Crystal Dionysopoulou: ADHD symptoms overlooked in girls

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SPEAKERS

Crystal Dionysopoulou, Katy Weber

Katy Weber  00:00
But first welcome, Crystal, thank you so much for joining me.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  00:04
It's my pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Katy Weber  00:06
Yeah, you are my first international guest. So I'm glad we could make this work. And I'm super excited to learn more about your business. But first of all, why don't you tell me about when you first thought you might have ADHD? And how long ago you were diagnosed and sort of what led up to your diagnosis?

Crystal Dionysopoulou  00:30
Yeah. So I actually only got diagnosed a couple of months ago, and really only started looking into it this year, because I'm not sure what happened. But all of a sudden, there was kind of like an explosion of ADHD means like, all over social media. And I was reading them and I started thinking. That actually sounds a lot like me, but I'm not ADHD, I was never hyperactive, so I totally dismissed it at first. But the more this kind of content, like came across my feed, and the more it was just put in front of my face, the more I realized maybe I should actually look into this seriously. So I eventually found a psychiatrist here in Athens that is familiar with ADHD and speaks English and everything and, and he gave me like a short test. And I basically was like, yeah, you definitely have ADHD inattentive, a touch of impulsive, but mostly inattentive, which is why I had no idea until now. That that it was a thing, because I think everyone thinks of ADHD is like the hyper little boy, which is, incidentally, that's my brother. He was diagnosed with ADHD as a as a kid. And they just totally glossed over me because I was quiet.
Katy Weber 01:56
Ah, I was gonna say that’s fascinating. Not surprising, but fascinating that it wasn’t even looked at. Yeah, even if even though there was somebody who was diagnosed in your family.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 02:08
Yeah, I was quiet and I behaved well. So they didn’t really care, I guess. Or their it just wasn’t known. Or I don’t know, I think, as far as I know, it’s a pretty new diagnosis. And they’re, like, still learning about it, and, and everything. So I don’t know, my brother was always getting into trouble. And I was just like, the quiet perfect kid. So they’d never really paid attention that I was just daydreaming all the time.

Katy Weber 02:38
Yeah, absolutely. I mean, if you’re not being disruptive why, wife? But a broke why fix? Exactly. And so? Yeah, you know, I there has definitely been an uptick in. Like, I call them pandemic diagnoses. Especially I think among women and mothers. I know, you have some little ones. Right.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 02:59
I have one. I have a almost three year old

Katy Weber 03:03
daughter. Yeah. So I looking back when my children were in the newborn to toddler phase, I think I certainly my symptoms certainly escalated when, with because of lack of sleep, and just the chaos of having little ones around. And so I’m not surprised that there’s been such an uptick in diagnoses among women and mothers, since the pandemic started. Yeah. And just, you know, the, the all routine has been thrown out the window. And just, you know, with any kind of remote learning and social isolation and anxiety makes perfect sense to be looking back thinking like, we can’t, you know, we can’t ignore, we can’t ignore the symptoms anymore in our own lives. And I think our typical hacks just weren’t working anymore.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 03:57
Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think I thinking being a mother with ADHD, like, especially with small children, is it brings like a whole other dimension to why I didn’t even consider it as a thing for me because everyone talks about how after you have a baby, your brain changes. So I just thought, Okay, well, this is maybe all part of brain fog from being a mom, you know, they talk about mom brain, and, you know, lack of sleep and forgetfulness, because before I had my daughter, I had a really great memory, and then everything just got kind of really exacerbated, and I had postpartum anxiety and depression and everything and looking back now, it turns out that a whole lot of what I was experiencing after I had my daughter was also like, maybe just exacerbated ADHD symptoms that were untreated because I had no idea.

Katy Weber 04:58
Yeah yeah. I had the exact same experience with both of my children. That was when I after my first daughter was
Yeah, yeah. I had the exact same experience with both of my children. That was, when I was first pregnant, I went to the doctor seeking help for postpartum depression. And I remember even back then thinking it didn’t exhibit itself. The way you often think about postpartum depression, I didn’t feel dysphoric and I didn’t feel, you know, like I had no, I didn’t want to harm my child, or myself, which are some of those common symptoms of postpartum depression. But one thing I had a lot of trouble with was emotional regulation, I would lash out, I would yell at my husband, you know, I felt like I would just go from zero to 100, in terms of rage, and felt really out of control in terms of my emotions, and, and so the meds certainly helped. I went on an SSRI, and it was great. And it was life saving for all of us in my family. And, and then the same thing happened again with my second child. But now looking back at it, I think, you know, it was

Crystal Dionysopoulou 06:00
it. How much of this was postpartum? And how much of it wasn’t?

