

Patricia Sung: Chaotic good in motherhood & ADHD

📅 Thu, 8/26 1:40PM ⌚ 54:42

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adhd, doctor, feel, people, hormones, medicine, diagnosed, motherhood, struggling, moms, women, learning, structure, diagnosis, brain, experiencing, life, kids, class, person

SPEAKERS

Patricia Sung, Katy Weber



Katy Weber 00:00

Thank you, Patricia, for joining me. I'm very excited to hear your story. I know I've heard so much of it already through your podcast motherhood in ADHD. But you are one of the rare guests. For me who was diagnosed quite a while ago. You were diagnosed when you were 20? Correct.



Patricia Sung 00:21

Um, you know, it's been so long, it was either 19 or 20. I can't remember. But I can't remember those years either. So. I mean, that was 20 years ago. So I'm dating myself now you know how old I am? Um, but yeah, it was my sophomore year of college.



Katy Weber 00:37

Okay, and so, tell me about that. You know, what were some of the things that led up to you thinking you might have it or it was suggested and what led up to the diagnosis at that age?



Patricia Sung 00:48

Well, I totally fell apart. That's how I ended up getting my diagnosis. I was a really great student my whole life. I mean, like, on a roll, I always did my homework, I mean, very, my coping mechanism of choices, perfectionism. So I always did very well, like, above and beyond. And I held it together all through school. I mean, I was a little like Swan, kicking, kicking, kicking under the water to keep up, but I looked great doing it. And so I was, I think what the blessing of being in grade school in high school is that you show up in the morning, and then they tell you where to go, they tell you go to first period, then you go to second period, then you go to third period, you have designated times to work on your homework called study hall, or lunch, you get like it this whole schedule, and the structure is built in for you. And then when I went to college, all of a sudden, there was zero structure. And I'm the one responsible for getting up. And of course, you know, as a freshman, you have, you know, low man on the totem pole, and you get last pick for classes. And I signed up for like an 830 class, my freshman year,



Katy Weber 02:08

I did the same thing Latin five days a week, why?



Patricia Sung 02:13

I, I hardly ever went, I don't want to do that. But it was like the only choice I had. And, you know, back then, we registered for classes with the telephone when you had to, like punch in? Well, you know, with my ADHD that I didn't know about here I am punching codes for like, you know, I mean, it had been like 40 minutes of punching codes trying to get into classes, and then they would tell you, it's full. And you try again. And I finally think I just picked a guy's like, I got in and then I was done. And then I realized, like, Oh, crap, what did I do, and I'm not a morning person. Ever been a morning person. But so you know, you have this new freedom and the structure that I would have told you. I mean, granted, I was 17 probably didn't know any better, I would have told you that I was ready. And I was organized. And I was prepared for this. And then when I got there, I was not, I was not prepared for being responsible for getting up myself and not having my mom there to wake me up 15 times before I get out the door, or, you know, keeping up with schedules that are different every day of the week, and keeping up with reading 150 pages for one class on my own. And all of that irregular workload, combined with the lack of structure, I literally just fell apart. I was a mess. And thankfully, when I went to go to the, to the doctor at the Student Health Center, she was familiar with and she said, I think you have a DD. And my reaction was like, I don't even know what that is. What do you like, What do you mean? And when she explained it to me, I remember just looking at her and being like, oh,

why did just like didn't even compute. I'm like, okay, so she sends me over to the Student Services Center. And I met with a psychiatrist on staff, and he diagnosed me. And then I was just so blessed along the way where I was, like, connected with this young lady who was doing her graduate work on her master's. And so I was part of her thesis project. And she did like an eight hour battery of tests on me and analyzed everything about like, how I function and what I could do and like everything from like intelligence level to like, a lot of executive functioning skills. And so it was fascinating to get these results back and be like, wow, I'm in the 99th percentile in half the stuff and then I get to my shirt, short term memory, and I have the short term recall of a third grader. Like, oh, okay, like when you hear that, and you're like, I have the skill level of an eight year old in recalling information back. And I still hear him 20 years later, I remember which part of the test that was because it was so hard. She was listing out, like 10 numbers in a row, and I had to remember them all, and then repeat them back to her. And then I had to repeat them back in backwards order. So the last number, she said, I had to say it first and repeat them backwards. And I literally was like, I have no idea what you said. And to sit there and be able to look at these results and say, oh, like there really is something wrong here. And it's not just in my head that I'm struggling was such a blessing. And then she was friends with a girl who was in law school who had ADHD. And this young lady took me under her wing. And I would go sit in the law school library with her and study and she showed me how to study like how to use white noise. I mean, in this again, back in the day, I had my Walkman with a cassette tape of white noise. And it was crazy how I could, there was something about this type of white noise tape that he gave me. And I don't know if it was magical, because it was the first time I'd ever encountered it or because there really was something special about this noise. But it totally tuned out everything else. And I could really focus in on what I was doing and grasp into material. And I wasn't reading the paragraph six times. And I feel like it's like, it's a part of it, it's a gift because I love reading and I love learning. So if I was into it, I didn't have trouble. But here, you know, when you get to college, you have to take all these basic classes, and I'm like, I really don't care about sociology, it was hard to sit there and like really learn it. Whereas when I was in high school, I could just, you know, skim through the chapter ones pay attention as much as I did in class and be fine. And now here I am in college where like, that doesn't fly, you have to be in there taking notes, you have to be in there paying attention, and going to class every day. And, you know, reading all of the texts, and he like learning the difference between professors who go mostly on their own lectures versus the book versus the people who are like 5050. I mean that. Like that was a skill that I had to learn. I didn't realize that was even a skill, I guess. But this wonderful woman who was in law school explained to me how to take notes how like, how to function basically, as a college student with ADHD. And that's really how I made it through was through like divine intervention of some really wonderful women who poured into me and taught me what to do and how to make it work.



