

# Megan Dowd: Enneagram, entrepreneurship, and ADHD best pract...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Megan Dowd

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Megan Dowd 00:00

For me, the Enneagram is has been most useful in understanding, especially in conjunction with my ADHD diagnosis is in understanding why am I reacting this way? Or why did I do this thing in the past? It's making sense of all of the pieces




Katy Weber 00:23

Hello, and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school, jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens and it has been nothing short of overwhelming I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who liked me discovered in adulthood they have ADHD and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Okay, before we get started, I wanted to first of all wish all of you very happy holidays and let you know that the women and ADHD book club is back for the new year. That's right, I'm going to be hosting another online book club series to study a radical guide for women with ADHD, which is the incredible workbook by Sarah Solden. And Michelle Frank. We did a few of these last year and they are just fantastic. I love hosting these book clubs so much past participants have said, I found it nourishing and affirming to be in a room with other women who truly get it. I really appreciate having this space Book Club was one of the first experiences where I didn't feel I had to be impressive or perform in order to be liked thankful for this community of welcoming neurodivergent friends. I loved the format of following a workbook but having specific sections to discuss in the group. This has been such an important step in my identity journey. Registration is now open so head over to [womenandadhd.com/bookclub](https://womenandadhd.com/bookclub) to reserve your spot. Okay, here we are at episode 117 in which I interview Megan Dowd Megan is a neuro divergent entrepreneur, brand therapist, business strategist and coach with her human first biz second approach make it helps new and seasoned business owners build a better human connection with themselves and their clients leading into who they are and what they stand for. In addition


to her business coaching, she also co founded Hello, CEO in 2020, to help support neuro diverse entrepreneurs to discover where they can thrive in a business world that isn't one size fits all, Megan, and I talk all about the Enneagram and some common ADHD personality traits. And we also discuss neurodivergent business practices and learning styles. I really enjoyed this conversation. We had a lot of laughs enjoy. So Megan, thank you so much for joining me.

 Megan Dowd 02:56


Hello, thank you so much for having me. I'm very excited. I mean, we already started chatting with an intro. And already I'm like, Oh, we're gonna have trouble keeping this in time.

 Katy Weber 03:06


It's not only that, I mean, I think for the most part, listeners, anyone who's stayed with this podcast and has listened to more than one episode is along for the ride, because we go all over the place. There's nothing linear about this podcast. So I think for the most part of the audience's okay with that.

 Megan Dowd 03:20

I mean, it's a podcast about ADHD. So you kind of have to know what you're getting into. Right.

 Katy Weber 03:25

So but I do like to start out asking kind of when you were diagnosed with ADHD and what was happening in your life at that moment, that kind of led you to start looking into it and connecting the dots so to speak.

 Megan Dowd 03:41

Yeah, I so I was officially diagnosed only this year in 2022. It was in January. Yeah. January is when I when I requested with me GP, like, Could we do a screening and then had the, like the insurance official, because of course, like insurance in the US is its own cluster that we won't get into and had the insurance official diagnosis in March, early April. But it was almost exactly a year ago that I was that I was starting to put some pieces together going, hmm, hmm, okay, I don't I don't like how close that hits. And a lot of it came down to what I had always assumed was clinical depression, the brain fog, the inability to focus, the listlessness of, I really want to do the thing. I have all of the skills to do the thing. Why can't I do the thing? And alongside all of this back in 2020, I had started a business for folks who are neurodivergent and at the time my business partner had been diagnosed with ADHD a few years ago, so I had had that exposure. Sure with her where I was like, Well, I don't know if I have ADHD, but I definitely know him. neurodivergent. And so it was, it was a combination of things.

 Katy Weber 05:07



Katy Weber 05:07

Ah, okay, I didn't realize that usually I feel like myself included, usually I meet somebody who had a business, realize they were neurodivergent and then completely pivoted. And we're like I've been I've already been working with these people. So I have to call all my old clients and be like, guess what, we have ADHD. So you okay, oh, that's really interesting. Okay, so then, but like, there's gotta be some retrospect where you were like, Okay, that'll make sense why we find why we gravitate to each other, right?



Megan Dowd 05:38

Oh, definitely. I mean, we we had a very, she ended up having a health crisis almost immediately after we started the business. So like, I don't fault her at all. But we had a very short lived podcast called tangents welcome, where we were talking about business and like running a business as a neurodivergent. Human. And tangents were welcome. Because there was absolutely no way we could try to, like, have a topic without going on a tangent.



Katy Weber 06:08

Yeah, interesting. Okay, so now, what was your role in that business? I mean, your was this brand strategy at the time, or what was the business specifically for neurodivergent clients?



Megan Dowd 06:18

This business, it's called Hello CEO that was specifically for to be a resource hub. And it still is, I say was, it still is it still exists, it's gone through some changes, since my, the original co founder had to step away. So it's just me at the moment. But we looked around and we saw that business education, Online Business Education in the heavy air quotes, Online Business Industrial Complex, was so not helpful. It was so tailored to a neurotypical mind and it ver en and beyond being tailored to an empty mind, it was so it rarely took into account different learning styles, regardless of neuro divergence. And it really it started with both of us just being really frustrated with, in our opinion, really lazy teaching and curriculum. And in our opinion, like the people that that affects the most are folks who are neurodivergent. And so not being able to have accessibility in various forms of information, not having the information taught in different ways. There's all this stuff that we were getting frustrated with, we were like, You know what we could do this better. We both understand enough of the basics. Not even just enough of the basics, we both ran our own businesses for a number of years prior to that. And we both saw so many, so many of the ways that we had worked around the like beginning business, initial courses, or communities and Masterminds or memberships, or whatever, we kind of collected all of the ways that we had created workarounds for ourselves, and really came together with like, what if we just offered a better version that had all of these points of support that served all these different learning styles that could speak to different ways that different brains work and create this resource hub for folks. So that's how we we dove into Hello, CEO. And it was really like as it grew, that we have a membership called the connection collective, which is a non framework non teaching. Membership, it is purely like this is the support place, we have co working, we do hot seats, like there's still some there's a coaching aspect to it, but like, truly it is so that you can come into community with folks who feel like they might be a little bit of a misfit feel like they don't do business the right way. Again, heavy

