

Karis Knight: Hyperfocus, masking & finding our voice

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SPEAKERS

Karis Knight, Katy Weber



Katy Weber 00:00

Let's start off with kind of how you're such a we last. You're what 2425. At this point, I'd say 24 Oh my god, I think about how different my life would have been if I had made these connections at 24. But like, what, what were some of the first tip offs for you in terms of ADHD? What made you really think that this was you?



Karis Knight 00:24

So I was always something like at the back of my mind, but I was always like, I just joke about it, because I didn't really ever end to it. And also, like, I suppose, like, I never really, like had anything that was standing out as leadership, I suppose I realized, maybe looking back, and I just figured out my own way of dealing with things. And things like watching, hoping he like, especially in school, I got a lot of validation from my parents. So I want to do well. And I try and find other ways to study. And I'd make myself interested and all these kind of things. But then it was there as soon as TED talk. And I was like, Yeah, that's me. That's me. Yep. And it's that constant need for stimulation, that I just is like, like, stood out to me so much. And it made me realize so many things that I hadn't actually realized that I do in my everyday life that was like related to that. And then when I was working, and during the summer, I had my first art exhibition. And as you can imagine, like, especially when they do see, like, there's so much going on or so much to think about, there's so much pressure that you put on yourself to make that events like, like pay off. And I realized that the marketing guy that I had hired to help me run the event and do video interviews with all the people at the event had ADHD. So he was really known as me space. And I said at the event, and he just will carry this, you're doing this, this and this. And I was like, Thanks, James. And then I'd get on it and like, get through it. And I realized that so many people around me didn't realize what was happening inside of my head and things like that happened, but because it was something that he could relate to. I then realized that like, Yeah, I know that I can pay attention to this, I can learn coping mechanisms actually working. And so you just got off something so stupid, or so they're like, I can go write that. So that is identify and then, like, solve a problem. So yeah, that's pretty much how I

realized that I had it. And it's very much like a new journey for me. But yeah, it feels so like such a sense of relief, to be able to put how you're feeling and towards the other people can relate to as well.



Katy Weber 02:28

Yeah, absolutely. It is something interesting to talk about too, with people who don't really like, I think when I first was diagnosed with ADHD, it just felt like, I felt like my whole life made sense. You know, like, I was so happy. I wanted to shout it from the rooftops. And then, right, because it just was like, like you said, like, it was like, I'm not yelling, you know, I'm not down on myself anymore. Like, I really feel like I can I can find the accommodations that I need. And I can do the things I need to get the stuff done and, and like, I just felt so amazing about it. And then when I started telling people I have ADHD, the reaction was sort of like, Oh, I'm sorry, you know, like, I realized people think when you talk about ADHD, that you're talking about a disorder because it's called a disorder. And so they talk about it, like you have this horrible thing happening. And you're like, Well, no, the not diagnosed part was horrible. The diagnosis part is actually the greatest thing that's ever happened to me, right. So it's like, it's, it can be so difficult to talk about with people who don't understand how this can be like, the greatest and worst thing ever. So try to live in that paradox at all times. Tie announcing back and forth. Yeah, literally. Yeah, right. And so I think, again, like why it's so important for us to find each other, you know, and to be able to talk about these shared experiences and to talk about things and not have people kind of roll their eyes are just or just like, look, give you that look that we've all gotten in our lives, which is like, oh, okay, take it down a notch. Or, or like, Oh, right. I don't know what's happening here. But I'm just gonna slowly back away from you. Like, you know, all those things that we've experienced, we could just sort of crash together and be like, Oh my God, this two and this two at this time? Yeah. Yeah, I don't remember what we're talking about. Oh, yeah. Okay, so. So but oh, you're using the example of the guy who was doing the marketing for you, right? Like, that's such a perfect example of like, a way to feel seen and to feel like you had the accommodation of him saying like, Alright, let's get back on track. Let's do this thing. And I think when I talk about you know, when we talk about like the struggle of living with ADHD, a lot of it, you know, because I asked myself that all the time. I'm like, How much am I struggling? Right, because we asked ourselves obsessively all you know, we we, our lives obsessively. That's part of our personalities. And so I'm always like, How much am I struggling? How much did I struggle and I from talking to so many different women Like realizing how so much of our experience depends on how much structure and accommodations we had earlier in our life, right? So like you just saying, like you had validation from your parents is something that can that that changes the course of your life, right from somebody who did that, right. And so it's amazing to me how when I, when we talk about ADHD, like our, our experience is so similar in so many ways, and yet, at the same time, also can be wildly different in terms of how we grew up, right, and show how we retreated or how we were supported. Yeah. And then to think like, you know, to find that I have people who are listening or finding this podcast all over the world, like, it amazes me that there's this. So I mean, and then, you know, we're technically 10% of the population, but I think it's way more.