Katy Weber 08:06

That's amazing. I because I certainly imploded when I went to university, as well. And you know, it's funny because I have this conversation with a lot of women about like when ADHD symptoms really sort of present themselves and when it's most common for women to get diagnosed. And so there's the hormonal theory, which is puberty, pregnancy, postpartum, and then menopause. So that this is like a, you know, a hormonal surge estrogen issue. And then there's the structure theory, which is, you know, when you're going into situations, like you were saying, like, when you're in high school, there's so much more structure or even like I, you know, I really struggled in middle school. So it was the elementary school to junior high transition of less structure. And then again, in university when I was free, you know, nobody was waking me up, there were no, I was my own accountability. And so I totally imploded. And then again, with babies, you know, so I don't know what it is, I go back and forth. I think it's probably a combination of the two. And I think it's, it's fascinating to me,



Patricia Sung 09:13

I mean, our brain is what it is, like, we have structural differences in our brain. But I think those two big changes highlight what is already there. When you are in a good rhythm, you feel good and you feel competent, you're like, Alright, I'm rocking this and then something comes along and messes it up, which is how we feel like my routine got messed up this you know, threw me off my day. Instead of like part of our I see this, like, very common theme with ADHD years is that we're thrown off by this. Like surprise, quote, unquote surprise that comes in and ruins what we hadn't planned but yet we ever expect there to be A surprise, but there always is a surprise, there's like life never just floats along beautifully. It's always changing, it's always moving. So it's kind of like a funny, like hiccup in our brains is that we don't plan for the problem, because there's always going to be a problem. And that change in structure is a highlight of when we see it more, obviously, because we are really good at adjusting and trying to figure out how to make it work, because we're used to being overcomers. And then like, when we're feeling good, and then we get we get knocked down, like, that's when we feel the heat of it. And then with the hormones, that's another way that we see the what's already there, like kind of just like shines ahead light on it. And, you know, there's a huge connection between estrogen and our neurotransmitters. So when you hit puberty, in middle school, you have both more hormones and less structure. And then, for women, like, we have hormone changes every month, like so the more that I talked to women about that whole cycle, it's like, there is a huge difference in that week leading up to your period, and the week that you have your period. And for some people, it even stretches a little bit longer than that two week span. So it's almost like 50% of the time we're feeling our symptoms way more. And then we

have slightly less than 50% of the time where we're feeling much better about ourselves, and how things are going. So it's,



Katy Weber 11:45

those are the times where I wish I was so much more attentive to my, you know, because, you know, I always hear about that. And I'm sort of like sitting here thinking like, Am I the worst bird during my period, or the week period? Like, I'm like, I can never remember it. I'm just like, I really should write that down. Because I'm terrible. Like, I remember when my daughter was 13. And I don't think she'll mind if I say this. But like what, you know, when she first got her period? And, you know, she was like, How old were you when you got it? And I was like, I don't remember. And then she didn't get it for she had it once and then didn't get it for a couple months. And she was like, Is that normal? I was like, I don't know. Like, do you cramp? And I was like, I don't know. I think it amazes me. Yeah. So so 20 years ago, I mean, I feel like I'm like talking to a pioneer. Woman because it's sort of like, you know, I'm part of this. You know, I was so recently diagnosed, I'm part of the what I like to call the pandemic diagnoses with lockdown diagnoses. I feel like there was a huge proliferation of of diagnoses this year, because so many women, so many mothers struggled with lockdown, and his lack of structure. Right, exactly.



Patricia Sung 13:03

And then also, like, your stress greatly affects your hormones. So here we are in that same cycle of where we have less structure and more hormonal issues. So yeah, mothers are on the struggle bus right now.



Katy Weber 13:16

Yeah, for sure. But what would it What was it like? And the other thing I always talk to them about, too, which is, you know, looking back at all the times in my life that I struggled the most like having babies. God, how would things have been different? Had I known, you know? And so I love talking to women who have, you know, have that perspective. I remember when I interviewed Elizabeth Brink, and she, you know, I was diagnosed at nine and she was like, it's actually not really any easier.



Patricia Sung 13:46

Like, I wish I could be like, but part of me is like, I want to be like, Well, yeah, you could I don't know, like, it really was just still Hamas.



