Amy Brown: Sports, jokes & slow processing speed

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adhd, feel, thought, life, working, sports, helped, career, early, athlete, understand, exercise, hyperactive, impulsivity, run, children, perform, element, diagnosis, resonates

SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Amy Brown

Katy Weber 00:00
First, I want to find out about your diagnosis journey because you are one of the many moms who discovered your own ADHD through helping your child. So tell me about that.

Amy Brown 00:12
Yeah, so it was quite the journey was about a year journey culminating and the ADHD diagnosis for my son. And as we were going through that, and working with the child psychologist on some of his behavioral therapies, I recognize that a lot of the symptoms and things that the child psychologist was bringing up, you know, I have those things, and I'm like, it's not normal to have a million thoughts in your head. I thought that was, I thought that was normal. I didn't know. You know, it's not normal to have trouble task switching. Oh, you know, so all these things hyper focusing, like, I just thought I really focused on that was really good at stuff I'm interested in. So I think for me, it was just recognizing through that journey with him that I had a lot of the same symptoms and traits. And, you know, I've developed guess I would say, strategies over time to help with those, to help me be more successful. But that's really how it came to be. I just figured it out through that and went from there.

Katy Weber 01:20
So your son was he was a brought to your attention by a teacher kind of how was it brought out? Because I feel like you know, what you're talking about is there's so many positive aspects to ADHD in children. But often the diagnosis comes because they have been disruptive, you know, like it often it comes from like a negative, like, we need to fix this point of view. And so I'm curious, was it a teacher who said he was being disruptive? or How did that come about?

Amy Brown 01:47
So I would say it started back in preschool. And some of the comments we would get is that, oh, he's a really active child. Well, I did not read through the tea leaves that that meant that he may have ADHD, I don't know if they just felt uncomfortable talking about it. But I would hear all the time. He's a very active child, meaning he's hyperactive,
he’s you know, all over the classroom. But when we got into kindergarten, and started working with his teacher, and he is a young, he’s a young child, he’s right on that edge of, you know, cut off, to go in to even start school. But speaking with his teacher, he was having some behavioral issues. He was struggling a bit with the schoolwork and kindergarten. And so we decided to seek the help of a child psychologist, because not only was he having and struggling there, and yes, it could be ADHD. But we were also at the time when he started, I was going through a divorce. So that was kind of extra noise on top of it. And so we wanted to identify, really what’s going on here is that the, you know, the divorce? Does he have some sleep issues. And so we worked with the child psychologist to just really kind of work through that over the year, and let’s really make sure that, you know, this diagnosis is correct. And we don’t have other noise going on, if that makes sense. Yeah, I

Katy Weber 03:14
mean, I think that’s something that we’re all trying to really disseminate. Right, which is, what is ADHD? I mean, is it is the ADHD, just a type of brain that you’re born with. And so therefore, there’s life changes that exacerbate your symptoms, you know, like motherhood or divorce or, you know, any sort of the sort of traumatic life events exacerbate the symptoms? Or is ADHD, you know, I think I feel like we have this conversation, a lot of like, Are we being misdiagnosed? Is this just depression and anxiety? You know, like, or where does this all come back to? And so I think it’s really interesting, when you’re kind of trying to untangle with a child, when there’s a lot changing in life, but when is life not changing for children? So I think, yeah, right. Like, I think a lot of the time is sort of like maybe when you’re born with a certain brain, this is just how you react to certain major life. You know, some life events as opposed to a neurotypical child who might kind of mark go with the flow more. Yeah, I don’t know. I don’t have answers I just fascinating. And then my, at the end of the day, I feel like the ADHD is the part of us that is endlessly fascinated by all of this and looking into it. Like, what is it? Is it this? Is it this?

Amy Brown 04:32
Like researcher? Yeah, exactly. Right.

Katy Weber 04:36
So okay, so then you as you were going through this journey with your son who was six at the time, right? He was, yeah, six at the time. Okay. And how old is he? He was five at the time when we first started. Okay, and so so you’ve both been diagnosed fairly recently. You said you were diagnosed earlier. How when when were you diagnosed?

Amy Brown 04:55
So I was diagnosed in March. He was diagnosed in January

Katy Weber 04:59
of two Okay, wow. Yeah. Wow. So Gosh, it’s such an intense emotional roller coaster going over everything right?

Amy Brown 05:10
It is. And then when you look back, you’re like, Oh, yeah. Right. This day like,
Katy Weber 05:18
Oh, I

Amy Brown 05:18
I know, I know why probably reacted that way. Yeah.

