

# ADHD Bri: Doodling and the inattentive brain

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adhd, people, feel, terms, struggle, inattentive, diagnosis, diagnosed, community, anxiety, kid, talking, thought, doodling, conversations, comics, absolutely, experience, research, funny

## SPEAKERS

ADHD Bri, Katy Weber



Katy Weber 00:00

All right. Well, thank you for joining me. I'm so excited. And you know, your your illustrations are obviously doing very well or a lot of people are relating to them. You've sort of blown up since you started the account in July, so not that long ago. So why don't you sort of tell me about when you that was sort of around when you were diagnosed as well, right?



ADHD Bri 00:25

Yeah, I had been going through the diagnosis, prop SAS for kind of the beginning part of that spring. And I was waiting on the final Yes, like, we did a ton of the tests. And pretty much she was just going through background history. And she had my family fill out surveys and all that stuff. So we were just, she was already pretty much telling me that I was ADHD. But she wasn't doing the official you are like that. So right when I started posting was pretty much around the time that I got that final Yes, you are diagnosed officially ADHD.



Katy Weber 01:06

It's funny, I really needed even though I had a my therapist who has a doctorate in psychology, you know, said I'm pretty sure you have ADHD go get an official psychiatric evaluation, I got my psychiatric evaluation. Even though both of these professionals have said you have ADHD, I still like I needed that doctor to say out loud, you have it because I sort of almost felt like, I would always still be questioning, I think such a huge part of identity is just even. It's like the other imposter syndrome. You know, we talk about imposter syndrome with like that feeling of, you know, imposter syndrome with entrepreneurialism, or in coaching or those sorts of things. But I feel like there's this whole other imposter syndrome when it comes to just constantly questioning, did I? Did I do I just want this really badly? And often, you know, or do I actually have it? Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So what were some of the symptoms that you were experiencing that led you to even seek out the diagnosis in the first



#### ADHD Bri 02:03

place? So it's funny, I didn't seek out ADHD diagnosis at all. Like That wasn't my intent with seeing my therapist, I had no idea. I was ADHD. The only experience I had had with ADHD before all of this is my husband is diagnosed. He's been diagnosed since his teens, and he is predominantly hyperactive, okay, and he's a stereotypical, predominantly hyperactive. And then also my older sister, I didn't know she was formally diagnosed, but she also was hyperactive as a child. And now I know she would be considered more combined as an adult just because of how adults learn to mask their symptoms. So when I went in, I was actually goodness, I decided to go see a therapist, because I had had my son the year before. And I've, I've always had a lot of struggles. But I have gone through lengthy process over these years of trying to really get to the bottom of that, and I've gone through diagnosis and diagnosis and misdiagnosis. And so when I went this time I went, well, you know, I've been really anxious, I'm not getting my stuff done. I, you know, I haven't been able to get my stuff done. I am way behind and what I want to do I have no motivation. I'm not depressed. I'm not sad. Like I don't feel anything like that. I just, is my anxiety getting too much in me is this hormones from the baby like I had all these symptoms and all these traits way beforehand, but I think it's really hard to piece together all of that. Especially when you have other factors like being postpartum sweet. nation. Exactly. Oh, goodness. Yes. The sleep deprivation.



#### Katy Weber 03:59

So many contributing factors. Absolutely. I feel like that's a very, that's so common with moms when you're when you're in like the thick of it with the young babies. Yeah, you don't even know what to question because there's things are changing so much and your

life is so radically different that it's like it could there's so many other contributing factors for sure. Absolutely.



ADHD Bri 04:18

Yeah. So, I mean, when I went in, I just kind of, I met my therapist, fairly new. I just was looking for someone who was close to my area and who I could see in person after you know, all the you know, quarantine and lockdown stuff. Once that loosens up. I want to be able to see someone in person. So I chose someone closer by to where I live. And I did a little bit of research on her but ultimately I was like, Oh, she deals with stuff with anxiety, and she seems pretty experienced. So I went in and we did initially approach it from a okay you have generalized anxiety disorder. cuz I've been diagnosed with that. And she maintains that diagnosis as well today. But as I was talking, and as I was talking about certain experiences, she stopped me at one point. And she said, Hey, you know, this is really interesting, because Have you ever heard of a thing called inattentive ADHD? And I was like, No, I don't know what that is at all. Like, I know what ADHD is. And, in fact, my husband has told me several times in the past, he thought I was ADHD. And I was like, No, like, I'm not ADHD, I know how you are. That's not how I am. And so when she brought that up, I was like, I have no idea what that is. She's like, okay, we're gonna table it for now. Because I really want to concentrate on your anxiety issues. But like, just to let you know, that's, that's something I want to talk about. And a few sessions later, she stopped me and she said, Okay, you know what, now I want to get you evaluated, I want to do an evaluation for ADHD, because it seems like so much of what you're talking about is tied into these traits. And so we started that process. And I started doing my own kind of individual research on top of when we discuss things in person and doing all that testing. And so it was just really cool to suddenly have so much of my life fall into place, you know, you get, I had no idea what it was. And then as I was going through, I was like, This is the answer to everything like, and, you know, I've gone through diagnosis before, like, when I was younger, I've been diagnosed as depressed, as anxious. I had a psychiatrist tell me that I exhibited borderline personality disorder traits. And that was, once I looked, I was like, I can kind of see it, but at the same point, it doesn't fit. And while I still do think anxiety fits, for sure, I just never felt like a lot of the things they had discussed with me and, you know, did diagnosis with me for ever really fit the way that ADHD fits for me. And it's funny enough, since I've been more cognizant of my ADHD, and I actually do take medication for it, it's actually reduced my anxiety as well. So it's just it's been a huge change. For me.