air quotes, because and I think I do think that this is changing, especially in the last few years, especially as so many of us are working from home entirely from home. But it really was designed both the membership and and the space of Hello, CEO to reassure folks that you're not alone and that it's perfectly fine to run an online business to run a business on your own to be a small business owner whose brain works a little bit differently. And frankly, there are a lot of us because this type of lifestyle and this type of control over our work and this approach to work is incredibly appealing for brains that do not do well. In a cubicle in a nine to five in corporate America.



Katy Weber 09:37

Yeah, and often we are running like six different businesses because we can't help ourselves.



Megan Dowd 09:46

I may have just started my third.



Katy Weber 09:48

I know that's my joke. I was like I accidentally started a new business over the weekend. Oops. Yeah. Okay, so now you had mentioned Dupree Shannon, I know that something many many of us are first, especially women are diagnosed with depression and anxiety before coming to an ADHD diagnosis. In fact, I recently heard a lecture on it was a psychologist talking about all of the 1000s of ADHD patients he had met with and like, how he feels like a diagnosis of depression and anxiety combined is almost 100% a precursor to an ADHD diagnosis, which I'm like, Yeah, you think, but it was interesting to hear that, that that is almost like guaranteed in his, you know, in terms of his experience with his clients that that it's almost the diagnosis in itself. But looking back, you know, often when you're diagnosed with ADHD as we are like, we'd look back over the course of our whole life through this new lens. And think, wow, the signs really were there all along. Nobody knew what to look for. What would you, you lie, you're already like, Oh, yeah. What are some things that you look back on in your life? And you were like, oh, yeah, it was ADHD all along. Surprise.



Megan Dowd 11:00

Hey, guess what? This the most obvious one that came to mind. The first time I was like, do I have ADHD, this was the first thing that came to mind. When I was in high school, had a lot of arguments with my folks about playing music while you were doing homework. That means that you're not focusing. So you can't listen, stop listening, you cannot have music you cannot have, you can't certainly, I mean, watching TV wasn't even an option. cannot have other things going on. That means that you're not focusing, you're not trying hard enough. And I always explain to them as like, I need to have music. Otherwise, I can't focus I need to distract half my brain so that the other half can focus. And that was always how I described it. And so the first time I thought to myself, like, do I have ADHD that memory came screaming back of like, well,

do. You repeatedly told the adults in your life that you could not focus? Because your brain was doing too many things? So if you didn't have music on it wouldn't let you do your homework. That feels pretty textbook.



Katy Weber 12:12

Yeah, right. I know. When I was in high school, I had this like, very dysfunctional studying pattern, which was I would come home, and I would literally nap for four hours, I would nap from like 4pm to 8pm, then I would get up and like, have dinner with my family. And then I would go to an all night coffee shop. And I would go and like drink coffee and stay in an all night coffee shop from like midnight to 4am and do all of my homework in a coffee shop drinking coffee and chain smoking. And then I would come home and sleep for four hours, from four to eight and then go to school. And I did that for like a year in my senior year of high school. And like, I look back at that now. And I was like, Oh my God, whatever works, but at the same time, like it just screams everything about that it screams ADHD. But I had to work at it, you know, all even through all through college, I had to work in coffee shops, not libraries.



Megan Dowd 13:06

Yes. And And again, like if I was working in a library, I had to have music, if I didn't have something else going on. And frankly, it's still true to this day, if I unless I'm in like deep hyper focus, which does happen. Who knew I have to have something in the background, even like, I'll put on television shows that I've seen 1000 times. And suddenly I'm in a flow state I'm focusing I'm able to get shit done in a way that I can't normally and it is astounding to me how once I accept I mean, this personal journeys, but like truly once I accepted that part of myself, it was like, wow, I can I feel a lot better about life. Not that like, oh, this fixed it. But like, Oh, I didn't I never took into account what a huge barrier that was. Because it was something that I like that I was always told growing up that like, having stuff on in the background means that you're just distracting yourself. You're not actually doing whatever it is that you want to be doing, be it cleaning, the dishes, cooking homework, whatever. And in reality, I can't operate any other way you give me silence and that is the best way for me to daydream for the next hour and a half. Right?



Katy Weber 14:30

I feel that I feel that way with my kids and the their teachers. I feel like there are teachers who who get doodling and then I feel like there are teachers who don't get doodling and you know, and we're teachers who are really annoyed when they you doodle because it's a sign that you are not listening and I'm like no, it's actually quite the opposite. Doodling anchors you to whatever it is that you need to listen to. And so I think like what you were talking about before, I think the experience of many of us was that there is we were told there's a right way to do things and Then there's your way, which is the wrong way. And many of us as children being like, but it works for me, intuitively this way works for me. But now I have to not do that anymore and force myself to do this other way, which is the quote unquote, right way. And then I'm like, Well, now I wonder why we're all adults. And we have all these trust issues. And like, we don't know, you know, we have we have no incense of intuition anymore, because we stopped listening to our intuition so long ago.



Megan Dowd 15:28

Well, and we were told that our intuition was wrong, that our intuition was broken. So like, let probably not the podcast for it. But wow, that'll do a number on your sense of self.



