Holly Slater: Spontaneity, intensity & ‘Pure O’ OCD

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SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Holly Slater

Katy Weber 00:00

So now are you locked down? Are you a locked down diagnosis? Because I was that was sort of what? how this all happened to me and you said you were diagnosed last year. So why don’t you Well, why don’t we start there? Walk me through how you got diagnosed,

Holly Slater 00:15

you’re gonna have to put up with me and talk and you constantly I’m so sorry. But seeing as this is about ADHD, I feel like I’m gonna be forgiven for that. I know, right?

Katy Weber 00:23

I’m used to it, we go, we go all over the place. That’s the beauty of a podcast with two women with ADHD is just

Holly Slater 00:30

trying desperately not to interrupt you constantly, as I interrupt you. Essentially, I got diagnosed in 2019. So what was the end of not last year, the year before the very, very end of that year, so Okay, I thought it was last year, but obviously, it was the tail end of 2019. So it was actually nothing to do with the pandemic, it was more to do with where I was, mentally, in my life. I experienced a huge amount of anxiety throughout my life. And it kind of came to a head really and 2019 I was away from my family for a while being in Australia, it’s quite difficult sometimes being away from the support group. Because I think when you feel different, you need people that you know, love you, no matter what around you. And so I had to make a lot of new friends in Australia, being from the UK, a lot of people I made friends with went back home at some point. And I made friends with lots of different people, but the majority of them kind of moved back to the UK. Now I have a really fantastic support group in Australia. But it wasn’t really the case two years ago. I was kind of floating around, I was a bit lost, came to Australia because I broke up with an axe. So I was just, you know, floating around essentially trying to figure out what, how I’m doing with my life. And then I just started getting panic attacks, really bad panic attacks. And I’ve never really experienced that before. on that level, I started to think I was going insane. I started thinking, oh my goodness, my schizophrenic like all these
intrusive thoughts, it was really intense, really, really awful. And then I went to a doctor, they had a therapist who I still see today who is one of the most amazing women I've ever met before. And it was really down to her why I got diagnosed, because we were seeing each other only a few weeks when she said you know, there's definitely a few things going on here. One of which is pure OCD, which is essentially mental rituals as opposed to physical. So it's kind of obsessive, intrusive thoughts, which actually go hand in hand with ADHD sometimes, anyway. Yeah. And that's been calmed down. Now for a long time. My therapist has helped me with lots of techniques to not sort of spiral in terms of how my thinking is going. So that's not too much of a concern anymore. But the ADHD was something that it actually didn't surprise me in the slightest. She just said how, like, you've got quite severe ADHD because you speak so fast, when you're anxious. And you're thinking was all over the place. I struggle with executive function, I can't listen for more than a few minutes or, you know, unless I'm really interested in something, all the classic signs and so it was essentially my therapist that said I had it and from that point on, I've just kind of researched it a lot and accepted it been upset about it and happy about it all the different emotions. But my mom did say when I was a teenager, I think you might have ADHD, you know. And I just didn't didn't think anything of it. I was a teenager, I didn't care what that meant. I was just like, okay, yeah, maybe. And then that was it. And then obviously, as life continues on and there's a lot of challenges that are presented to you as you get older. My ADHD just got worse and worse because I was worried about so many more so much more elements in my life Korea and you know, a partner and financial things, you know, lots of different things kind of came to a head and I just felt completely overwhelmed and bowled over essentially, and just needed a bit of guidance. I think

Katy Weber 04:39

It's funny how it just like, you can hear it several times in your life. And then one time it just lands and it's just like, bam, like suddenly you're like, holy shit. I have ADHD and like, all of a sudden, everything changed. Like, I think about all the ways in which like my therapist suggested it to me for years and I was sort of like, oh, fascinating, interesting, and I even took like self-tests online. And was like oh yeah look it's perfect. I cross every know every one of these things I have, but I still didn't know what to do with that information. And then at some point during the pandemic when it was I think I sort of hit some sort of perfect storm of difficulties and struggles and executive function that I was like maybe I will look into this and and maybe it's then that it's like once you start to actually look into it that it's like oh my god, everything makes sense finally like, but it is amazing like I'm always I'm always fascinated when you know so many of us seem to have that same experience where it was like it wasn't like it just out of nowhere you were like eight What is this ADHD you speak up like you know, it's this thing that kind of like you hear over and over again, I'm, it's interesting that your mother actually recognized it

Holly Slater 05:46

In high school. Oh, God, I was hyperactive, I was really hyperactive. And just, I think I've always been quite childlike. And a lot of elements of my personality, I get very excited. And yeah, I think that I've always been like that I've always felt mentally a little bit younger than all my friends. You know, not my intelligence, but it's more just like I get I get excited like a kid. And I think in high school, my mum just thought, you know, I used to, like, have these like physical sort of not shudders but almost like I was excited, I would kind of shake. It was just like too much energy running through my body almost.

