

Elaine Taylor-Klaus: Shifting our expectations (without lowe...

Sat, 2/12 11:13AM 1:04:54

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adhd, parents, kids, struggled, diagnosed, coaching, thought, diagnosis, happening, years, husband, anxiety, stigma, youngest, women, test, complex, adhd diagnosis, pandemic, conversation

SPEAKERS

Elaine Taylor-Klaus, Katy Weber



Katy Weber 00:00

So but I will start out asking you about your own your own ADHD diagnosis because I think you mentioned you were around 40. Right? So kind of what was going on in your life? I know a lot of the women I interviewed were diagnosed because their kids were diagnosed. So I'm curious, is that how you came to your diagnosis? Kind of? Yes. You know, what was going on? And when was that?



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 00:21

Okay, so So my story is very similar to what you described, which is, you know, all of my I often say my kids were diagnosed one after the other like dominoes. And when the third one was not yet but was clearly going to be diagnosed, I think. I went to one of my doctor, one of my kids doctors, and I said, Could this be me too? Like, I looked around, I'm like, my husband can't be responsible for all of this neurology. There's this, there's just no way could this be me, too. And I really got a pat on the head and No, honey, you're just a mom. And so I, you know, disregarded and I kept trying to function with three complex kids that a complex family and yada yada, and, and I was actually what prompted it was I was going back to graduate school. And I decided once I kind of got my head above water with managing these complex kids, I discovered coaching things were starting to turn around, we had had a nutritional change that really changed things in our family as well. And so things were starting to lighten, the load was starting to lighten and I decided I needed to do something to help other parents that nobody should go through a loan, what I went through those first 10 years, because it was it was horrible. And, and it looked great on the outside. But on the inside, I felt like a house of cards. And so I was decided I was going to go back to graduate school. I mean, I was trying to find a graduate program that met my schedule, with three young kids. So because I needed part time, but I wanted it during the week and not the weekend. Like I couldn't find it. But so I knew I was on the path to get it to say I was going to go get a PhD or something. And, and so I went back and I had myself tested because I was wondering whether I needed accommodations. I started because I done so much advocacy for my kids. By this point. What I realized was that in

college like I had made it through prestigious university, I did really well in school, but I burned myself out. And so I went, I started trying to figure out why had I only written papers and never taken a test. Like why did I choose a major, like I didn't choose a major where I could ever have to take a test even though I love I would have been fascinated by psychology couldn't do it. And so I went back and had myself evaluated, and I was diagnosed with attention and learning issues that you know, 40 something years old. And like you said, it was like, all of a sudden, my entire life made sense. Every job I had done my major, my everything I had done started to get clear to me what had happened. So I picked up the phone and I called my mom on the way home and I said Mom, guess what we've got you know, and which really, really pissed off my dad for a while. And then I cried for a few months. You know, because as you said it, it really like rocked my world view of myself. Because I was fairly high performing high achieving, you know, like, so it just it's something was incarnate in Congress. And I mean, this is going back a long time. I didn't know that much about ADHD in those days. So yeah, so that's how it happened. It was kind of a combination of the kids and I really wanted to go to graduate school. I ended up not going because I couldn't find a program that might schedule. And so I discovered coaching somebody sent me to coaching program, like okay, I'll do this as a stopgap measure. I'll do this for a year until I can find a graduate program. And the first afternoon I fell in love I called my husband in tears like this is it I found it. And I hadn't thought about graduate school again until now I'm thinking about it again. But that's a different conversation.



Katy Weber 04:12

That's so funny. You know, I I have often wanted to go back and do graduate work. But my final year, I actually I went to university and I'm from Canada. So I didn't we didn't have any standardized tests. Thank God then, because I don't know what I would have done in that situation. But I was terrified to take the GRE is and



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 04:31

always my stall. That's right because I did I went back and took the Jerry's. Once I had the accommodations, oh that's



Katy Weber 04:40

see I had no idea but I just remember like my final year of university. I got a job halfway through my year because I was working at wanting to get a new work at a newspaper I got a newspaper job I got my dream job. So therefore there was no point in going to class at this point. And so I got F's In every class in my last semester, which brought my you know, tanked my GPA, but I thought who cares? Doesn't matter. I've got my job. What am I ever going to think about my degree ever again? Which now looking back, I'm like, yes, the signs were there all along. Yeah, always. But yeah, it's so fascinating. So I've sort of figured now because I've often thought about, you know, I also went through a coaching program, but I also have like, really wanted to, I've always sort of toyed with the idea of going back and getting a mental health counselor doing a mental health counselor graduate work, but I'm also kind of like, Am I old enough now that they're not gonna care about those flunks? I got in my 20s.

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 05:40

And this is actually my so here's my theory, my theory was I'm in my 40s, all I need to do is break 1000 on the GRE, and I'll be able to talk my way in, that's what I figured, you know, like, I don't know if I would have or not, but but it was really, it was hard. And I really remembered why, like, I haven't taken a math class since high school. So it was because I don't have, you know, good facility with my working memory. So I had self accommodated in college in ways I didn't really understand until later. But literally never took a class that required a test after my freshman year of college.