Katy Weber 13:52

Yeah, right. I feel like you probably experienced a lot more stigma than we're experiencing these days. Because I sort of feel like if there are no, I mean, I don't know. I'm curious. What was it? What did it feel like at such a young age to have a disease? Or a disorder that? I mean, it sounds like you were very well cared for in terms of the your mentors and the people who are helping you. But did it feel like you had this rare disorder that only boys had? or?



Patricia Sung 14:26

Yeah, I mean, if you think that like, okay, so I was diagnosed in the year 2000. And back then, like, I know, there's a lot of people's like, there's this whole like, Instagram community of, you know, ADHD advocates, and we were like, they just people just don't understand it. I'm like, that then people not only didn't understand it, like, didn't even know what it was. I mean, when I was diagnosed, there was still the distinction between add versus ADHD. And now it's all just one clump with subtype. I mean, it's like, there's been a lot of changes in 20 years, but I don't really feel like it was so Much of stigma just because people really didn't know about it, so there wasn't like, a negative feeling about it, because people just didn't know about it. But also, like, I hid it, I didn't tell anyone. Because at that point, I was old enough that I didn't have to. I mean, like, I had accommodations in school if I needed them. But most of the time, I tried to do it on my own, which looking back probably was not the best plan. But at the time, I didn't really understand that either like that didn't, like, I didn't really understand how that could have been so much more beneficial. Had I use it, it's kind of like I had these tools, but I didn't know how to use it. And it's like, well, you can have a really cool CNC router. But if you don't want to does, like doesn't really matter, you know, um, and I hope I didn't just nerd out too bad on CNC routers, but I'm sorry, I used to own a makerspace. So that'll won't be there for a second one. Let me reel it in. But so there wasn't really this stigma because one people to know about it. And two, I just didn't tell anybody like I didn't have to. And I just tried to hide it and do my best to blend in. I'm sure I have like 43 layers of masks on at this point that I am now trying to peel away and really be true to who I am on the inside. But yeah, that because it wasn't really known, like there just wasn't. There wasn't like that horrible stigma about it. Because I didn't have to tell anybody, like I was old enough to decide it was on me. And granted, it definitely like kicked me in the rear a lot of times like, especially like in work situations where I knew it was an ADHD issue, but I didn't necessarily know how to go about doing it in a better way. Like I feel like I had the information of a diagnosis, but I didn't really have enough understanding about it. To utilize it. Well, if that makes sense.



Katy Weber 17:07

Yeah, absolutely. Now, were you on medication at the time did they put you on?



Patricia Sung 17:13

So in college, I did have. I did take the short acting methylphenidate. So redlin for studying but back then again, we also didn't have a lot of like information on how to best use it. There weren't like the long acting ones didn't even exist. that much. I mean, I'm sure I mean, I guess they could have actually Shouldn't I shouldn't quote that, because I don't actually know. But I don't think that they did. Because I mean, if I think back to all the women that I know, who did know and did take medicine, like it always had to go to the nurse to get your medicine at lunchtime. And so I don't even think long acting existed back then. Yeah, like, you know, back in the 1800s. So I would just take it when I was studying, like, I didn't even understand enough of it to realize how much it was affecting me in the rest of my life. I really thought it was just about the studying. Because before I had medicine, I would stay up and drink frappuccinos and study with frappuccinos instead. Um, but yeah, I mean, I, I didn't even know how much it was affecting me like from a broader scale, in terms of executive functioning and all that and I just tried to make it work.



Katy Weber 18:33

I never had Ritalin but obviously because I wasn't diagnosed, but I when I was studying in university, I had a cup of coffee, like a full large cup to go cup of coffee. And I would add a packet of hot chocolate mix to it. And then a box of jr meds. A full box of German that sounds delicious. I know. Right? And that was like mice. It was terrible. But it was that I was like that's how I self medicated when I needed to study when I was pulling all nighters. And of course now I look back and I'm like, yeah, that's actually pretty kind of intuitive. Because it was just like chocolate, and caffeine. And then this goop of sugar that all just like sat at the bottom that I could spoon out at the very end of all of this like mush of Junior Men's. Yeah, I always thought that makes me want to right now, but



Patricia Sung 19:23

it always makes me laugh. People are like, oh, like, I really don't want to try medication. And then they're like the person with the like, you know, convenience store sized mug of coffee. And I'm like, well, you and your gallon jug of coffee are totally self medicating. Right. Yeah. Oh, yeah. But just that that's huge self medicating. Yeah. You're just using a easily purchased version of it instead of one that takes small miracles of God in order to

get



Katy Weber 19:58

you know, and university was also When I first tried Prozac that was kind of like my beginning of another like 20 year journey of tinkering with various cocktails of antidepressants and always feeling like they weren't working, but also feeling like if this is how I am on antidepressants, imagine how bad I would be not on them, you know, that was always sort of the approach I took. So I kept doing them because I was afraid of not always trying. And so, you know, that's something that I think a lot about, since my diagnosis, which is really just like how much of this how much of this long history of postpartum depression, especially postpartum anxiety, and depression and anxiety and treating those symptoms? How much of that relates back to the lack of a diagnosis? I'm sure a lot.