Katy Weber 05:21
Okay, so let's, what what do you look back on in terms of your earlier childhood? Or you know, I know that before before we talk about high school and basketball, like, when you look back at your younger life, what are some of the the moments where you're like, Oh, yeah, the signs were there all along? Yeah. So

Amy Brown 05:40
really, really early on. Funny enough, when I was in preschool, they actually tested me for a hearing disability because they couldn't hear. And it really, it was just, you know, it was zoning out or, you know, we're working on whatever I was working on. And so they really seriously thought I had a hearing issue and I was fine. I could hear it was just, you know, either I didn't follow instructions very well, or, you know, zoning them out, going into early into kindergarten, and even first grade, I can remember struggling in school, not necessarily from a behavioral standpoint, but really just the focusing and learning my letters, and even doing math. And I was I was actually early on in the lowest reading group. So when I was going to school, they had kind of a lower mid and a high reading group, right. And I was in the lowest reading group for the first few years in elementary school. Just it wasn't clicking for me. And I tend something I see in my son that even occurs with me to this day, and obviously I've gotten better at as with it as I've gotten older, but sometimes when people are talking about complex subjects, or even just asking a question, it takes a minute for my brain to kind of just resonate with what I was just asked, or what people are talking about. And I kind of have to sit back and just let it sit in there for a second before I can express, you know how I feel about a subject. But so, and we can talk more about that later. But early on, I had trouble and it's really, really funny. So when I look back at my kindergarten report card, something else that caught my eye was that they thought I was uncoordinated. So the fact that later on, you know, a division one athlete playing basketball and scholarship, but in kindergarten, they thought I, you know, couldn't put two feet together. It's just kind of comical to me. But that happened. And I can remember even in first grade, I think I got a good lesson in learning that I was a visual learner, I was having the hardest time just trying to learn subtraction. And I came home, I actually cried about it to my mom, lucky for me, my mother was changing careers, and she was getting ready to graduate with a teaching degree. So she sat me down, and she just really broke it down visually, and that she just took some pencils and said, Hey, you know, here's five. And when you take away two, there's three left, and it connected. And I'm like, Oh, that's what that is. So it's really about, you know, for me, just learning about what methods work best for me in terms of learning. And I think once I made that connection, you know, from there, I started to speed up and learn more quickly. In second grade, I had a wonderful teacher, I went from the end of the last reading group to the first reading group, but she connected with me, she helped me understand. You know, it's just a visual learning and explaining things. The other thing I'll say is that reading in general, and I've heard this from some other folks that have ADHD, but I'm a slow reader. 1, when I read paragraphs, especially early on, I had trouble remembering what I read, I could read it over and over and over again and would just drive me nuts because I'm like, I'm so sick and tired. To read it again, because I don't remember. But having to adopt strategies around that so that you know, you can get through your
standardized testing and all that so early on that some of the things that resonate with me, I still managed to kind of early on adopt strategies and get good grades. It’s just those things were more difficult for me than they were for others.

Katy Weber  09:42
Yeah, I liked what you had said about in your email about writing in the margins. Just a reminder, what the paragraphs were because I totally used to do that in university as just like, just a quick way to go back and be like, okay, where am I as you know, especially in these. Yeah, I took political science we were always reading. Getting these like, you know, novel sized political tomes from the 16 times 16. Like I Oh yeah, I always had to write in the margins. But also like remembering how it was very difficult to decide what was important and what wasn’t in textbooks and so like when I would start highlighting, I would highlight the entire textbook. I remember seeing, like, you know, the entire page being in yellow because it’s so it was really difficult to kind of decide and determine, you know, prioritize information. Now, you had also mentioned in your email that both of your brothers were diagnosed as children with ADHD and yet they were still was it just like your parents thought it was a boy’s disorder, or was it

Amy Brown  10:47
ever talked about we, it was never talked about with me, my. I think maybe the difference is, the only thing I can think that maybe helped me is that early on, my mom recognized the need for me to be involved in sports and get that energy out. So it’s kind of funny. I am, I tried to do ballet that didn’t work out for me too much, a little too slow. I really liked to be active and I’m like, I want fast stuff. Like let’s go so she got me involved in soccer early on. And I think you know, I was just always on the go and one of the things that you’ll read about with ADHD is that exercise helps feed kind of the dopamine the chemicals that you need, and I was always exercising all the time on the move in played a number of different sports growing up from soccer, the volleyball, the basketball, to softball to field hockey to track so I would do several sports at one time. And I think that kind of helped me focus in the moment when I was in school better. My brothers on the other hand, they were not as active just wasn’t their thing. But yes, one of them has ADHD combined. And then the other one has what they would use to call add similar to me, ADHD in a tenant.

Katy Weber  13:40
Okay, so let’s talk about exercise and especially activity with children because I feel like there is a very clear connection between the activity you know, getting your jiggles out or whatever you want to call it with kids, and their ability to focus and it drives me crazy when I hear about teachers who are punishing children by taking away recess, right, you know, and it just feels like if, you know, perhaps this proliferation in ADHD symptoms is happening because we are expecting children to sit in their desks and we are taking away all of their body and works having particular expectations of them in the classroom. That so but at the same time, then you think about like 100 years ago when children did sit very still and behaved and you know, maybe it’s because they were up at four working the farm, I don’t know, but

Amy Brown  14:35
they were active, so they never had these problems.

