of the only psychologists that really will touch trauma with a 10 foot pole. And I feel like because it's such a complicated issue, I gotta give him props for really delving into that in a in a really curious way. And so, I think, you know, I think there's a lot of merit to a lot of the stuff he writes, but something about the whole relationship with the mother thing just rubs me the wrong way. I don't know. It's just feels very just yeah, anyway, just feels very masculine, right. In terms of the in terms of the like, yet we figured it all out. It's all comes down to the mom. And I'm like, Oh, really? It's very Freudian. So. But yeah, that's my that's my take on scattered minds in a nutshell. But I do think there's a lot about in, you know, in terms of just, you know, I think there's so many questions around like, why, why now? Right. I think that's the other the other question I have, which is like, why in the few, the last few years have so many of us been diagnosed is it just increased awareness over what to look for and what this looks like. And we're all just kind of collectively coming to understand that ADHD might have many more faces than we thought it used to? Or did we just experience a form of collective trauma because of lockdown, because of the pandemic? Or politically we're going through a lot of trauma, culturally, we're going through a lot of trauma in the last few years. So it's like, you know, is that what's happening to us? Are we having trauma like responses that mimic ADHD? Because so many of us are going through a lot right now? And I don't know. I mean, how do you even begin to unpack that? I feel like I've been doing that for the last since my diagnosis, like trying to really figure out what's happening here.



Abbie Cardwell 24:10

Yeah, and maybe the thing is, it's it's not about finding an answer. It's just having the question and seeking. Well, yeah, right.




Katy Weber 24:21

And I think that's what can be so profound about this diagnosis is that we're shifting away from that thinking of what's wrong with me. I'm the problem. I'm terrible. I can't do what everybody else is doing all of those ways in which we had sort of dumped on ourselves as being the problem and a diagnosis of ADHD and why it feels so liberating and not at all, pathological to so

many of us is because it's really an explanation and saying like, Oh, okay, this explains a lot, I was not the problem. This is an issue of emotional dysregulation or dopamine deficiency or whatever it you know, whatever is As the answer to each of our many myriad issues,

 Abbie Cardwell 25:04


I mean, one thing, I just think that in a way, it feels like now I know why I feel like I'm blessed with this curse of always feeling driven to do the thing I'm born to do. Always wanting to do my music or my art. And I feel that for people with ADHD, it's, it's heightened, like we have to live into our callings. Or we will suffer if we don't. It's like the volume on that which is ramped right up to 11.

 Katy Weber 25:47

Right. I know. And ever since I heard the term hyper arousal, I feel like I want to use it all the time instead of hyperactivity because so I just recently what, so a few months ago, when I went to the ADHD conference in the annual ADHD conference, William Dodson, who is an amazing psychologist, writer, he was giving a lecture where he talked about, instead of using the term hyperactivity, he prefers the term hyper arousal. And I just read, I just My jaw dropped, because I just felt like that so perfectly encapsulates what you're talking what you're explaining, right? Like, I don't think many of us really relate to hyperactivity, maybe you're like, oh, yeah, I guess I fidget a little, or I don't know, I twirl my hair. Like there's things I talk fast. Like, there's things where we recognize hyperactivity in ourselves. But hyper arousal just feels like that emotional response we get or like, you're saying, like, everything feels like it's turned to 11. Right. And, and I think, you know, it's an so that I definitely relate to so much more in terms of, you know, what I've often called the two muchness of life, where it's like, we can go from zero to 150, in terms of emotional response, and emotional dysregulation and just feeling like, or like you said, like, how do you even describe to people how a certain emotional, you know, a certain response to something can feel physically painful, right? And where people kind of give you this look like, All right, take it down a notch. But, and then you feel like you're well, you're like, oh, what's wrong with me that I'm, I'm feeling so overwhelmed in this moment?

 Abbie Cardwell 27:24

Yes, you just made me remember that as a little kid. I was always told that I was a bit too much. Because I was so emotional, like my grandmother's that I was sunshine and rain, when I was really little. Because I would really, really feel something and like, be crying. And then the next minute I'd be laughing. So yeah, it's it's at 11.