Katy Weber 06:03
Yeah, you know, I think how much of that was, I mean, it’s it’s so difficult to untangle depression and anxiety from ADHD, because so much of it I think our depression and anxiety comes from our ability or inability to manage our ADHD symptoms, especially if we’re not diagnosed, we have no idea what’s happening.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 06:27
I completely agree. I mean, yeah, growing up, like I, I was never diagnosed as a kid. But with with anything, but looking back, I was absolutely depressed. In middle school, I had a really tough middle school experience with lots of bullying and everything. And the bullying was on them not on my behavior. But how I dealt with it was maybe maybe aggravated because of, you know, the rejection sensitive dysphoria, I think it’s called. So I took everything a lot harder than, you know, other kids might have. And I was very much like, in a depression, for me is like a dark hole. It’s like a, like a black hole almost, that I just get sucked into. And I can’t find my way out of it. I was in that black hole a lot when I was in middle school. And looking back, I’m like, Well, if I had been diagnosed with ADHD a little earlier, and was maybe, or had some help to manage my symptoms, either with medication or therapy or something, maybe Middle School, and then High School, and you know, even college and going on through life wouldn’t have been such a challenge just to like, just to do what everyone else seems to just float through, you know?

Katy Weber 07:50
Mmm mm. Yeah, absolutely. I think a huge component of emotional are sorry, of RSD rejection sensitive dysphoria is rumination, and taking our obsessive tendencies and kind of trying to focus on solving the problem, or figuring out like, Who’s to blame, you know, so I think when there’s difficulty with social relationships, if the other person’s actions aren’t making sense to you, you can kind of really focus on the fact that you are unable to solve this puzzle. Does that make sense? Yeah. So I get it, I understand why we tend to go down these dark holes, especially when it comes to interpersonal relationships, and why there’s so much self blame in situations where we really have no control over how the other people are acting. And so if you translate that idea to a sitter, you know, middle school bullying situation.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 08:54
Yeah, but that’s what I was trying to explain was that there’s maybe people who can’t talk about the things that they’re feeling because they’re not able to. And if they could talk about them, they might be able to figure things out. So that’s the part where I think it’s really important to get help when you’re feeling that way.
Yeah, it's like, what, what must be wrong with me that I'm getting targeted this way? And I can't handle it, like, no one else seems to be having these problems. It's just all me and then, you know, it spirals downward from there.

Katy Weber  09:07
Yeah. So one thing I love is that you mentioned on your website, and also in our email correspondence that you built your first website at 11 and got paid for it.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  09:18
Yet something about that. That was actually around the same time. So that was in middle school. And I think since I didn't have a lot of close, like personal relationships, I kind of threw myself into a bunch of different hobbies. I there was like, reading a lot of science fiction and fantasy, because my parents are huge nerds, and they pass that on to me happily. And learning about different hobbies. I learned how to knit at that time, and I also learned how to build websites. So what happened is that my, we had a family computer. And just just the one because you know, this was the very early days of the internet. We had dial up. So we all shared the same computer, even my dad when we needed to do work stuff, because he worked at an IT company. And there was one day that I needed the computer to do research for some kind of paper book report or something for school. And he had been working on it to do some, like, professional development, he was learning PHP, which is a programming language that is still used actually on the web. And he had an exercise book in front of him with like a tutorial and he had the computer up with the the program and trying to figure out the example. And he had gotten stuck, there was an error that kept popping up. And he had gotten frustrated and just left the computer as it was. So I come up to the computer, and I see all this stuff. And I'm comparing, like, what's on here, because I'm curious, you know, I think that's an ADHD thing to forget about my homework completely and fix the error. And, of course, being 11 then I made the entire thing all about Pokemon. So my dad came back saw that I fixed it. He's like, how did you do that? I'm like that the error told you did you not read it? So he, uh, he was really excited and proud of me. And you know, he started teaching me a little bit about web development. So I kind of took that and ran with it. And I built my own site, he helped me get a domain name was a pink elephant, a web design. Because pink elephant was taken, and I have like a little stuffed pink elephant that that I loved. And I actually, after I had like that website up, I had no portfolio and like, almost no experience. But I didn't care because I thought this was fun. And I would actually go door to door at local businesses in my little town and say, Hey, do you guys have a website? And I had like a script prepared for if they said yes. And if they said no, so if they said yes, I would say, oh, okay, that's cool. Can I do have the domain anywhere? I'd love to check it out. They would give it to me on their business card or something. And I would say, Okay, well, if you need help updating it, I just wanted to let you know, I do websites, I, I, you it's important to keep them up to date and everything. Here's my business card, you can call me a little 11 year old girl. Yeah, I love 11 year old girl. But everyone always told me I looked at least like 15 or something. So I think it was the way I presented myself because you don't really expect an 11 year old girl to march into your store and say something like that. Right? So if they said no, that they didn't have a website, then I would tell them, okay, well, you know, the web isn't just a trend, I think it's really here to stay. And people, people are going to be looking for your business online. If you're not online, you could be losing a lot of customers. Or they could be checking to see if you're a trustworthy business or checking for reviews and that sort of thing. So it's really important for you to have a website. By the way, I happen to build websites. And since I'm a kid, I'll be cheap. So you should totally hire me to do this. And two businesses actually did. One was a realtor. And the other one was a local Mexican restaurant. And it was those websites for up probably longer than they should have been. But they paid me for it. And then I got distracted by another hobby and didn't touch websites or web development again until like high school.