Katy Weber  14:37
But like, for me, personally, just in my own life, like the I always had kind of a hot and cold relationship with exercise until my diagnosis when I really kind of made that connection where I was like, Oh, yes, of course, physical activity, especially first thing in the morning is, you know, key to kind of the success of my day and and in terms of just how I focus and how I'm able to accomplish things and it's so it's become such a non negotiable for me it's absolutely something I need to do just like drinking coffee. Yeah. So it's I think that yeah, I think a lot of activity and exercise at a younger age can really help curb some of the, you know, more hype hyperactive. Or I don't even know what the word are disruptive symptoms in kids so you've you've had that experience, when did you get involved in basketball,

Amy Brown 15:39
so basketball, I actually didn't start playing until the sixth grade. So I was a bit of a late starter, I played soccer since I was five I even ran track before I started in basketball in sixth grade, and my father was very athletic. So he was super excited because my older brothers did not play sports but so he gravitated to me because I was very athletic and wanted to play in these sports but you know, I mentioned him I'm like, I just I want to try basketball, I think it would be fun so I started it and that the rest is really history from there in the sixth grade. So a bit of a late start, but you know, I was lucky to and fortunate to have some good coaches and got pretty good at

Katy Weber 16:26
it and you feel like now looking back with this new lens of your diagnosis. Do you feel like that was what helped you academically? Or what do you feel like is the kind of relationship between being in sports and how you performed academically in high school and in college and you also do your masters too, right?

Amy Brown 16:46
I did yeah. So I think just being active in general and you know, when you're doing several different sports, you know, back then I'm not just exercising for 20 minutes you're exercising for several hours across the day because I'm running from soccer practice to track you know, whatever practice I had next at the same time, I feel like that helped me just focus better in school it also helped me learn some better time management skills that kind of forced it because you have to try to fill every moment of your day with something you can't you really can't relax you know you go from one sport and then we got after a win you know the homework at the same time so I feel like that definitely helped me succeed and then knowing that you know when I saw the potential of being able to get a scholarship knowing that I would need to you know, make sure I stepped up and get good grades to put myself in a position to do that certainly helped as well

Katy Weber 17:50
yeah. Oh, those are all great points so so you know I feel like I've talked about this with guests before the idea of like if you want something done give it to a busy person really kind of relates to me when I'm in hyperfocus mode right? Like it really does help when you have a lot of plates and why we do so well in high stress situations and and when we have a lot going on but then also I didn't even think about that that idea of like the motivation you know what how important it is for us to find motivation, externalize motivation to get us to do things and yeah of course a scholarship would be a great great motivating factor for keeping your grades up and

Amy Brown 18:31
yeah, absolutely and then I'll add that you know my I'm really just trying to I was one of those kids and I always wanted to please my parents and you know with my dad loving sports I also you know, wanted to do well for them as well so I'd say that was another motivating factor for me.

Katy Weber 18:48
But now you also mentioned that your dad passed away when you were in high school right? So that must have been he did

Amy Brown 18:52
Yeah, it was tough he he got sick with a very rare kind of a nerve tumor. Probably when I was in Late Middle School, so maybe around seventh eighth grade he didn't pass away until my junior year in high school but it was really tough you know, having him go through that and be sick but at the same time, it also allowed me to have sports allow me to have an outlet and you know, I also wanted to please Him as well because we're going through this you know, just a tough time in your life.

Katy Weber 19:27
I would imagine that that level of activity as well would help with emotional regulation too, right? I mean, I feel like there are ways in which a lot of athletes use sports as an outlet for emotion is going

Amy Brown 19:43
On yeah,

Katy Weber 19:44
Yeah, even just people who are like going to the gym you know, or you know, I often like for me, like, you know, when I have stimulating conversations like these interviews often that I have to like run around outside literally go and like run around outside because you know, you need to have the physical

Amy Brown 20:03
Exertion worked out? Yeah, I agree with that, um, you know, having that outlet and in addition to that, I think having that support system, you know, like I said, I played multiple sports, even in high school, but just having that support system of my teammates, you know, while you're going through that as well, was very helpful at the time.

Katy Weber 20:23
So I'm curious now with what happened with Simone Biles in the Olympics and kind of mental health versus physical health and how it would have been so much easier for her to just say, I injured, you know, my, my tibial fracture, whatever, you know, like, it's so much easier to have a physical ailment than to really say like, No, I'm looking after my
Amy Brown  21:30