 Katy Weber 27:51

Right? Well, and I think it's an interesting paradox that we have, which is like, on the one hand, we have this childlike enthusiasm about going for something that we're interested in, right. It's like we feel compelled to follow a trail of interest, a new you know, when we're, we have so much of that like driven energy and that flow, when it's when everything is flowing wonderfully. It's just it's magic. But at the same time, it's like the flip side of that is the hiding the turning

our back the pulling away from something because it feels too much. And we want to protect our hearts, right? It's like, you have to protect you to the fragility of your mental health sometimes in a way that, that we have to pull away from things we love. And I was just reminded of that, when you were kind of when you had written to me about, about having, leaving, singing and leaving a career that was so important to you, but at the same time, like I just felt it in your words about how the when this, I don't know. So like, the stakes are high, or you know, sometimes a passion can feel like too much, right?

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Abbie Cardwell 29:01

Yeah. And I think also, when you have societal pressures of like, like, for me turning 40 I was like, Oh, well, that's it. You know, I didn't make it. I. Well, other people would go, Oh, wow. Like she's starring in a movie. There was a daco made about me in Mexico that that traveled the Film Festival and it looked on paper, like, I'd made it, but then I was coming back to Australia and then working as a cleaner. And so I was like, Oh, well, you know, that's it. I've had my time. But, um, one thing I really want to add is, I did I had had the book, Julia Cameron's book, the artists way for 20 years, and then I finally was ready for it in that complete desperation black hole. I dedicated myself to it. I did my morning pages every morning for 12 weeks. I did the artists date, once a week, which is you spend half an hour just doing something for fun, whatever it is visiting an art shop, doing something new this playing, and it flipped the switch. I've done my morning pages ever since. And when I got my diagnosis, I started doing the artists way again. And I think it's great, particularly for people with ADHD because you have to play and make time, half an hour a week to do something to fill your cart. And I think there's something in that writing every morning, when your subconscious is still active, you're more in touch with getting answers and guidance. And it can really help take all of the rubbish out of your head. And I think that that's a tool that I will never give up. Yeah,



Katy Weber 31:07

I love that. That's a very ADHD thing to say, to getting all the rubbish out of your head. But it's true, right?

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Abbie Cardwell 31:14

Yeah, if I miss a day or two, it's okay. I don't beat myself up. But I feel like well, I need to dump and dump in the pages. Yeah. Yeah, I really



Katy Weber 31:26

liked the idea of scheduling and sort of guilt free downtime, because I think that can be really difficult for many of us for myself, I now schedule, non working time, because I find it very difficult for to have that boundary. If I'm just like lying around, you know, if I'm, if I have downtime, I usually feel guilty over the fact that I'm not doing something productive. And but I also realized that downtime is productive, and just different ways, right? So I have to like be very intentional about it.



A**Abbie Cardwell 31:56**

I just discovered something which might seem crazy, because I'm 47. But I've just realized that trying to do tax book work, anything that I find challenging the week before my period is just crazy. It will lead to total burnout meltdown. Because that's what I've been trying to do. No, I need to, like lock that in the diary and go this week is not that.

**Katy Weber 32:32**

Yeah, yeah, I think it's I'm so terrible at keeping track of that just also because I'm also about to turn 48. And I'm like, my, my period is not regular it by any means anymore. And so it's really difficult for me to like get that cycle. But I think you know, it's one of the things that realizing how much hormones play into our ADHD and our executive functioning as women is such a revelation, right, which is like, Oh, that explains a lot, right? I can try. But at the same time keeping track of it is not something we're terribly good at. So. Right. But it is, but I think that that's such an important way of managing, you know, when we talk about managing ADHD, it's really about paying attention in those ways, where it's like, how can I set myself up for success in these ways where I'm like, this is not the week to do that, right? And really trying to understand that there's like, there are cycles to when it might be a great time to do that. Or when it might be a better time to, you know, write emails or when there's, you know, trying to really think of like, where is where's my cyclical energy? That's been really huge for me too. Yeah, I call it bio rhythms where I'm like, What are my bio rhythms throughout the day and throughout the month, and even throughout the year, right, pulling back and being like, what, what are the seasons that I'm most likely to do things in?

A**Abbie Cardwell 33:54**

Yeah, now now you've got me thinking I need to actually map it out to the year in the diary and just write in next year's diary. I'm just gonna I have to I have the Google Calendar and the pay for one because I don't trust myself.