Katy Weber 06:20

I mean, it amazes me that I was very lucky because I did not come to ADHD through my children. I came to ADHD through my therapist who has ADHD, she came to her ADHD through her son. But she noticed in me, I've been seeing her for years. And she was gently suggesting to me, like, you should look into this, because she noticed this, like wide chasm between how I was performing, and what I was doing and interested in and, you know, taking on jobs and entrepreneurial, manic interest in things. And then my self worth were like my narrative, and she was noticing this great divide. And I thought, Well, no, I'm probably bipolar. Because I would have, you know, I would recognize that that manic swing of the pendulum, which what I now realize is sort of the the hyper focus, and then the burnout, you know, phase, but at the time, she was like, You should look at ADHD. And I was like, like many women, I was like, now I've been diagnosed with depression and anxiety. I'm not hyper, you know, I can literally spend days on the couch. And so I did and

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 07:25

I was diagnosed with and treated for anxiety for years. Mm hmm. Yeah. Right, for many years. And when I got treated for ADHD, it's amazing how much less anxiety there was. And I don't mean that it's gone by any stretch. But so much of the anxiety was, I can't get myself to do what everybody expects me to do. And I expect myself to do makes me anxious,



Katy Weber 07:47

right? What's wrong with me? Yeah, yeah. And I remember my daughter, who's now she's now in high school, but when she was in the third grade, she was having a she was really struggling with this huge project was like the first time in her life that she had had a really big project where she had to do a lot of research, and then kind of had to then translate this research into sections and paragraphs and essays on third grade, third grade, she was doing a project on Singapore. And so she had done all of this research, but then it was like, Okay, now what do we do? What where do we start and she just like, froze, she couldn't start. And I remember so viscerally. At that time, this was long before ADH, my ADHD diagnosis. Before I had any idea what was happening. I related so deeply to that paralysis, right where I was like, This is what happened to me in school all the time. I was like, and and, you know, Katherine Ellison interview, as she said, stuck on input, which just like, yeah, describes my entire academic resume, right, my attack my entire academic career, which was like, I loved research. I loved reading, I loved bringing ideas together. But when it came to actually having to like write the essay, or have the test, I just was, like, look like I just couldn't do it, it was I'd get so

overwhelmed. And so I was watching my third grader, have that same issue. And I remember thinking back then, like, I had an undiagnosed learning disorder, something was happening, and I didn't get the help I needed. But then even then, it still took years before I really kind of understood what ADHD was, and how, you know, what executive functioning was, and the

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 09:31

interweaving of it all because it's, it's probably not just ADHD, right? I know. It wasn't for me, it wasn't for my kids. And, you know, it was all kind of it was intertwined. So for me, I couldn't take tests, but I could write anything. And I really learned to write so I leaned into that strength and played to that strength because with writing, I didn't have to hold the information in my head. I could write it down. I could capture it, and then I could use it so I didn't have to remember it. Whereas with the test you're supposed to remember stuff. So like I literally ran out of my essay tees in the middle of the essay today because I was so stressed out and got sick in high school from being so stressed out from test anxiety. Wow. But I could write anything and so I just gravitated to what worked for me you know, that's so amazing anyways YEAH?



Katy Weber 13:03

Okay so you discovered coaching, which is great, and I love that, I love that story to have that, you know, sort of that that the subtle difference between coaching and therapy and kind of, you know, exploring that

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 13:17

therapy I in those days, I thought therapy is established, it's you know, it's a credential, it's I, you know, I, I grew up in what I call the achievement elite, right? You know, you expect to go to college, it's better to get a graduate degree. And I always thought I would get a graduate degree. I didn't expect to burn myself out in college. And so for me, the gold standard was it was an academic grade. That's what you had to do. And then when I discovered coaching, and I realized that coaching reflected everything I stood for, it was about empowerment, and about Conscious Change, and people being at choice and possibility. And it was, it was like, it wasn't saying your broken, let's fix you. It was saying, You're phenomenal. What do you want to do? I didn't want to get like, it was just everything I needed. And quickly became very clear that it was everything that kids needed, that my kids needed me to stop looking at that performance paradigm that says, well, you're struggling in math, so we need to get you a math tutor. And they needed me to start saying, look how gifted you are in storytelling or in math, or whatever it is. Let's play to that. Let's really enhance that. And oh, by the way, we'll get you some support that don't worry about that. Nobody has to be graded everything. And that's the shift. And it was it was profoundly impactful, impactful for me and for my kids. And within a couple of years. My husband came on board and he actually got him coached to and then a couple years later I asked him, you know what changed what happened, you know, he said I just couldn't do any more that what you were doing was working? Yeah. And it was it was and I wasn't coaching my kids, I was just changing my approach to how I communicated with them.