05:57

Yeah. And especially in women, like I think is so under diagnosed, because that's what I realized myself, like, how good I am at masking things. Like my, this is what I've realized recently, my peripheral vision so good, I can be looking at this, I can be watching everything

else to watch and hear everyone else's act and then a room to hold it. And I didn't realize I was doing that like to realize I should be reactive. It's like, yeah, no, no, that is what you were thinking or doing.



Katy Weber 06:24

That's funny. I like that. I wonder if that I mean, even just reading on your website, when you were like the idea for my art project came because I was doing occupational therapy. And I'm like, even just that ADHD in its own right where you're just but the way in which, like, our resumes always look like somebody just threw a bunch of stuff in the air. And it all just landed because it's so true.



06:51

And someone said to me, when they came into the exhibition that I've just recently finished, he said, cat is like, my girlfriend is working on me here. I was saying, I wonder what drugs she's on to make this to make this artwork. And then he said, I turned to her after seeing you buzzing around in the room? Like, yeah, no, I think that's just her personality. I was like, obviously nearby. That's why I was talking to them. And I like yeah, it just says that energy you've got all the time it comes from you just comes out and color. stimuli.



Katy Weber 07:22

Yeah, yeah. Okay, yeah. Okay. Let me just backtrack a little, because I do want to talk about what you're doing as an artist and your project. And yeah. But first, I just want to go back to like it through this ADHD lens. Now, do you look back at your childhood, especially? And think like, Oh, my God, the signs were there all along?



07:47

Yeah, like I do. And I think that's the thing that was mentioned with my mom and the validation. And also, like, every single school report I get is she's so bubbly. And when she moves in the class, like, she's just like chatting to someone. And I remember one of my school report cards, saying, I just had to take my shoes off all the time. Because like, I just like, I just felt sort of strict to like, that was when I was in primary school. And just the rules, like I couldn't do with the rules. And I wasn't attention all the time. But it was never like she's a bad child. And also a thing I didn't realize. And I don't know how well known this is. But this is what I seen on the TED talk is a lot of people who have got ADHD are diagnosed with asthma, because they wheeze when they're younger. And I was diagnosed with asthma when I was younger. And what she taught us women said in the TED talk was, you go to ask my appointments, you never take any of your inhalers because you forget it was part of your daily routine. There's no way you're remembering that. But you go there, and they're like, Yeah, you're like the bass patients. And that was always me. And then I think back to the fact the point that when they said to me that I hadn't asked my tag, actually, they were they're having an anxiety attack. And it was just like, No one realized that that's what it was. I don't know. But like, I don't have any asthmatic

symptoms, like no going up and it does, it does change. But that was one of the things. I was like, wow, like, yeah, I have been diagnosed with asthma and have I actually go like, and never hindered me in any way. So that's interesting.



Katy Weber 09:09

That is interesting. You know, I spoke with guests about the connection between like histamine and the and like, the genetic component of like, the MTHFR gene and ADHD and like all this, I mean, it's just dizzying when you start to really like, um, you know, peel back the onion layers. But yeah, there has been some interesting research done around allergies and AR and histamine and ADHD. i But I never thought about that connection between like asthma and anxiety, right, and like breathing because I certainly like my when my anxiety manifests, it manifests in feeling like I can't feel my lungs, right? And so there is that panic where you're like, Oh, my God, I'm, what's I'm dying. And then and then you're like, oh, right now that's anxiety. So I'm curious. That would be really Interesting study of like, how many people were misdiagnosed with any kind of like any sort of respiratory issues as children



10:08

actually I'm facing for sure. And also what she, what she said was sometimes they know that it's not asthma. But if the parent is seen as a good Kayden if you're looking at that, and you know that that sustained sensation symptoms for asthma, you ask that asthma. And if that if that ticks the box are some things that the doctors diagnose as because they don't want to start looking into, like a mental disorder. I feel like if the parents haven't raised haven't raised that themselves, and I was like, that is very interesting. That's very interesting.