Patricia Sung 20:47

Yeah, I mean, I too, I mean, I went through a really rough bout of depression in around that same time, between, you know, the almost failing school, and then I was a victim of rape, and like, it was just like, all the things happened at one time, and it was not good. And so I was taking an antidepressant as well. And I think, while that did help, it's not necessarily like the greatest treatment for ADHD. And I don't, I don't like I'm not saying that in the way of like knocking it. What I'm saying is that a lot of women have a diagnosis to go along with their ADHD have like anxiety, or depression, or whatever, you know, something in that category, we have a lot of friends that come along with ADHD. And that gets attention first. And that's how we get to the doctor, because of the chronic fatigue, or the depression, or the suicidal thought, like, all of that drives us to the doctor. And that's usually what gets diagnosed first. So on one hand, it's great because it got us to the doctor in the first place, and we're getting some help. And when you're treating something that's better than nothing. So that's helpful. But obviously, when you know, the root cause is the ADHD, then you can treat it so much more effectively, because you're getting to the root and not dealing with just, you know, the overgrowth of branches that are getting in the way. And so I think that helped me a lot like I had really bad postpartum anxiety with my oldest and taking medicine for that made a huge difference in my mental health from that aspect, but also for my ADHD. And I think whatever treatment you're doing is better than no treatment. But you do want to keep digging until you get down to what the root is. And so I just think there's so many women out there who have been struggling with these things that are caused by their ADHD like, yeah, you're anxious if your brains always going, Yeah, you're depressed if you feel like you're failing all the time. Yeah, you have suicidal thoughts, if you just keep failing over and over and over again, like, that makes

sense. Like, that's hard. But I want to spread the message of like, but there's more like, get in there. And when you treat your ADHD, that ripple effect makes all those other things better.



Katy Weber 23:08

You know, even when I was with my health coaching certification, we talked about it was called the thumbtack approach, you know, which is going to a doctor complaining about the fact that you have a pain in your ass, and the doctor giving you medication for the pain, and not asking why you have a pain in your eyes. And then you're like, Oh, I sat on a thumbtack. And it's like, and that's sort of a lot of the time finding the source of the pain is usually something that's left to us. Because the doctors will stop at treating the symptom. And I think like you said, like, I think it's so important to address the symptoms immediately, because often those symptoms are our pain and vital and you know, and they are things that are need immediate attention and other things that get us to the doctor's office in the first place. But yeah, always going further. And that's where I think I also I I feel like the changes that I have made be on medication, the changes, my lifestyle changes are what have made the real difference from that point. I'm sorry, yeah, I certainly wasn't against medication. I tried it. But I think by the time I had tried medication, I had already made enough changes. I mean, I'm old enough and kind of had intuitively come to a lot of decisions before my diagnosis that I didn't feel I felt like I had already made enough changes in my lifestyle, that the medication wasn't adding anything any benefit to that, if that makes sense.



Patricia Sung 24:33

Yeah, I think first I want to touch on the first thing you said because I wholeheartedly wholeheartedly agree like, if your doctor is not taking you seriously, when you talk about this, then you need a new doctor. Like I'm sorry that there are many wonderful, wonderful doctors out there that don't know enough about ADHD. And it's just like if you have a heart problem. You see cardiologist you don't go see like, you know, a dentist for your heart problem. They are both very qualified individuals in their area of specialty. But don't go see your heart doctor for teeth you don't see a T doctor for hurts like, that's just kind of like common sense. Because we feel inferior. And we have doubted ourselves for so long that we take the word of this person who has a degree over what we know is true in our hearts. So I'm not like down talking your doctor, they might be great when you have a sinus infection. But if they don't know about ADHD, then don't go see them for that. Like you need to find someone who knows what they're talking about. And unfortunately, at this point, like in the year 2021, not all doctors know enough about that, to be the

specialist that you see for that. So I tell everyone like, yes, you can start there. But even if you have a very understanding GP who's like, yeah, I think you do have it, let me help you. Like, if you're trying to try medicines, you want the person who's got a lot of experience and is going to help you figure that out quickly. You don't want the person who's like throwing spaghetti at the wall and hoping it sticks. So you need to see the person who knows what they're talking about. And I know it's expensive, but like your brain and your health and your family's well being is worth that expense if you can swing it.



Katy Weber 26:31

Yeah, I know. And it's funny because it feels like self advocacy is such a difficult thing for us to begin with. The irony there is is not lost. Yeah.



Patricia Sung 26:42

But anyway, but then going back to what you're saying about lifestyle changes. I mean, medicine is one tool in your toolbox. It For Me, medicine is a huge help. And like all of the things assigned to me, what it boils down to is my emotional regulation that makes the biggest difference for me, like when I'm taking my medicine, I am so much more patient with my kids. I can like have that pause before I blow up most of the time. Like that's not 100%. But you know, most of the time I like the medicine gives me enough breaks in my brain. Like it stimulates the brakes to say who you are driving me insane. Right now I'm gonna take a deep breath and try to rephrase the sentence. Whereas when I'm not on my medicine, I mean, my mood is like bam, bam, like, I can lose it on the turn of a dime isn't the same tournament? No.