Katy Weber 15:38

Oh, this is exactly the puck.



Megan Dowd 15:41

All we talked about, okay, great. We'll go into like, wow, that does a number on your sense, your sense of self your self esteem, because you've been told so many times that the way you do things is broken the rate that you do things like, it's not wrong, but it's not right. It I mean, I'm a child of the 90s, which is the very classic like, a lot of encouragement. And there's a lot of encouragement towards a specific end. There was no spectrum that like, oh, well, like, there are lots of ways to do it. No, there's one way to do it. But you can do it. I know you can. You're so gift. Oh, God,



Katy Weber 16:17

you have so much potential. That was that's the one I hear. I heard all the time. Yeah. So much potential. If you just worked harder, you could do this.



Megan Dowd 16:29

I have what I call the spicy soapbox. And I get on this soapbox quite often, especially with folks with ADHD, the working hard is not our problem. We want to work hard, there is no part of us that's like,



Katy Weber 16:44

well, and I think that's the other thing too, which is like, there's never a lack of trying with somebody with ADHD. And I think that that's another message that becomes really like really screws with our sense of self is the fact that we are viewed as being lazy and not trying and having this character flaw of not caring, when the actual, like exact opposite is true. We care so much we try so hard. And we're just like not getting the bullseye ever. And so, you know, again, we start to give like, I felt like I just sort of gave up on myself, especially as a young kid with school. Like, I just felt like I really was like, I don't know what I'm doing wrong. Everybody says I have potential. I don't know what this potential is. But everybody seems to be disappointed in me. And so I'm just gonna give up.



M**Megan Dowd 17:32**

Truly it I my high school was extremely academically rigorous. They pride themselves on being in like the top 100 high schools in the US News and World wrinkling partner, whatever it is. We had four valedictorians, because like they all had a 4.0 they all hit all, like there was no way to separate them. Also worth noting that I sat down at my high school graduation, I had I think 600 Some people in my graduating class, and I sat down and I was like, Who the fuck are you? I don't think I've ever seen you before. All of which to say, I, I really internalize this sense of like, I am not competent. I am not as smart as these other people. Which was really a weird thing to hold when we did. It was I mean, obviously, it was encouraged that like everyone does all the AP classes you possibly can, because that reflects on the school's academic rigor, implement anything. And I got all fives on all of my tests. And not all of those valedictorians got fives on all of their AP tests. Which isn't to say that I was like, Oh, I guess I'm so smart. But like I truly couldn't, it really threw me for a loop. I don't get it, because I thought I was working as hard as them and as them in class, but I'm not, apparently. But I can do well on this test. Which leads me to where he'll talk about tangents, which leads me to where I'm going. I just passed my coaching certification, which I'm ecstatic about. And I had spent the last month since I submitted my materials in knots that I was going to have to resubmit. Because I quote, didn't work hard enough. And I was chatting with a friend on Monday when I found out and she was like, of course you passed I read your stuff like Were you really like truly not not joking. We really that worried. And I had to take a moment and I was like, I really have no concept of my own competency.

**Katy Weber 19:40**

I totally understand that. Because I think it comes back to this idea of trying and there are things that are very, very easy for somebody with ADHD that are very difficult for the other people. And then there are things that are very easy for other people neurotypicals that are really really difficult for Neuro divergence, like boring domestic chores, you know, or something like that. Like I think about it The amount of work that you put in is never necessarily going to dictate the outcome when you have ADHD. And so that's really inconsistent. And so like, there are tests that I didn't study for, and I aced, because I don't know I just did. And then there's tests that I would have studied an immense amount of usually things that involve memorization that I would have tanked and failed, because I just couldn't like hold on to the information. And so it never felt like my effort matched the outcome. And I think that seems to be like, if you think about that, and you kind of extrapolate that idea to a lot of areas in our life, like relationships or, or work, you know, there is this constant sense of just like, again, that lack of trust in who we are.

M**Megan Dowd 20:45**

And like, again, to take it back to childhood, like, that's what you're taught in elementary school that, like, if you work this hard, this is what happens. And so trying to recalibrate for the like, Well, this was really frickin easy. I didn't put much work in, but I did it. And then I worked my ass off, but I'm nowhere near I don't know how to hold these. I mean, as a kid, especially like, I don't know how to hold these two things. And even as an adult like, Hmm, right. Well, yeah, it's mind boggling.



Katy Weber 21:17

Yeah. And I feel like that's another thing I've kind of contemplated a lot through these conversations on the podcast, which is like for many of us who were diagnosed with depression. And I fully believe depression is a comorbidity with ADHD. I think ADHD tends to facilitate depression, or at least undiagnosed ADHD. So I don't necessarily think they just aren't coexisting. But like, I also think that many of us were diagnosed with ADHD because of the fact that we felt broken, we felt like we weren't living, there was something wrong with us, and that, therefore, we were disappointing to people in our lives, or disappointing to ourselves, because we weren't living up to our potential and so therefore, we felt sad and depressed, right, but it wasn't like, it wasn't a depression, the way that I feel like those questionnaires that that I was always given by the doctor the DSM questionnaires about like despondency. I never related to those because I didn't, I was like, No, I have an overwhelming excitement about things all the time. So I don't have a sense of despair, or like I've given up but I always just sort of felt like anything I try. I like I just felt Yeah, like broken, like many of us. So it's kind of a conversation, a theme that is woven through a lot of us kind of figuring out the am I or am I not depressed? Question.