Katy Weber 10:39

Yeah, you're right, that's true. You know, a lot of issues. A lot of us grind our teeth at night, right. And so that's totally a thing. And so a lot of people have like TMJ issues, right? With your jaw and your inner ear. And so then the inner ear leads to issues with vertigo, right? And Dizziness. And there's this whole connection between tooth grinding and our jobs. And I've talked to I had this experience too. And because I had had sinus allergies growing up, I went to an EMT when I started getting vertigo, because I was like, wow, I think I thought it was sinus. And it was like you just said, like, I assumed it was sinus related. So I went to an EMT, and was like, help me with this sinus problem. And so they started treating it like it was a sinus issue. Yeah. And it turned out, it was like, and it wasn't getting any better. And it was getting worse because of the teeth grinding. And it was finally a dentist who said no, you know, it's actually this is what is the cause of it? And if you can, if you can stop the teeth grinding. But like, yeah, it's like you zero in on what you think the issue is. A lot of the time, you know, medical professionals are just more interested in treating the pain than they are and really thinking about what the source is, right? So like, who wants to who wants to unpack the source of anxiety and a child, you know, I'm sure a doctor is like, I don't want to touch that with a



12:05

trav. But that's another thing. I've only recently discovered, though, that I've got anxiety this

day. But that's another thing. I've only recently discovered, though, that I've got anxiety all the time, I just thought, because I think I learned very early on how to turn that nervous energy into excitement. I'm just excited all the time. And I think I just I'm just I will say to myself, I'm easily excitable, but now I'm realizing that I'm highly anxious. All the time.



Katy Weber 12:25

I think a lot of the time the anxiety comes from, you know, wanting to be well behaved, right? I mean, so like, not only as females do, we want to be likable. But we're probably like a lot of us were told by our teachers that we were too much or too tight, ever, like all these ways that we're told as women growing up that were too much of something, but Right, and so like our job, we feel like we will be better if we are smaller, right? That's what women are taught, we have to be taught to be less and be smaller. And so like, of course, anxiety is the is the result of that recipe, right of like trying to be trying to pull yourself back all the time, and not knowing why you do what you do. Because you have all of these impulses, and you're being told you're wrong your whole life. And you know, there's ways in which we are just told over and over again by the adults in our life, that we're doing things wrong, you know, and that's why it's like, of course, I have depression and anxiety as an adult. Yeah. I know, it's so it's just mind blowing, thinking about the ways in which, you know, this all connects to this one diagnosis.



13:31

I know. And I think that's why I think so mad, but like, you can go through this far in your life. And just and not realize that that's what it is. But I know for myself, like, I was always so scared of getting into trouble. I'd like hyper focus all the time, on how not to get into trouble, and how to be better and how to and I realized I like in my head all the time. I was always thinking that right? How can I do this? And then if I can do that, and then obviously, because you are thinking so fast, like I could get to that conclusion quite quickly, and then learn how to fit in and learn how to then not be sent to changing saving told me for time to stop talking. And I just can't



Katy Weber 14:09

be right. And that's Yeah, I think when the concept of masking is first, like introduced to us as that's why I think we relate so deeply to that sense of like having this public persona versus we are on the inside and feeling like there's this huge divide between our public and private. And then you're like, oh, yeah, I really relate to everything I see and read about masking.



14:37

Yeah, it's and it's so bizarre that you'd never, especially for me, because it's very, very much a new thing. Like it's just like, yeah, yeah, I did things like you're even saying like grading your teeth was like, okay, there you go. That also is



Katy Weber 14:52

it's funny because like when people tell me that they've listened to lots of episodes of this

podcast, my response is Oh, like I'm always a little better. because I'm like, gosh, you know a lot about me like I do not hold back. I guess I I'm like I talk about all of my shit all of my mess like everything right? I mean it's so cathartic that's so lovely though because that's what I mean like I can't I can't help myself it's not like I couldn't I don't have a choice right as soon as I open my mouth like my deepest secrets always come tumbling out. But then I got a DM I got a DM recently that was basically like you're so together you know, why aren't you more of a mess on your podcast? She's like you're every all of your guests that you talk to you're all just so accomplished and none of you is messy. And I was like, Have you been listening to like, I think that's a compliment. It sounds like a backhanded compliment like I think that's a compliment but I'm also like girl like like we are all missus that's beautiful. We also do amazing things which is what is so wonderful like I think every woman I interviewed is brilliant and fascinating and you know to channel that energy right like yeah, we definitely accomplish things but we are anything we are definitely messes. I just like I had to laugh I was like I don't even know how to respond to this message like if you if you are feeling like I am super together I mean I guess the fact that I can even release a podcast every week is a big deal okay, and I definitely like I realizing how many projects I have dropped and like you know things I've gone for like really super interested in and then drop them like I realized that this is taking a bit of extra for me to even continue doing this.



16:46

So I did something that accomplishment went to be here for and to do otherwise you wouldn't be doing it like I think that's what's so lovely. And I think like that interview definitely shows as well and that's just not as there's a nice space to be and then



Katy Weber 17:00

yeah, right so but you know, I feel like I definitely need to like rebrand if anybody thinks that this that this podcast is all about being like you know having a having our shit together change the the introduction or something? Let's talk about, oh, well, no, I was curious. Just going back to your childhood and your parents like what have you talked to them about ADHD? Is it something that they even were aware of?