Katy Weber 27:46

What's that saying? What is that saying? Good question. I totally was like data turn,



Patricia Sung 27:51

I can turn on a dime. Is that what it? Yeah, I think it's like this one. See, this is an ADHD thing. I'm like, I know that phrase. And it's just not coming to me. So



Katy Weber 28:00

pick a different one. No, maybe that's it, but it sounds You're right, it sounds



Patricia Sung 28:04

turn on a dime. So like, my mood will turn on a dime. Yeah, that's it. Okay, that sounds good. So my mood turns on a dime like, and the people who suffer from that are my kids. So I take my medicine for that. Like that's like, to me, it's not about being able to absorb things while reading and like, Yes, that would have been great when I was in school. But it's all about the emotional regulation piece. For me, like that's why I take my medicine. But that is only one tool, you can't wave your magic, like methylphenidate and fix your whole life. Like your medicine creates an environment that is more suitable for learning and employing all of your strategies and tools that you have accumulated. But if you don't have any, all you did was create a really great environment. It's kind of like if you planted a garden and you'd like did a really great job of tilling the soil and putting in the nutrients but then you didn't bother to like put a plant in and grow anything like you are creating a great environment. But you still have to do the work of learning how to do things differently, that makes sense for your brain and employing all of the tools and all the strategies that you can and that work for you. It's just one.



Katy Weber 29:25

So just to backtrack a little bit you you know, went through your 20s and and then motherhood What? What changed for you did it did it feel like because I mean, I feel like I struggled so much and part of me just sort of felt like everybody struggles in motherhood right. Like, how can you not it's, it's insane. So I'm curious with your perspective, you know, was it did your ADHD Kind of escalate. I don't even know if that's what the symptoms escalate and motherhood and like What do you feel? What do you feel like women with ADHD struggle with more in motherhood than, say a neurotypical mother might because I just always sort of assumed that everybody secretly hates it. Or everybody just secretly struggles and hates babies. That's what they I was, like, I used to always say, like, they could just show up at age two, that would be great. I would be such a better mom. But you have to like birth them. And then they're just these tiny screaming balls of need for so long.



Patricia Sung 30:36

No, I say the same thing. I'm like, if I could just birth 18 month olds, I'd be all in like, I don't even care that they're like, way bigger. If I could burn an 18 month old, I would gladly skip that first year and a half. Yeah, like, hands down. No questions asked like, Oh, um, yeah, so I, I mean, I like how this is all like tying together because again, motherhood is that same thing. It's now when you have a newborn, you have lack of structure, and too many hormones,



Katy Weber 31:04

and so much noise. The sensory thing is



Patricia Sung 31:06

like, from like a structure standpoint, like I was thinking about this, actually, earlier today, when you have a baby, you're on this like three hour cycle that never ends, and you're not sleeping. And sleep is a huge component of taking care of your ADHD. So you're sleep deprived, you have all these hormones running around, you're on this weird schedule, like you had one version of life. And then this baby comes out. And now you have a completely different version of life. There's nothing about your life that is similar. Even if you're still doing things that used to do like working, or taking care of family, like you have to do those things in a new way. Because you have to accommodate keeping this thing alive. So when you throw all that in, plus the hormones, it's like, a shock to your body. And that's where you see all your symptoms. And it's like a flare up because the it's all that hormone issue. So your dopamine and your neurotransmitters aren't running the same way that they normally do. I mean, it Oh, it's such a hot mess. But I'm just holding on like a reminder. I'm like remembering, you know, caring for a newborn. You have the you know, you said the sensory input where the baby's constantly making noise and I don't know if you need your kids we're, I got an expert level baby. With my



Katy Weber 32:30

second was my second was colicky and it. Yeah, it's amazing. We both made it out alive.



Patricia Sung 32:36

Yes. I mean, my oldest son just cried all the time. Unless you were holding him. And that Yeah, the noise level was awful. And you're right, the same thing. I was like, everyone would make little things about like, Oh, yeah, well, mother, it is hard or Yeah, you know, are you are tired. But part of where ADHD women struggle is that we say things to say, Hey, I'm struggling. And everyone says back, you're right. This is hard. And so you think that your level of struggle is the same as everyone else's? Because everyone's telling you like, yeah, it's hard. It's a struggle. And we don't realize that when we say we're struggling, we're struggling at a level nine, and everyone else is struggling at a level four. Yeah. So yes, everyone does struggle. motherhood is hard. But we're struggling in a different way. Because we have different brains, we have different chemicals running through our brains, we have more of a sensory overload, we have too much estrogen, hormone problems running around. I mean, it's like all the things at one time, and motherhood involves so

much executive functioning, like it's exactly executive functioning. I'm like, what, how do I make this like more important, I'm like, I need a better adjective for the level of executive



Katy Weber 34:05

function.