Katy Weber 15:12

Yeah, you know, I feel like I've talked about this on in other interviews in the past, but you know, one thing that I really think a lot about we, as we do, you know, going oh, sort of over our life through with this fine tooth comb and looking at all these ways in which we could have you know, the grief about like, the signs were there, why was nobody noticing. And so I am the youngest, I have two older brothers who are very did very well academically, Ivy League scholarships, and I started struggling in middle school and just never recovered. So I had a very dismal academic career and had a lot of F's in high school, you know, barely got you barely graduated, had to redo my senior year, a lot of that. So I really struggled. And I remember my parents always saying, like, well, we can't all have, you know, all of our kids can't be a students. You're just you know, you're the one who has the street smarts, not the book smarts, right. And they were like, very quick to kind of label and, and they always had this joke where they were I was in the gifted program, also, not



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 16:20

worse. Not smart. Right. Right. And



Katy Weber 16:23

you know, and I like, to EEG kids, I sort of had that feeling of like, they're gonna, they're gonna kick me out and find out if they're gonna find me out. And why have they kicked me out? Yeah, right. Yeah. So. So my parents would always joke about the fact that they were like, have our three kids, you have the highest IQ, but look at you like, you're a hot mess, right? Isn't this funny? And so for them, like, I see the way in which they like kind of labeled their three children, right? Yes. And now looking back, I think that that was actually quite damaging. Like, I feel like I needed help. And to just I think in at the time, I think they did the best they could, obviously, and they were really trying to say, look, academics are not important to us, we don't care. Like, we just want you to be good at something that that moves you about, I think like I think, you know, looking back at my life that's really mattered. But in terms of like, my self worth, and in terms of my sense of intelligence, yeah, I really struggled with that, because I did so poorly in academia. And so I think about that with my kids. Now, all the time, I have a 15 year old and a 10 year old, so a ninth grader and a fifth grader. And, you know, like, I don't know, like, rather than thinking, you know, with my son, especially my fifth grader, you know, I'm like, I don't know whether which approach to take because on the one hand, I feel like I don't want to be the parent who says, You have to get all A's, my daughter gets all A's, it's very easy to her when my son, he really is very interest driven. And so, you know, I know that he can do well, in some of these subjects. And I know that it would be important to him to do well, like in terms of his sense of self, but at the same time, I think about what my parents did, and how, like, that didn't work either. And so I've always sort of feeling like, you know, that, that sense, you know, that that questioning, like, am I going to screw up with my kid what I am? Yeah, no problem.



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 18:29

No question. Good. Parenting is damage control just did that podcast? Great.



Katy Weber 18:35

Um, but again, sort of feeling like how would I, you know, so much parenting is kind of like, how do I redo my own childhood? Right. And I think that can be I think it has pros and cons.



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 18:46

I think it's, it's a huge part of the work that I do, actually, is and I become aware of this in the last few years and how many parents I work with, who are trying to change the paradigm break the cycle, figure out how do I how do I not dishonor what my parents did, or let go of what my parents did, depending on what that was, and still be the parent this kid needs, you know, like, exactly what you're speaking to. And as we were talking to two thoughts came up. One was that same experience I had of I thought I was probably everybody kept telling me I was smart, but they were probably wrong. Because it was so hard for me. And, and in eighth grade, I even asked my mom, I said, I think I'm going crazy. And I need some help. And so my mom took me to this therapist, and I sat across the big brown table from this old white guy, who after an hour looked at my mother and said she's fine. And they sent me on my way and that was it. Right? I did. I had asked like, I knew there was something and I just didn't know how to label it. My mom tried. She was told professionally I'm fine. And so we went on but That nagging feeling of, they think I'm smart, but they just don't know the truth yet was always there all the way along into college and through college. So when my kids came along, and my eldest was brilliant, and really struggled with school, like super difficult struggle, and I probably made a lot of the same mistakes you've spoken to, that are now becoming beginning to surface now in those first 10 years. But what I used to say to them was, you're going to be an amazing adult, and we just got to get you there. And being a kid is hard. And being a teenager is really hard. And we're going to get you there, because you're going to be an amazing adult. And, and when I work with parents, now, the conversation, the way I began to shift it, the difference between my eldest and my youngest is about six, seven years. And by the time my youngest was coming up in elementary years, I was a coach, and I was doing this work. And so the difference of their self concept is quite, quite vivid. Right? And with the youngest, I started the conversations, like what's important to you about your education? And, you know, how do you see yourself and instead of, man, you know, you're getting C's in this and you know, you could be doing a work, I would say things like, well, how important is it to you? And which classes do you think you should you want to be doing well in and, and I really took that coach approach so that when he owns it, he really owns it. And when he knows he's got to do the work. He's just like, he was not going to get A's in chemistry in high school, even though he probably could have because he just didn't care enough. But getting him to buy in to do it at all, for his own benefit. That was an accomplishment. Right? So that's, that was how I dealt with it later. I did not do it as well earlier, as I did later.



Katy Weber 21:52


Yeah, no, that's a great point. I talked, we talked about that a lot. My husband and I have sort of, you know, his his albatross with my daughter, especially as her is her messy room. And it you know, it's there. It's it's what is going to her I mean, it's exactly well, that's



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 Elaine Taylor-Klaus 22:12


when I know what our role was. You can share this with your husband, our rule was this. If you would like me to say goodnight to you, or to wake you up in the morning, you will clear a path between the door and the bed so that I don't kill myself.