Katy Weber  13:47
That's a great story. I love it.
That's a great story, I love it.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 13:50
Thank you. It's a lot of fun. Looking back, I can't believe that I did that though. I'm like, how did I have the guts to go around and cold call? But I think it's because I didn't know that there was like any kind of reason why that would be intimidating. I was just like, why not?

Katy Weber 14:06
Right? Well, I think we have such impulsivity and and when we are interested in something we go after it. Can you imagine if we actually stopped to think twice about whether we were qualified to do things we'd never get anything done?

Crystal Dionysopoulou 14:18
Definitely.

Katy Weber 14:20
I think that's definitely one of our strengths is really just forging ahead with an exciting idea. And not getting bogged down by overthinking more, or getting bogged down with doubt. We usually experienced that somewhere along the way. I know I usually hit a wall. But in terms of getting something started, that's fantastic. Ooh, so what are some other thing in your past where you look back and you think, Oh my god, of course, that was ADHD.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 14:47
Mostly it was school related things. Like I never did homework growing up. It wasn't that I didn't know how to do it or that I didn't want to do it. I just couldn't get started like that task. Initiation is really hard for me even now. Once I started, it was fine. It was done in 10 minutes, but just actually doing it or remembering to turn it in if I had done it or remembering to give forms to my parents or something. I learned how to forge my mom's signature really early, so that so that I wouldn't get in trouble with teachers.

Katy Weber 15:16
I did that too. Oh, that's funny.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 15:20
And it was I guess, so then they're like, related to that, I guess it would be that I procrastinated a lot. But I didn't mean to. It's just that I, it's not that I didn't want to do the things that I needed to do. It was that I just couldn't.
Yes, you know, I remember trying to describe this to my husband, we're looking back at larger projects, especially in university as well essays, you know, I had no problem taking notes, and preparing that for a larger project. But when it came to actually starting the finished product, it's like I had no point of entry. I had a very difficult time getting that first step taken. And figuring out you know, I think there's something about the with, with executive function, the inability to prioritize. So there's this idea that, you know, you can't really figure out what is the first step to get you to a goal, because every step feels that equally important.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  16:26

even even if it's laid out for you like, right, I remember when I was doing like papers and stuff for for high school or for college. And it would be like, the teacher would say, start with the outline. And I would say, Okay, well, how do you start an outline? Like, you can't. I can't just write down introduction, I have to know what what's going to be in it, I have to know everything that's going to be in it. And I can't do that unless it's done. So how do I start it?

Katy Weber  16:52

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's where a lot of procrastination ends up happening is the, the, you know, I often said, like, when I would procrastinate on writing something, often I'd be writing it kind of in my head all along. And then I needed the urgency of last minute, you know, cramming, to get something actually out of my head and onto the paper. So it's like this self imposed deadlines that we need and that sense of urgency in order to get past the overthinking. And once I sort of realized that, that's how, that's why I was procrastinating. I mean, this obviously doesn't apply to things like housekeeping or other boring tasks, because they're boring. But when it came to actually like getting work done, I think a lot of the procrastination kind of makes sense to me now, and I can break it down and think like, oh, everything kind of had its purpose.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  17:48

Right. But it's hard to tell, like, your professors that when they're like, when they ask you Okay, what do you have to show for your work?

Katy Weber  17:56

Yes, that's true. Yeah. Well, it's just, you know, it's all in my brain.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  18:03

Don't you do that doesn't agree with you? Right? This isn't normal. What are you talking about?