Katy Weber 07:36

I've had that same experience, too. I had, you know, I still sort of felt like I had postpartum

depression and postpartum anxiety, even though my youngest is nine. I never knew what to do with that. And now, since my diagnosis, which was only last year as well, you know, I'm reevaluating all of the ways that, you know, the, this long history of depression and anxiety with this whole new lens, and this whole new understanding and realizing the how intertwined everything is, and yeah, how I don't even feel like they're co-morbidities because it just feels like the depression and anxiety stem from ADHD, or at least the undiagnosed ADHD, you know, yeah, it is amazing.

A

ADHD Bri 08:21

It's funny, you know, being a parent and having gone through pregnancy, childbirth, and having a newborn and, you know, raising my kid, being around my kid every day, just how much it's really magnified. What I've been dealing with my whole life, like, I think, I really have to credit having my son to leading me to get this diagnosis, because I've always just kind of shoved all these different things under the rug. I was like, Well, no, I'm just, I'm just lazy, or I'm just, you know, you know, I constantly make excuses for how I was, and I was kind of, not while I wanted an answer. I also hadn't had success, success, finding an answer, right. So I just kind of had given up at this stage.



Katy Weber 09:15

Well, yeah, I mean, I think that it's sort of becomes a cycle in terms of the depression and anxiety where it's like, I know something's wrong with me. I can't articulate it, nobody else seems to quite understand my situation, you know, and then it just gets worse. You know, it's sort of sort of spirals from there. I think you really, yeah, you were really fortunate to have somebody who if you came to them with what are so often from my experience and from other mothers I've talked to is misdiagnosed or immediately treated as postpartum depression and anxiety that you had somebody who is able to really kind of see the nuances there and say, maybe this is all coming from down VHD

A

ADHD Bri 09:53

I think I got really lucky because she's actually a specialist in ADHD as well and she typically sees children with ADHD. But she said that it's been very common that when parents bring in their kids to be evaluated, that's when they realize they also are ADHD, right. And they end up getting evaluation. So just really funny and just kind of, it's interesting how that just all comes together.



Katy Weber 10:21

I know. Yeah, I mean, I, I didn't seek a diagnosis for either of my children before I got my own. But it really did a lot of my sort of the seriousness with which I actually started researching. I think there's like a two step process, there's like this mere suggestion that you might have it and you're like, Hmm, interesting. I don't know what to do with that information. And then there's like the second half, which is when you actually start looking into it, you start researching, you start like, like, for me, it was like, it sort of was this like, Oh, I started listening to podcasts. And then I started like, seeing more memes popping up. And then it was the sort of like, it just snowballs. Because then I was like, oh, my goodness, this is me, this is everything is, is exactly what's been in my brain all these years, and all of these thoughts, and I feel so accepted. And suddenly everything makes sense. And it just like, it's like this snowball going down the hill. So I didn't actually I didn't have the experience that I think a lot of mothers did do have, which is they are seeking an ADHD diagnosis for their child. And then they're like, Oh, this was my childhood. But I do sort of feel like I am seeing because my kids are older. They're 13. And nine, like, I see so much of their struggles, and I relate to their struggle. You know, I've had those struggles as a kid and didn't know what they were I just sort of always thought I had a learning disability. Yeah, but nobody ever said I did so.



11:41

Oh, absolutely.



Katy Weber 11:42

Yeah, it is amazing how seeing, seeing that shift in perspective, when there's a child and, and then of course, then there's the whole, like hormonal element, which I think is also kind of just now being taken seriously, or researched or whatever, I think there's so much more research that needs to be done in terms of women, and like when their symptoms become exacerbated, like it feels like, you know, the onset of puberty and then having a baby and then also menopause, and you're like what are these have in common surges of hormone?



ADHD Bri 12:18

Yeah, and I've noticed it's being discussed in the community a lot more, which is great. Because ultimately, it's a lot easier to get that information around when, you know, within the neurodivergent community, just how much that stuff like hormones, or sleep quality, all

that stuff really do impact our ADHD. And for me, personally, I know that there's going to be a certain time of the month that my medication is going to be ultimately rendered ineffective, just because of how much the hormones are impacting me. So it's, I am really interested in I really can't wait to see more kind of formal research done and out there because we know it affects us. We know it happens. So we just need it to really be acknowledged and dwelled into a little bit more, right.



Katy Weber 13:17

I know. Well, I that's one of those things where I feel like I really should pay more attention to my own monthly cycle. But then, of course, there's the other part of me that's like, I've always been terrible about paying attention. Because of my inattentive. So it's like, I'm really, so I'm like, I should really, you know, as you were talking, I was like, I should really, like start keeping track and keeping a note, you know, keeping a journal and I was like, yeah, that's not gonna happen.



ADHD Bri 13:42

Well, if you're mindful as it's approaching, I honestly, I mean, my husband can tell me when I'm about to start, because he notices my ADHD just kind of like being just magnified. It's just being really like, I'll be a lot more and attentive, I'll be more forgetful. I'm not noticing the stuff. I'm having a hard time paying attention to conversations and following along with that stuff. And it's just so funny. He always tell me like, Hey, you know, just a heads up and I'm like, Oh, my gosh, how did I not even notice it myself? And yeah, right. So I think as I've been more mindful about it, it's been much easier to kind of pinpoint that, Oh, this is happening. The hormone changes happening.