Patricia Sung 34:07

Because you're not just responsible for yourself anymore. Now you're responsible for this baby. But you're coordinating both you and the baby together. But then if you have a spouse or a partner, like you're now you've got to manage your relationship with your spouse, your relationship with the baby, you're also trying to, quote unquote, manage which really, you can't, but we're trying to manage the relationship between our spouse and the baby. And then you throw in another kid. Now you've got a whole nother set of relationships that you're trying to manage. And that's from a like an emotional standpoint, but also like logistics wise of, if you have three kids and you've got to get three kids to the dentist post yourself. You're now trying to coordinate for dentist appointments. With the school schedule. They're only open during the day, during Cool our like, stuff like that, like, ah, I mean, you got to fill up four sets of paperwork. I mean, everything is times four, but like, but more because every, it's kind of like if you think about somebody who's juggling, it's easy to juggle two balls or three balls. But when all of a sudden you're juggling 43 balls, that's way more difficult than the three. Well, that's



Katy Weber 35:28

I love how they say like, once you get past three kids, it actually gets easier because you've just completely given up. Like, it's like, in some ways, it's easier, because you just you're like, I can't possibly, they're just raising themselves at this point. And then so it just becomes easier.



Patricia Sung 35:46

I think at that point, you have enough confidence to know what is or is not going to keep somebody alive. And like so you know that you have enough experience to rely on your minimum threshold? Yeah, plus, you know, there's enough other humans around that, like, if somebody is in trouble, hopefully, another bigger kid will catch. Like, I'm one of five kids. And I'm the oldest. So I mean, I was tasked with taking care of people all the time, even inadvertently, just because, you know, being the eldest child, so, you know, we all made it.



Katy Weber 36:18

Oh, I really loved what you said about the fact that like, by the time we get to the point of self awareness, where we can reach out and say, I'm in pain, I need help, I'm struggling. We're, we're struggling so much more than somebody else who might reach out and I'm curious, if you know, when you go to the doctor, and they ask you like on a scale of one to 10, how much pain are you in? I would bet that somebody with ADHD is so much more likely to like downplay pain, like you've gone to the doctor, you're can't sleep, you're in excruciating pain. And the doctor says, Are you in pain? And you're sort of like, well, I could imagine it's worse. So I'll say like a six



Patricia Sung 36:58

other people have cancer and not dying. So I feel like I shouldn't put it that high. I'm definitely down lower. Yes, no, we are the Queen's of rationalizing and overthinking ourselves into to the point of almost lying to ourselves.



Katy Weber 37:16

Because I think it's the self doubt it's that like, ingrained inherent self doubt from from living a life of feeling like you have betrayed yourself or feeling so betrayed all the time in so many situations that I think we just have no, we haven't developed any ability to trust ourselves. It's like going to the eye doctor, you know, and they're like, which is clear the first one or the second one you're like, let's do the first one again, I don't know. And then you're so worried that you're gonna get the wrong prescription. Maybe it's just me now I can No, I do this. But like, you know, where you're sort of like, Oh, no, I've totally gotten the wrong prescription. Because I can't remember which one was better? I'd say but you're like, Am I lying? Am I I don't know. And just feeling like completely incapable of being able to explain what is happening right now.



Patricia Sung 38:04

Yeah, I mean, we we do, we've developed this lack of self trust over time, because we know what's true in our heads, and we know what we're experiencing. And everyone else is telling us that it's a different version of that. So we're hearing You're too dramatic, or you're too sensitive, or you're too slow, or you're too fast, or you're too impulsive, or you think too much. I mean, like, literally our whole life is being told that we are to fill in the blank description. Again, to think that like, well, if, if my version is say, like, again, I'm gonna go back to like the number scale, like, I think I'm at like a level eight. But this person is telling me I'm being too dramatic. So I must more be like, like four. So then you fill out

four on your paper. But if that person were to come into your head and experience it, they would be like, what is going on in here? And they'd be like, this is on fire. It's a level 20, you know? So we've spent our whole lives trying to even out the dissonance that we're hearing. So we adjust ourselves because we think we're the problem, not realizing that it's just that the other person is different than me, they have a different perspective. They're not experiencing what I'm experiencing. So it takes a lot of work, to learn to trust yourself again, and believe yourself when you say I'm at a level eight or nine here this is a problem for you to like, stick to your guns and be like Yes, I'm at a level eight and when the other person looks at you and says I think that's like a level four for SSA. No, this is a level eight. It is hard to fight for yourself. When you don't feel calm. But in about it. Yeah, as you do you start to believe everybody else.



Katy Weber 40:06

So true.



Patricia Sung 40:08

I'm like, I get like, get on a soapbox for this for like the next, like three hours that I know, one of my favorite new topics is that the dissonance between Whoa, we have experienced and what everyone else is saying. And learning to trust yourself again, now that you know that. Yeah, like, the house really is on fire and it does need to be addressed. It's not just like, Oh, yeah, well, things are kind of hard right now.