So my thoughts are, you know, Swanson elite athlete she performs, you know, obviously, she's the greatest gymnast of all time, she knows how to perform under pressure. I don't feel like you know, she mentioned she had the twisties. So her brain's not connected with her body, you know, she wants to perform as an athlete you want to perform, you want to be out on the stage, you want to, for me, I want to be playing in the game, I don't want to be sitting on the sidelines. So I think, if she has, and really, I'll say this, too, you know, it's really up to her, she knows her body better than anybody else. And I feel like, you know, if she's not prepared, then I think it's the right thing for her to do from either a mental health aspect or physical aspect to set aside and say, Okay, you know what, I could get seriously injured, which she could be seriously injured, not, you know, having her mind connected to her body. And I think it's the right thing for her to do to step aside and recognize that and say, you know, what, I need to step aside. I have teammates that can perform, maybe not as well as her per se, but she's currently under her current conditions, those teammates can perform better than her. So let's step aside and give them the chance to shine. That's how I look at it. I think she made the right call for herself. And also, you know, she has ADHD as well. And I keep thinking of things like, well, so I'm flying over to Tokyo. So I have to fly on this, you know, what, 1416 hour plane ride, it's completely flipped in terms of, you know, when it's new in here, basically, it's, you know, midnight there. So a lot of the athletes I felt in general to me look kind of tired. And just all the things that she's going through plus she's with ADHD on top and, you know, the medication and everything else, I can understand where she may have been disconnected, and you know, things like that pop up. So I look at it as she's an elite athlete, if she could compete, she would have competed, she couldn't. And I think she did the right thing for her and her body and made the right decision there. And you can even see in the last, the volt that she participated in at the end where she was able to come back she didn't do any twisting elements whatsoever. So it's obvious to me if she could, she would have she couldn't, you know, so that's how I look at that. And I think

Katy Weber  24:02

like two after a year and a half of COVID and the pandemic and the Olympics being delayed a year and dealing you know, with Black Lives Matter and just like everything that we have gone through over the last year and a half like of course you're not going to be performing at your peak level like who it like we don't even know what you know, none of us are all still trying to figure out what our new normal is and we're all like I can't even imagine what it must be like to be an Olympic athlete at this moment and to be thrust Yeah, like you said, across the world, where day is night and having to perform at peak level and so I find it so fascinating that there's such this that there has been a backlash you know, because it feels like you know, there is some element to being an elite athlete where it's like you have to push through the pain at all times and that's part of your, you know, your your identity is pushing through the pain because when you do push through the pain and you get the gold then it's worth it, you know that there's no other outcome you have to at all costs. And so now all of these gymnasts who are coming out and being like, Yeah, I was forced to, you know, perform with a broken foot and it destroyed my life, like all of these ways in which we're kind of, right. Like we're kind of like deconstructing. Maybe this isn't the healthiest way to be treated as is probably not a
good idea. Let’s Yeah. Yeah. So it does it’s I don’t know, I think it’s very fascinating. And then not only that, but she was her meds were not allowed to Riley she’s whatever bed she’s taking for ADHD she wasn’t allowed to take in Tokyo. And so there’s that element. Yeah.

Amy Brown 25:36
I think I’ve read that we’re not sure. So like, legal, but they were gonna make them options for certain athletes, but it’s a little bit unclear whether she was able to or not, I mean, I can imagine that if she wasn’t able to, that would certainly really throw you off.

Katy Weber 25:52
I don’t know what she was taking. But I also feel like, I’d be really surprised if Olympic athletes were able to take stimulants at all, you know, it just feels like those would be on the banned substance list from the beginning when it comes to performance enhancement drugs, but I don’t know much about that.

Amy Brown 26:09
They don’t get exemptions. And she has an exemption. Yeah. Several athletes that from what I read anyways that have ADHD are able to still take it with the exemption.

Katy Weber 26:20
Yeah. Interesting. But yeah, I’m sure permission. It must be fascinating for your point of view to kind of, like I said, have this new lens. Looking back at just athletics in general?

Amy Brown 26:34
It does. It’s, it is excellent, fascinating. And looking back, and I’m like, man, thank goodness, I did exercise I probably would have not done so well, in school without it. Yeah. So.

Katy Weber 26:48
And now when you had also mentioned about, you know, the the difficulty of having when you have young children and going through a divorce, and also not having time to yourself and not being able to exercise and again, it was sort of like feeling like your life was out of control. And I’ve talked a lot with guests about how much I struggled when my kids were younger, and how I feel like I was misdiagnosed with postpartum depression and anxiety simply because, oh, gosh, where do I start? I didn’t have sleep, I didn’t have help. I didn’t know how to ask for help. And just like feeling like, again, it’s another part of my life where I’m sorting out, you know, what was ADHD? What was new motherhood and what was you know, just needing a good night’s sleep and, and also feeling like, you know, wanting to give mothers of young children a hug all the time.

Amy Brown 27:40
I'm like, I feel you.

Katy Weber  27:42

I know, it is so hard. And then to hear, you know, like women who have young children and are going through this incredibly difficult time and are sorting through. Well, maybe I have an ad at you knows, maybe I have ADHD and going for a diagnosis and being told by their medical provider, like no, lower your expectations, you're just a new mom, this is just what life is like, you know, and being totally dismissed by medical professionals. And again, I think it's another time in your life where I'm like, think, you know, we just have a certain type of brain that that implodes at certain times of our life that are super stressful, like Parenthood. So what now thinking back about your that time in your own life, do you feel like all you needed was to just go out for a run and everything would have been fine? Or do you feel like there? I don't even know what I'm asking. I guess, you know, what kind of revelations Have you had about your own ADHD when it came to that time of your life?