Katy Weber 06:28

Oh, yeah. I call that like my body buzz. You know, like, I get it. After my interviews, I get body buzz because I'm so stimulated from the conversations that I have that afterwards. I'm just like, Hey, what do I do? What do I do? Like, oh, like have to go out and run around and stuff? Yeah, but I know that's amazing. I can
Holly Slater 06:45
just pick

Katy Weber 06:48
like a robot

Holly Slater 06:51
that runs like, What is she doing? She goes out every few days.

Katy Weber 06:55
It’s her body buzz. Did you know that? Did you know that? Like spontaneously picking up and moving from I didn’t move anywhere near as far as you did. But like when you said you broke up with an ex and move to Australia. I was like, Oh my God, that’s I did the exact same thing. 20 years ago, I broke up with an ex and and just was like, I need to move and I picked up and moved and I moved from Canada to the US. And then I met my now husband and now I’m trapped here. But like, it was it. I had no idea that spontaneous travel was part of ADHD. And then now I’m like, Oh, yeah, it makes sense. There’s the impulsivity. There’s the like you said, like that sort of childlike wonder. But I think there’s also something about like, reinvention, you know, like, I think there is something about us that always wants to kind of start fresh, and, and leave all of our troubles back in the old place. And, and have this whole, like, I had this whole wonderful idea that I was just going to become like, you know, start everything fresh, and I was going to become this perfect person. And I’ve noticed that throughout my life, oh, you know that I with diets. And like all of these were various ways in which we’re like, today’s the day that I’m going to start new, fresh, and everything’s going to be wonderful, and I’m going to be that perfect person. So where do you have a history of like, spontaneously picking up and moving?

Holly Slater 08:12
Oh, um, no, I Well, I’ve been traveling a lot in my life, because living in the UK for most of my adult life, till I was 25. I’m 31 now, so I’ve been here for six years. But in the UK, obviously, I was there till I was 25. And it’s so close to other countries in Europe that it’d be silly not to sort of just spontaneously travel. So I wouldn’t say I’ve lived I would just pick up and live in another country. The only reason I did that was because it was a really difficult breakup. And two of my very close friends already lived out here. So it was a very easy transition for me at the time. To just, it was a no brainer, go to Australia where two of your best friends are. And that’s what I did. But I lived in France and I lived in Spain as well when I was 22 and 23 when I was at university, so I think Yeah, part of that spontaneity is what I chose at university was to do languages. So I had to do a year abroad in my third year. So that was really interesting. Also really difficult actually more difficult than I imagined it would be. Because I kind of isolated myself I was living in France. I was supposed to be this teacher teaching children English and as someone with ADHD and depression at the time. I just thought I can’t do this, like planning lessons. What on earth am I supposed to be doing? And I was only young. I didn’t have any support from sort of the school that I was working in the French school. They didn’t understand where I was coming from. I don’t think they didn’t, because French people tend to be quite sort of matter of fact. Quite And so if there’s an issue, they just want you to say it. But I didn’t know at the time what was going on with me. I just thought, God, you’re so lazy. You’re so stupid. You don’t know how to be a teacher, you don’t know how to do this or that and I was missing home or my university friends that I’d made. I had to just I was kind of ripped out
of uni, and then plunked in the middle of France. So that was really tough. But I would say overall, yeah, I love traveling. I love being spontaneous. My partner will tell you it was probably made him gray a lot earlier than he needs to be because I am like, just like Homer Simpson and Marge is just like, what is happening? You’re doing all these weird things all the time. That’s kind of like me. I’m just making my partner gray before his time, because I’m always suggesting new things that we should be doing. And if we don’t do them, I feel like I’m somehow missing out on something. Because I’ve had the I’ve already had the thought now so we have to do it. Unfortunately.

**Katy Weber 10:58**
It’s like Dorian Gray. Meanwhile, you’re getting younger.

**Holly Slater 11:01**
Yeah, that’s it. I mean, it’s ridiculous. I’ve tried so many different things as a kid. And yeah, I’ve always had these crazy ideas that I want to do. But I think Australia is probably the craziest on it’s obviously lasted six years now. So I must be doing something right.