Katy Weber  18:09

So did you do well, in school? I mean, what were your grades like, um,
Crystal Dionysopoulou 18:15
It was very, I was kind of all over the map, which confused my teachers and professors a lot. Because it really depended on the class structure. If it was a class that weighted heavily, homework and things that I had to be like self initiated, then my grades were abysmal. I ended up having to take English, my junior year twice, because I failed it the first time, my junior year of high school. And if it was a class that was more weighted on in class discussions, or tests or things where you really show that you have the knowledge, but it doesn't rely on you doing too much at home. I had really good grades. And my teachers just couldn't figure me out. So it was kind of a struggle. I actually never graduated from college. I've dropped out three times now from from college for three completely different majors. And I'd like to go back and finish it eventually. And I think that now that I understand a little bit more about how my brain works, I might be able to, but I have maybe altogether about two years worth of college credits. So I need another two years to full time in order to finish and it's a lot more when you have like work and kids and adult responsibilities.

Katy Weber 19:53
Oh, absolutely. I often think I would love to go back and redo my university. Just because I feel like I would be so much better at it, I just really flubbed my way through all of it. And I think I would, you know, often think I would like to go back and do it. But then of course, you know, there's it's everything, you know, if I'm seeking out a certification or a more short term degree in something, it's usually there's a means to the end or you know, it has a purpose. Yeah. And I think, you know, a lot of us struggled when, if we were in the humanities or in, the more, what's the word I'm looking for, like, more obtuse subjects in university, as opposed to, like, the more abstract ones? Yes, yeah. As opposed to getting, you know, a real like, a purposeful degree, that's going to help me get from point A to point B.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 20:53
Yeah, I think I first started in college trying to be an architect. Then, halfway through my freshman year, I switched to vocal performance. And I stuck with that the rest of that year and my first semester of my sophomore year, but halfway through that around Thanksgiving, I completely burned out. Because I was also having to work full time, overnight at a hotel in order to pay for college. And I didn't have any help from my parents or anything, because it's complicated. My parents were recently divorced. And there was complications with the FAFSA, I couldn't file independently. Because you can't do that until you're 24, even if you're not getting any, like financial assistance from your parents. So I was working full time. And then I would basically be at the hotel working from 11pm to 7am. Go to class at 8am until like 3pm. Struggle to do a little bit of homework between three and four, pass out, and then wake up again at 10 to do it all over again. So by November, I was completely, you know, midterms were coming up, and I was completely burned out. So I just dropped out. That was the first time and I moved to Colorado and just started working.

Katy Weber 22:21
Isn't it amazing to look back at those life choices now with this new lens? Yeah, I feel like I want to go back and give that girl a hug.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 22:30
Me too. I think actually, when I was diagnosed, or really started understanding what it meant to be diagnosed with ADHD, I actually kind of went through a grieving process. Yeah, like, it was the full on six stages of grief of like,
questioning, like, why, why me? Why Why? Why am I having to go through this and like other people just get to coast through life, it seems like, you know, from our, from our perspective, on like, anger, like, my life could have been so much different. If I had known about this earlier. It’s, you know, I went through all of the stages of, of just trying to accept and understand that this is just how my life was and it I can’t change it now, but I can change it going forward.

Katy Weber  23:24

Mm hmm. Yeah, absolutely. I totally relate to that feeling of grief, wondering how, how my life would have been different. At the same time, really appreciating all of the, you know, amazing. The amazing attributes for of ADHD and really kind of seeing with clarity, kind of, Okay, how it has helped me. But yeah, there’s definitely a lot of grief looking back. And I think even with, you know, my husband and I talk about seeking a diagnosis for my son who is nine, and he is nervous, he worries about the stigma of a diagnosis. And, you know, I’m always trying to explain to him like, can you like, gosh, I spent so long thinking there was something wrong with me and having no idea what it was and just feeling so misunderstood by everyone around me and even myself and like, Can you imagine if you sort of could label it and find solutions within that within that paradigm? How, how positive that would be always thinking you’re just you know, a failure all the time, which is what I see my son doing sometimes when he is struggling in school. His default is Oh my God, I’m terrible. I you know, I need to I need to just walk away from all of this because I can’t do it. And so it’s it’s interesting that perspectives and seeing how many parents are just I guess society in general. See this as a stigma and a you know, and see this as such a negative thing.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  24:59

Right. I mean, I was I was talking to someone, actually yesterday, and I was mentioning some things that I had read about him. And I was trying to remember the names of people that he had mentioned. And I couldn’t, but I was able to describe around them. And I said, I’m sorry, I have trouble remembering names. And he, which I understand now is part of having ADHD. But for a long time, I didn’t. And yesterday, he the this, this guy was telling me Oh, it’s okay. It just means that they don’t matter to you. And I said, No, that’s not it at all, it means that I have ADHD, and my brain works differently than yours does. And, and that’s just how it is, it doesn’t signify the importance of someone to me. And it just kind of made him stop in his tracks. And I don’t know what he thinks of me now, but, but I hate that there is some kind of stigma about a diagnosis, because it doesn’t change who you are, it doesn’t even change, like really what your behavior is, or how your brain works. It just allows you to give it a name. And I think that that’s freeing. For me, at least, it’s kind of freeing to be able to know what it is and why. Why I act sometimes in a certain way, or why I can remember some things and not others. And it provides also a framework to seek out tools and ways to manage these things.