Amy Brown  28:43

Yeah, I think that, you know, when you juggle young children, especially that only two and a half years apart, maybe that's not a good idea, after all. It is very challenging. And when I look back on it, I think especially after the second child, not it wasn't quite as, as noticeable with the first, but with the second, I just felt like I'm not together. I'm disorganized. I felt I couldn't, you know, I wasn't able to get that exercise. And like I would like to, and I just felt like, you know, I just didn't have things together. I don't know if that makes sense. But it just didn't feel organized. I felt like I had no time. I'm like, I gotta clean the house. I gotta do this. I'm over here. What are we doing? It was just very difficult. You know, versus today, fast forward. They're a little older, a little more, you know, independent. They're four and six now. It's a little easier. It's a lot. It's just wonderful. They're really fun. It's a fun age that I'm going through right now with them and I feel like I kind of like home. Okay, getting it back, you know, I feel more organized. You know, I can plan a little better. I know we're not best planners, but I can plan a little better. And I guess that's, that's what I'll say about that. It's just when they're young, it is really difficult, you know, trying, you're getting no sleep on top of it. And it's hard to manage.

Katy Weber  30:21

Yeah, it's funny because I had this moment with one of my husband's aunts, I think my first was like a year old. So I completely agree that having the second was way worse. And just in terms of organization and executive function and anxiety, too, I feel like I had much more anxiety around my second one, and still do, even though he's 10. But I remember like, after, when my first was a year old, and one of them one of my husband's aunts, like just making small talk and being like, so how's life with the baby? And I was like, it's really hard. Because I didn't know what else to say. And she just looked at me and she was like, really, I don't remember it being that hard. And I and that was one of those moments I will never forget, because I was like, I, up until that point had felt like my experience was everyone's experience. And that was the first time that I realized that like, oh, maybe I'm maybe I'm struggling more than the average than everybody else. Right? Yeah. But I also thought, you know, that she, Kate, her children came from a different decade where all of the family lived together. And you know, like, they all had a situation where I was very far away from all of my family, you know, and so I didn't feel like I had a lot of help. Whereas I, I sort of chalked that experience with her up to just like, you know, you lived in a neighborhood where your mom was always around to help. And you could always jump your kids on other people. And but again, like, you know, that, that feeling that we always have back going back and forth between like, wait, doesn't everybody feel this way? Try this parse out, like God,
Amy Brown  32:01
I'm like, Hey, this is I guess this is it. This is normal, right? So maybe we're just I feel like a lot of ADHD folks, we just
don't really complain, we just kind of like, Oh, we just got to figure this out and don't realize that we're maybe having
a tougher time than than other folks, while we're going through it.

Katy Weber  32:20
Right? Well, I often think that that might have something to do with processing speed, too, because I feel a lot of the
time, like when things are going really quickly. Like, it's you are just kind of like going along on the speeding training,
you don't really know what's happening, you're just trying to keep up a lot of the time and like, and I think that has to do
you know, on the one hand, when you're in a situation where there's a lot of urgency in kind of an emergency
situation, you do really well because you can keep up and you can start doing things really quickly. But for the most
part, I think a lot of that has to do with with our slow processing speed. And even though we can make really fast
connections, and we talk really quickly, there's a lot of that hyper activity, I think you really hit on something when
you were talking about you know how you've got that, like, I've talked about it with my kids where I'm like, I have
a foil a in my brain, right? So I'm like, the the thoughts come and they hang out in the lobby. Yeah. And then it takes a
minute for them to actually get into the main part of the building for me to actually like, listen, so I'm like, I can hear
things. But then it takes them over before I've actually lucid into the thing. And so you had mentioned it in reference
to jokes, right? Where I get so

Amy Brown  33:31
worried when somebody says like, Oh, I'm going to tell you a joke. I'm like, Oh my God. That's what I'm that's how I
feel inside. I just smiled. I'm like, Okay, tell me a joke, you know, but I'm thinking like, Oh, I'm not gonna get it, because
I just don't get them. I don't know what's wrong with me. But you know, somebody will tell me a joke. And it'll take a
few minutes for it to like, click most times that Oh, that's what was funny. I've even had somebody tell me a joke. And
I may be driving in the car later. And you know, to be polite. I laugh at the time, like, Oh, yeah, that's a good one. And
then later on, it hits me and I'm like, Oh, that's what that was. And I kind of chuckle about it. But yes, that happens to
me. And I will say, you know, something else that's a little bit that helped me recognize after I learned my ADHD
diagnosis, some of the feedback I've gotten from supervisors in the past is like, Hey, we want you to speak up more in
meetings. Well, when I'm in meetings, I have to really focus on what that individual is saying. And it takes a minute to
kind of come into my brain, like I've said, and understand what they've said and then come back with Okay, this is
how I feel about that. And I don't necessarily it doesn't click real quick. Like it may with some of my colleagues. So
it's not I have plenty to say just it takes a second So I've tried to also get a little bit more, I guess I would say
uncomfortable, or being comfortable with being uncomfortable even in a work setting with, okay, maybe my brain
doesn't need all that time to let it sit, it's okay to just kind of go with what you're thinking, if that makes sense to try
to speed that up a bit. So I can provide some feedback when I can. So being a little more risky, you know, rather than
waiting for me to fully let it sit in and think about it, I'll come up with an idea and go Okay, and then try to get that
out. I think that's