Katy Weber 14:33

But have you noticed a change in in just your relationship with your husband and how you communicate since your diagnosis?



ADHD Bri 14:42

Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. I think that it's been a really nice change. I we had been working on communication for a while. We've actually been married almost five years this year. And we've always made it a big point to Work on communication, just from our past relationships, all that stuff. We're like, okay, communication and communication, knowing how each other is feeling, this is the way to go. And so since my diagnosis, and since I've

really dive deep into learning not only more about myself, but also having a better understanding of my husband, and how he operates and works, it's much easier to understand that. And I think that it's allowed me to not only give myself some more grace, but also give my husband more grace, because I think that we tend to be hard on things that we don't understand. And I think having that understanding is just the bridge to improving communication and proving just the way that we do things, the way that we operate as a team. And, you know, as parents do, so,



Katy Weber 15:58

yeah, I imagined that must. That's lovely. I've had a similar experience, just because I felt like so many times, if there was conflict in my relationship with my husband, we've been together 20 years. So this is all brand new, but I really feel like I sort of come at conversations without any shame anymore. You know, like my, because like, you're saying, like, I have so much more grace for myself, my self talk has changed so much that I feel like our conversations are like on this new level of just understanding about how we operate. And I used to come at things with so much guilt and so much shame. And now I'm sort of like, no, this is what is happening. And this is what I you know, I understand why I'm having these responses. And I can feel that he, you know, just appreciates that. Because it must be really tiring to have somebody who just like always pulls out the shame car over and over and over again, especially somebody you love and respect, you know. So you've done a handful of illustrations about kind of flashbacks. But what are some things specifically from your childhood that you've looked back and you think like, Oh, that was ADHD. And I had no idea nobody had any idea, especially with a sister who was she diagnosed as a child, or



ADHD Bri 17:11

Yes, she was she was, apparently my mom got a phone call one day and the teacher said, Your daughter is swimming in her chair during the lecture. Like she is literally on her stomach trying to swim in the chair while the class is going on. And so I think that's also kind of the reason that I was missed by my own mother. Because even though she knew that my sister had ADHD, it was just such a different expression of it. And so for me as a kid, I was always very, I was the stereotypical daydreamer. So when they talk about inattentive, tending to be j dreamers, that is me to a tee where I would zone out, and I'd be in my own little world, just thinking about everything in anything during class, and I look like I was paying attention. But I wasn't there. I wasn't mentally in the classroom, I was elsewhere. And in ways that was really enjoyable for me. So it wasn't really an issue. But it did start becoming an issue when I had to really be on top of things myself more. From a very young age, I noticed that I wasn't getting as much attention from my parents in

regards to my education as my siblings, because I was always a good student in air quotes. I was the one who got decent grades. And so they don't worry about me as much. And so they weren't overseeing a lot of my like, okay, is she finishing her homework? Did she get that permission slip signed, like all that stuff, they weren't paying attention to that. And from a young age, I'm talking about like, second grade, third grade, that, so I had to start managing myself. And it was a struggle. I imagine it's hard enough for a child as it is. But I really, really struggled. I would have homework complete. And I would misplace it. Like I'd have it that morning. And suddenly it's like, oh, it's Do I need to turn it in? Where is it? I don't know. I mean, I could have read like, okay, what's the lesson plan? What's this test going to be? And forget what was on it, forget what the test was going to be about. I'd forget tests and quizzes, and that actually really developed into an anxiety for me, where I started physically getting sick. Anytime it was around, like, test time, anytime I knew a test was coming up, I would get physically ill and to the point where I might even you know All right, trigger warning, I don't want anyone to, you know, be blindsided. But I would get so ill I would throw up. And so it was things like this. And on top of this, it's, I do have to point out that I also have two specific learning disorders as well on top of my ADHD. So I have dyscalculia, and dysgraphia. So dysgraphia is a disorder that deals with writing, where dyscalculia deals with math and math concepts. And with the way that they have them kind of defined is a little bit more simplified than they actually are, they deal with a lot more like, you know, for example, dyscalculia can also affect how you are with directions, and you know, left and right up and down all of that. And so never asked me to read a map. I can't do



Katy Weber 20:51

it. Um,



ADHD Bri 20:55

but yeah, so as I'm thinking about my childhood, there's a lot of exploring still being done about, okay, what is impacted based on that? What is the ADHD?



Katy Weber 21:07

Like, is just,



ADHD Bri 21:09

there's a lot of discovery being done on that and just going back, and so, I mean, I was

definitely a spacey child, I was definitely very forgetful. I have had issues with my sleep from young young age where I would lay in bed, and I could not turn my brain off. I would lay there. And it's not like it was anxious thinking. And this is actually one of the things that really pinpointed my therapist into realizing that, oh, this isn't anxiety, like this part, this is ADHD. Because I will lay in bed. And it will start off as like a simple thought, like, Oh, you know, did I drink water and a few hours will pass by and I don't even realize how my brain got from the thought of water to slam poetry. Like it just the way my brain works. It just everything is connected, even if it doesn't seem like it is. And I think one of the first comics that I did was actually about my brain being a kind of like a TV, but I don't have control of the remote. Oh, right.