**Katy Weber 34:11**

Oh, I do too. Plus, I just like to write it over and over again. Yeah. When I was diagnosed with ADHD, it completely turned my world upside down. I looked back at so much of my life, my grades in school, my multiple careers and hobbies, my friendships, my marriage, motherhood, my relationship with food and my body like all of this with a new lens. And it was overwhelming to say the least. If you've been diagnosed with ADHD and you're feeling blown away by this new insight into your brain and how it operates. I totally understand I can help you begin to sort through this chaos. explore who you are and how your brain operates. So you can finally start to lean into your strengths and begin to use them to your advantage moving forward together. We can work to identify what obstacles you've been facing and create strategies to help you start living a more fulfilling, gratifying life, head over to [women in adhd.com/coaching](https://www.adhd.com/coaching), to book a 30 minute initial consult with me, so we can figure out if my brand of one on one coaching is right for you. Again, that's [women and adhd.com/coaching](https://www.womenandadhd.com/coaching). And you can find that link in the

episode show notes. So that's, you know, makes me think like, what else do you feel like? What has changed for you since your diagnosis? I mean, we've talked a little bit about going back to music and

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Abbie Cardwell 35:36

yeah, music is my I feel like is the reason that I'm alive. I have it, it comes. To me, it feels well, easy. And one of the hardest things as well, because you've always got to face yourself, you've always got to go to battle in a way. But I think it's what I'm here to do. And I've still faced resistance, you know, you still, when you go to write a song, it's like, you want it to be the best, every time. But yeah, I've had to learn how to just play and do a little bit as a habit. And I joined an online songwriting Club, which you just have to write a song in an hour, they throw a word up, and you just have to make noise and put things out there, which is a really good practice, because you just have to do something, anything. And it it does help you to let go and just make whatever and have less attachment. So I think, doing what you love at whatever capacity if you have no money that doesn't have to get in the way of the thing that you love. Like, if you want to be an artist, I firmly believe anything you want to do just do it. But if you have a pen, you can draw in on a napkin. It can be anything, and then over time, that will just blossom. That's my advice. Did I go off tangent there?



Katy Weber 37:18

Oh, totally. I loved it. But you know, it was I love the music group. Because it's so perfectly like, it's like you've got you've got an urgent deadline, which helps you overcome perfectionism. And the overthinking. I think that's so perfect for our brains, right? That just like Nope, don't even think about it. And why we love you know why we love that spinning plate deadline feeling right? Which is like, Oh, I get I get past myself. I get out of my own way. And then you're just like, I just have to throw something together. Yeah, yeah.

A

Abbie Cardwell 37:51

And there's accountability. And you've got a group, a small group of people, and you have to listen to everyone staff, and teachers, you even if you listen to something that you really don't like, you learn how to provide feedback and just comment on the things that stood out to you. And you learn so much in that process as well. So it's, it's a really cool thing to find a group like that.



Katy Weber 38:22

Do you find your approach your own approach to writing music or performing is different

A

Abbie Cardwell 38:28

now? Well, this new song is really it's a new thing for me and I've called it electro twang, because I've you know, I played banjo guitar, ukulele harmonica, it's always been very rootsy Americana singer songwriter stuff, apart from when I randomly flew to Mexico and started

Americana singer songwriter stuff, apart from when I randomly flew to Mexico and started making music there, which was like Mexican surf, rock and roll and I sang in Spanish. And I did have a 10 piece Mexican band in Melbourne for a while. But apart from that this new music is just so exciting. Because I started in my just experimenting in this club. I started adding electronic stuff and samples but then bringing in the pedal steel or the banjo. So for me, it's like this whole new world has opened up where it's like modern and old and my partner Matthew writes techno music so he could hear what I was playing with on my GarageBand but he has the skills to actually make it magical. So he took my ideas and then made the single. So it's really nice now that we have something that we can do together sometimes you So, yeah, that's great.



Katy Weber 40:02

That's great. And does it sound playful? Right, which is what you were saying it's yeah,



Abbie Cardwell 40:07

yes. And, you know, I know, I just know, in my heart that I'm, I'm most at home onstage for some strange reason. I've always felt whole, more completely me on stage. For some reason, I did not really understand why. But I know that I'm supposed to be doing that. And I'm happy. I have a few more singles up my sleeve that will come out over the next few months. And I have big visions of performing. And also sort of enjoying having a side business to support that at the moment. With my dopamine cleaning stuff. Bye. Yeah, yeah, it's nice to not have all the pressure on music, I think when when it was all about being on social media and having to make a living, you know, I used to live in my van and tour around and travel all the time. And I think that your RSD can flare up a lot when your need, for me the pressure of having to make a living, it all becomes because it's you, you're the brand it eats itself worth when you're like, Oh, well, I'm not, you know, I'm struggling, that I have another thing that I have this sort of spiritual, creative outlet through my alchemy, making all these wonderful things in my lab. And it's just another expression of my creativity. And somehow it all works.