**Katy Weber 11:19**
So you went to school for languages. I’ve just tried to keep like this is so ADHD you went you went to this is like you went to university for languages. Now you’re a copywriter. And somewhere along the way you became a craft beer expert and industry advocate for women and the like. It’s like, I mean, this I love that I will use my my CV looks the exact same which is like it is all over the place. But like, and I love that I love that about us. I love the fact that we do a million things too. But like it’s also sort of it could be so dizzy egg or what you’re trying to be like, Look, I need you to be like one thing. So but looking back, how was school? Like what are some things in your past where you look back? And you’re just like, okay, that obviously that was ADHD all along, because you talked about high school a little bit. But was there anything like in your childhood that you look back now and you think that Okay, that was clearly the ADHD

**Holly Slater 12:25**
strangely enough, I didn't really struggle with school work, like a lot of people with ADHD do. I was quite interested in school, I loved it. All my friends were there, I had a great time. I grew up in a very small town in North Wales in the UK. And it was a really close knit community. And I didn’t, I used to enjoy going to school. To be honest, I wasn’t good at everything. Obviously, I was better at languages, and writing. But I did always feel a sense of being different. Being a bit strange, because I think I was always the kind of person that would want to have quite deep, meaningful conversations with people all the time. And that's not something everyone wants to do. Yeah, so I did feel a sense of separation from a group of people in school. In terms of the school work, I didn't, I didn’t struggle with that at all. I started to struggle at university. Definitely. I think as the pressure piled on, that's when it kind of triggered off a bit more of the ADHD symptoms. For me, the executive functioning one thing that was different about my high school years I think was I had a lot of anger and frustration. So I would feel very frustrated very easily, which I still sometimes get. I think it's just a sense of overwhelm and having too many things in my head at once. And sometimes I just kind of lash out. Really I used to use my mum actually reminded me, I used to do this really strange thing when I was angry and I used to bite down on my hand when I was quite young. I was like a way of releasing the anger intention. I'd never heard anyone I wasn't the kind of person that would throw things or you know, be aggressive. It was more internally it was more internalized. It was more aimed at myself than anything else. Yeah. So I would think to myself, you know, why am I doing this? Why am I acting like this? And then I would just get really angry with myself
and I remember a few times people at school or my mom would just go Oh my God, why are you acting like this? You've been really strange or if I ever got called weird or strange, that would set me off. I would feel so angry and so her because to me, the word weird is such a trigger to me. That I, if I'm weird that somehow I'm You know, not accepted? Yeah, obviously. Yeah. And just like yeah, sense of, no, you know, you're defective. And that's quite a profound thing to think when you're when you're in your formative years.

Katy Weber  15:16
Yeah, you know, it's funny we first of all, I feel like the majority of the women I speak to did well in school, I think that it's actually the minority of women who really struggled and struggled in school, because I think women just have, you know, girls or or anyone who was socialized as a girl growing up like they have that I think that a lot of the issues are much more of that kind of internalized daydreaming and the people pleasing that kind of starts to snowball throughout life, and then you become this, just oh, you become incredibly anxious as a result, because it's all of that like internalized issue. So I think, you know, you were kind of talking about how, you know, strangely, you did well in school. And I think that that seems to me like that's actually much more the norm. But it was interesting, because like, I've spoken to a lot of women about anger from overstimulation, right, I think that's really like a mis, misnomer that like that, especially when you talk about autism. When you talk about what like when, with neurodiverse people, there's sort of this stereotype that like when you get overstimulated that you kind of you cower, you know or you think of the like stereotype of like the autistic child who has like the headphones and is kind of like hiding. But I think a lot of the time with overstimulation we do we get really, really angry. And so I've like talked to a lot of women about it, especially mothers, when we talk about like, the rage that we have toward children, you know, and that we have a lot of difficulty with emotional regulation, when we get overstimulated from the noise of children, babies and crying and everything else and and so I've always talked about it in that regard, but I've never really thought about like that kind of overstimulation leading to anger and self harm in a kid. But like, when you talk about it makes perfect sense. Like that's, yeah, absolutely. That would be a way to calm yourself, right? Is that kind of that anger, that rage to then want to kind of localize the pain in a way would be so that's interesting. I don't think I've ever talked anybody about rage in children. But I mean, I certainly I certainly my acting out as a kid always was, like talking back to my teacher and being like, really, I was I always ended up in the principal's office for just being you know, the teacher would tell me I had to do something. And I'd be like, No, I don't want to, you know, like I, those were the moments where I acted out. So anyway, I'm just like, processing all of this as I go. But that's really interesting. And so then how did you get into craft beer?