Katy Weber 22:22

Yes, I remember that one. Yeah, somebody else you're like somebody else has control. They forgot to turn it off at night.



ADHD Bri 22:28

Yeah, exactly. And so that was a big issue for me as a kid. And it's been an issue for me as well into adulthood until I've been medicated. And now I am falling asleep much faster at night, my brain has been sufficient, sufficiently stimulated and calms down. And then I don't have to think about a million things in order to exhaust myself and children to help with that. Oh, yeah. Well, it's funny, I think, now that I've got the falling sleep faster, problem out of the way. Having my kid actually, I think, impacted my quality of sleep in the middle of the night, because now I wake up at every single noise. I know. Yeah, I just can't get a break with that. But with my childhood, and definitely looking back it. There's just so much that makes a lot more sense.



Katy Weber 23:27

Yeah. Plus, it sounds like you had the added pressure of being the quote unquote, easy kid. No, yeah. So and so there's like, I imagine there's a lot to unpack with that. Just like you're saying, like in terms of just that, that internal pressure you would have put on yourself at such a young age? And why the sort of bored, disruptive physical hyperactivity tends to get noticed, and, and why the kids who are the daydreamers and the people pleasing, you know, you know, those manifestations of ADHD, especially in young girls is so often overlooked.



ADHD Bri 24:04

Yeah. And I think that a lot of people don't realize that a lot of kids that go through that being, you know, more and attentive the day dreamers, they tend to channel a lot of that into things like perfectionism. And so that's what I ended up doing. I was just so worried about having things done perfectly. And it was a struggle, because I would forget things all the time, I would miss details. And it would just compound that, oh, gosh, the anxiety around it. And so, I have felt for my whole life like I've been chasing this unachievable goal of perfectionism. And I think that with that perfectionism, a lot of people who struggle with it, especially a lot of people who are ADHD, tend to be way more harder on themselves, then you know, neuro Typical people, people who aren't struggling with that stuff aren't going to have nearly as much of, you know, high expectations and standards, right for what they're doing.



Katy Weber 25:12

And that reminds me one of the, you know, you had one of your drawings about doodling, which was so great because it really brought home that I, you know, the fact that we come up with coping mechanisms, doodling is a perfect example of a coping mechanism that we sort of intuitively come up with, that helps you focus, right? And, and so it tethers you to the information that whatever's going on the conversation, the information, like doodling is a way in which we kind of keep our focus, just like fidget spinners and all those things. So it's like you sort of came up with this intuitive coping mechanism at a young age. And then you're told it's bad. You know, like, there's ways in which we do things to help ourselves. And then we get a slap on the wrist because what we're doing is the wrong way to focus, you know, yeah. And so then you stop trusting yourself, because things that you've done intuitively are the bad, wrong thing to do. And so then you're like, well, now what do I do? So that one project I remember that really stood out to me, because, well, I'm not actually any more much of a doodler. I think I've moved on to fidgets. I was 100%. A doodler. And I'm sure most of us were, and had only kind of recently with through my kids made that connection about how important it is to have stimulation while watch in order to focus and how there's like a fine line between stim something that is stimulating and something that is full on distracting. And, you know, it's I think it's so important for teachers, especially in classrooms to be able to distinguish between what is this going to be stimulating? Or is this going to be distracting?



ADHD Bri 26:49

Yeah. And it's funny, because, you know, I have a lot of teachers who would point it out and tell me to stop doodling or, you know, I even I think there was a few times that I got

docked points on assignments for doodling. Duck points on tests for doodling, even though often I use doodling to think things through and to help me kind of piece through stuff. And so I received a lot of, you know, punishment, essentially for using my coping skill. But I did have some teachers who recognize there, like, you know, Bree is doing great in the class, she enjoys learning, she just struggles with paying attention. And they would let me doodle and I would do just fine. I would do much better in that aspect of being there and present in class, if I could have something just to keep me just stimulated enough to focus on what they were saying and talking about, you know, whether that's doodling. I know, for other people, it can also come out like, my husband is really big and shaking his leg, he bounces his leg up and down. And I know like before it used to drive me absolutely just up the wall. But now I think it's easier for me to recognize, like, that's the stimulation that he needs in order to focus and to be engaged in this conversation. And again, I guess that just comes back to the, you know, giving ourselves and others grace. And I think for people outside of our relationship. So, you know, teachers and our bosses and colleagues, I think that having just the general stigma and misinformation, if we could, you know, less than that, and we can get more accurate information about ADHD out there, then we won't have those teachers who think that the child is just not paying attention, or that they're being too distracting. Like, I think that we could really get some much better understanding and empathy for kids.



Katy Weber 29:08

Yeah, absolutely. I hope we're working in that direction. Yeah.