Katy Weber 41:54

Right? Yeah. But I feel like that was for me, I had this long list of short lived businesses, I'm not going to call them failed businesses. But they were like short lived. But I also feel like now I look at them as all each one of them as being a building block, right? Like this patchwork quilt of, of who I am now. Yeah,



Abbie Cardwell 42:15

totally. I was a Hypnotherapist. And like, when I, I did that for a while in Melbourne. And I realized, it's like, when you're doing hypnotherapy on someone, it was, it was so similar to writing a song because you've got to think on your feet. While they're under hypnosis, you don't know what they're going to say. So you have to think in metaphors. And I was like, this is like fun lighting. But in the end, it was my executive dysfunction that I just sort of turned me off because he has to do so much marketing, and to find clients and do all of that. So that, you

know, I look back now and go, my heart, all of my career, even my music career, it was always that stuff that I struggled with. And even now I am getting some help to look at all of the stuff I find really, really hard with Arby's our communities like the bookkeeping, and the marketing and all of that stuff. I like elements of it, but planning for me. Not my strong suit.



Katy Weber 43:23

Right? Yeah. And it kind of amazes me that like, why would I ever think I was supposed to be good at all the things like, you know, I've always, always been, you know, now I'm kind of in this framework of like, who can I offload this to? I can't do this, I don't want to do it. Who can I get to do this is much more my mindset now as opposed to like, why did we always default to this place of shame? Like, I should be able to do my taxes? Like, why would you be able to do your taxes if you that's not what you're cut out for either? Like, I've just sort of feel like why did we always put so much pressure on ourselves to do all of the things by ourselves?



Abbie Cardwell 44:02

Yeah, asking for help. That's a big is huge. I like it even yesterday, I was carrying heaps of stuff and someone says, Oh, do you want to hand and I basically, almost short circuited, I wanted to say yes, but I was like, and it got really awkward. And then I said, okay, like, they all laughed about it. Why can't we just say yes, we I get because when you do say yes, you're allowing their energy they're giving like people receive from energy from giving. So we're cutting off the flow. Well, we don't do it. We have to have to be able to say yes, please. Thank



Katy Weber 44:55

you. Right. That's such a good to myself. I know. I know. It does a good job. A reminder that actually people like to help. And yeah, we are helping them by allowing them to help us. It's it's reciprocal. Yeah. And also, I thought about when you were talking about being on stage, and how comfortable it is to be on stage because I do think that's something that some, many of us have that that question like, Am I an introvert? Am I an extrovert because I feel like an introvert a lot of the time. But I love being performing. I love being on stage, I have a performative element, right? I love, you know, public speaking or being on stage. And I wonder you mentioned as a child being, you know, accused of being too much. And onstage you have permission to be as much as you want, right. And I saw, I wonder if there's something there, if there's a connection there in terms of the permission, when you're on when you're on stage to be as much as you want.



Abbie Cardwell 45:54

I feel that I am inherently an introvert, because I recharge through being alone. And I love my space, in my alone time. But when I'm onstage, it's gonna sound a bit woowoo. But I have always and even before I knew about woowoo stuff, I would before I went on stage, I had this conversation, it was like I was connecting with my guides. And being on stage was always felt that it was about allowing people, the more comfortable and the more joy I had on stage. It gave everyone in the room permission to feel it. And so if I was nervous, there was one time

where I was on live television playing a song I didn't know. And I was really nervous. And I had to just say to myself, get out of the way. Because it's not about me. It's about, it's about everyone else. And I just have to sort of let everyone else come through me and take over. So I think maybe it's, it's a bit more of a spiritual thing. I don't know, being on stage. And then yeah, then I love being at home and making stuff and being in my garden. Yeah.



Katy Weber 47:30

That's beautiful. I love that. And I feel like I'm, I often don't think I'm very woowoo but I am a huge proponent of like energy in that way. I feel like there's so much energy between humans and in rooms, you know, and so we often talk about like, walking into a room and feeling the vibe, right? Feeling energy and rooms from different people. And you know, never knowing if it's gonna be like, Hey, I'm gonna have the greatest time or you walk into a room and you're like, oh, no, I need to leave. This is not the vibe for me. I think right? Like I love that idea that we create a sense of energy between us Yeah,



Abbie Cardwell 48:08

maybe ADHD people just have that heightened Do you think so?