Megan Dowd 22:35

Truly. And I mean, and depression is such a, as with so many mental health things, it like it's such a spectrum. It's such a spectrum. The first time I learned that brain fog was a thing. I had a moment. I had a moment because I up until then, and I mean, this Wow, I'll talk about coinciding with ADHD. But I was like, I guess everyone is just better at life than me. Everyone must just handle things better than me. Which was the first thing that came up when when chatting about an ADHD diagnosis, the first time that I really embraced like, oh, I have clinical depression. It was like, Maybe I'm not maybe maybe I'm not terrible at life. Maybe there's a reason. It's weird to be like, I got so excited when I got a depression diagnosis. But it was true. Because that helped me understand that like brain fog is a thing. Panic attacks are a thing. Not everyone has trouble breathing.



Katy Weber 23:35

Well, yeah. And I remember I heard you talking about that on the Enneagram and coffee podcast about the importance of the diagnosis in terms of like the label, right. And I think that's another thing at the end that kind of spoken about on this podcast, which is this idea that like when you cut when, when you're diagnosed with ADHD, everybody else with ADHD is like, Yay, congratulations. Oh, my God, that's so great. And everybody without ADHD is like, I'm sorry to hear about your disorder. Because I don't understand how life changing the identity is. Because suddenly you have an explanation for all of these seemingly random, you know, struggles that you had in your life. And so it is so wonderful. It's such a positive experience to get this diagnosis, even though, you know, we don't we don't necessarily think of it as a pathological disorder. The diagnosis can be so important to us to get that diagnosis and not just kind of have this wishy washy, like I don't know, maybe aren't we all a little ADHD, you know, like, I feel like it's so important to write it's really important to like, distinguish between the kind of ADHD light Ness that everybody is talking about and like OCD, light and all those things that are like make light of the real clinical side of ADHD. That is really, really where we really really did struggle before the diagnosis. to us or anyone after tell, but you know,



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Megan Dowd 25:03

yeah, truly, like when we're looking at these specifically, mental health, arguably disabilities, disability is contextual. You hear about the like, well, there wasn't like we weren't diagnosing ADHD in these numbers 100 years ago. Yeah. Because the expectation wasn't that you were working 10 to 14 hours a day, commuting for an hour or two, trying to figure out how you're going to pay for rent, dinner utilities, etc, etc, etc. Like, of course, we're their brains that were structured this way. 100%, no question. But it's contextual. We can't understand disability, and that now this is a larger, but we can't understand disability without context. And so truly, like, having a diagnosis, for me, at least, helped me embrace my context helped me with the like, I'm not, I'm not broken. I'm not the only one. I already was at a point where I was like, I'm kind of sick of trying to make myself function the way I'm supposed to. And having the diagnosis was like, fuck, I'm done. He's out. Loud assholes. I'm not doing this anymore. It was it was marvelous moment of like I am, I am capable. I can do things in my own way, obviously, as evidenced by the coaching certification, sorry, I'm still working on it. I'm still



Katy Weber 26:30

nervous. I really like I really rail against the like, let's fix your ADHD narrative. And I see, you know, and that's one of the things that really bothers me, when coaches kind of use that framework of like, let's hack it, let's beat it. Let's fix it. And I'm like, no, no, there's nothing to fix, right? Like this is about right in the way let's serve your ADHD

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Megan Dowd 26:52

100% Part of why I was like, I can't wait to be on this podcast, Katie and Eric, and it was such a good chat. Because it's not about the like, I love how upfront you are about that, like, this isn't about the hacks, we're not fixing it. We're not doing something about it or working around it.



Katy Weber 27:11

Well, and not only that, but I think it actually is kind of predatory because I feel like it. All right now I'm totally on my soapbox. But like, I feel like it is exploiting this feeling that we all have that the answer that somebody else got the manual, but me, right. And so they're always feeling like the answer is going to be at the next at the end of the next self help book or the answer is going to be at the next end of this course, or this certification. And I feel like a lot of the time that narrative of like, yeah, fault, you know, we're gonna fix this, exploit that belief that, you know, we don't have what it takes. And that's it, the answer is somewhere out there somewhere. And that that always really bothers me because I'm like, You're just taking advantage of that specific vulnerability that many of us especially with ADHD have, oh,

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Megan Dowd 27:56

and combine that with the the trend in right now at least in the online business industrial complex of ethical marketing and trauma informed business. And like Good Lord, in the in the metaphorical way that my great grandmother would say, y'all need to go to church. Bless her.

grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. Oh, she was a tough old bird. But truly, like, is there any  
Are any of you putting the pieces together? Is anyone actually evaluating what this rhetoric is?



Katy Weber 28:35

Right? Yeah. Well, and I think that's what's so like, insipid about capitalism, too, is how easily good intentions can be twisted into



Megan Dowd 28:48

profit tearing. Good intentions are perpetually weaponized. I mean, we, especially since the summer of 2020, and like the revitalization of the Black Lives Matter movement and all of the various uprising strikes, etc. that have happened since then. We've seen a lot of that corporate good intentions weaponized for profits doublespeak.



Katy Weber 29:09

I've just laughing because I always joke about how like, you could always tell who the people with ADHD are at parties, because they're the ones in the back of the room, like talking about the time space continuum. Like this conversation is reminding me of that right now. Just like, Hi, I just met you. Oh, my God. Let's talk about capitalism and the industrial.



Megan Dowd 29:32

That's also one of the key things that I realized about myself that I was like, Oh, you have ADHD. I cannot suffer. I cannot suffer small talk. I immediately am like, tell me about your trauma. Tell me about the things that make you the happiest in the world. Have you ever seen this TV show? Let's talk about the mechanics of the writing.



Katy Weber 29:53

I know right? I get it. I love it. So anyway, I'm sorry. I read disrupt the Hello, but it was waiting to be left.



Megan Dowd 30:02

Oh no, please.