Holly Slater  19:15
Oh, yeah. Well, I moved to Australia in 2015. And I was doing farm work for quite a while of that, sort of first year that I was here, which we have to do in order to get an extra year on our visa. You have to do farm work. Yet we have to work on like Australia. Yeah, that's

Katy Weber  19:38
so idyllic. Oh, that's cool. I had no idea. Well, I mean, yeah, but I just like that's that's kind of smart actually, for the country to just be like, if you want to live here longer, you've got to do manual labor.

Holly Slater 19:51
Well, that's it and it was very manual labor, but that's where you form the most, the strongest sort of friendships most because you You're, you know, doing back breaking work in 45 degree Celsius here,
Katy Weber 20:05
all literally in the shed together.

Holly Slater 20:09
So that was great. But then I moved to Sydney, after I sort of did my farm work moved around a little bit 2016, I moved to Sydney. And I sort of moved around a few pubs and things, because that's kind of the easiest work to get into when you're not sure how to make money. In Australia, you earn quite good money doing hospitality, so anything in restaurants, pubs, bars, that sort of thing. And then me and my friend, Adam, were like, Okay, I need a new job. So let's go and drink some beer at these pumps, I might want to work and hand my resume in. And so that's how I got a job. A really sort of a pub that everyone loves in the area I live in called the courthouse. And so we call it the core T for sure. And I started working there for about a year and a half fantastic establishment that's very open minded, welcoming. It's, you know, the suburb I live in is very sort of left wing. It's very progressive, and all sorts of different people live here. It's fantastic. Because not all of Australia is like that, of course, some of its very rural should I say. But it was fantastic. And that was my first taste of sort of really crafty local beers from Sydney. And it just kind of went from there, really. So I worked at a pub that had craft beer on the on tap. And then one of my friends said to me, we're opening a brewery, like I'm a rep, as in he sells the beers to pubs. I'm a rep for this brewery, do you want to come and work at our new tap house. And I said, Yeah, that would be fantastic. So then I kind of dip my toes into working in an actual brewery not too far from where I live. And I started hosting tastings. I was a supervisor there. So that was fantastic. And then I ended up getting a job at my current employer called beer cartel, which is, essentially, we've got a bottle shop, which is I guess you'd call it a liquor store, or something. It's just we sell beer there. And that's all we sell, we don't sell spirits or wine, it's very focused on beer. And then we have a warehouse as well, where we send online orders. So in the pandemic, that's been great, because people order a lot of beer online, so we could keep our job. That's fantastic. So essentially, I've been working in the industry for about four years now, in various capacities, I've done some podcasts as well, related to beer, and I love it, I love this industry. But I did notice that it's very obviously male dominated and a lot it's to change in terms of how women are treated and approached in this industry, this so many examples, I could, you know, go into with how we are treated sometimes in terms of, you know, always your manager, I want to ask about this, or that, when I'm standing right there, that kind of thing. Um, all the sorts of things you can imagine. And you know, there's some quite dire things that have happened as well, to people, you know, assault, that kind of thing. So essentially, I just want to be an advocate. Yeah, for women in the craft beer industry, we were just as valid. We know our stuff. And just because I'm not a guy doesn't mean I don't know, more than you about beer. So essentially, from that, I started writing blogs for beer cartel as well. And doing podcasts, and it kind of went from there in terms of writing. And then I decided, of course, on a whim to become a freelance copywriter and journalist because I've always loved writing and having done languages at university. I was like, why don't I combine my love of this and this to create this? And I didn't, I didn't have the confidence before this year to do it to be honest, because I always thought no, I can't I can't do this. I don't have the skills, the confidence and I just kind of did it I created a website for myself, I started advertising myself as a copywriter, and the works been pretty steady Ever since then, and I still work at big cartel. still do the blogs and things and sell beer but I also do my freelance copywriting as well. And that's something that's an end game for me as essentially do that full time. But as a freelancer, you can't just go straight into that because you need to build a client base, which is essentially what I'm trying to do at the moment is build that foundation for further future for myself, but it's been going really well. I love writing. I'm a bit of a languages nerd to be honest. So it does make sense that I'm doing that. See once

Katy Weber 25:07
you actually trace everything back it all make sense every all these seemingly random interests and vocations all like, come together and you’re like, Oh, yeah, that makes perfect sense why I’m here with all of these.