Katy Weber 40:37

Yeah. And it's something that I remember experiencing with my babies to that kind of moment of realization, after going to the pediatrician all the time. That moment of realization, you get as a mother, where you're like, I know my baby better than anyone else, like a pediatrician can give me expert medical advice in an sort of an objective setting. But at the end of the day, like my maternal instinct is so much stronger. I know what's going on. I know what is best, I know what we need to do in this situation. And so there was this level of like, intense trust. And, you know, realizing, oh, like mother's instinct, or, you know, maternal instinct is like a real thing. And yet, it's funny, because I was never able to apply that to myself.



41:20

Until now. You know,



Katy Weber 41:21

I think I think the so much that has come with my own diagnosis has been my ability to really advocate for myself and talk to myself in just a completely different way, but in like an authoritative way where it's like, no, you're actually, this is why you're doing this. And this is why you're doing this, as opposed to always feeling like I was wandering in, in a foot of water, not understanding why I was so slow. And



Patricia Sung 41:46

yeah, and that's one of the reasons I always encourage women to get a diagnosis, even though you don't officially need it for something, having that clarity. And that competence to know this is where I am, this is who I am, this is what I have. And this is what I'm dealing with. There is something about that knowledge, that gives you the confidence to say, this is who I am, and this is what I need. And this is what I'm going to choose based on knowing who I am. And some people don't need that some people are extremely self confident. And they don't need that. Almost like validation, I guess. But most of the ADHD women that I talked to having that, like, I'm a card carrying member of the ADHD club, like that just allows us to, yeah, just to feel confident in knowing that we're not making it up.



Katy Weber 42:42

Right. Yeah. And I think that's something even even though my psychiatrist told me I had it, and then I went and got it. Or my therapist told me I had it and she has ADHD. And then I went and got an official diagnosis. And I even had my doctor during those during the the appointment like I made her say the words you have ADHD to me and like you have combined because I was so worried I was going to walk away from that appointment and and feel like maybe I misheard something, maybe I misconstrued something I forget, I didn't write it down. You know, like, I made her say it out loud. Because I didn't want there to be any, any misconception or any doubt in my mind when I left the office that time, because that's sort of how you operate all the time, which is like, I don't know, but I don't work better. Or maybe, you know, it does.



Patricia Sung 43:35

It just it feels, it feels good. There's like a sense of relief there that, to know that that is really true. Hmm. No, it's just it's, I mean, when it comes, you'll get like the waves of the grief and the sorrow and all that that you will you will work through. But something about that validation. It's just a beautiful, beautiful gift that you're giving to yourself by going

through that process. And I know it's hard. I mean, dealing with trying to find the right doctor and going through the insured like all that. It's a lot of hoops. But I find that for most women, it's a worthy endeavor.



Katy Weber 44:23

Yeah, I see that. Yeah, I agree. So what led you then to start the podcast, the motherhood in ADHD podcast? Because you've been doing this for two years now. Right? Two years and ADHD years. That's like a decade.



Patricia Sung 44:40

It is. I mean, the fact that I even have stuck with something for two years straight. That was literally like I started just like as it's fun. And I felt called to help moms, but like, I enjoyed this like, usually we're hobby hoppers, and we do it for a little while and then we go on to something else, right. So here that I made it two years. It's like This is legit now. So when I had my first son, I struggled so hard between the postpartum anxiety and all the hormones. And it was just it was awful. And I had to do a lot of work and ask for a lot of help to figure out not just the anxiety, but also figure out how am I going to function taking care of another person with ADHD, like, this is a whole nother ballgame that I was not prepared for, like, I had no idea it was going to be this hard. And so that's why when you said like, I'm curious if you knew, like, would it be easier? I'm like, No, I was. All I wish I was. I mean, but that's part of what, you know, one of the things that's, you know, in my grand vision of where I'm going with this is that I want to help moms so that for the woman who's thinking, I want to have a family, but I don't know, if I can, I want to give them the tools that they can make this work. And so that they are prepared. And they're not blindsided because I felt like I mean, and part of this, you know, my mom passed away many years ago, so she was not here when I had my son. So I didn't really have anyone there to say like, this is how mothering goes because my mom passed away when I was like, 22. And there were so many times where I was like, why did not, Why didn't anybody tell me about this? Like, I remember, after I had my son, and the nurses wheeling me to my room, and my stomach was huge. And I was like, why do I still look like I'm seven months pregnant? And the nurse laughed at me. And she was like, honey, that's gonna take a while. And I was like, What? Why didn't anybody tell me this? I thought I was gonna be, like, flatter What happened? You know. And so it's the same thing with having kids, like, from a logistical standpoint is that I didn't know, I just, I didn't know what I was getting myself into. And it was a lot of therapy, a lot of learning. And I feel like, up until I had kids, I was able to kind of just like, fudge my way through having ADHD and living life. And once I had kids, I wasn't able to fudge through anymore. I was like, now this is a big enough problem that you have to do something about it. And so I did, and I worked really hard.