Katy Weber 30:04

I'd like to take a moment to thank better help for sponsoring this podcast. If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know, I am a big proponent of therapy therapy provides me the best opportunity for verbal processing something that is so important for my kind of brain and

my sense of self. What I love about BetterHelp is that it's not a crisis line. It's not self help. It is professional therapy that's done securely online from the comfort of your home. They assess your needs and match you with your own licensed professional therapist, and it's available for clients worldwide, so you get access to a broad range of expertise that might not be available to you locally. It also tends to be more affordable than traditional offline therapy and financial aid is available. If you visit their website and read their testimonials. There are actually quite a few reviews that specifically reference help with ADHD as a special offer for listeners of the women and ADHD podcast, you'll get 10% off your first month, simply sign up at [betterhelp.com/women-ADHD](https://betterhelp.com/women-ADHD), that's BetterHelp help.com/women-ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp. One thing I do want to talk a lot about is the Enneagram because I know a lot of listeners are like obsessed with it. I am not obsessed with the anagram simply because I feel very like boxed in by personality tests because I often will be like I don't know, sometimes I answer it sometimes I fill it out and I'm a seven sometimes I fill it out and I'm a foreigner I don't know who I'm gonna be today. I feel very like multiple personality ish when it comes to those tests. And so but I also feel like some people are really, really drawn by them in terms of like developing their values and and make a decision making and that kind of thing. So I'm curious, like, how did you get into the Enneagram?

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Megan Dowd 31:51

I in general love personality tests, I find them fascinating. And granted, this is a semi personality test. Gretchen Reubens, four tendencies? The upholder the obliger the questioner, the rebel, I am a questioner. So it's no surprise that I'm an information hoarder. Whether or not I apply that personality test, I'm like, ooh, that's me. I just want to know, I want to know how the people are typing things. I want to know like how they perceive the world and what are the archetypes they see through their lens. That's partly how I got into the Enneagram is like it's another Personality Typing thing. So let's go. And it was, again, roughly a year ago, a lot of things converged about a year ago. About a year ago, a friend and I, I've been trying to figure out my Enneagram for months and like, just not like in a really concerted effort. But like, just like, I'm not like nothing. Am I a two? No, I'm definitely not a two. I'm just socialized as a two because women are socialized to be helpers. I'm I have four. I mean, four isn't wrong. But it doesn't feel right.



Katy Weber 33:04

I feel like yeah, sometimes some days before, but that certainly doesn't. Not always.

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Megan Dowd 33:10

Yeah. So we were sitting around, a friend had come to visit from New York, New York State and I have a campfire in the backyard. So we built a fire. We're sitting around it. We in Oregon, it is legal. So we had a little bit of weed. We're just like, feeling good in that good space. And we were talking about her Enneagram, which she thought was a three and we're unpacking like, oh my god, I think you're a four. So we started reading through some force stuff. And she was like, Oh my God, no, switch it to you. I can't handle this. It's too uncomfortable. So we started chatting about me. And she ought to out of nowhere. She was like, Have you ever looked at the

nine? I was like, Well, let's look at it. And then we so we, we looked at the nine and I was like, Sure could be. And then we were looking at the the subtypes. Specifically the counter subtype, which is like the the subtype that doesn't look like that number, but it really is, which is the social nine. And I read about the social time and their deep desire to belong there feeling like they don't belong there deep desire to facilitate the community. And it was this combination of like, Oh, my goodness, I'm seen and oh, no, somebody has seen me, I did not care for this shit at all. Shut it down. And so obviously, then I in my information hoarding ways, I was like, now I'm going to learn everything I can about the social nine. And it was an of course, this was in combination with around the same time that I was exploring, like, am I ADHD? And it was, I mean, it was like plink all the things were just starting to drop into place. And for me, the Enneagram is, has been most useful in understanding especially In conjunction with my ADHD diagnosis is in understanding, why am I reacting this way? Or why did I do this thing in the past? It's making sense of all of the pieces. And truly, I think that that's true for any personality tests. Like it's only as useful as you find it useful. Anyone who's who's like, oh, Myers Briggs is the only way or Enneagram is the only way. It's like now, I don't really care. I disagree, but I'm not going to fight you on it. If it's useful for you if it means that much to you. And you found such meaning. That's freakin fantastic for you. And for me, the Enneagram was like, oh, all those pieces. Okay, that. There we go.



Katy Weber 35:42

Right. I feel like sometimes I get in a logical loop with ADHD because I'm like, the ADHD had that same feeling to me, which was like, Oh, my God, the why, right? That's what you're saying. It's this, why to who I am and why I do what I do. And having that answer and understanding it is in some ways, combating the huge question marks I always had about why I was wrong, or why things didn't work, or who you know, like always going through life with this huge question mark. And feeling like ADHD is an answer to so much of that in such a convenient weigh in almost like every thing comes back to ADHD in a weird way where I'm like, Am I making this more than it is? Or the other thing I often get into, which I've talked about sometimes with previous guests, which is like, I was always searching for an answer. And always finding things like with personality tests, or like with Gretchen Rubin, and how, you know, HSP is based, highly sensitive person is basically ADHD, they just don't realize it. But like, I feel like HSP is really just sort of a precursor to an ADHD diagnosis. Good luck with that,



Megan Dowd 36:45

or autism. I mean, the person that wrote it was like, I don't believe in autism, but there are highly sensitive people, and you want to rethink your bias there. I want to rethink some things.