 Katy Weber 22:24

Well, that's what he says to me. He says, Have you seen her room? And I'm like, No, of course not. I don't go in there. I would I do that to myself. But we talk a lot about the why. Right, which is, you know, she both of my children have to, like really understand the why behind any task, and it's our job to help them find that, you know, it might be self evident there died. Right, exactly, or why. Right. Yeah. And the shift. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah, I think about that a lot in terms of, you know, trying to understand trying to explain to my husband that things are not necessarily self evident in childhood, right, and especially with neurodivergent children. Now, this are a typical, he is a he is a you know, this is something I I question all the time, I mean, I'm fairly newly diagnosed. So I'm, like, you know, I had to go through and I'm looking through my family tree, and I'm looking at my child, neither of my children are officially diagnosed. Because, you know, it's been such a crazy pandemic. And, you know, I also feel like, neither of them is very stereotypically ADHD in their behaviors. And so I want to be really, really careful when I'm when they are tested, you know, because, you know, they have my, a lot of anxiety, but they really, really want to do well, and that anxiety kind of Trumps the hyperactivity element of the, you know, the misbehaving in school,

 Elaine Taylor-Klaus 23:52

I think you just you have to treat the most the clearest most presenting factor, right. Yeah, like, and sometimes it's the anxiety and sometimes it's the Add, and sometimes it's the working and, you know, like, you have to, you have to deal with what's showing up.

 Katy Weber 24:04

Yeah, yeah. And I And exactly, I sort of feel like, as my understanding of myself grows, it's, it's affecting my parenting tremendously. And so that's something I know you talked about, just, you know, getting dealing with your own issues, is kind of, you know, the idea that I guess that idea that you can't pour from an empty cup, but, but bringing it toward just understanding what is happening as a parent, you can then help them

 Elaine Taylor-Klaus 24:35

some, some of it is that empty cup, right? You got to take care of yourself self care, you know, it's it's not just words, it's so essential. And some of it is you got to do your work, like a lot of parenting these complex kids and whether the parents that I'm playing with in my sandbox are neurotypical or not. They're all doing some really deep, difficult work, because to parent these kids effectively, we have to get ourselves out of the way. And when when we're trying to deal with their stuff, and it's really our stuff, we're not really serving our kids to help them do with their stuff. So if we're setting I'm thinking about this one mom of an adopted kid, and she and

she and her husband, single kids, she and her husband are both neurotypical kids, like textbook at day, 15 year old. And it's she's doing real work to be good to think about how do you shift your expectations without lowering them? And how do you meet him where he is and empower him to become the kid he has the capacity to be, and still hold a bar for his success without setting it so high that he can't hit it. I mean, that's a lot of work. And to do that work, you got to, you got to let go of the stuff that you're taking personally, and you got to get out of your own way. And, you know, you can't make it be about you as a parent, like, no offense to your husband, but your daughter's for him is his issue, not hers. Right. And, and in my world, like what, what is important, because it's not an unreasonable value that he wants his daughter to clean a room. But for the sake of what and what's that conversation look like? What's it costing him in terms of relationship? And, like, That's some heavy work to do?



Katy Weber 26:25

Yeah, oh, I know. That's what Yeah, it's a conversation we have a lot because I sort of feel like, you know, his his point of view is, I have the answers. And I can show her the answers, if only she will listen, and isn't that my job as a parent, and my point of view is always, you're already showing her the answers just by modeling this behavior. So when she has her own apartment, and it actually becomes important for her to like, not get rotated, or whatever it is that she needs to look after, she will have had that behavior modeled for her when it becomes necessary.



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 26:58

And as they become teenagers that has to do with how they accept the information, right. So if you tell somebody, they will, they will consider it. If you ask them in a way that they answer it for themselves, then they will own it, and it will be theirs. And they will act on it differently than if you tell them so we always say Ask, Don't Tell. Because as soon as you tell them, particularly over the age of 12, you've lost them. Right? They're not listening. Really. I mean, you can tell them and they'll nod and they'll say yeah, yeah, yeah. But they're not going to own it in the same way. As if you involve them in it.



Katy Weber 27:34

Yeah. No, it's so true. I'm just getting I'm smiling because I was thinking about, I think it was in one of your earlier podcast episodes, which I absolutely love. So I'm so glad you guys are doing that. I hope you're having fun with it. It sounds really



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 27:49

long overdue. It took years to get to it.



Katy Weber 27:51

Yeah, you know, it's you got other things on your plate. But yeah, I think you were talking about like books and how, you know, you can only read so many books when you're a parent and and

like books and now, you know, you can only read so many books when you're a parent and and you know, you can get stuck on input, right? Where it's like, you can start to read books. But really what you need is the handholding you need. You call this Sherpa which I love because I use that term all the time in parenting where I'm like carrying everything out from the car. And I was like, I basically just a Sherpa. But but you know, and it reminded me of when my daughter was two or three and I read that the parenting book how to talk so your kids will listen and listen to your kids will talk great book. Yeah. I don't remember anything from that book. But I do remember, you know, one of the things they emphasized was when your child you know, you not to be so quick to answer your child not to give them the information, but to ask them what do you think? And I remember like this moment, when I she had asked me a question, and I you know, I don't remember what it was. But she asked me this question. And I was like, Well, what do you think? And she just looked at me point blank, it was like, I don't know, mom. That's why I'm asking. They just sort of froze, because I was like, what comes next? What comes next in the book? I don't remember. Can we get a hold on? But it just reminded me of that, that feeling as a parent often right? Where you're kind of a deer caught in headlights where you're like, it doesn't matter how many Dr. Sears books you read or anything like at the end of the day, you really are just flying by the seat of your pants and you get so much of parenting is sort of trusting your gut and just doing the thing in the moment.