ADHD Bri 29:13

I definitely think that, I mean, having access to these communities, having these communities where people are sharing their experiences and their stories, and, you know, having their unique perspectives put out there for others to see, just makes it so much easier for that to spread around and to be understood. And so I think it was harder for us in our childhoods, because there wasn't really that information network out there. You know, there wasn't, you couldn't even go on and Google easily. I mean, as a kid, I said I'm a kid of the age of the internet where the internet started becoming a really big thing. And so possibly my mom could have tried looking up stuff but there wasn't that much information out there. And on top of it with a DD being something separated from ADHD way back when before they put those diagnosis together under the same umbrella, it's just so much harder to figure out what to do and my mother would have never known to search for add She didn't even know to consider ADHD for right so



Katy Weber 30:35

Oh, yeah. Now I'm curious do you relate to the H in ADHD at all? Cuz you mentioned in your bio, Somewhere I read your bio must have been Patreon site. Anyway, but you had mentioned that you were you were diagnosed, inattentive, and so I feel like so many women are diagnosed combined. And we go through that journey of like, I'm not hyperactive, what are you talking about? I don't have the jumping knee. And you know, I wasn't being disruptive as a child, I'm not hyperactive. But then you sort of start to realize the hyper activity manifests itself in your thoughts and losing track and, you know, or not being able to sleep or in, in the impulsivity, the impatience, you know, like, not being able to sit in traffic. When my doctor was asking me those questions about, you know, I was sort of like, Oh, yeah, I relate to all of that, you know, I relate to that sort of the hyperactive mind element for sure. Is that something you feel like you relate to?



ADHD Bri 31:32

Yeah, and I think it's true with a lot of cases with inattentive ADHD, just,



31:37

you know,



ADHD Bri 31:38

just from what I've seen, this is purely anecdotal. But just from what I see, and a lot of it expresses itself internally. So you know, I have those thoughts that just don't stop. They just keep going. And I might not even be moving on the outside. But internally, my brain is just going haywire. So I mean, absolutely. I do have issues with the name ADHD, I think that a lot of people feel like it doesn't quite Express ADHD very accurately. Because it's not a deficit of attention. You know, many people explain including myself as it's having a hard time directing your attention in the right place. I think that we're actually very excellent at focusing on things. It's just do we get control over what that thing is? Or is it the thing that's going to stimulate our brain, the mouse, right? And so you hear a lot about like, hyper focus, I might have trouble reading a chapter for a lesson. Like let's say, back when I was in university, I had to read so many articles, and I would struggle, it's just a one page article, why can't I get through this? I'd have to reread the page a million times. And I would still forget what it is. But oh, you give me something interesting, like drawing this particular thing, or, oh, let's do some pottery. And I could keep my focus for hours and hours and like, forget to Like, eat, or sleep or use the bathroom? So, you know, I definitely think that it's, it's interesting, taking a look at the name ADHD and being like, Okay, how

does doesn't really apply to everyone? at all? aspects? Because it's just, it seems so inaccurate in a way. Right?



Katy Weber 33:41

So okay, so then what would you call it? If you could call it something? If you could rename it to something else? What would you rename it? Oh, gosh, that's a good question. Okay, I won't put you on the spot. I could remember this is like a new question. I'm asking people I couldn't remember if I had sent you that or not.



ADHD Bri 33:55

I've seen. I've seen others discuss it. And I believe on Twitter. I've seen people put their own suggestions for what it could be. But I think for me, the reason why it would be so hard to answer at this point, is because I'm a big, like, advocate for not everyone experiences ADHD the same way. And even within the different subtypes. Like I'm not going to be the same as another end of the attentive ADHD or it's just, it's not going to happen. Everyone expresses things differently, even in the DSM itself. So when they're going through, and they have the specific list of traits, and you need to match like what six out of nine as an adult. And not everyone's going to have the same six or seven or whatever. They're not going to have all the same traits selected and their diagnosis process. And so I feel like I'm continuously not only exploring myself and what being ADHD means for me, and how it impacts me. But I'm trying to explore more on how it impacts other people and their unique experiences. So I think I'm a forever learner, I love to learn. And so I think, maybe at some point,



35:20

I'll have



ADHD Bri 35:22

experienced and witnessed just a ton of different behaviors and traits that can be like, Okay, you know what, here's a good over arching term. But at this point, I just don't think I could.



Katy Weber 35:37

No, that's a great point. And I love that you say the, you know, the, the I love to learn and

being a learner, because it's, it is something I hear over and over and over again, I personally had such a dismal experience with high school, and had to redo my senior year and then didn't get into university, and then finally got into university and then dropped out after my first year, like, you know, had the very buttery experience, what I finally got my bachelor's, and I just, you know, I hear over and over and over again, that experience, and I just love being able to now say like, I'm actually I love learning, you know, like, it was something I always felt like this was, I wasn't able to distinguish for myself. And like, just because I had a bad experience with school or academia. You know, it doesn't mean I don't love research, and I love doesn't mean I don't love to learn. And I used to joke about how like the amount of research I put into by my first stroller, I probably, if I had been able to put that energy into my bachelor's, I would have been great. But yeah, what do you think about the term disorder? Does that? do you relate to that or not?