Well, then when I had my second kid, it was like, start over like, sir, from scratch, you have to figure out a new way of running your life with multiple humans. And he was only probably like six months old. When, like, clearly, in my prayer time, God was like, I want you to start a podcast for moms with ADHD. And I was like, the Lord has lost his mind. Like, there's no way I'm doing this. I mean, I am. I'm actually an introvert, I do very well with one on one. But you put me in a big, like a big party and I'm like a deer in headlights. So I spend I mean, at that point, I'm trying to think like, How old was I my son's 339 36? Okay, so 16 years I known about my ADHD and I hit it and tell anybody, like other than like my husband, and maybe like a couple of close friends. That's it, no one else knew. And now I am going to put a podcast on the internet to tell the whole world like, you've got to be kidding me. But, I mean, still now, but two years before, like, there really wasn't any. There weren't any resources out there. for moms, I was googling, like, moms with ADHD and I came up with like two articles. And I reached out to both of those ladies, you know, as I'm like, sleuthing around the internet, trying to find their email addresses. I didn't hear back from either one of them. And I couldn't find anything else out there. And I was like, I can't be the only one. Like, at minimum. They say three to 5% of the population has ADHD. I personally think it's more like 10% but I won't get up on that soapbox right now. How can I be the only one Looking for this? I can't be. But when it wasn't there. I was like, Okay, I'm clearly like, you have been called to do this. Like if I look at my history, like, so before I had my boys. I taught Middle School, actually at an all boys school. And before that, I worked in banking. So like I have and I've had my own business several times. You know, serial entrepreneur is another ADHD trait. And so, here along the way, I've run businesses. I've worked in business I've taught I but I really loved teaching and I love teaching brains that are different because I get to put on my like creativity. And figure out like, how do I get this kid to learn something like to like pull it apart and toss it around and figure out like, how do I get this brain to understand what's going on, and I taught Spanish. So teaching the language to kids who have learning disabilities is like most people will just be like, it's not worth it. Like, we'll just put that in there 504 that they don't have to do that class. And like no, people who have learning differences can also speak multiple languages like not to say that we want to make things harder for them. But like, don't tell them, they can't do it. If they want to, they can, we can figure it out. Like it's not going to look like what everyone else is doing. But they can if they have the right tools and strategies, and I'd figured out a way that I can teach a language to fifth graders with learning disabilities, then surely I can figure it out how to teach you like almost anybody anything. So I look at this podcast as a way that I can take all the different pieces, all the different journeys, all the different winding roads, and I pull it together. And I can use this experience to help moms who are struggling like I am, but also put my hand out and say, Hey, you don't have to be a hot mess, it doesn't have to be a huge struggle. It's not going to be easy. Because the motherhood is not easy. having ADHD is not easy. But it can be done. And you can enjoy it, and you can be confident about it. But it takes a lot of skill and

strategy and tools and all these things. But once you put your mind to it, people with ADHD can do amazing things. And there are a few more motivated people on this earth than mothers. Like we get stuff done. So I want these women to feel confident and know that they can live beautifully, even when they have a brain that's different.



Katy Weber 52:00

So you have so many incredible resources on your website. And do you work with people one on one? Or are you really sort of more of an advocate who you just offer an abundance of incredible mothering resource? I mean, you're incredibly prolific. So. So I want to just tell people like where they can find you. And but do you work one on one with people or don't have advocacy,



Patricia Sung 52:28

I mostly am focusing on on advocacy and educating. So I'm working on classes right now like people to learn, like about ADHD, and employing the like, the basic life skills that we didn't get as a kid, either because somebody didn't teach us or because they taught us in a way that didn't make sense to our brains, like those little building block foundational pieces that when are in place is like magical. But if they're not in place, then yes, our life is a hot mess. So that's what I'm working on right now is the like learning how to live well with ADHD. So learning how to, you know, organize your calendar and routines and stuff like that, or like, oh, man, well, I was saying before I get off on a team, because like, I can literally brainstorm 45 ideas with you right now. But, you know, I can only make so many things at one time. So the calendar one is the one I'm working on right now. And my plan is like every couple of months to release another one so that people will have like a library of resources that they can choose. And say like, Okay, I need help with this. And I want to learn about that item. So I have Yeah, a bunch of free reasons. A lot, a lot. A bunch of free resources on my website, which is motherhood, ADHD, calm, and anywhere that I actually am. That's my handle motherhood, ADHD. And yeah, go grab a resource. Find a way to help yourself live a little better. And then and, yeah, when I had my courses ready, I did one over the holidays, like just lowering your mom stress and figuring out how to do the holidays well with less stress. And then I had to take a little break because that was a lot of work. And in the holiday is one of those like ADHD things where like, this is gonna be awesome. And then you're like, oh, that was a lot of work and the holidays break. And then I'm getting back to it for the spring, so it'll be really good. So everyone come get a class learn because some good stuff and make your life better.



Katy Weber 54:28

Awesome. Well, that is fantastic. I'm so enjoyed talking to you. I feel like I could probably talk for another few hours. So I'll have to just have you come back for another episode. I would love that.