19:30

So I still have at home just now. And I told my mom, I've got ADHD she carries out. Like she says really don't. And I texted her when I think of ADHD. And I said to her that I sent her the link the TED talk, I just thought and she said no you don't and then half an hour later after she'd watch the tape document. I think either they're sitting there like on the way with my mom. And it makes so much sense because but my mom's a makeup artist for film and TV so she's always in such a creative environment is always changing all the time. And but she's very like impulsive and it works. She's learned how to very organized because it's how she's managed. She manages everything, but there's a home she's not. And then the two of you have a conversation like, Hmm, okay, then like, no, no, we see this but my sister also had in had has dyslexia. So her school life was very, very hard and she got bullied. So I think a lot of the attention was on her. So my misbehavior wasn't that bad because I was still getting good grades in school, because that's how I knew has freezone because that's what they wanted. So

I just work out a way in my head, hey, I do that, at least in subjects that I like the ones I done, like, I just I'll drop down later on. And it was all fine. But I think like after, like, they don't know that after talking to them. I know. They're just like, ah, there's like that aha moment. Okay. Yeah, that makes sense. To be honest. Which is nice.



Katy Weber 20:53

Oh, my God, I love that right. I feel like we should get we should get like finder's fees for everybody that that we invert, because yeah, it is that sense of like, you know, and there's always well, and I think when people say you don't have ADHD, it really just like reinforces a lot of the stigma, because a lot of the times people say you don't have ADHD, because you got good grades, or you've got a job or like, it's usually like you couldn't possibly have ADHD because you were successful. And you're like, No, no, no, you don't understand like, those things are entirely right. In fact, quite a lot of us do really well. And that's not what this is. Yeah. I love that story that your mom comes back. And she's like, Yeah, I think I have it.



21:36

So funny. Because he, isn't it?



Katy Weber 21:41

Oh, yeah, it is? Absolutely. I know. And I think yeah, when I first put the pieces together in my own life, I went over and I was like, thinking about everybody in my life. And I called up my brothers. And I was like, so guess what? At least one of them, I think definitely has it. Yeah, the other one I'm not quite sure about. But yeah, and I know you always go over everybody like thinking about how it manifests. And then I'm thinking about my own kids. Okay, so now, I want to hear more about the voice of women, because this is amazing. And I think, also, we touched on it a little bit in the beginning, but I want you to tell me about like, how you came to the idea because it was COVID. Right? And you're so you're in school? Are you still in school for occupational therapy? Or



22:31

just thought back yesterday? I'm not starting back in this case. Did I still time there was a one way.



Katy Weber 22:37

That's awesome. Yeah, I know. But you were doing art before where you, you were obviously an



22:44

artist? Well, I did in my spare time. But I would never call myself an artist. And and I seen this

art is doing really well. And I was like, I could paint that. Like, why am I doing that if she can do that. And then I just said to myself, I need to think of a really sick concept. And what I've learned, I know, like no one really knows of ADHD, we regret our problems over right, because you just can't stop thinking until the problem. So. So I had this list of problems. One of them was after George Floyd passed away, not passed away, it was killed. That I went to a protest. And there is a woman, a black woman standing up there talking about all the experience she'd had. And now I've got mixed messages. So my Nana is half white, half black. So a lot of my cousins are black. And I was very much like this is there's something really not okay with that. So that was a problem because I was like, and the inside were the same. And we're women, and we experienced a thing of being a woman. But on top of that they had a mission, that means to be black on top of that. And I don't like how that is, and I want that to be an issue. And then I started to think about all the issues that we have as women and how we feel that we need to be pretty and how horrible that is. As we get older, we trying to keep our youth which is ridiculous. Because the older we get the retro soul gets and the knowledge and the bravery and everything we've come through to get to that age, and to show age in your face should be celebrated as a beautiful thing. But you can't make money from that. And these these, these corporations can't make money from as if we're not buying beauty products. So what's a better way for us? So then there's all that problem. And then I done this one painting that I was in that they were the eyes were cut off, and it was just the mouth. And then I just came into my voice, a woman, voice of women, and then we can look at women because I'm a woman. And then at least as humans, we need to have a box to associate ourselves with to let the barriers down. So then only I can contact women to allow women to make this connection. And then I can talk about just to start off breaking down the barriers, everything that we experienced as women and the feelings that we have about being petty and our egos and what that means that we're so much more than that. Right? We're brave we're, we're knowledgeable we raise families and actually families isn't everything that women has either and actually, even if you identify as a woman You don't have the typical genitals of a woman, then that doesn't make you any less of women, if that's what you identify as. And that's what I wanted to take all of that away and focus on who we are and then say, and I don't want to take things like race and the outward outward being away completely, because then for me, that's taken away. That experience, which is why I made it half in half to try and make at least the focus, be equally on our essays. And our and our beautiful essays and our bravery and our knowledge, as well as avoiding and at least have this better balance between the two, because it's never going to go away completely. And it would be death of Bangor st if you could make it go away. But by by by producing these images in this way, it can then spark conversations between people. And then I was trying to think how can I better raise a community and with the people that I'm working with, as I can get charities involved in I can talk to the charities about what I'm doing. And I can support the charities by donating the paintings for charity. And all this just came out on paper when I tried to write my into your exam for facial therapy. And it was even. And that was because I've actually taken all the things from occupational therapy, which is about seeing the person as an individual, taking into consideration their culture and seeing their life through their eyes and not your own. So I the women also write their life story. And the reason I don't change any of that, because who am I to change their story and write it in my words, I want it to be from how they see it. And then what I realize by doing that, and then writing their story, as she is that can be very controversial or no longer controversial, because it's just that person's view on life, and how can you argue with that, we can have conversations around the issues surrounding that. But it doesn't involve that woman that involves other things. And that women is always going to be in the middle of that conversation to come back to and agree with their perspective, because that just is it just is because that's it. That's how they're seeing it. So I basically just had all these problems I wanted to solve. And then this project just allowed me