Katy Weber 36:57

But still, it's just like that what they have in common? Is that is that the wife? Yeah, and I almost used to, you know, one of the reasons I always have a lot of self doubt around the diagnosis itself, am I actually ADHD? Or did I make this whole thing up? Did I fool my doctor, all of these things? When I question,





Megan Dowd 37:14

I tricked them? I'm not ADHD enough,



Katy Weber 37:17

right? Or am I making a big deal out of nothing? How much do I really struggle? All of those questions? And so I've often been like, is ADHD just one more convenient answer, because I'm always looking for convenient answers, or is ADHD, the answer that I had been looking for all along and finally found, and I don't know, I still have some life left in me. So maybe there's something else that's gonna happen. But, you know, I always, you know, I've always like, this is my like, ex Christian side of me, because I'm like, you know, I grew up in a very religious household. And so I feel like that searching for the why is as the result of my like, rejecting religion. And so, again, I'm like, my Christian grandmother would be like, Well, if you hadn't if you had stayed with the church, you wouldn't be seeking for that. Why all you know, the why is God.



Megan Dowd 38:08

Well, that's so common with so many extra angelic calls that like, you had an easy answer, and you don't anymore, and it's really hard to just sit with that and be like, Well, I am happier now. And also, look at this existential crisis, I opened up for myself.



Katy Weber 38:27

I know, I know, I always joke I've like I'm an atheist, who still believes she's going to hell.



Megan Dowd 38:35

That i Wow, I feel that in my bones.



Katy Weber 38:40

Right, that's what exactly what it's like to be an extra angelical is to be like, I still believe I'm going to hell. It's just I've chosen it. But yeah. Anyway, that's a whole other podcast. I gotta have you back for that one.



Megan Dowd 38:53

Yes. Oh, boy. Well go to town. Right. But



Katy Weber 38:56

it is. I mean, it's not it's not a surprise that so many of us have very similar values, right. In

it is. I mean, it's not it's not a surprise that so many of us have very similar values, right. In terms of our politics, in terms of our upbringing, you know, in terms of our religious values, our philosophies, it's, I don't think it's a coincidence. But, so Okay, so let's get back to the Enneagram because you had mentioned that it was it could kind of help you find clarity in life. So if we're talking about this big why is that? Is that what it is? Or do you feel like there's is there more that you wanted to expand on that?



Megan Dowd 39:25


It was it's not necessarily a why for like, why I exist or purpose really it? For me it was so helpful in understanding how and why I relate to others. Because in I mean, and this is classic Enneagram nine, especially classic social nine. I have never felt like I fit in. I've never like despite having consistent friend groups and friends throughout my life, it always felt like well, it's like they're just being nice or nice. and a myriad of other things that we tell ourselves, but like, I don't really have any friends because I don't. And it's not a and this is where it I was like, oh, it's not a four because it was never the narrative of like, no one understands me, which is very for, but it was just the I don't it's because I don't fit in it's not quite right. And so for me, it's the the why is not the existential why, but the why is the why, why do I feel this way in relation to other people? How do I make sense of myself as part of the community. And an understanding that through the lens of, of the Enneagram, through the social nine, has been so helpful for me, especially in building and running my business, because it really explained, especially in conjunction with that ADHD diagnosis, like, oh, this, these are the places that I thrive in. And these are the places that I've been trying to force myself into, because that's what you're supposed to do. And I don't have to do that. I'm just gonna let that go. It doesn't work for my brain. It doesn't work for my personality for how I relate to people. Why am I forcing this so hard? The world is a wonderful, wide and varied place, there are other people who can do it. So why am I putting all of this pressure on myself to do the thing? Well, on the one hand, it's because as an Enneagram, nine, you want to like, you want to be of service to everyone, and you want to provide for everyone and to facilitate the peace and happy coexistence of the group. And also, it's, I don't have to take that on as my personal responsibility, which is a tough pill to swallow. And it's been part of what is helpful to me about the Enneagram




Katy Weber 41:47

Yeah, okay, I can I buy that you've sold me now I get it, because I you know, I think another thing that is a very common thread with many of us is the perfectionism and like Control Freak aspect of having ADHD, which sort of feels almost like antithetical to the chaotic frazzled, always late part of the of ADHD, but like, I think many of us because of the fact that we feel so out of control in our environment. And very, we don't trust a lot of our own behaviors a lot of the time, like, there is this desire to control what we can control, right? And so it's why you know, like, eating disorders is a perfect example. Many of us have disordered eating or have struggled with eating disorders, because it's a control issue. And so perfectionism is a control issue, right? Where it's like, Where can I wrest control were in an otherwise chaotic existence, right? And so I think why, like, you know, when you were talking about social relationships, like, I often will, you know, if somebody doesn't text me back, and this is also rejection sensitive dysphoria, but I think like, if somebody doesn't text me back, I immediately go into that, like, what have I done to inadvertently offend that person, of course. And it's the inadvertently because I'm like, I don't remember doing anything. But clearly, I have offended that person,

because I don't, I do things. And I don't realize that I've offended people. I've done that many times where people have dumped me or have gotten angry with me or have done something where I was like, I genuinely don't know what I did. And I think that's also very common with ADHD, which is like, we do things. And they're construed differently than how we're met. And so I feel like that's where something like CBT has really come in handy, where I'm like, what is true in this moment, because I've decided that somebody hates me, because it's not untrue, it has happened, but I think it can be really, you know, a lot of the time I feel like, I don't Well, I don't know where it was going with this. I think it was just this idea of like feeling very out of control around just social interactions and how we're perceived is another thing to which right, which is like, if, if I can mask and try to control how people see me as much as possible, then I will feel less chaotic, right. All these things come together, right? It's a such a control issue.

 Megan Dowd 44:12


Oh, yeah. And I mean, I was I was a professional actress for a decade when I meet people at parties. I initially I'm like, if it's someone I really connect with, I'm like, Hey, heads up. I'm an incredible introvert, you're meeting my theater personality, because I can be gregarious, I can be charming, I can be the life of the party and I fucking hate it. But that masking is good.