Katy Weber  37:02
one thing that has really helped me with this diagnosis is just being aware of like, how you operate, and then what
you need in order to operate efficiently, you know, and so a lot of the time it was it was shifting from this constant
mindset of like, Oh, my God, something's wrong with me, what's wrong with me? I can't do this, too. Now, I approach
every interaction with like, Okay, what, what is hap? What's the breakdown here? Or, like, you know, what do I need
to help me have performance or, you know, like, just examples, like, what the processing speed, like, you know, the other day I had my, my cat is sick. And so I've been dealing with the vet, and like dealing with the phone calls a lot of the time and you know, he's throwing information at me so quickly, and I'm in the super stressed out mode, where I need, you know, in the past, I would have been like, oh, my god, there's so much information. I'm not probably I didn't write it down. And I don't remember what it is. But now I'm too embarrassed to call him back and all this, you know, all these ways in which I would have turned into a chaotic situation. Whereas now, I don't have to say to him, I have ADHD. So I need you to do X, Y, and Z. But I can say to him, like, you're throwing a lot of information at me right? Now, is there some way that you could email me this information? Or can we go over it again, because I know I'm not going to remember it. And so there's like, just these like, tiny ways in life where I can kind of advocate for myself where I'd never used to be able to write and so I feel like, yeah, in a business situation, it must be very helpful to now know, okay, you're sort of like, Alright, I have listened mode, and then I have talked mode. And how can I better shift from one of those to the other, right. And so it's, it's, I think, so much of so much of the kind of, quote unquote, treatment of my ADHD, for me has been understanding what's going on, and then finding the ways to advocate in the moment as opposed to like, immediately going to a state of overwhelm.

Amy Brown 38:55

I agree. And that actually resonates with me, because I've become, I'd say, over the past few years, just much more confident. And I used to, for example, in a work meeting, if somebody had something really complex that they were talking about, and I didn't understand it, I would go and find a friend and be like, hey, with my notebook, can you tell me what they said? Or helped me better understand and now, just having more confidence and understanding me more, I'm not afraid to say, Hey, you know what, you just threw out some kind of crazy math formula. A little too fast for me, and I need to write that down. Can you slow down and let's understand that I'm not afraid to say hey, I didn't get that. Let's, can we talk through that a little more, so I can just kind of absorb what you're saying. So that resonates with me quite a bit what you just said.

Katy Weber 39:41

And do you think that that's from the diagnosis or do you think it's just getting older as a woman because I feel like white men have had that privilege their whole life like they've never had to be like, I'm not the smartest person in the room. So if I don't understand something, I need you to stop and like they, that confidence is like inbred in them. But I feel like as a woman, you know, we have a lot of that insecurity, especially in the workplace where it's like, oh god, I, you know, I have something to prove. So if I don't understand something, it's up to me to go Google it later and figure it out on my own, as opposed to saying, Hey, you know, you need to do a better job of explaining it to me.

Amy Brown 40:18

Yeah, exactly. I think maybe a combination of both. I'll say that I started kind of that technique more before I found out but it took me a while to get there and to have that confidence to go Okay, you know, maybe others aren't getting this either. But they're doing a very good job of putting on the game face like they're getting this but so I'm just going to speak up and I agree with you, it took some time to just kind of immaturity to, you know, get to a point where you feel comfortable saying, Hey, I don't I don't understand, you know, can you explain that a little better a little differently. I'm a visual learner, can you put it up on the board draw me some pictures of like a dog in a cat or something? I can understand. So I think I got there very close, or just prior to figuring out like, oh, ding ding ding This is an ADHD thing? I think so. Made the connection afterwards. But maybe he got there a little sooner because of just being an older woman, so to speak. Yeah, I
Katy Weber  41:18

think yeah, I think a lot of what this comes down to is sort of having a confidence in your own intellect. Which is something that when you are you know, when especially if you struggled academically like I did, you know, there’s a sense that like, you don’t really have so much self doubt when it comes to your how bright you are. And and so, you know, I feel like that has followed me throughout my life and so now it’s only now that I’ve maybe it’s an age thing, maybe it’s an ADHD thing, but again, it’s that idea of like, I’m having more confidence in my abilities, you know, and my intellect so that I can advocate for myself. Yeah, so it’s so again, I’m like, it’s so interesting to obsessive Li Think about it.