Absolute absolutely, it does fall into place. You never listened to your parents or your grandparents when you were younger. But it does all fall into place when it should. somehow magically, it kind of just happens. And it’s also, obviously we have something to do with that we make things happen for ourselves as well. But if I have any advice to anyone, it would be just let things happen the way they just aren’t actually supposed to happen. And not not put too much pressure on yourself.

Yeah, I think that we have a lot of impatience. And I would say that’s one of the difficulties with being an entrepreneur too, is like, I also like asked, so often will have these great ideas, and I’ll do this thing, and then I’ll be like, Alright, I did the thing, why aren’t 100,000 people knocking down my door to get this thing or buy this thing? Like, you just sort of assume that like, everybody’s gonna realize how great this is right now, right? Like that. There’s no sense of growth or progress. And then of course, if when that happened, like that’s like me with social media, I will post furiously on social media for like, two weeks, and then I won’t get any. I won’t get the adequate feedback that I require for my dopamine hit. And then I’m like, this sucks. Forget it. I’m not doing this anymore. And I give up. Just like nobody lives. Exactly, right. But you’re right, it is true. Like once you actually kind of take the time and to look through the hindsight it is it is amazing what we can accomplish and all like the how everything does sort of tie into each other. So on that note, what would you say you love most about your ADHD?

Um, there’s a lot of elements to ADHD that are actually really positive. I think that people do forget about I’m, I don’t mind, but my impulsivity. It’s not always a good thing. But I think it keeps things fresh and interesting. That’s for sure. I love my passion for life, my passion for pretty much anything. I love food, I love music, I love my friends and my family. And when it’s warm outside, when it’s cold outside, I have a huge passion for pretty much everything in life. I’m always curious about things. And I have, like you said a childlike wonder, I’d say, which probably annoys people sometimes and probably makes them feel like a bit confused. Like, who is this person? Why are they like a child, I don’t understand. But a lot of my friends you know, love that quality about me, they think I’m really fun. And I enjoy making people laugh. And I try and keep it light hearted most of the time, because I just really enjoy making people laugh, I think and that’s probably part of the ADHD is just having that childlike quality, which is quite hard to find, I think in a neurotypical person who has who’s a bit more, sort of tethered to reality, I’d like to be I like to not be in reality a lot of the time to be honest. I’m like, Well, if I want to be a famous writer, then I, What, are you gonna do it, you’re not going to stop me? Or you know, and then I’ll just go Actually, no, that’s ridiculous. And then I’ll go I want to be like, you know, professional swimmer or not that actually. But I like the fact that I can come up with new ideas constantly. That’s proved really helpful for my copywriting. So obviously, when you’re writing, you have to be coming up with new ideas all the time. So that’s been really good for me. And, yeah, I think one of the main things is the passion I feel and the intense emotions I feel aren’t always negative, they can be excitement, happiness. Sometimes I’ll feel goosebumps when I listened to a song, I don’t know, if everyone always feels like that, if it’s always that sort of intense, but
you get that a lot with ADHD to where you’re like these things that you sort of always assumed everybody had like goosebumps with, with songs, and you know that you’re sort of like realizing, like, everybody feels that way, right? And then you have to come sort through each and every one of these idiosyncrasies and being like, Oh, is it really only 10% of the population roughly, that has these reactions and experiences these things, and it just feels like they’re everywhere, and I’m surrounded by it. And I’ve always done these things. And most of my family members do this things and everybody I’ve ever loved in my life does this thing and you’re like, Oh, right, that makes sense. I only like people who are interesting. Like I was like, I only like people I’m only drawn to people who are like me, you know, and so that’s, there’s that question of like, are we really surrounded by other neuro diverse people when we are neuro diverse because we’re drawn to each other except for lately. Except for my partner, my, when you’re talking about childlike wonder, too, I was thinking about like how, you know, that’s one of the things I love as well, like, you know, I just feel like I do have this sort of childlike energy about a lot of new things and discovering things. But then I also have this childlike relationship with money and spending. And I feel like I am not the adult in this relationship at all a lot of the times and I’m like, I don’t know what to do with that information. Yeah, like when he we have those conversations where my husband is like, you do realize how a budget works, right? Like you do think about money coming in, and money’s going out. And I’m like, No, I don’t like I don’t think those I don’t think that way. And, and again, like, sort of feeling like where I’m not an adult, a lot of the time I’ve I’ve had that feeling. And I didn’t realize that that was actually quite common. Like a lot of us, who at the end of the day had that feeling of like, I don’t I didn’t get the manual. I didn’t get the adult manual. I’m sorry. I don’t know how you guys all figured this all out? Like was it osmosis or what? But I didn’t? I didn’t get it. I don’t. I’m not there with you yet.