 Katy Weber 44:35


Right, exactly. And that was the you know, I think that's another one we you know, are you an extrovert or are you an introvert question that many again, which is like the are you an extrovert? Are you an introvert pipeline to an ADHD diagnosis? Because I think many of us are also, like, I love public speaking. I love getting up on stage. I love performing, but I'm also extremely introverted. And so I could never reconcile those two and also like, I would go to a party and never know if I was going to walk in that door and be the life of the party and have a great time. Or if I was just going to, like, catch a vibe, and be like, nope, gotta go home. Like I never I never knew until I was in that moment.

 Megan Dowd 45:12

Yeah. And honestly, I found I mean, deep therapy times with Megan. But for me, I found it's been years since I went to a party, like a party, a big party where I didn't know everyone, because Thank you, COVID.

 Katy Weber 45:27

Yeah, I don't I don't do that anymore. Yeah, I don't do that. But I would have

 Megan Dowd 45:31

to make a concerted effort not to mask and not to put on that persona. Because it was so much easier



Katy Weber 45:42

to be alcohol.



Megan Dowd 45:45

I actually, like I never drank. Oh, see,



Katy Weber 45:48

that was my that was for me. I don't anymore. But like, for many years, basically, my entire teens and 20s. It was, you know, alcohol that kind of got me to that place of like intense masking and intense performative.



Megan Dowd 46:03

For me, it was just like, I need everyone. And, again, Enneagram nine, I need everyone to like me in this party. And you know what that is so that I am not ostracized from the group so that I am not othered from the group, you know, what the easiest way to make everyone like you is to be the charming person that every like that I remember everyone's names. And I remember the thoughtful details, except I don't. Because I can't even though I've, and that was the thing is that I'd be like, I'm sorry, I know that I've met you four or five times, and I don't remember your name. But I do know that you have four dogs, and that you've worked at this specific photo business for the past six years, and that you are incredibly talented with cyanotype I know everything about you, but I don't know your name.



Katy Weber 46:49

And then there'll be like my name Sally. And you'll be like, Oh, nope, just lost it again.



Megan Dowd 46:55

Thank you gonna forget it again. But tell me more about your life.



Katy Weber 46:59

Right? I feel like this whole conversation has just been a checklist of like, if this is basically your unofficial self diagnosis episode, for all their like weird random things. But hopefully listeners are like, Oh my God, yes, yes, yes.



Megan Dowd 47:14



You're welcome. The things that aren't asked in that DSM questionnaire, but ours Oh, very ADHD.



**Katy Weber 47:21**

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



**Megan Dowd 48:36**

I love the way I connect things. It makes sense to me. It doesn't necessarily make sense to everyone. And it's part of what I love about in my business is, is listening to people. I truly encourage folks to word vomit, like, talk to me longer than you think you should talk to me till you are bored of hearing your voice. Because I'm able to pull out like there's so much connective tissue like it's the the classic conspiracy board with all of like, I can see all of that. And I really love being able to put that to use whether that is when I'm watching a TV show with my husband, Ito and we're like, I mean, we're the really obnoxious people. But it's good that we found each other because we're constantly pausing it like, do you think this is what's really going on? Do you think this is how this is going to happen? Because this is going in this direction. And I love that about myself. I love being able to see so many things that feel like they're so desperate and then don't have anything to do with each other. And then you start pulling on that one thread and you start pulling on that other thread suddenly you're unraveling the entire tapestry.



**Katy Weber 49:49**

I love it. Yeah. Okay, I want to ask you about your business too in a minute. But I also love to ask if you could rename ADHD to something that is less confound Things are confusing. Do you have a name that you might give it? I heard



**Megan Dowd 50:03**

just like straight up executive function disorder, or attention excess. Okay? It's not a deficit. I'm not lacking. I'm interested in everything all at once.



Katy Weber 50:18

I know right? I have a fire hydrant of attention often,



Megan Dowd 50:22

truly like and if you get me going, I will fire hose you with information you did not want to know. But suddenly, you are like you know about a dude who invented his own radio station who convinced people that goat testicle transplants were a good idea. Thank you, John Brinkley. You're welcome. Now you're never gonna forget that tidbit.



Katy Weber 50:44

I'm totally gonna go down that rabbit hole as soon as we get off this call. Oh, he's fascinating. Oh, yeah. Awesome. Okay,



Megan Dowd 50:50

what a weird dude, America is a weird place. Because if you can market it, people will do it.



Katy Weber 50:57

Yeah, that's true. Okay, yeah, no, I like that. I feel like that's something the idea of Attention Deficit is really misleading for a lot of people. Because yeah, I've never I'd never related to that. I didn't when it was suggested to me that I look into ADHD. I was like, There's nothing about that term that made me think I related to it. I've never thought of myself as hyperactive. I never thought I had Attention Deficit I like it was so such a weird, a diagnostic, whatever you call it. deich. Name? What's the word? Yeah. I wanted to give each get a chance to just talk about your business really quickly. And who are your clients? And how can people work with you and find you and get more of you?