to do that. And it allowed me to use my art. And also I love about painting. As I can't forget, I'm painting my hands like it's something that even if my mind's just in a way, I always come back to pretty quickly and don't get too distracted as long as I keep the paintbrush in my hand.



27:16

And so yeah, that's that's where all that came from. And that's why I decided like, this is what I feel that my path from all different random things I'm doing from, I'm also doing yoga teacher training, because I want to have like a wellness center and a safe place for people to come and be vulnerable. Because there's none of that. And I think, I don't know if it's maybe through my experience with ADHD or not. But you can have a filter, right? It's like, as you were saying, like what you're thinking your head just comes out. And I realized that not a lot of people live their lives like that, I may see the being that vulnerable, as a bad thing and are negative. And it's not, it's a beautiful thing to be that vulnerable and wear your heart on your sleeve all the time, because people can then connect with you. And if everyone is using if everyone is common to each other, and that way instead of in a manipulative way and trying to use their weaknesses to their advantage, then it's a beautiful thing. And we all want to be loved. And we all want to connect with people from the heart. And we all get that rush of dopamine when we find connection in someone. And there's all things that we can connect with, with everyone that we become in contact with that we can find a common ground, even if they're halfway across the world, even if they're not like the human experience, we just want to feel love and feel safe. And where if we are not feeling that, then it's because of different traumas and different things that we've been around. And if someone if we don't like a certain person, it's because they're not making us feel safe. And they're probably don't like us, because we're doing the same for them. And when we strip all that down, we all have the same human needs. And it's ridiculous that we try and put ourselves all in these outer boxes that don't need to exist if we just if someone doesn't like the way that someone's treating them, we just put our hands up and say, I'm sorry, actually to do that way. Instead of or, like if someone is like this. Or if someone as invest bots like LGBTQ and you see something wrong, you're going to get shouted down your thought that that person doesn't know if we come to each other with a place of openness and a place from the heart, then those conversations aren't going to be an aggressive thing is then just like, Oh, I'm sorry, I don't mean to offend you, instead of running from the ego. I just can't say so, yeah,



Katy Weber 29:25

yeah. And I think you know, it's such this like incredible antidote to kind of what we're experiencing now especially with with the lockdown and pent the pandemic and like how many of us have started to live the majority of our lives online? You know, so we've all become one dimensional right? And so you think about like, how social media has created this like polarization right of this polarization in politics polarized you know, these and the more polarized we become the more radicalized we become so like, you know, in the US like You know, somebody being a Trump supporter is basically like synonymous with being like the devil, right? And you know that that's not necessarily true. But it's really, really difficult to, to bring back, you know, to pull back on that radicalization when when, you know, you think about how social media is feeding you these ideas over and over again, and same with like, COVID, and the vaccine and like all and, and so it's so interesting to me like to think about, like, how important empathy is in our lives and how much it's lacking, right. And when talking to women

and talking about our experience with with undiagnosed ADHD, you think about how, like I was saying earlier, like how our, our lives end up so different based on how we're socialized, right. And when the socialization comes with with accommodations, or comes with privileges, and so you really start to see the social inequity in our experiences, right. And then Black Lives Matter is such a perfect example of like blowing the lid off of the inequities that are existing in our society. And, and so it's been like, I feel like, even just through the ADHD conversations, like, it's been so powerful to speak to and be aware of the experiences of being neurodivergent. And growing up as a person of color versus growing up as a white person, right. And like,



31:25

that must be so sure,



Katy Weber 31:27

yeah, because so much of this comes down to like, we were saying, like behaving and being a good person and not speaking up and not being a rabble rouser, or, you know, all of these ways in which we are told to like, well just shut up and keep in your place. And don't, you know, don't reach out and don't try to like empathize.