Holly Slater 34:08

I think my partner actually thinks he has ADHD. And he hasn’t been formally diagnosed, but I can recognize the signs in him immediately. So it’s quite funny that we kind of found each other because it’s complete chaos.

Katy Weber 34:24

Now, did he think that? Has he come to his realization through you and your awareness? Or was I think

Holly Slater 34:30

so? Yes, I think like me, it was not something he thought about in too much detail. He just thought I probably but then you know, he’ll console me on the days or I feel like I can’t function at all. And then he’s actually just started studying to be a teacher. And he’s having a really hard time studying. And I just said to him, you know, I think you probably do have ADHD. If you can’t focus on anything and you know that extreme level of procrastination, for example, let’s tie to the entire house instead of doing this one thing that we really need to do, yeah, when we wouldn’t ordinarily do that at all. And he’s very forgetful, bless his heart because very forgetful. And he’s one of most amazing people I’ve ever met is so intelligent. But he just struggles with that a bit of that executive functioning as well on different ways. Different ways to me though, which is probably a good thing. Because I’m not forgetful. I’m weirdly, I’m late for everything. And I’m scatty as anything. And, you know, if you talk to me about something, I’ll probably try and talk to you about something else that I’m actually interested in, which is probably very annoying, but I do remember things and I’m quite perceptive as well. We were having a conversation the other day about people’s eye color. And I said to him, could you tell me like all your friends eye color if I asked you and he said no. And I said, I’ve known them a lot less like a lot, not as long as you have but I could tell you every single person I’ve ever met I could tell you the right color. So like that level of perception, I think is something to do with my major HD because I’m constantly checking out you know, my surroundings and looking at this and that and all the details and Dave is just, it goes over his head and he doesn’t sort of notice anything that’s going on Aranda at all, but his ADHD
is definitely different to mine. But that’s obviously normal for men to have habit presenting differently but his executive functioning isn’t quite as severe as mine. But his the side things where he’s studying I think he’s been really struggling with that. So that’s something we’ll definitely look into. But when you were saying you know, we’re drawn to people that are possibly neurotypical and neurodiverse I think that’s definitely the case you know, one of my best friends is bipolar and she is one of the most interesting people I’ve met I wonder

Katy Weber 37:07
with memory if there’s different there must be different types I haven’t really done much research on memory but like you know, so many of us do struggle with memory but like Well now that you mention it like I haven’t I haven’t I have a great visual memory so like if I’ve driven somewhere I will always be able to drive there again I will immediately you know I will always remember how to get somewhere from that visual memory and like I will remember somebody’s face from anybody I’ve ever met my entire life but you will tell me your name 12 times and I still won’t remember it you know so I’m like there must be different types of like visual and auditory and different types of working memory that sometimes they land in different areas of our brain because there are so many things that Yeah, like there are so many things that I will forget I’m terrible. I spent a lot of time setting up ways in which I can help myself remember things you know, like, like I have my reminders app on my phone that goes off all day long to remind me to do literally everything from like feed your children take your morning meds take your evening meds like you know, feed your pets, like every things that you would think that you have to do every day that eventually you would remember to do I can’t remember to do them unless I have these reminders going off. But I will you know I remember every horrible thing my mother in law has ever said to me over the

Holly Slater 38:35
years. That’s just the way it works. I think everyone would probably remember that kind of stuff you really don’t want to remember

Katy Weber 38:41
but that’s what I made like I think there are ways in which when when we start to talk about things like rejection sensitive dysphoria, like the way in which we ruminate and that we will hold on to negative comments for the rest of our lives and they will they will hover around us no matter what we do with like little ghosts that will follow us everywhere. So that’s interesting I didn’t really think about like the the we really can be very specific with memory or even just like with language to like it amazes me language is one of those things that my brother who is not diagnosed but I’m convinced he also of my two brothers. I’m convinced he also has ADHD. But he is really really proficient at language and he picks up languages he speaks multiple languages. He’s never had an issue with vocabulary but I could never remember vocab I just was like, I can understand. You know, I will learn everything theoretically. But when it came to actually like remembering the vocab I just never could do it. And so, but then again, like there’s also a lot of actors have ADHD. I’m like, how do actors might remember monologues and how do actors remember scripts, like there’s got to be all these different, like corners of our brain where sometimes they work and sometimes they don’t, or constant memory.