Amy Brown  41:59

The ADHD you and you know, I think about when I was younger, just not having that confidence. And now I’m like, I Why did I think I couldn’t do this subject like I can do this subject, I just need to teach myself a little differently. Maybe then somebody else learns, but I have you know, I’m like, I’m a smart person, I can do this. But you know, maybe in my 20s I’m like, Oh, I don’t want to do math class, because I don’t get math. And now I I feel like I’m not afraid to tackle, you know, those kind of things.

Katy Weber  42:26

I know, right? Yeah. Although I did start I did take up parkour with my son recently, and I really regretted that decision. Like, I’m like, Oh my god, I couldn’t even lift my arms over my head after my first class. I was like, maybe I need to take the confidence down a notch. I am still paging. But we have that and you know, I feel like that is another thing with ADHD we have a very, you know, we have such this childlike energy about new things that we we tend to be more youthful than our peers do.

Amy Brown  42:56

I agree. Yeah, we can definitely restart research something until the cows come home. It’s, it’s pretty intense. When I get on a subject. I’ll even say recently, random thought because I’m for those and I’ve always been photos, but I, I went with some friends and I have a hybrid bike and they have these rode bikes and I love the ride that we have, but I had trouble keeping up with them because I’m on this kind of slower bike and they’re on these really fast road bikes. And so I researched rode bikes like to death for, like, you know, days before I decided like, this is the road bike I’m gonna get because it has this feature in that feature and you become an expert road bike or overnight. Oh, I know.

Katy Weber  43:40

Absolutely. Right. hyperfocus I guess I didn’t get to ask you what you love about your ADHD although I feel like we’ve been talking about a kind of throw out but in terms of your business, because you had mentioned that you really loved the supply chain industry and you felt like it was a good fit for your ADHD. So why don’t you talk to me about what you do and kind of why. You know, we’re always looking for like, what are ideal careers for people with ADHD and it feels like you have you’ve definitely are in

Amy Brown  44:54

one. Yeah, absolutely. And I’m very passionate about logistics. So currently I’m a director of outbound
transportation for Dollar Tree, Family Dollar. And but prior to that, just really in the logistics industry, I think in general, there’s so many different aspects that you can get into and learn. And if I look back on my career, I’ve gone from running warehouses to running vessel operations down on a pier, with big cranes and really cool equipment; to now being on the transportation side of things. So I think there’s just so many different aspects of it. I mean, you have railroad, you have import export that you can learn. And if you think about when you go to Walmart, you can pick any product on the shelf or really anything. And how that came to be to me, that fascinates me to understand that they, they took all these different raw materials to start with, you know, they get turned into different widgets and eventually get put together to make a product, and then that product makes its way to the shelf to be sold to you. I just find that fascinating. And being in the industry, and just learning all the different aspects to me has been very helpful my brain because I’ve been able to learn new things in new parts of it as I’ve gone through my career. Yeah, right.

Katy Weber 46:17
a lot of moving parts. And again, like we like we said, like being lifetime, lifetime learners, I think. But yeah, looking back at my career in journalism, I’m like, Oh, yeah, of course, that makes sense. Like, every day is a new day. And every article is a brand new topic. And I have to, like, become an expert in that topic in a very short period of time. And it was so interesting, you know, always learning in that way. makes so much sense to me. So yeah, I can see why being in a situation where there’s, so you know, managing so many moving parts. And also like thinking about like, the, the macro element to these products would be so fascinating. Yeah.

Amy Brown 46:58
Yeah, no, it is very fascinating. It’s been a lot of fun. So far, being in the industry.

Katy Weber 47:05
How long have you been working for dollar tree? Family Dollar?

Amy Brown 47:09
I’ve been working with them for about two and a half years.

Katy Weber 47:11
Okay. Because I feel like that’s like, you know, my informal polling, I feel like we tend to switch jobs every two to three years. And have you dealt with that element of like, trying to keep the newness in your career?

Amy Brown 47:30
Um, I would say, a lot of what has driven me, I think, yes, to some degree of stored answers, yes. But I also have found that, you know, in order to move up, you had to just really grab hold of the opportunities that are given to you, and take advantage of that. And so for me, a lot of the times why I have moved on from a company just has to do to the opportunities that I’m given, to move up within the world and experience, transportation or supply chain in a
different way. So each and every time I have loved every company that I've worked for, they have certainly given at all my bosses have given me, you know, different things that I've been able to learn and take to the next journey in my career. But, you know, hey, if an opportunity presents itself, and it makes sense, you know, you're gonna gravitate towards that. So I think