Katy Weber  26:33

Yes, absolutely. And I think that’s important. And it goes back to what that gentleman was saying, in terms of, you know, there seems to be this idea that, well, if you really wanted to do it, you would figure out a way and, and and feeling like I’ve spent my whole life, really wanting to do things and not being able to figure out a way and now with this new knowledge and this new insight, you know, you are able to like seek the tools that are needed. And it’s not that you don’t want to do something or that you don’t care at all, you just haven’t kind of figured out what are the best hacks.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  27:09
I think it allows us to defend ourselves in these situations to say no, it's not a character flaw. It's not me not caring, it's not a lack of empathy.

Katy Weber  27:20

Yeah, I had a similar experience with a friend of mine who I went for a walk with her yesterday, and I hadn't seen her in ages. And, you know, we both really liked each other, but I was explaining how, you know, one thing that has been, you know, different for me with this diagnosis is realizing with my friendships; you know that I have that object permanence issue of you know, if you're not, if you're not right in front of me, I tend to be very bad about checking in on you and thinking about etc. I'm even, I'm even talking about it in a negative way, you know, but I'm not the kind of person who remembers to check in on people and communicate with people. And I often feel like I'm a terrible friend. As a result. Oh, my gosh, I identify with that. Right. Yeah. And so I think it's very common, you know, we have that we're really sort of focused on the, what is in front of us, what's the media and we, you know, and I said. It's not that I don't absolutely adore or love these friends, I just, you know, you just get really sort of preoccupied in the moment and, and she was lovely. She was like, Well, I'm so glad to know that because it will, it will make me check in on you more. And you know, and she said that, you know, I feel like maybe she didn't mean as much to me as I'm meant to her and that she sort of felt like I was standoffish or a little intimidating. And I think that's pretty common, you know, with in terms of our in, in terms of the relationships that we have, especially with other women. But it was such a positive moment, because I had said something that was really vulnerable. And she was like, I'm so glad. I now know that that is an issue for you. And so I will check in on you. I mean, how many? I don't know if you've ever had this. I've had this happen to me so many times throughout my life where a friend will get angry at me because they texted me five times. And I never once have texted them, you know, like initiated it in a Yeah, exactly. And then they get angry with me. And then I feel bad. So I basically sort of recoil. And then the friendship is over.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  29:25

Yeah, I honestly, I haven't had the opportunity to have a friendship. I reached that point for the most part, because growing up, we moved around a lot. And I actually went to 18 different schools between kindergarten and my senior year of high school. So Oh, wow. Okay, object permanence meant that I have no idea where these schools are, like who my teachers were were who my classmates were. Some people that I was very close with, and I don't remember any of them. I mean, I have like these great big, empty spots in my memory because I spent so little time in each place that it's just, it wasn't long enough for it to get into my long term memory, I guess. So for a long time, I really struggled with forming more meaningful relationships with people. Just because I had never really had a chance to do it. And then, of course, because we moved around so much, as soon as there was any conflict, we would move again. So I never really learned any tools, or techniques to manage conflict in relationships or drama, you know, in friend groups, because I never really had to deal with it. We were never around long enough. So when I started having friendships and relationships as an adult, my first instinct when there was any conflict, was to just completely back away out of the out of the friendship out of the relationship. And if I could I moved. So it took a long time for me to realize maybe that's not the right way to deal with things, and to really work things through and everything. I don't know how much of that is a factor of my childhood, and how much of that is a factor of being ADHD, as far as the conflict avoidance, but it's something that's really shaped how I deal with people now and how I form relationships with, with friends.

Katy Weber  31:41

Yeah, I'm still trying to get over 18 school. Especially thinking, you know, I struggled so much from middle school in high school. And I felt like I was very preoccupied with social relationships in during that time. It's and not preoccupied with, you know, academics at all. So I'm sure that must have been a struggle.
Crystal Dionysopoulou  32:09

I didn’t know any other way to live. Like, I didn’t have any, that was my normal. So. So I can’t imagine living in one place long enough that you go to the same elementary, middle school and high school that that completely blows my mind. Because I asked people who do that? Didn’t you get bored? Boring, staying in the same place all the time? So it’s just a that that aspect is just a different perspective, I guess.