Holly Slater 39:59
Absolutely. Yeah, it’s funny that you mentionedrst, because that’s not a concept I actually knew existed until recently. And that is a symptom that I feel actually probably every day of my life through one way or another. And it’s obviously my brain being a bit unkind to me. Because I have a lot of amazing friends that are just the strongest
friendships you can imagine like, they’re my family. But I also have this feeling of, you’re different. They don’t like you. They don’t like you. They don’t like you constantly going in my head. It’s just just so strange, because there’s no, there’s no reason for me to think that way. And when I think back to any sort of rejection I’ve experienced, it has been blown up in my head to ridiculous proportions. Like, it’s not just a rejection from that one friendship or that one person. It’s from society in my head. And it’s, yeah, that’s something that I definitely wanted to touch on. Because it’s if anyone else feels like that, you know, I understand that it’s awful. It’s one of the worst parts of ADHD has that feeling of rejection, because it’s, it hits you right in your core.

Katy Weber  41:18

Yeah, I mean, that was definitely I feel like, the best way I’ve ever heard it described and I talked about this a lot with in previous interviews, too, which is just piece of shit syndrome, right? Which is like, and that was kind of how my therapist really started to talk about it with me, was just that inverse relationship between accomplishment and self esteem, right? And it almost feels like they are inversely related. Like it does feel like the more you get done in life, and the more you accomplish, the worse you feel about yourself that you’re just like, Yeah, but I’m a piece of shit. And so it was like that, I think that was really what struck her which was like, the, the overwhelming sense of of this, like disregard for ourselves, you know, which I think was a huge part of my journey when I was first diagnosed, which was just like, really getting to the core of like, what it’s like to live your entire life, feeling like you can’t trust yourself feeling like you had a certain amount of, you know, what’s the word I’m looking for? That was always told to me in school potential. Okay, so it’s like, you had this enormous amount of attention all the time, and you couldn’t get there and you couldn’t perform, you know, and it was like, knowing that you were bright, but never feeling like you could prove it. And so it’s like, you’ve gone through your whole life with this overwhelming sense of like, self disappointment. And so like dealing with that, and carrying that around, it just felt like it got worse and worse, no matter how much you know, no matter how much you accomplished in life, no matter how much like how much how fun you were with your friends, and how much you were, you know, using humor and all the masking and everything else, it was like it, it felt like the self esteem and the the RSD would just like grow like this monster that was being fed by everything else in your life. And like that’s, I think something that you know, when we Yeah, when we talk about rst or we talk about like, that level of pain. You can see it in the eyes of other people who have ADHD or have been especially diagnosed in adulthood where it’s like, yeah, like I that was so it’s a huge part of it, right? It’s a huge part of it is carrying around that. That secret like indescribable sense of sadness and shame that has accompanied so much of what we do in our life that I think I don’t think a lot of people really understand how you know, when we do talk about the struggles of ADHD that that’s really what it is it’s so difficult to articulate. And I think you know why a lot of people just sort of don’t really I think it’s so it’s easy to kind of dismiss ADHD is this like hilarious disorder where you like talk about sort of squirrels and all of that stuff and like, there’s so much underlying hurt and, and sadness. And it’s I think it’s also why people get really upset when when there’s that toxic positivity element where everyone’s like, no, ADHD is a superpower. It’s great. It’s the most wonderful thing and you’re like, Well, yeah, I see that but I also like, like, really, really struggled for a long time and like, What am I supposed to do? There I feel like I have definitely rambling in this interview.

Holly Slater  45:45

I know I ramble a lot as well. So I’m right now with you. Don’t you worry about that. But But yeah,

Katy Weber  45:51

no, it’s true I then so that was interesting to me because I had also never heard of what did you call it? It was oh OCD, the like the combo. Pure OCD. Yeah. So there’s so there’s like this, and then the physical, the physical and then the mental. Can you talk about that
Holly Slater  46:09