36:49

Do



ADHD Bri 36:50

I Do I mean, I know, again, everyone experiences it differently. And some people think of it as a superpower, some people straight up, just think it's a disability. And for me, I mean, I think that everyone can kind of interpret it for themselves as they wish. So you know, if someone doesn't want to describe their ADHD as a disorder, they want to describe it as a superpower they are free to, and I fully encourage that. But I think that it is important to have it listed as a disorder because it does impact the way that we live, and we do our day to day life. You know, the world isn't necessarily built for the way that we operate. And so, you know, if I could go back to school, I wasn't diagnosed while I was in school, of course, I've been out of school for many years now. But, you know, I think about if I had been diagnosed at school, there are different, I could have received help based on my diagnosis, I could have received different kinds of accommodations. And so while I fully encourage people to take their diagnosis and make it positive, and do what they will, it is still really important for people who do need those accommodations, and they do need assistance. And I think if we took that away, we're leaving them to flounder, you know. And you made that point of how you did struggle in school. And I've noticed people that I grew up with that I know have ADHD now that had either similar experience to me, I was okay, I wasn't a great like the greatest student, but I did fine. But I have a friend who actually did exceptionally well in high school, but then completely floundered once they got to university and had to manage their time and schedules themselves and they couldn't do it. And so it's it's interesting kind of seeing, like the differences of how people approach

things. I mean, even with myself, where I've always been education oriented, I didn't finish college in the typical four years, I actually ended up transferring colleges, changing my major having to restart the whole thing again. And then I had to take a break because of financial stuff. And I worked for a while and then I went back up to I actually moved out of state and I moved back to my original state, and I finished my degree. And so it's always interesting hearing about ADHD years and their education journeys. And then where they go and how they do and whether they choose to explore higher education or not, or, you know, do things on their own in their own time. self study, so



Katy Weber 39:53

right, yeah, it is it's been from the women I've interviewed has been. One of the things I always like to ask too, because I've interviewed PhDs. And I've also interviewed people who, who dropped out five times with five different majors and then eventually gave up. And everybody's like, so exceptional. I think going back to the term of disorder, I think maybe there's sort of, again, like a sort of two step process. With your own discovery and diagnosis, we're in the beginning, you know, to discover this diagnosis for me was so revolutionary, you know, it just really sort of felt like everything. Just radically changed, my view of myself changed. And it was, so it was so overwhelmingly positive. And so, so many lights, I really struggled with the term disorder. And I remember talking to my therapists were like, why is it called a disorder? This is like, so everything that I thought, you know, everything that I, that I felt like I had going for me, I kind of would attribute back to ADHD. And so I was like, this doesn't feel like a disorder. And she was the one who really said, similar to what you were saying, which was like, Yeah, I get that. But, you know, once that kind of wears off, you really do still have to take very seriously the fact that you live in a society that is making a you have to work 10 times harder for so many things. And you have to kind of acknowledge that and give yourself you know, the the support and the resources that you need to move forward with this. And so I've sort of come back around to the turf disorder and sort of take it seriously. But I feel like there was this kind of initial euphoric state, where I was like, This isn't a disorder, this is a superpower. Now, I'm kind of coming back to this idea of like, okay, yeah, now I like now I'm sort of really seeing all of the, the extra work that we have to do in terms of the structures and the ways in which we have to really sort of set ourselves up for success over and over and over again, in so many different ways.



ADHD Bri 41:51

You know, it's funny, you mentioned going from really, like a positive outlook to maybe more of a realistic I wouldn't say negative, negative, not the terms are more realistic. So sober, yeah. Because I feel like, I didn't start with the positive outlook. When I started, like,

I wasn't like, you know, a Debbie Downer or just like super negative about it. But I think I came from a very, like, you know, I struggled so much in life, and I had to work so hard to get to where I am, and to what I'm doing. And so I think, I mean, I've always struggled with a lot of internalized anger and frustration at myself, like, why can't you just do this? Why can't Why is this so hard for you? And so when I received that diagnosis, and, you know, I was trying really hard not to focus on what ifs, and you know, the past and all that stuff, but it was so hard. And I had only experienced, I had only seen more information that was based around hyperactive traits. And so I have to say, I started out kind of bitter. I was, I was mourning, it was a grief period for me, where I was mourning a sense of what I felt I could have achieved and what I could have been Had I known about this much earlier. And in a way was positive because it fueled my my drive to research more and to find more experiences about inattentive, ADHD. And I think what has been really great is that, especially like last year, I was like, kind of going through things. And like, beginning of the year, I was struggling to find that much information about inattentive ADHD, or that many people openly talking about it, but I feel like the ADHD community, at least, you know, from around where I've been in, has really grown in the aspect of more and more people are speaking up. They're thinking, Oh, you know, I didn't know that this was aspects of my inattentive, ADHD, and I need to vocalize this. And you know, I have people who approach me and they're like, Is it okay? If I share my story? Like, if I do a comment, like, I don't want to feel like I'm copying you? Like, no, do it, do your comic, your experience is not my experience, and it's so valuable, valuable to get it out there. It's so like, it's priceless, to get your unique experience and put it for other people to see. And so that, you know, someone who might be struggling with something in silence, and they're not relating to anything might come across it and be like, Oh, I'm not alone. And, you know, that's essentially the whole reason why I haven't been doing these comics. It started out as just something more small and personal for me to use to describe kind of different things to my family and friends. And then other people started paying attention to it and noticing it and It's been the drive for me to keep doing it because like, oh, if I can use a, you know, skill that I've built up to get information out there, then I need to be doing that I need to give back to the community that has given me so much support and me so much information and acceptance and that feeling of belonging? Oh, well, it