31:46

And the thing is that I think that's the thing like, worth what you're saying, with if, if you've had a safe environment, and like going back to what I'm saying, as like, all we want to do as humans is to feel love and to feel safe. And if when we're in that place, then we can we show our best selves. So like, and I think for someone like me who's grown up in that environment, then my ADHD can become a superpower instead of the anxiety and the depression and what it can definitely bring, whereas for me, and the nervousness, and all that I've learned to enter next gen to excitement into make me do things and to make me like active and to work towards achieving the goals that I want. But I can only imagine how then that that then, I mean, and the self, though has been a huge part of my journey. But I can only imagine how much worse that must be for someone who hasn't gone off in that. And that space of love, and safety. So the energy turns into, like severe anxiety and trauma, so then they're operating from that place of trauma. And as I think you are a lot more sensitive, being when you're running late on that high energy all the time, you're a lot more sensitive to that traumatic energy as well. And, like, that's such a huge part of the discussion that like, that, I think is kind of like must be like, like not, like not even seen upon because, like, it can be a superpower. And it can be this amazing thing. But like anything, and anyone, even if you're not operating from that space, if you've come from trauma and even like aggression, things like that aggression that we have in our society always comes from athletes, and it comes from something right. But it's not just because like, as up as, like, as I'm saying, like, as humans, that's not the natural place, or we weren't to operate from.



Katy Weber 33:36

Yeah, and then to just bring it full circle. Like, as a society, we're not willing to look at the source, right? We just want to, like tidy it up and like fix things now. And like as fast as easy as

source, right? We just want to, like try it up and like fix things now. And like as fast as easy as possible, as opposed to really trying? Yeah, well, that's true. It is, it is an enormous dismantling of our culture. That is long overdue. But I think at the same time, like, I think projects, like what you're doing are really get to that the heart of how important it is to see each other with empathy and to really kind of understand experiences and to share and you know, learn about ourselves make



34:18

those connections, it's like, as you were saying, at the very beginning those connections and when you can make those genuine connections with people. It's such a beautiful thing. Like we are social beings, we come from tribes way back when, like that's how we've, like whatever your beliefs are, like have grown and evolved to be whatever words you want to put on that. But we've developed as as society massively, however you want to put that but we've come from groups of people in villages and tribes and all these things, and now we're loving a lot of time and our own in solidarity, solidarity, and our homes. And then we get massive egos to like, Oh, I'm so independent. I'm so independent. And this is something that I've spoken about a lot on my Instagram. None of us are independent, like I don't know, like where the my gas comes from and someone else has been dead and all that even get that and the clothes that I wear. Well, I didn't make them. And the third one, I just went to the supermarket and like the postman delivered my mail. So it's like, actually, do I have the skills to be able to fit in all those roles? No. So I feel independent that we need to coexist as a society over Yes. We can't even look at our own bodies unless you've studied in healthcare. We rely on somebody else do that for us as well. Right?



Katy Weber 40:27

Yeah, that's so amazing. So now you just had a show, or you're in the middle of a show or what's going on,



40:32

I had a show in London, it was the first show I'd ever done like headphones, oh, myself, I was working in a bakery to be able to do it. And then like I just did on, like, I just rented a space, we ended the gallery and portability ward in London, and just went for it. And it was the best week ever by like, I just had all these people, are we coming into my space, wanting to talk about important subjects? Definitely. I just told him to leave like that's my space control is going on here. And I think that's an I realize, like, where a lot of those superpowers come in, because you've got that eight or do to last all day. And actually, it was the best feeling ever going home and feel like I've run out of all my energy of passion. This is how people feel after a long, hard day. They don't have any the energy left, and they can't talk to anyone I love.



Katy Weber 41:23

And so Had you already decided that you were going to do this full time? Or was it the show that really kind of put you over the edge? No, I,