Megan Dowd 51:41

Yeah, well, if you are purely someone who's like, I just want to hang with the other ADHD and neurodivergent. Folks, check out Hello, CEO, we have the membership called the connection collective, which again, it's not about you're going to learn a certain framework. It's just like, here's some other people. And we do and we do things together. And we co work and we have happy hours, and we do coaching hot seats, but it's really just like, my brain works a little different. And I don't want to do business the way everyone's told me to do it. Come on in. We want to party with you. Oh, that's awesome. So and for my own personal business, I refer to myself as a core messaging coach. And I am a messaging coach, a brand consultant, and a Narrative Strategist, I delineate those because I think that there are incredibly distinct differences between coaching, consulting and strategy. And they tend to get all mushed together. So I do my best to make them very, very clear. And then certainly, like, we can work

in a combo of all three, but it helps for me, especially because I want to be generous and give everything away, it helps me stay within scope. And it clarifies expectations for folks, so they know what's in scope. That's my little soapbox about why we need to clarify coaching, consulting and strategy. I work with generally, it's maybe not the most eloquent way to say it. But I tend to work with folks, industry creatives who are sick of their industry, they're really sick of the like, of the buzzwords of the this is how business is done in this industry. And they're like, I don't care. It really they tend to fall into the camp of like, I don't care how it's done, or I am actively sick of it. And I'm done with this.



Katy Weber 53:23

Right? Like goes back to that idea of just like how I intuitively work is is not how you're telling me to Yeah,



Megan Dowd 53:32


yeah. And personally, I found with so many clients that I've worked with just in general coaching, that tends to come from a breakdown from the really a lack of internal language that they've crafted for themselves around what they do and how they use that language for themselves, versus the external language, the content marketing, the messaging, the launch, narrative, et cetera, et cetera. And so my work really revolves around working with folks to solidify that internal language to find the words, find the values, find the descriptions, find the language that makes the most sense to you. It is internal, no one else is touching it. What resonates with you. And we can talk about the different connotations that these words have or the way that their public is perceived by society. That doesn't matter when you're crafting your internal language. I had one client a few years ago, we're going through the core values. And as we were chatting, I brought up like, you know, I know that it's not on your list, but I think we got to talk about ambition, because it feels like it's screaming from every corner, but you're just dancing around it. And she was like, hey, fun fact, it actually wasn't my original list, but I crossed it out because I feel like that's the wrong thing to have as a value. And we ended up having this marvelous coaching session around why it was it felt like the wrong word, but right why it actually is this deeply held value, and how she personally defines it. And I think that's the perfect example of like language is, so individual language is living. That's not to say that language that we don't take responsibility for how language harms others, we have like, we're all social creatures, and we live within a larger community, we gotta be good to each other. But when it comes to your business, the internal language is all yours, no one else has to understand it, no one else has to even hear it. And then once we've crafted that internal language, then let's massage your meaningful message. Let's massage your signature framework or your signature method. Let's craft all of the external language so that it is so specific and unique to that internal language. But it makes sense to people who are not inside your brain.




Katy Weber 55:52

Yeah, I feel like I noticed that more and more because I'm, you know, I'm Gen X. And so I not only do I work with millennials, but then I also now work with Gen Z. And like, there is a real language like, it's like you sometimes you need interpreters. Not literally, but I feel like there is

language evolves. And, and I think it is really important to be able to find, like you said, find a language that you can speak in that is authentic to who you are and where you are in this world. But at the same time, also using a language that's not inadvertently going to alienate other people or isolate you or especially like generationally, I noticed that more and more as I age that I'm like, you know, and then I also have a 15 year old daughter, who likes to tell me how stupid I am all the time about different things, right. But a lot, often it comes down to like, well, we're saying the same thing. We're just using a very different language from how we were from who we know, when we were

 Megan Dowd 56:52


born. And I love language, my background in theater was in classical theater, which is all about parsing language, and how it feels in your mouth and how you're using certain words in certain contexts. And, and I really love bringing that into my business into my work now, because language is not just how we communicate, it's how we experience. And I and I really, I really relish helping folks clarify that experience for themselves with language so that they can then share that experience.

 Katy Weber 57:28

I got I want to have you come back and just talk about language for an hour, because it's such a juicy topic. And I think, you know, it is something a lot of us experience, especially with our like our coming out stories, right? Or like how to how do I articulate my experience as a neuro divergent to my family members or to my boss, or, you know, in ways that can make sense to me? And how can I, you know, so many times after a diagnosis, people want to be like, how do I explain to my family what I'm going through, and I'm always sort of like, you don't? You don't? This is it's very, you don't do it in one sitting. It's your journey. And that's what's most important. Well, and

 Megan Dowd 58:07

when you don't have a point of reference for what everyone else is feeling, because you've always felt different. How do you communicate that?

 Katy Weber 58:14

Yeah, yeah, for sure.

 Megan Dowd 58:17

I mean, it's not impossible on your own, which is why I like to look full circle, bring it back to my business, but like, why I tell folks like, it's okay, that you haven't figured out how to express your values yet. It's not because you don't have values. It's because you need someone outside yourself, to point out to you the things that are just so inherently obvious. Because until we have a different point of reference until you have someone with outside perspective, it's like,

back to my parents in high school with the music, like how do I communicate to you? Like I literally cannot focus on anything, because my brain is doing too much. But if I can distract half of it with music, I can do anything.



Katy Weber 59:00

Yeah. Thank you so much, Megan. This has been awesome. I really enjoyed talking to you. And not like I'm like surprised. But yeah, no, this has been a great conversation. I really learned a lot in this hour. So thank you so much. Thank



Megan Dowd 59:14

you for having i We definitely I'm glad that you're watching the clock because I was not.



Katy Weber 59:21

And I definitely



Megan Dowd 59:22

I was like, Oh, we've been talking for like half an hour.



Katy Weber 59:26

Yeah, I know. Right? And I have to be really mindful of it otherwise, because I'm like, I don't edit any of these. You just get them out. So I'm like, I have to be really careful because we could easily talk for three hours. So I'll just have



Megan Dowd 59:37

to be back. Thank you.



Katy Weber 59:39

I was gonna say I'll just have to have you come back. And we'll continue but thank you so much. It's been really lovely. Yeah, I really enjoyed it.



Megan Dowd 59:46

Thank you so much.



Katy Weber 59:53

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