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 29:27

Well, and that's that's why I read the central guide was because what I wanted was a parenting book for those of us whose kids are not so typical, write that book that that doesn't tell you what to do, but gives you kind of a mindset of like I what I want for parents is like I've got this bring it on whatever you got, I can handle it. I can swing at it. I could you like I've got this. And I think that comes more with a parenting paradigm with a framework or an understanding of how do I want to be as a parent rather than when she says this, you say that or when you do that, like, I think the more tactical you get with suggestions in some ways, the less helpful they can be. That doesn't mean that they're not sometimes helpful. Maybe strategies can be really useful. But mostly as parents, parents come to us looking for strategies, right. And it's very hard for them to get their head around what we're saying to them, which is, hang on, we promise we'll get you the strategies, but give us give us a minute to help you understand a framework first. Because if you can understand the framework of empowerment, for lack of a better word, if you can understand taking him on one thing at a time, and don't try to do so many things, if you can get the foundation in place, then you don't have to think that five o'clock when your daughter's asking you a question in the water's boiling over and you know, like, you, you you own. It's kind of like she ever do yoga. Oh, yeah. Okay. So you know, when you first start doing yoga, it's very conscious, and you breathe in you pause, exhale. And then over time, after you've been doing it for, well, when something happens, you automatically go to your breath. You just use the breath to calm yourself down in your life, whatever you're doing. And it's, it's kind of like that, it's like, what I want is for this, the coach approach for parents to be there, their breath, their exhale, how they approach everything without having to think about it.



Katy Weber 31:27

Yeah, and I think also, one thing that has helped me tremendously since my diagnosis is being able to explain what is happening. You know, like, I've always, for me, it's always about repair, right? It's, I've never and that's one thing, I think I really am grateful for my ADHD, you know,

which is like rage. Yes. It totally overstimulation. Yes, I had no idea what was happening at for years. Now that I have the, you know, the language and the toolbox, it's really helped me to be able to explain to my children, what is happening in the moment. And then there is the repair. And I've never been the kind of parent who's like, because I said, so. But just being able to have that language to say, like, you know, I'm really sorry, I went from zero to yelling, but there was this was the TV, the dog, you know, all this stuff was happening. And that is why and so it's been really helpful for me to have that language personally, that I can then, you know, turn and explain to them, you know, why the why behind any decisions really?

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 32:29

Well, and that's what I love about diagnosis is that, for us, or for our kids, I'm a big believer in diagnosis, because I think it gives you an explanation for what's going on that you can then learn to navigate. And without it, what we what we make up about ourselves, or what our kids make up about selves is a whole lot uglier, you know, they make up their lazy, crazier stupid, when the truth is there, you know, irritated or irritable or tired or hungry, or whatever it is, when you can, I'm thinking that we had a code word, we have a code word on our family for when someone gets so hungry, they just need to stop and eat. Right, it's called broccoli ice cream. And we started a really, really young, and they still use it now all young adults, but that that's this, that noticing that awareness of I'm not functioning anymore, because I'm hungry. And that's not helpful for anybody. And I've got to stop now and take care of that. And everybody acknowledges it and honors it. And like, that awareness that you're speaking to is so powerful, it's just understanding yourself just a little bit. That next layer, right?



Katy Weber 33:40

Yeah, and sort of, it's basically you're looking for the accommodations that you need in that moment, right. Like, I think that was another thing when I was talking about my son and doing with his schoolwork, you know, and not wanting to pressure him to get all A's, but at the same time knowing that like he's capable of the A's, and if he gets the A's, he will feel so much better about himself. And you know, and then I used to before my diagnosis, because he was he was in very early elementary school, but he was he struggled, he wasn't verbal for a long time, he was always kind of had an IEP and was delayed. And so I my thinking was always like, well, not all just like my parents, not all of my kids are going to get straight A's. And now I really sort of shifted to like, what accommodations do we need? Like, what? What do you need to get the A? And like, I don't necessarily know about the A, but again, it's sort of like what do you need in this moment to be your best self?

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 34:34

Well, so sometimes this program, I was client I was working with this week, who's got a kid, teenage 1314 year old boy, who's got six classes and has really made a lot of progress in the last year is doing great. And the kids do got four A's and two, you know, barely passing and the parents were like, asking the question I want Want him to take responsibility for all of his education I want him to get, you know, he can do straight A's. It's like, okay, let's look at what's really important to him. Clearly, he's got ownership, or he wouldn't have those four eights. So what's going on with these other two classes? And so, you know, they were both language arts

and history, they're writing, there's all this executive function, like, as we broke it down to see what was really happening, they can then go back to him and have a conversation to help the kid decide, okay, what, what if I were to get some support or work or whatever, you know, would I be able to pull it up to a b? What is that important to me? What's the you know? And so, because the kids got ownership? And so it's not about Kenny or not, it's about? Is it important enough? And what's the what's the benefit of the cost to him? Right, even at even at, you know, 10 years old, I think you can start having those conversations in some way to engage them to a sense of choice about themselves in their education, especially in this environment.