41:29

I mean, I kept telling my mom that after FSL five pain instead of angry, I wouldn't go back. But I know my heart's not in it. And then I know like even more, I started to discover how our brain function on it. And like we can focus but when it's something we're interested in, and if we're not interested, and there's no way in heck, we're going to be able to focus. So that's what I said, if I go back to uni, I am not going to be able to focus on anything. And I'm not going to pass any exams because I'm not interested, I don't want to go and do a three month placement. When I'm not getting paid for when I just want to paint it in like that makes no sense. And like weapons do be an occupational therapy, or you can go in and do it occupational therapy, and I don't want to do that. But because I've done three years, I could still go and be an occupational therapy assistants that as I was saying to my mom, like, I still learn all the skills, and I'm using them. And that's what's so amazing. I just think it's so powerful when you follow the path of life that I believe in. If you less than to teach your your mates ago, it's because now some women and some people have come in to the exhibition space, and we've broken down because the some of the stories have triggered their own emotional responses. And like me, too, a few years ago would have been like, what do I do with a human and a blubbering mess in front of me like, for delay? Do we guys know that I have my head, I'm a trained therapist, I can talk them through that emotion. And I can come down and be like, this is okay, this is a good release and be able to have those conversations in a proactive way instead of making him feel really uncomfortable and not know what to do. So yeah, that's me. Like, it's all worked out. In the end, hopefully, it continues to go that way.



Katy Weber 43:09

I know. Right? And it is, it is always amazing to sort of trace the trace all the different things that that have led you to this place in your life right now. Right? Like I think about, like, you know, so often we start things and we can't, you know, we they can't sustain our interest for very long, right, because we're moving on to new things. And we always just like default into thinking that we're terrible, because as a result, because we can't finish things, you know, or we only do 90% of a project. And we never do the last 10%. And we always view ourselves as as failure. And yet, like, it is amazing how all of this pulled experience from all these different things that we have tried leads us to have interesting perspectives in the next thing we try right like, and it died like we're so it just brings this like well rounded fullness to all of our experiences in a way that you wouldn't have been able to do if you just stayed on one track one track for 30 years. So I'm like why do we put so much emphasis and how important it is to be consistent when I'm like, actually, I think it's way more important to be trying a million things. Yeah.



44:19

Try everything. Yeah, as much as we can for sure. And I think that allows us then to be able to connect with so many other people because once you've tried so many more things, there's so many more people that you can then connect with with all these things.



Katy Weber 44:32

Yeah, that's absolutely. Yeah. Okay, so now we've kind of like touched on this a little bit. But if you had to think of like, something you really love about your ADHD, what would what would be something one of



44:49

the you lie thing for me is the energy to do everything and also like I'm a perfectionist that I'm not. And I think if I see ALC was, I think in images, if I have a vision of what I want it to be done like that, it needs to be done that way. So I find it very hard sometimes to work with other people, because they're not going to do it the best way that it could be in my eyes. So it means I end up doing everything for myself, which actually then like, we could look at that in two ways. But for me, I really like it. Because I learned I learned so many new skills, like how to code a website, and how to then like run an Instagram platform and how to then like force sugar, or can then you get an amazing flow when you learn these new skills. Whereas I think, for a lot of people who think in a more linear way, that's very overwhelming to have to do all those different things. Whereas for me, it's just like, yes, so much. There's so many different things today, I could do that today than that tomorrow. And it's great. I think having that excitement as far as the diversity and like, for sure,



Katy Weber 45:54

yeah, I love that perspective, too. Because I definitely feel like you know, there are things that we miss out on when we do everything by ourselves. And I think that there is definitely that sense, like, ask for help. And I think there are ways in which it's really important for us to bring it help. And like, I think there are ways in which we burn ourselves out. And we have to kind of find this, we have to find that balance, and definitely ask for help. Like, like, when I think about like motherhood, right. Like, there's a lot of times when my kids were little where I needed help and didn't even know how to ask for it. We have a really hard time even articulating where we need help and how to ask where to where to find it. And, and yeah, there is no. Right, exactly. And so I think there is like a real fine balance between like doing everything, because we can I mean, that's the other thing is that it's really tempting to do everything to build your own website, because you're like, I know, I can do it, like just 48 hours straight figuring it out. And that's exactly, and so like, that doesn't seem like an impossibility. So on the one hand yet, like, it is amazing, because then you're like, okay, that off my bucket list of things I need to learn, I can do that. But I think at the same time, we also like the the messy aftermath of a life like that then becomes like, oh my god, I'm so burnt out. But how do I get help? And how do i Where do I even need help? And how do I ask for it and all of that stuff. So it is. But it is an amazing thing. And I think to like when you think about like huge projects that have that kind of sustained energy and focus is something I think that is really powerful. I mean, this is hyper focus is just like an incredible thing. And you know, we joke about like, staying up all night doing things, but like, I think that's it is it is an amazing, it is an amazing talent to have joy. So excited. We don't like I know, like, it is really exciting. I just think that when we do finish hyperfocus and we burnt ourselves out that we you know, I think the biggest difference for me now is that I realize what has happened. And so when I need rest, and when I'm burnt out, I can say to myself, like you're not lazy right now. Because you can't Yeah. Yeah, well, yeah. Because we feel like we should have we should have that productivity level all the time.