Katy Weber  32:44

And how did you meet your husband? And and where I guess I can’t really ask, Where did you grow up? I’m assuming you grew up in the US, so your husband and end up living in Greece. So

Crystal Dionysopoulou  32:55

In 2015, I, at the beginning of 2015, I broke up with, with my boyfriend at the time, it was a really toxic relationship that I was happy to get out of. And I was working at a marketing company that had recently introduced rules that let us work from home whenever we want. And so I kind of got a crazy idea as a lot of us ADHD years do and brought it to the company HR department and said, Well, if you’ll let us work from home, whenever we want, what really is the difference of working from home here in Indiana, versus working from an Airbnb somewhere in Europe as long as I’m online at the same time. And then kind of took a long time to get back to me. But since they had put that policy in place, they couldn’t really argue it. And so I ended up that summer, spending three months, essentially as a digital nomad going to a new city or country every three to five days. I had rented out my apartment at home. So I ended up spending less on flights and Airbnb and you know, eating out all the time than I would have on rent in Indiana. And it was a amazing experience. So while I was there, I went to a couple of work conferences related to tech or related to UX, which is user experience and my professional background now. So there was one conference in Prague that I went to in May. And after the conference every day, people would kind of gather in the hotel lobby and talk and drink and apparently everyone in this who attended this conference was pretty musically inclined. So a couple people Write down guitar and there was like singing and playing guitar and everything. And it was a lot of fun. And one of the guys who was playing guitar, I ended up sitting next to him. And we started talking a little bit. And I didn’t really pay him any more attention than anyone else. But the way he tells it is that he fell in love with me. Absolutely immediately. Like the moment he laid his eyes on me. So, you know, I moved on from Prague and and I went to a different city and kept traveling and everything. But while I was in Europe, we were messaging back and forth a lot. We connected on Facebook. And I, later that year, there was a there was another conference that I was going to in Chicago, because I was back home in Indiana, Chicago was a little bit closer. So I went there, and he came up with an excuse to fly all the way to Chicago from Greece. Just so that he could see me in person again. And we ended up spending a week together in Chicago, and basically fell in love. And we ended up flying back and forth between Indiana and Greece a few more times that year. And he spent Thanksgiving with me and my family that year. And the weekend after Thanksgiving. He proposed kind of on accident, but he did it. So I said yes. And we got married the next year. So it was kind of whirlwind really. But you know, it’s been four years ish since we got married. And I’m in Greece now. It’s nice here, Sunny.

Katy Weber  36:47

That’s beautiful.
Crystal Dionysopoulou 36:48
Thank you.

Katy Weber 36:49
And so tell me about the name, lucid Fox, which is the name of your business. It’s such an awesome name. Where did it come from? I love your website. I love your logo, especially it’s beautiful. So tell me about the origins of lucid Fox.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 37:05
So I was trying to come up with a business name in 2014. Originally, I thought I was going to do some kind of digital or business consulting for for women who wanted to start their own business. And so I was really trying to come up with something that that would be a flexible name. So I didn’t want to box myself in too much. Because I knew myself at that point, I didn’t know that it was ADHD. But I knew that I liked to do a lot of different things. And if I wanted to change my business, I didn’t want to have to change the name and the branding and everything. Good thing because it changed it like three times.

Katy Weber 37:45
You know, I was actually split. When I in one of my other interviews, I was talking with a woman about that, or the name of her business. And we had to say she had the same realization, you know, and we said, this is great advice for ADHD entrepreneurs. It’s because we pivot so often, that it’s really important to find a name that will pivot with you.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 38:06
Yeah. It’s funny how, how so many of us seem to have had the same thought.

Katy Weber 38:14
And intuitively Come come up with these workarounds. Before we even knew what what was causing it.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 38:20
Yeah, absolutely. But yeah, I thought, at first I thought of Fox, because I really, I really love foxes. I identify with them strongly. And I actually have a tattoo of a fox because the characteristics of the animal are things that I want to remember that I have to and that I need to remember to be true to myself in that. So like foxes are clever. They’re a little bit of a trickster, and I absolutely identify with a they. They’re very quick thinking and agile. And that’s all kinds of characteristics that I identified with strongly. So I’ve had that tattoo since I was 18. And it has never steered me wrong. So I knew that I wanted Fox as part of the name. And then I was thinking about it. And you know, even now there’s all these companies that have pick a color pick an animal kind of names. So I didn’t want to do a color, because that was sounded like it would be too trendy, and maybe not be relevant still in a few years. And I also wanted to make sure that the domain was available and a lot of these names with Fox in it weren’t available at that time. So I started thinking about characteristics and I wanted to as part of my business at that time, I wanted to
provide clarity for my clients. But also kind of ties back to my name crystal, because crystal is also supposed to provide clarity, it means clear, I get the crystal clear joke all the time, and it got old A long time ago. So I kind of decided to own that joke through the through the name. So I decided I was looking at synonyms of clear and clarity and all of that, and I came up with lucid. And it just sounded so, so good together. And it also kind of harkens back to lucid dreaming where you're in control, even though it's the dream and everything. So it just, it just felt very, very right. So I went with it.