Katy Weber 36:00

Yeah, it's been really interesting having the, you know, these last two years of hybrid learning and remote learning, and I don't know, I'm, this, I'm sure a lot of parents have had a real window into how their children you know, learn in a way that we never were afforded for better for worse, you know, not necessarily, there was a lot that was terrible about having to suddenly become their teacher and their mother and everything else and housekeeper. But, you know, it really gave me such insight into both my children's, you know, like you said, like, where, what, where the stakes are and what they're interested in, and



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 36:37

I was thinking about it yesterday, I think that, you know, we've spent two years joking streaming, Netflix and cortisol, right. But basically, and for those of you don't know, cortisol is a stress hormone. So that's basically what we've had for for going on two years. And we've got kids with developmental delays, that are now being compounded by a universal systemic developmental delay. Because even if they're doing okay, in school, right now, we got kids going off to college coming home, and they've just are not developing as much as two kids would typically do. They're not getting the same interaction. I got a client as a college professor who says she's having conversations with with students she's never had before and all these years, because they don't have access to the upperclassmen they usually get to talk to, right. And so same with high school kids are not getting as much exposure to other kids and older kids. And, and so you've got this kind of systemic developmental delay that's happening on top of these kids who have their own individual developmental delays. And I think it's going to be years before we see that unfold a little bit, we see the real impact of it, but but I think we're gonna have to shift our expectations to meet them for where they are now, not what we thought would typically be developing. There's not going to be any alternative really,



Katy Weber 38:00

right and to stop to stop convincing them that they are somehow behind right now.



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 38:04

Right? This notion that anyone is behind is absurd to me, because we're all behind. Or maybe not, maybe we're not behind anything. Maybe this is right where we are Right So I'm curious about



Katy Weber 44:59

the term calm complex because you know, it's not what I've heard, you know, I talked about neuro divergent or to he is how did you come up with the term? Complex? Because to for me it feels like every child is like so like, what is that umbrella



E Elaine Taylor-Klaus 45:13

because you have complex kids.



Katy Weber 45:16

Nothing is easy, said that



E Elaine Taylor-Klaus 45:19

the really simple version is kids who struggle with some aspect of life or learning. But what happened for me when I started this world was I had one kid with like eight or 10, diagnoses, all of my kids have a minimum of two or three diagnoses, myself included. And my husband and this when Diane and I first started, it used to be impact ADHD before we became impact parents. And I kept wanting to branch out because we knew it was never just about ADHD. And parents would come to us and say, Well, my kid doesn't have ADHD, so I can't use your help. And like, yeah, you can promise it's really not about ADHD, it's about. And so when I started doing the research, and I realized about 86% of kids with one diagnosis have multiple sclerosis, and like, and the term Special Needs didn't really feel like it apply. Because when I came up with when my kids were little special needs still have this other NIS stigma to it. And I didn't feel comfortable calling my kids special needs because they didn't have physical disabilities. And, and so I just was looking for something that made more sense because ADHD was just not enough. And, and I don't know, I just landed on, you know, these are complex, and people started responding to it. So when I wrote the most recent book, I in and the publishers wouldn't weren't, didn't want anything to do with it, because it didn't specifically say either ADHD or anxiety or you know, didn't have interesting because they want to be able to market it clearly. And so we kind of compromised on the central galleries and complex kids with ADHD, anxiety, and more, right. And so and I wanted it to be ADHD, anxiety, autism, depression, I wanted to like list out like 30 things, they wouldn't let me do that either. But I think that what I've often said is, if you if you have a complex kid, you know exactly what I mean. And if you don't, then it's not for you, anyway. Yeah,



Katy Weber 47:16

that's a great point. Yeah, right. Sure. Well, I'm, this is something I felt so naive when I received my ADHD diagnosis, because not only did I have that my therapist kind of hand holding me, but I had a very, very knowledgeable, you know, mental health specializing NP, who, you know, I came to her with all my paperwork and a flurry and she was like, Yeah, you had me at hello?