a little bit? Yeah, essentially, I think it probably comes a little bit hand in hand with ADHD for me. Because a lot of people that have this type of OCD do have ADHD as well, because I think obsessive thinking is definitely a thing with ADHD. In terms of one of, did I do this, right? Does this person like me, that's a bit obsessive, I think. And it's not anything to be ashamed of. And it's just a fact. So with pure OCD, I had never heard of it either. I think it's a relatively new concept that they're still researching. But it essentially means that I don't have physical rituals, like you'd imagine licking the light switch off and on five times, well, you know, everyone's gonna die. It's nothing like that. It's more to do with mental rituals. So trying to get rid of intrusive thoughts by thinking about a song or just trying desperately to control my thoughts. Whereas what you should be doing is allowing thoughts to come in and out as they wish, because they don't actually mean anything a lot of the time. But with pure OCD, you attach a huge amount of meaning to any intrusive thought, and it gets really, really distressing. If you research pure OCD, you'll find that there's awful subcategories that people can fall into. For example, I was told by my therapists, one of her clients had felt that she was a pedophile, these were her intrusive thoughts. And for a female, or just anyone, that is probably the worst thing you could be thinking. I'd, you know, rather be an axe murderer than. So those kinds of really, really distressing thoughts. Once I used to get worried that I had schizophrenia, because I was so scared of losing control. When I had anxiety that I would have Can I convinced myself that I was actually going crazy as it were, of course, it wasn't, it was just a feeling of losing control of my thoughts and my feelings, and how insanely high my anxiety levels were, that everything just seemed too much. And it's essentially you're trying too hard to control your thoughts. And so they keep returning. And they kind of haunt you in a way because you can't control them. And they're just very distressing sometimes, you know, I, the best way to describe it for somebody who doesn't have these thoughts is have you ever been in the car and you just think to yourself, I could just jump out right now onto the road? Yeah, oh, I'll just throw my mobile phone out onto the street, or I'll just punch this guy that's walking towards me, you don't actually do these things. No one ever does these things. They're these weird urges and impulse impulses. And you just disregard that thought most people would go, that was funny, that was a bit weird, or just won't even think about it. But for us, it's a bit more intense than that. And you attach meaning to those thoughts. And it can really, really distress you on a daily basis if you don't get a handle on it. Because you kind of see that as reality. I had a thought that I wanted to, you know, kick that dog. So that means I'm a terrible person. Do I want to kick that dog? Oh my goodness, me this, that and the other. So it's essentially attached to anxiety and it just your brain kind of latches on to these really negative thoughts and snowballs them to the point where you just think you're the worst person, worst person in the world.

Katy Weber  49:57

Yeah, I feel like I need to do a lot more research into intrusive thoughts. My 10 year old has been asking me about it recently. And we had some we've had some interesting conversations about it. And in the back of my head, I'm like, Okay, time to get him a therapist. Like, but it is really interesting. And I think there's been that Yeah, like, I think it is a big part of, of, I don't know if it's just a part of anxiety and we just are more anxious society or if it has something to do with neuro divergence, but like, it's Yeah, it is something I think a lot of us experience and do attach meaning to, you know, am I a terrible person? What does this say about me and that kind of thing. Now, if you could rename ADHD, have you thought about something you would rename it because it's such a problematic acronym that's not really like does not reflect our experience at all.

Holly Slater  51:42

For me, I'd like to take the negative connotation away from it. And I'd like to not think of it as a disorder. I you know, yes, we suffer in some ways, but I don't like to think of it as a disorder. I like to think of it as you have these people
and you have those people. And we think this way, and you think that way. I'm an alternative thinker. I don't know. Anything. That's I mean, I could describe our brains as somewhat of a sci fi like a seesaw, isn't it? It's, there's this amazing part and then there's also this horrible part. It's hard to kind of describe to someone that has never experienced those symptoms before because it has such amazing qualities and also really heartbreaking qualities as well. So I'm not sure what we could rename it as, but I don't like the thought of it being something that just makes everyone suffer or make them a bit hyperactive or because that's just not an accurate description at all. Yeah,

**Katy Weber  52:41**

well, we'll just call it the seesaw contingent. Awesome. Well, this was great. Thank you so much, Holly. I love your website. By the way, you've got so many great photos and the kid in your name. It's such a nice font. Did you do that yourself?

**Holly Slater  52:57**

Uh, no, I actually hired a friend of mine who's a graphic designer. She's amazing Bianca Jarvis Korea. And she I just said, You know, I want it to be colorful and retro because a lot of copywriters in Sydney, at least tend to be quite corporate, their websites are very, I'll get this done and that done and you can trust me and I'm reliable. Whereas I just kind of thought, okay, I just want to be who I am. I don't want to come across as this person who's going to be very corporate and I'm just I'm just a good writer. I like I like writing I'm good at it. And if you work with me, I'm very personable and fun and that's pretty much it.

**Katy Weber  53:35**

No, you definitely get that energy from your website, Holly J. Slater comm I'll put it in the show notes for anyone who wants to look it up, poke around and maybe even work with you. But yeah, your energy is definitely infectious on my website. It really leaps off the page. And so yeah, it sounds like you've found found a great job for your personality.

**Holly Slater  53:58**

Absolutely. I love writing. It's definitely part of who I am. Just took me a little while to get there.