Katy Weber  40:49
And it's a nice nod to hyperfocus.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  40:53
Yeah, I know that now.

Katy Weber  40:57
So what does lose? So tell me a bit a little bit about lucid Fox, what do you do? What clients do you work with?

Crystal Dionysopoulou  41:05
So now I work with nonprofit organizations, I build custom websites for them. But I have a very, very involved research phase as part of that web design process, which is what's different from most other web design companies. Since I have a background as a user experience designer, I do pretty involved user research at the beginning. And it really makes a difference in the end results because I involve their audience, their donors and their constituents and their clients in the decision making process. So people are less likely to protest to change when the website gets launched. And also, it's more likely to work better for them, because I've used their feedback as a guiding light instead of often stakeholder assumptions in how how the website should function and look.

Katy Weber  42:11
And now I love that you have a diversity, equity and inclusion consultant on your team? Is, is that standard for working in the nonprofit sector? Or are you just like super progressive and awesome?

Crystal Dionysopoulou  42:23
I wish it was standard. I think for some organizations, it might be standard, but I've actually gotten some resistance to involving her on some projects with clients. So I have to be like, no, this is absolutely a part of the process if you want to work with me. So I guess it would be that I am super progressive.

Katy Weber  42:45
Like, well, you said it not me. No, I think it's a huge positive and and definitely love that that is worked into the fabric of website creation, for sure.
Crystal Dionysopoulou  43:01
Thank you, it’s really important to me. I believe very strongly in building websites that are ethical. And that includes a lot of things. That includes making sure that the websites I build are accessible, which means that people who have to use screen readers, or other assistive devices are able to use the website as seamlessly as anyone else. I believe in making sure the websites are privacy oriented, which means that I don’t think we should collect any data that we don’t need. I don’t like including things like Google Analytics or hotjar which tracks mouse movements on the screen or even just takes full videos of people interacting with your website. Because most of the time, people don’t know that those are tracking their movements. And I don’t think that’s ethical to be tracking people without their consent. I believe that the websites I build should be inclusive, which is why I have the cache on my team. Because especially with nonprofits, you’ll often find nonprofit run by a bunch of white people who are serving a community that’s full of people of color. And that’s not necessarily a good thing, because they might be doing this without any feedback from the community that they’re serving. And they don’t even think about it. Because a lot of white people don’t think about these things. So I kind of bring it to their mind and also make sure that the websites reflect those values too. So that the imagery that that is used is diverse and inclusive. The language on the website Doesn’t unintentionally exclude anyone, so on and so forth. Um, and I started working with nonprofits specifically because I find these values to be so important to me that I feel really bad if I’m working on projects that don’t align with them. Prior to really going full time, with lucid Fox, I was sub contracting for marketing companies. And a lot of the projects that they would put me on as a developer, or as a designer, I would be uncomfortable with and I would say, you know, the design on this isn’t accessible, we should probably, like reconsider the contrast, or it doesn’t really make sense. Or you’re kind of asking me to implement a dark pattern here that’s manipulating the user’s behavior. And they would say, Oh, we don’t really care about accessibility, they’re not likely to use our site anyway. Or, you know, that’s a decision that’s already been made, or we don’t have the additional budget and everything. And I felt really bad about myself. And I think that it’s my responsibility as someone who’s building websites, which people are on every day, and I think the web is really such a force in people’s lives now that what’s on the web, can influence our culture. So as someone who’s building things on the web, it’s my responsibility to make sure to influence it in a positive way.

Katy Weber  46:37
Absolutely. I mean, if anything, the last four years in America has proven all of that.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  46:44
Yeah, absolutely. Not to name names. But

Katy Weber  46:49
I must have been fascinating watching this country over the over the course of 2020 from a far

Crystal Dionysopoulou  46:57
more despairing, I mean, I have family there. I’m kind of worried about everyone. Kind of, well, it’s more positive 2021. So fingers crossed that the future is a little brighter.
Katy Weber  47:12
But I meant to ask earlier, are you on any kind of medication? Have you chosen to take the meds route?