Yes, I was not met with any kind of gaslighting or gatekeeping the way I hear other women experiencing, you know, and, I mean, granted, I was, I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety, so that there were a lot of people I was seeing, who had no idea that this was ADHD, including myself, but it amazes me how many women are told you're just depressed, or you're just anxious, and that medical professionals are not making those connections, you know, between like, you can't, it's coming from somewhere, it's coming from being undiagnosed. And that there is not, you know, it's pathologizing depression and anxiety in this way, I think can be really damaging to to somebody who just feels like these diagnoses are not fitting, there's got to be something else going on here, etc. etc. But like, it still is just like, I've lost track of how many women are said, Well, you know, are turned away from their, from their doctors, because they, you know, they're looking up, there's they're reading about ADHD, they're feeling like, Oh, my goodness, this is explaining so much about so many things I have struggled with throughout my entire life, and then going to a doctor and the doctor saying, Well, no, you've outgrown it, or, you know, adults don't have ADHD or you know, you can't possibly have ADHD, because you did well in school or like all of these ways in which, yeah,

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 49:02

so here's, here's what I would say is that I think, I think we have to, I would invite us to take a historical view. Right? So in 1991, I think it was Sarah Selden came out with a first book on ADHD and women and changed the landscape. It was I mean, that was only what, 30 years ago when we said out loud, women can have ADHD. And then, you know, I got somebody has been pitching me to be on some podcast, it's like, ADHD doesn't exist, like, I am not, I'm not playing this game. And they sent me this video from 1995. And saying, it's every bit as accurate as it was, then I'm like, No, in fact, he's seen a ton of research done in the last 30 years. And, and we know so much more just the last 10 years. We know so much more than we did. And most of our practitioners don't get this education. Like you and I are super well informed because we've done a lot of work to get informed, but most of our practitioners And I'm not dismissing them for if there wasn't part of their education or they were educated before, like, I had a medical student who called me this year in the last couple of months. And she said, I am seeing so much ADHD in this in this population. I'm working in a clinic. She's she's in a residential community in Florida. And she said, these parents need something and nobody's getting it. And it's not in like medical curriculum, will you do a webinar for my medical school class? Because nobody's teaching it. So the doctors are getting it and the therapists aren't getting it. And then like, So are they didn't get it. I'm hopeful that they're going to start getting it in the in the coming years. But it takes 20 years for research to get into practice. Yeah. And so we're kind of caught in this stage right now. Well, and



Katy Weber 50:51

I, you know, it's also fascinating, too, because I think, you know, there's, there's a lot of question around why has there been such an increase in diagnoses since the past the beginning of the pandemic, right. And I'm always asking that question. Right. Which I see it. Yeah. Well, and I mean, I had an emotional breakdown. That's what happened to me. I mean, my kids were home, my husband was home, I was remote learning, I was the housekeeper, all of a sudden, I couldn't do my own job. I was basically just sitting there waiting for the next crisis to happen on Zoom. And I just, I was miserable. And, and, you know, that's where I realized,

Okay, I can't I can't do anything. Like I couldn't even you know, it all come to a head. And so I've spoken to many mothers, especially who came to their ADHD through, you know, just that the House of Cards just blowing right off the tables after the pandemic.

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 51:38

Yeah, and that third kid put me over the edge. Right, exactly.



Katy Weber 51:41

So there's always Yeah, I mean, you know, and same with like, I used to having a baby and like realizing now how much I struggled with what was just labeled postpartum depression or postpartum anxiety. But now I'm like, oh, no, it was lack of sleep and crying and all of the other stuff and hormones and,

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 51:59

and I think I could handle it. I accommodated for myself, when it was just me, when I was only responsible for me, and I could work more hours, if that's what it took. And I could do whatever I needed to do to manage my life to make to be successful for myself in my life. It wasn't until I had kids that I needed the resists different level of accountability. And I could no longer just accommodate for myself, because there were other parameters I had



Katy Weber 52:25

to hit. Yeah, yeah, that's such a good point. I you know, so it's funny to me, because I feel like here is this, you know, this diagnosis that is that is misunderstood in women. And then at the same time, you're also hearing the dismissive, like, everybody has ADHD right now, it's so trendy, that ADHD is over diagnosed. And, and it's like, you're going back and forth between these two ways, and what you realize like it's just bringing to the fore how much women are dismissed, right? And how much gaslighting there is around struggle as a woman, right? And how much that you know, we internalize all of that messages of like, well, you just can't get your shit together. You know, you just got to keep keep trying, or whatever it is, right? That we've been, we've been hearing our whole lives.

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 53:14

So so many things, I was many things, but there's this notion that somehow that somehow we as women should, should just be able to handle everything that comes and that we shouldn't have any struggle. And if we did, there's something wrong with us because we're struggling. It's just it's that in and of itself is pathological. Right? That's just so, so wrong on so many levels. And I just feel like we buy into it, we've all bought into it. On some level, this notion that we're supposed to be good girls pleaser is perfect, make it work for everybody else. And, you know, we turn out to be just as human as everybody else in our chest as as riddled with with challenges and foibles and capacity to do great things and also to struggle through it and and

we need each other to support each other in it. Because it's not going to just be handed, we have to we have to really we have to ask for what we want. We have to do it without apology. I think you were talking about this whole the stigma around ADHD. And one of the things I've really noticed in the last 10 years is we've seen the autism movement rise to the surface so profoundly in the last 20 years. When you look at those two diagnoses side by side from a public perspective, public perception perspective, right? You've got one that's a diagnosis of stigma and shame and judgment. You have another that started off as shame and became and has morphed to a diagnosis have concern and care. And, you know, I don't need to tell you which is which we are still stuck in stigma and shame around ADHD. And I have a mom, who has a kid with who's diagnosed with several issues on the spectrum kid has now is now come out as trans. She said she's getting so much more support from her community for the kid coming out as trans than she ever did with a kid because of the diet ADHD. Really unbelievable. And, and so we've got this the stigma around it, that's compounding. It doesn't matter the cause, like there's all this good research on whether it's over diagnosed or under diagnosed, or over medicated or unmedicated. And we're beginning to see that it's the quote over medication is not quite the problem, we thought it was quite the same way. But I think it's because we're still allowing that stigma to dominate the conversation. And as a parent, it's still an ADHD diagnosis still comes out as well. If they if you would just discipline them, there wouldn't be a problem. Whereas you look at something like an autism diagnosis or learning disability diagnosis, like, oh, we can help you with that. We could do something about that. Because it's more learnable. Right? It's more skill based repair, if