Katy Weber 48:13

Right. Well, everything else is turned up. I wouldn't be surprised if we feel that frequency



Abbie Cardwell 48:19

and, and feel things without logically knowing. Like you can, you know, know if you can trust someone without even really having any met them know, like, sometimes I meet people. And straightaway, I know that it's safe to talk about all the weird crazy stuff. And I don't know, I just know.



Katy Weber 48:41

It's great. Right? Yeah, I definitely feel like those are the those are the our ADHD sisters. Because it's like, you know, I know, I've I've always had always been like that where I was like, I don't have time for small talk. I like Can we please like, get immediately to the trauma? Or like, let's get immediately to like, the weird, you know, theories about science or something like I've like, you know, let's



Abbie Cardwell 49:05

make a t shirt that says, allergic to small talk. Oh, I like that. An allergy bracelet.



Katy Weber 49:14

There you go. You've just created another small another side business.



Abbie Cardwell 49:19

Write that down patient business.



Katy Weber 49:25

Oops. I know. Right? Oops, I accidentally started another business.



Abbie Cardwell 49:29

Yeah, oops. One great thing. This guy told me this two years ago, and I'm doing it. You get a little book and you write on it ideas carpark. And you put all of your ideas into the book. So it helps get everything out.



Katy Weber 49:50

You know, I just saw Tiktok video recently and I want to reach out to this woman because it's one of the most brilliant brilliantly simple methods I've seen. to this idea of the brain dump, or like, you know, taking just clearing out all of the rubbish and putting it somewhere, because I often talk about that with my clients, too. It's like, How can I park this somewhere. So it takes up less bandwidth in my brain, but I don't lose it forever, right, because I think we have that idea of like, I need to hold on to these things. Because if I don't, if I don't act on it immediately, or if I don't tend to it, it's going to be lost in the ether. And so the so this woman has, she basically just had like, a sticky notes, like, post it notes, and she just writes everything from, you know, make a dentist appointment to, you know, you know, I don't know, radically transform the environmental policies in my neighborhood, or something like it was just like everything, from crazy, outlandish ideas, to chores that needed to be tended to, and she just writes it all down. And then she just has paper after paper after paper, where she just puts the sticky notes like in a grid, on the papers, and she just flips through them and then looks for like, what are three ones that I can do right now? What are three I can do today. And she just does. It's sort of this variation of the pick three model that I had heard about, I've heard about before, which was very successful for a lot of people, which is like, don't have an overwhelming to do list, just pick three things. And that never worked for me because I just, there's I can't just pick three, I don't know, it's never worked for me. But there was something very appealing about this idea of just having endless sticky notes and going through them and just being like, Okay, what, what am I doing today,



Abbie Cardwell 51:34

with the morning pages, Julia Cameron says like, once you get to the end of the book, you get two different colored highlighters. So one color, you highlight ideas that stand out, and then the other color or action to do. So at the end of it, you can go through and see what it is that you

other color or actions to do. So at the end of it, you can go through and see what it is that your heart really, really wants. So that's a cool concept. But for me, I actually find it pretty challenging to read over the old stuff. Right? I just want to I just want to ban and which which people do to just like, let it go. And yeah,



Katy Weber 52:20

yeah, I can't imagine going back and reading my journals from university, that would be torture to me.



Abbie Cardwell 52:25

No, I don't all of mine from my childhood.



Katy Weber 52:29

Did you really, that's bold, that maybe I'll do that one on a New Year's Eve. I'll set fire to them all.



Abbie Cardwell 52:38

It was really, really, really, really cathartic. And there's another ritual that I think, could be really nice for ADHD people. It's a Peruvian ritual, called a despacho ceremony. And you traditionally get white tissue paper. But instead of making a New Year's, you know, a wish list of all the things that you want to do, it's completely opposite. You basically get all like food and flowers and organic things, and you make a lack of visual Mandala. But every item that you put on this tissue paper while you're building this beautiful piece of food, art, or whatever you're using, is you're saying thank you for the things in your life. And I did this one New Year's Eve where I was alone and feeling sorry for myself. But I discovered the superpower of gratitude that night because I did it for about three hours. And I was writing on leave and saying thank you for all of everything in my life. And I was buzzing for a good two weeks after that. And then on the January the first you wrap it up, and you bury it in the ground like you're giving it back to the earth. And it was totally magical. And I've done it every new years ever since. And I wrote friends in. And even guys that come round to parties. I'm like we're doing a dispatcher ceremony and I thought they'd be like, Nah, they're totally into it. And like, are you gonna dig a big hole in the ground? And so I think that, you know, I've heard people say all gratitude, you know, super power, but physically doing something like that is really really powerful. Yeah.