Katy Weber 45:25

really comes across I was thinking about what is it about comics that helps relay so many of the sort of ADHD struggles or idiosyncrasies, you know, because I feel like what I am, we are so drawn to visual representation, you know, if it's, if it's the memes, or, you know, there, there is sort of, we do share a lot of comics. And I was been, you know, preparing for my interview with you, I was like, What is it about it? That, you know, why is it just because

we tend to be more visual people? Or is it just, there's something about these moments in time, you know, that need to be expressed in a visual way, almost the same way that like, tick tock videos seem to resonate, well, too, because you get this sort of minute of time where you can play out a something that happens to you, and that is highly relatable. And so I think that there's something about that the way in which you can kind of you bring a comic to life that will will highlight a moment in time so beautifully, that we all are like, yes, oh my God, I've experienced that so many times. And I think you in particular, have a beautiful way of highlighting those moments in time, but in a just like a, just, like, compassionate, educating kind of way, you know, like, I feel like if they don't, sometimes a lot of ADHD memes can air in that like squirrel, you know, these sort of ways in which we almost make light of it too much, where it's like, that's actually there's like, some actual deep emotion under neath that that were not addressed. And I feel like you really, like walk that line so beautifully. And yeah, and you know, so I, one of my questions was, does your Does your husband have ADHD, which he had said really quickly, because he started out as this voice off, outside of the other side of the square, that was like, honey, you know, and then he sort of come in more in your, in your comics, he sort of actually become like a face now.



ADHD Bri 47:37

Yeah. And it's so funny, he wanted so badly to be in my comics for so long.



Katy Weber 47:44

Feel so validated by your journey to you know, because he sort of saw the writing on the wall?



ADHD Bri 47:50

Yeah. Oh, absolutely. I mean, he was like, I told you, so. I knew for years, and now you're, you know, now, you know, now you're like, going, but, you know, I could have told you that way back when, I mean, obviously, just joking, you know, fun way. You that, but it has been very validating for him, I think, to feel more understood himself, as well as like, you know, pinpointing what he saw in me, and then, you know, he's been so helpful on my journey, as well just, you know, letting me talk through things and being like, Oh, wait, like, do I need to, like reel this back? Like, what's going on here? And, I mean, it's, it's been great. And I've brought him into a lot of the recent comics, and I intend to keep them in there. Because, I mean, we kind of are like Yin and Yang, in regards to ADHD, we are so dramatically different. Now, the funny thing, though, is that I need to learn how to balance and there

because a lot of people who are reading my comics, they know my characters face, eye, and they know that you know, ADHD Bri that I am ADHD. And so I just need to learn how to get it across that my husband, who is now appearing in is also ADHD without having to like explicitly stamp a ADHD label on him, because I feel like a lot of what he does,



Katy Weber 49:24

well, you did have him in an ADHD Bri hat, which was like a little bit of subtext there. Yeah, I guess.



ADHD Bri 49:33

And so I'm just hoping that I can really show and I, I never make the comics that have him in there without getting him to make sure that I'm portraying him. I mean, I know it's just, you know, short four panel comic, very simple, but like, I want to make sure that I am showing his experience and how he thinks about it as well because my interpretation of it, I have my own biases. So, I'm hoping that as I'm doing this, and I can share more of his story as well, for people to see and relate to and get, you know, learn more from I just, again, it's like, there's so much to balance on there.



Katy Weber 50:15

And I've,



ADHD Bri 50:17

you had mentioned about, like, kind of the toeing the line between some, like, serious emotions, and then kind of like lightheartedness. And



50:27

it, I



ADHD Bri 50:29

didn't really think about that much before. So it's really kind of cool, you pointing that out. And it's something for me to kind of reflect on. Because I do think that there are a lot of heavy, serious emotions behind a lot of this, like, it's kind of like, these little moments, they

seem so small, but they have so much impact. It's not like it's just an occasional one off thing. It's stuff that I'm dealing with, personally, on an every day, every hour, every minute level. And so, you know, I need to show that it is impacting me, even if it does seem like it is more silly, because, you know, I'm a human being I'm not, you know, I'm not like the butt of a joke. Like, I think ADHD years get treated, like they're kind of like clowns, essentially, they get treated like their kids, and that they are immature. And that, you know, I just feel like, we need to have more respect and how we're explaining how ADHD works. And more like, again, with the stigma, or like just showing other people that this is something that people are dealing with and struggling with a living with. And you know that it's not a case of them just goofing off. It's not like it's very hard to control what we do and be mindful about things even. I mean, even if we're trying our best, I cannot, I cannot afford to mask myself completely. I know that the term masking is normally used for those in the autistic community. But I do find that there is a big overlap between the two. And masking is very common, even if it's not explained in the exact same way. It's very common in the ADHD community. And I have found that I've masked my entire life, I have really put up this persona, because I'm so afraid that if it slips, if I mess up that I won't be taken seriously. And it's I mean, it's hard. And I imagine that it's even harder for those that do express their traits more outwardly. You know,



Katy Weber 52:59

right. Yes. And that is one thing I've experienced over and over again, within the ADHD community is that elevated empathy in a community of people who have all struggled and I think that's one thing that's wonderful about the neurodivergent community, in terms of just the huge spectrum of you know, bringing the autistic spectrum and and the overlaps there that you were talking about, like, there just seems to be so much more empathy than not, in so many of these very nuanced conversations that we're having, and especially like, like you were saying about humor, humor is incredibly nuanced. And it's, it's a really important coping mechanism for us. But at the same time, it can also be very triggering and also be very demeaning and, and it's okay for me to joke, it's not okay for you to joke. You say that in a lot of marginalized communities to you know, and so I think it's, it's also fascinating to me, the more time I spend like on ADHD, Twitter, for instance, and like, the more I'm getting to know, like, the names of this community and the various personalities, like just how and, and while there are like sub conversations happening, and you know, like masking and masking is a great example of something that a lot of people are, have differing opinions on. And, and there is a sense of like, are we co opting a term? Are we not? Where do we fit? How can we, you know, there's self doubt and, and so it's interesting to me that while these conversations can actually take place with kindness and empathy in this community, and I think more so than most other communities I've ever felt a part of. So I give us that much at least.