48:24

It just ends up making myself sick. And then I can get like the rest of Oh,



Katy Weber 48:29

yeah. I wish we could appreciate rest a lot more because I feel like like now I call a recharging, right? Like, because it's just like, I feel like I feel better about that where I'm like, Oh my God, you just did something for three days straight. You literally



48:46

you can picture as well like in your head, right? Like, the bar is going up when you reach it said like a process you can wait for but that's I think so funny like because if that exhibition, like arrived from London, I flew months to work. And then I got there and I'm found a space and exhibition and I called up the lady. I was like, Can I come here in three months at the end of August? And she said yeah, I've got a space I was like, amazing. She says like send me photos of your work can we can start promoting I was like, I've not started painting them yet. He's like, case you start in three months. Yeah, there's gonna be 12 paintings and I could I seen that it was all gonna be as it was gonna be like this. There's a bit case you've not started painting. And these paintings are like 30 by 40 inches. And everyone's looking at me like how this was not painted when I was like yeah, there's failed to do how much fun I hope everyone's looking at me like how much but then it's like as you're saying all day all night like painting the way you do it. It's basically the neighbor to you to take it would not have got done it wouldn't have been done.



Katy Weber 49:46

Oh, absolutely. I think that's also something like I had a very complicated relationship with like procrastination for a long time and because I thought I was leaving things to the last minute because I was lazy, right? And again, it's like no, this is The process like this is how you think you're putting it all together in your brain. And you absolutely need the fast deadline of being last minute to do it. Like it's all part of how you get it out. Otherwise, it's never going to get out and get



50:14

the motivation, isn't it?



Katy Weber 50:18

Oh, yeah, exactly right when again, so you're like, well, now I have this deadline. And so I'm gonna get I have to get it all done, and it's probably gonna be the night before. So complicated, is great. I love it I love it? Let's talk about like how people can find you or to her? How do you? How do you work with women? How do you find your subject I,



51:59

I contact a lot of women through Instagram, a lot of times what I have been doing, I see someone that I just like think that want to connect with recently, I'm working on a project with women in Belushin presence that don't realize how space women and builders are. And so I'm working on that just over that was due to someone that came into the exhibition and wanted to work with me. So I just kind of let it all happen and for how it's meant to meet a lot of them and lots of different ways. And, and how I worked with a woman is I just interview them. And I suppose I kind of flexion it's kind of like an occupational therapy interview, right? Because that's what I need to do is learn a lot of information about someone really quick and capture who they are really quickly through a conversation. So I just asked them a lot of Congress a lot of questions about who they are, what they are and what they find joy and purpose. And because I also don't want to have any of the trauma that they've been through on the painting, which is why there's the story set, but because, again, like I don't want to take the reality of that away, but you're so much more than the trauma of being versus all the things that bring them joy. So yeah, just talk to them. And most the time through FaceTime, because it has been obviously, the pandemic recently. And then they just send me a selfie, selfie. And then we add all that we write a list of all the things that they want, and that's meaningful to them, maybe their mom represents a butterfly, or an owl or something like that. So then that image represents something to them. And in terms of where to find me, I'm on Instagram at Qy key underscore artist, and I've also got a website where all the women's stories are. That is www.qakdesigns.co.uk. Yeah,



Katy Weber 53:33

I'll have all those links in the show notes. And then the subject chooses a charity and so



53:43

yeah, a subject chooses a charity and a quarter of a profit or more to that chosen charity. So we're like on the website, there's the women's painting their name, uh, why did they chosen as well to represent them, and just basically to kind of give them the power to choose a powerful word. One of my favorite women that I've seen did, she's disabled in quotation marks, she's got a limb difference, and the word choice was evil, and her story is all about how she's evil. And that just brought me so much joy. I like that word is perfect for you. Because you're so able, it's just another like, diagnose diagnostic word or another silly name for a book, which doesn't make any sense. So yes, they also do the word



Katy Weber 54:23

right and it's and you know, anything you think about like, so many so many of the disabilities that are faced in our society are based on society's inability to accommodate right and so like think about like, you know, when you ask somebody you know, what is the biggest what is the biggest problem that you face with your disability usually and then the answer like my problem

is other people. Right? I you hear that all the time. And same with neurodivergent see right to like with autistic adults, like the problem isn't me. The problem is how people react to me and are



54:58

uncomfortable feelings that you feel because I'm not fitting into societal norms, and then who's even made up these as a as a norm is because actually if you were to go to a different country, you're going to feel just as uncomfortable because they're all doing things in different ways because the culture is completely different to here. Like it's madness. Yeah, that's a whole like, oh



Katy Weber 55:18

my goodness, you are a powerhouse. I thoroughly enjoyed picking your brain. Thank you so much. I really enjoyed this conversation.