Katy Weber  48:28

even you know, I marvel at my neurotypical husband's ability to stay with the same company for decades. But I also think that he changes you know, he, he gets a lot of promotions, and like, his, his job is changing on a regular basis. So I feel like maybe that's just human nature, that we need to change a lot. But I know looking back at my experience, often I would like quit a job in rage, too, because I couldn't, I can't take direction very well. And so often, it was like, I had issues with management, you know, like, I had issue with my boss or I had issue with the publisher or somebody, you know, there was some part where I was like, that's it, and my impulsivity side. And my compulsive side would just be like, that's it, I quit, you know? And then I think now looking back at it, I'm like, that's a real ADHD tax, because that affects your income potential, right? I mean, like, there's so many ways in which we have there's hidden ways in which we have a lot of taxes on us in the traditional workplace environment and why I think a lot of us end up becoming entrepreneurs, but then there's like, all sorts of barriers to being an entrepreneur too, because you have to be a self starter and you have to be motivated and all these things that, again, we can get burnout and

Amy Brown  49:44

I do think though, you know, there is something to that when I think back early on in my career, and as you kind of progress and move up, you know, you're a little more, you have less responsibility and then as you kind of earn the trust of others, you you move up into management positions, and I could see Where you know where maybe I would jump to the next position because it was an opportunity but also because hey you know what, you're probably going to be a little more micromanaged lower down, you know what I mean if you're in your position and as you you know, go up into other management roles and where I'm at today you know, I'm very much allowed the algs called independency kind of run you know my operation and you know they trust me to do that and so I appreciate that and you know I feel like I'm you know, I love my job I love where I'm at and you know I have that algal entrepreneurial kind of spirit going on in my career position where I can you know, I'm given that flexibility to run it in the trust to do that you know what I mean? Yeah, maybe that's another reason why to you would i would look to move up into the next level role

Katy Weber  51:03

and again, I think you know, it just helps to sort of have that awareness of like okay, this is what I like to do this is what I don't like to do I think self awareness is so key for us in this naturally so now have you thought about what you might rename ADHD since it's such a problematic acronym for so many of us

Amy Brown  53:58

I have you know, the attention deficit and then this order at the end doesn't bother me as much but I was thinking Attention Deficit regulation disorder maybe it's to me it's more of weaken of focus. It's about how do we control that focus how do we regulate that you know, we either go over the top or we don't do enough versus you know in addition to that with you know, I think of the traditional add now they've rolled it into the ADHD kind of you know, set I guess in the psychological textbooks that they have now you know, not everybody is hyperactive per se they could
you know, just be attention deficit disorder but we throw that in there anyways and we call it you know, inattentive type. So to me I was thinking attention deficit, maybe regulation disorder, something a little. I know it's not that creative, but just something a little different.

Katy Weber  54:58
Oh, no, I don’t I feel like we do not have a deficit of anything. An abundance of everything, it’s a matter of regulating it. Yeah. And I feel like from all the women that I’ve been interviewing, I feel like everybody is hyperactive in their own way. You know, even though so many of us don’t relate to the physical element of the hyperactivity, like we’re just the way our brains like ping pong back and forth and all of the you know, the way it exhibits itself in anxiety feels like hyperactive or impulsivity. Impulsive shopping. Like there’s ways in which I think

Amy Brown  55:29
we have a little piece Yeah, right. It’s

Katy Weber  55:31
the internalized activity that we all do that we just never really made that connection. We never really realized. Oh, right. Okay, that makes sense. Yes. Okay. I do have that. Like, for me, it was like road rage. I that was the big connection for me when that like I was getting my diagnosis. And she was asking me like, how I feel when I’m waiting in line or in traffic. And like, I feel like I want to tell you know, like, I was like, Oh, right. Yeah, right. And quick to anger is kind of an is kind of a hyperactive element. Yeah. Okay, I see it. Now.

Amy Brown  56:03
I’m kind of thinking, you know, what resonates with me there is that I’ve been in mostly operational roles throughout my career and in an operational role, you have a sense of urgency to get something done right now. Yeah, I mean, it just drives you completely crazy when you can’t get it done right now. So you do have that sense of urgency. And I do feel like, you know, maybe that’s why I’ve been able to be successful in those roles because of that. Yeah, right. Want to get it done now standing in lines like

Katy Weber  56:31
yeah, it doesn’t translate very well. It also leads to some compulsive online shopping, but I need everything to

Amy Brown  56:41
get leaner. Now I have to I asked my boyfriend like, okay, so I think I’m having a moment of impulsivity. Do you think I really need this? No, I don’t. I didn’t think so either. But you know, you’re trying to justify their right you’re like, Oh, I need a new bike to go riding so I can be faster. Even for me recently, so it does happen.

Katy Weber  57:04
I love it. Well, thank you so much. This has been such a stimulating conversation. I'm gonna go run around in my yard. But yeah, I really. I'm so glad you reached out and I'm so glad you found the podcast too. Yeah, I

Amy Brown  57:17

love it. And it's been fun. I thank you for having me on. And, you know, again, I love your podcast.