Crystal Dionysopoulou  47:17
So I was starting medication. And I tried Strattera for a couple months, but I'm actually in the process of weaning off of it right now. So if I've gone off on tangents, that's why it worked a little bit. But I found that it made me not myself. I'm like a very optimistic positive person. And I was finding myself being very irritable and snappy and pessimistic all the time. And that's, that's not who I am. So. So we're going to try something else. I don't know what yet, but we'll see.

Katy Weber  47:56
And when you say it worked, what did you find it helped with? Because I'm, I'm fascinated when so many people talk about how life changing medication is, you know, I'm like, what is it that is help, you know, has helped you or not helped you.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  48:09
And it helped me initiate tasks like I wouldn't. You mentioned earlier, how we often ruminate, things that we have to do in our heads for a long time, before actually sitting down to do them. I noticed that I stopped doing that and I would just sit down and do something so it helps with the executive dysfunction part of everything. But it didn't help me. I call it my get up and go it didn't give me any get up and go I had to drink an obscene amount of coffee every day to to actually get up and get the day started. And once I started then I was able to, you know be very productive, but in a kind of a flat way I wasn't myself anymore. And then it would wear off in the evening and I would be really irritated and bedtime with my toddler was extremely difficult. Because all of the patients that I had previously had was just gone. And it was it's not how I want to live my life. So even though it helped me do things and be more productive. I would rather it wasn't worth the trade off for me. Right exactly. Yeah. Yeah. But hopefully, hopefully whatever I go on next will help more. My appointment is next week. So fingers crossed.

Katy Weber  49:43
Okay, I know it's it's dizzying the amount of different medications out there and how how specific they are to different people's makeup and and their needs.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  49:56
Yeah, absolutely. Things are Most medications for ADHD are very tightly controlled in Greece too. So yeah. So he my doctor is reluctant to prescribe some things that might help. But different countries have different regulations. It's an ongoing discussion.

Katy Weber  50:23
And now over the past few months since your realization your diagnosis would have been some of your favorite ADHD resources, or have there been any podcasts or any self help books, or what if were How is your ADHD deep dive manifested?

Crystal Dionysopoulou 50:43
Mostly just a lot of googling, I wouldn’t say that I have been faithful to any specific website. But I found a lot of help and Facebook groups, I joined a lot of ADHD Facebook groups, especially ones for moms or entrepreneurs. And I found it very helpful to connect with other women who are going through the same thing as me and mostly to stock the other posts in the group and and really understand that I am not alone in this kind of experience. I wish that I was able to have the patience to sit down and read books and listen to podcasts faithfully, but I used to be able to but now with the with a toddler and two cats, there’s just not enough time in the day in sequence to be able to do that, because I’d have to hyper focus on it. And I can’t do that anymore.

Katy Weber 51:46
Oh, I know. I certainly remember those days. Yeah, I’ve been I love podcasting, just because it’s always kind of in the background, when I’m doing other things. And I when I first started really researching ADHD, I didn’t have the patience for a book because I just you know, I felt like I wanted really fast snippets everywhere. And I totally agree that need for the community and being seen. And you know, so many of the posts that start with Is it just me or really feeling validated is so important to our journey because we felt so misunderstood for so long. So I finally downloaded the audio book driven to distraction by Ned Halliwell. And because it had been just recommended by so many people, and I’m having such a hard time listening to it, because he talks so much about symptoms and characteristics of ADHD that will then send me thinking about all of the different ways in which it relates to my life. And I realize I haven’t been listening to him, but I’m, I’m constantly rewinding and rewind. And I’m like, this is the irony is not lost on me right now.

Crystal Dionysopoulou 52:57
That’s the struggle for me with like, physical books. I was a kid like I would be reading a book and then one sentence in the book would start me thinking about something and I’m like five pages later. And I realize I have no idea what I just read. My my eyes just breeding, but my brain is long gone.

Katy Weber 53:15
Oh, absolutely. I think that’s very common, if not universal among us. having read reading paragraphs and pages over and over and over again. Yeah, definitely. Wonderful. Well, it has been so great connecting with you and learning more about your background and your business and sounds like you’ve got it’s a beautiful Oh, so let’s, I forgot Tell me or tell our listeners where they can find you where you are online. And how they can how they can reach out to you to work with

Crystal Dionysopoulou 53:51
you. Sure. My website is lucid dash fox.com. That hyphen in there is very important. And they can reach out to me through the website, there’s a contact page there, that’s probably the easiest way. Otherwise, I’m just going to go ahead and say that’s the easiest way because my handlers across other social media are a little bit complicated to
Katy Weber  54:39

Great. Fantastic. Well, thank you again for taking the time to chat with me about your life and your diagnosis. It’s been really interesting.

Crystal Dionysopoulou  54:50

Thank you for having me. It’s been a this is my first podcast interview. So I’ve really enjoyed it.