## ADHD Bri 54:48

Yeah, and I mean, I think that a lot of it. So I think I remember Twitter, kind of having that big conversation about masking and other terms that it felt like we're being co-opted elsewhere. And I, honestly, from what I gathered, I don't think that a lot of the people in the autistic community, were even saying like, hey, you're co-opting of this, you're taking this, you can't use it. From what I was seeing it was more of you need to understand where this came from, like where this originated, like, a lot of people get so excited when I think of this happens a lot in the ADHD community where they hear a term, they're like, Oh, this is perfect, it explains everything. And then they start using it. And people like, oh, ADHD community came up with this term. And it's like, no, the, the term was around for a while, we have a lot of people who did great work like in the autistic community who came up with this term and have really fought to be taken seriously, and to have their rights. And so I think that from just what I've seen, it's more of a, we need to be better at understanding the kind of meaning behind these terms where they came from, and how it can apply to us. And, you know, I think a lot of people in the community get really excited at different terms that come up. And I know that another really controversial term that came up Oh, what was it? Sorry? I'm having a moment where I'm like, the terms at the tip of my tongue. I did a big comic about it. Oh, the rest. Oh, okay. Yep. And that's an interesting one. And I, I talked about it, and I tried to make it known that this is not an official diagnosis. It's not an official research part of things. But it's important to note that it's out there, and people are talking about it and using it. And there's a lot of conversations about is this its own thing. Is this based on emotions, or is it like, complex PTSD? Is that a reaction from being ADHD and the trauma from existing and world not built for us? And it's, it's interesting, and I, you know, I'm, I'm not on a side in that, again, as I said, I'm a forever learner. And I like, I like to be confident about what I'm saying before, I really say that I stand behind something. And it's just one of those things that I think that we could really stand to get more research on. Yeah, really stand to have professionals taking a deep dive and being like, Hey, is this you know, is this a trauma response? Or is this actually a response that's more biological or based on the nervous system, which is another theory that I heard, which is really interesting, because I think that like, for me, personally, I don't necessarily relate it as a trauma response. And so I think, again, everyone has their own ways of interpreting these things, and the ways that they kind of build it up for explaining their experience. And I think that we just need to be mindful about what terms that are out there that we're using, and making sure that we're looking at it through the lens of, we're exploring this as a community. None of the, none of the ADHD content creators out there, like myself, or ADHD alien, just, you know, there's so many, so I'm not gonna list it ton of them. But you know, we aren't professionals in that aspect. We're not researchers, we're not psychologists and psychiatrists, maybe some are, I can't say maybe some have a background, but we're advocates. And so we're going through, and we're speaking on what we know. But it doesn't mean that it's gospel. So I

think that when approaching all these different terms, just people should be mindful to kind of step back and be like, Okay, this is what this person is talking about. Let's not just take their word for it. Let's go through and let's explore, let's learn a little bit more. And, you know, go because the terms can be very insightful and healing for people and give them labels that they may need to reach that healing. But definitely for using them a lot, just being more mindful about how that works and all that.



Katy Weber 59:33

Yeah, that's an excellent point. In terms of content creating, I hadn't really thought about that extra layer of sort of feeling like you can be kind of tossed the title of authority very quickly and like a hot potato, you're like, I don't want this. But at the same time, also wanting to express yourself in the way that you express yourself and also wanting to express your personal experience and yet at the Same time, there's something about the medium that does sort of have an air of authority to it.



ADHD Bri 1:00:04

Yeah, definitely. And it's, it's just mind blowing for me just how much authority it can have. I have a moderately sized following on Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter. And I've been trying to be a lot more mindful about what I say and how I say it. Because, again, like, even though I'm not an authority on this, I'm not. And I have done a lot of research, I've read through medical articles, and all of that stuff. I've done a lot of my own personal stuff. But at the same point, like I'm given this voice of authority that, frankly, I don't think that I should be given. And I have to be mindful to not abuse that voice. Because the whole reason that I want to advocate for ADHD is to remove the stigma and remove the misinformation out there. And the last thing I want to do is be a perpetrator of either.



1:01:13

So



Katy Weber 1:01:16

so many layers. Absolutely. But I think you are so far doing a fabulous job. And obviously, so many people are relating to your content and your experience. And so thank you for putting it out there. Yeah. Thank you. I appreciate it. Well, thank you so much. I'm really I appreciate your time. And I'm so excited. I feel like I'm a little starstruck, I just really appreciate what you've been doing for for the community. So I'm so glad that you agreed

to be interviewed. So I think



ADHD Bri 1:01:53

Yeah, thank you for giving me the opportunity. I've really enjoyed chatting as well. It's always so great to talk with other people. So, you know, I'm creating these comics and I do, you know, participate in the community, but it can be very isolating to be behind a screen and especially, I mean, I'm under lockdown,



1:02:12

I'm not going out. Right. So



ADHD Bri 1:02:14

it's it's nice to have the opportunity to chat with you about, you know, your experience as well and I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to share a little bit more of minus