Katy Weber 54:40

Wow, that sounds amazing. I don't think I've ever heard of it. But I'm a big fan of, of ritual, especially New Year and Solstice rituals, too. So I'm like, Oh, I'm gonna look into that. That's so cool.



A

Abbie Cardwell 54:52

It's just so different from going all you know, like, I want this and I don't have that like you're thinking From with new year's resolutions often of what you don't have. And it's, it's totally different space, a heart space to be like, Wow, I'm so grateful for there's a lot to be grateful for. When you start doing it. It's sort of snowballed. You might start at first going, whatever. But it does actually work.



Katy Weber 55:26

Yeah. And I, we've talked about this, this theme, I think kind of is woven throughout on the podcast, this idea that it is literally more interesting for us to focus on the negative, it's more there's more dopamine and focusing on what we don't have. There's the puzzle. That's the puzzle. We love to solve the problem, where can I you know, how can I improve? How can I fix things? And so we tend to spend very little mental energy on what's working. And then it's like a surprise, why are we also depressed? And so it's like, you know, that idea of like, Yes, take it really building that muscle to reframe a lot of the time has been an a, you know why I think people like Sorry, sold in their work is so important is because they spend so much time, rather than saying, you have ADHD, we're going to fix everything. She says, no, nothing was ever wrong with you. let's reframe some of the things that are wonderful in your life. And let's really have you know, IX show, let's work on having gratitude for the amazing human you already are. And I think that's so much more profound and powerful than saying like, alright, let's figure out how we're going to find the right skip perfect planner for you and how we're going to fix everything. And it's like, no, no, no, You never need it to be fixed. She says, I think she says dogs and furniture are the only things that need to be fixed.

A

Abbie Cardwell 56:45

Oh my God. Give me another business idea. Hypnotherapy with music with with all that positive stuff.



Katy Weber 56:58

Right. I love it. Yes, absolutely. Sign me up. Now, I know I always love to ask if you could rename ADHD would you call it something else?

A


Abbie Cardwell 57:08

Okay. Well, I noticed the young man wrote the other week he called it Dave. heard of that?



Katy Weber 57:17

Oh, yeah, I've heard of that. Connor DeWolf. Yep.





A

Abbie Cardwell 57:21

Dopamine, attention variability, executive dysfunction. But I when I was trying to think about it, I the closest thing I got and I know it's not on point, but what came to my mind was intention overdrive is in your and it has different meanings in it too, because your true intentions will overdrive everything. So that was the closest I got because I felt like, you know, it heightens our need to follow our calling. It's not I know, it's not the one yet,



Katy Weber 58:06

but I like it. Or we could also just call it like turned turned up to 11. dials at 11

A

Abbie Cardwell 58:14

Yeah, it's just 11 we just call it 1111.



Katy Weber 58:17

Oh, I like that. Very simple. It's great. I could see the merch, right. I could see the merch already. Just the dye the music dial and like the amp and then just say

A

Abbie Cardwell 58:26

the name of that girl and that theory. Oh, yeah.



Katy Weber 58:30

From Stranger Things, right. It's like if you know, you know, 11 Yeah. She has ADHD for sure. Hi,

A

Abbie Cardwell 58:37

llegada. 11 I love to be on the t shirt too.



Katy Weber 58:45

Perfect. Well, I'm so pleased that you reached out to me, I was so touched. I'm just so in awe of your talent and your perspective. So I'm so grateful that you reached out to me, and that we were able to have this conversation.

A

Abbie Cardwell 59:03

Thank you. Thank you. And this is my coming out. Like I haven't told people publicly, so. But I figured that you know like someone said to me don't tell anyone You'll get judged And I

figured that, you know, like someone said to me, don't tell anyone. You'll get judged. And I thought I got a bit fearful. And then I thought, but that, wouldn't I be missing out on connecting with my people?



**Katy Weber** 59:32

Yeah, I think I know it's funny, because when I kind of came out and I came out accidentally, because I have this platform, and I sort of act you know, was sort of like, oh, yeah, hello, I guess I'm out now. And it's so funny because when other people who have ADHD and you tell them that you've been diagnosed, the reaction is like, Yay, congratulations. Oh my god, that's so wonderful. Welcome to the club. And people who who don't know anything about ADHD or just sort of look have that look like I'm sorry about your disorder. Are



**Abbie Cardwell** 1:00:01

I know, I thought that the other day it was a bit like I'm sorry, not what?



**Katy Weber** 1:00:05

Right? Like, the more we talk openly about it, the more we're changing what it looks like. So it's not like people immediately think, Oh, she's a hot mess. She's got ADHD. I mean, yes, we all are, in our own way, hot messes, but I think it's, you know, that ADHD also looks like very creative, very capable, very, you know, intelligent people who are doing wonderful things. And, and, you know, just because I can't fold my laundry, that who cares. But, you know, but we're really like, I think these the more of us, the more we kind of live that truth, the more we're D stigmatizing this stereotype of like, oh, you can't possibly have ADHD because you're too and then insert something positive. Like, that's such a ridiculous stereotype. That it's like, You're too You're too successful to have ADHD or your two together. It's like, no, that's actually the two of those. They coexist.



**Abbie Cardwell** 1:01:01

Yeah. Yes. I think knowing about it, and actually accepting the shadow side of it is, is to love it. The whole thing, you know, understanding the weaknesses that come with it, but then, like, all of the positive, like, I wouldn't take it away. Someone said, here's a pill, I'll be like, No, right. This is I'm, I'm digging this. This okay. Like, despite the downside, the creativity, oh, my god, the ideas, the business ideas, right.



**Katy Weber** 1:01:41

Excellent. No, okay. So I'll have a link to your website. But how is there another way of what's the best way that people can find you and look you up and one look, all of my



**Abbie Cardwell** 1:01:53

music is everywhere. So just under my name. It you'll you'll see on ADHD with all the different styles of music when you get up, man. I've got just a few of my albums in Spotify, because they don't pay a lot. The rest of my albums are on my website, but and then if someone's interested in dopamine feel cleaning products like this. Can I show it?



Katy Weber 1:02:27

I mean, yeah, this is on YouTube, so you can show it for the for the YouTube viewers. I'll put a link to you. Is there a separate website for the abbeys alchemy



Abbie Cardwell 1:02:38

there is yet I'll make sure it look if someone wants something posted overseas, we can talk but I don't know when they sell overseas just because it's expensive. Yeah, well,



Katy Weber 1:02:49

I I've got quite a Australia New Zealand listenership growing so right. Wow. Well,



Abbie Cardwell 1:02:59

they cleaning products. You know, they're multisensory, because the crystals make music. And it's all natural, and they're refillable. So that's, and that my mother will find love before I do the allergy T shirts. But yeah.



Katy Weber 1:03:19

Well, and also like you were talking about what the hypnotherapy right? It was like your musical background was able to give you that unique perspective of the similarities. And I'm like, if we don't have all of these crazy experiences, and try all of these random things we are we're able to see those connections in ways that other people aren't so



Abbie Cardwell 1:03:37

yeah, I think I'll get back into the hypnotherapy. Maybe when I'm an old lady. I can I can see it. I just see all crazy and woowoo and doing past life regression,



Katy Weber 1:03:50

kaftan crystals Well, I love it. Thank you so much, Abby, it's been absolutely delightful to hear your story with Heiser. I'd love I'd say come around for dinner. Well, thanks again. It's been a pleasure. Have a lovely day, weekend. And there you have it. Thank you for listening. And I

really hope you enjoy this episode of the women and ADHD podcast. Also, you know, we ADHD ears crave feedback, and I would really appreciate hearing from you the listener. If you're a fan of the podcast, please take a moment to leave me a review on Apple podcasts or audible. And if that feels like too much and I get it. Then just take a few seconds right now to give me a five star rating. Or share this episode on your own social media to help reach more women who maybe have yet to discover and lean into this gift of neuro divergence see, and they may still be struggling and don't even know why. And if you'd like to find out more about me and my one on one coaching for women with ADHD, head over to [women and adhd.com/coaching](https://www.womenandadhd.com/coaching). And you can always find that link in the show notes. I'll see you next week when I interview another amazing woman who discovered that she is not lazy or crazy or broken. But she has ADHD and she is now on the path to understanding her neurodiversity and finally, using this gift to her advantage, take care till then