Katy Weber 56:23

you will. Well, that's what I love so much about Sarah Holden's work too, is that, you know, rather than focusing on here's how we're going to fix everything, she's like, let's, let's deal with the internalized stigma and the messages that have been told to us our entire lives, blow the roof off of those, because that's really what is happening here, which is like, we believe, I, if I could just do the thing, you know, everything would be fine. Like we have internalized those messages. And we need to like stop thinking that that is true, you know, and really just being like, of course, you don't want to do the dishes, who wants to do the dishes? Like all of these ways in which the dishes you were done? Yeah. But they still have to get done, but at least giving yourself permission to not be a domestic goddess or to be all of the things right, which brings us back to that emphasis on consistency with grades, right. That's all



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 57:18

connected. I know. Right? And I don't want to leave this conversation without without also plugging. Michelle and Sarah is workbook that they came out with a couple years. Yes. The radical Women's Guide, I guess that's what it's called. And it's just it's a fabulous, fabulous way for women to begin to read to deal with some of those demons and reject readdress the assumptions. Positive Intelligence is another great way to do that we teach. We don't teach it we we run the Positive Intelligence Program in our community several times a year so that parents can really challenge the saboteurs voices that yeah, have, right.



Katy Weber 57:55

Oh, my goodness, I can't believe how time has flown. I feel like I have so much I still want to

ask you I do I do always ask my guests. If you could rename ADHD to something else, would you? Would you call it something else? Which I have no answer for?

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 58:10

There's so many things, I would call it I so many. I don't have a pithy name. Now. I will, I will come up with one at some point. But I almost anything would be better than Attention Deficit Disorder, except for what it was before that, which was minimal brain dysfunction. So that was pretty bad, too. So you know, relatively speaking from a historical perspective, it's better. Now I don't I think we it's not about deficit. It's it's a self regulation. It's a brain regulation. condition. You know, I liked the work early on, Tom Hartman used to do some work on that whole hunter gatherer versus the farmer. Right. And, and there's something about the way that we're wired that is exciting and interesting and creative and can be challenging in typical society, but I think we should call ourselves the stimulation seekers. That's what



Katy Weber 59:10

I like alliteration to always fan simulator, Aisha. Let's talk about we didn't get to talk too much about impact parents, but I will definitely put a link to it. I'll talk about it in the introduction because I know I really want to hype your fantastic podcast and all the work you're doing and the books and but sanity school, is that something that starts

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 59:33

today? Can I let's just talk real quick about sanity? Yeah, I want to hear what you and Diane



Katy Weber 59:37

are doing for for 2022 and how people can find you and get more of you. So thank you

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Elaine Taylor-Klaus 59:43

so so you know, impact parents will give you a free download to put in the show notes so that people can come get some free, free stuff because we do a lot of free stuff. I say about 95% of what we do is free. And then you know we use fee based programs to pay for all of the free stuff that we do. And, and even in that we really our value is that we know that it's effective. So we want to make it affordable and accessible. So everything we do we make that effort. And, and so what we do is a combination of coaching, training and support. And we That's the secret to what we do is we're actually teaching coaching skills. So we Saturday school is a foundational training. It's a behavior therapy training program for parents, which is recommended treatment for kids with ADHD, and other executive function issues. And so the treatment recommendation is that if the kid has the issue, actually, the parents the one that needs the training, because the parents, the one that's creating the environment, and setting the expectations and empowering the positive, positivity, etc. So, Saturday school is a six class course, it's a training in this coach approach to behavior management, basically. And we've

been together working together for about five years, when we realized we were doing all this coaching and our parents in our community needed a basic training. And so we created sanity school in 2015, as a way to provide that foundation to save time and money so they could get the training and then use it in the coaching. And so it's available always on demand. And then we teach it every so often as well. But when you get it on demand you it comes with three months of support and access to us and all kinds of community. So it's not as passive as it sounds like it is. But it's it is, to me, it's like the best thing that any parent can do if your kids diagnosed with anything or you think they're going to be because it helps you get your head around it. Right? It sounds set that framework for how do I parent this kid, before you start getting into this to the details of it, because the details are going to be important. But getting your head in the game first, I think it's really powerful. So that's what Saturday school is about. And then what we're doing this year, last year, in in the pandemic, we started offering short courses. So we're now doing a series of four week courses. And we have some coaches we've trained and brought onto our into our community. And so they're going to be offering some of this year so so that for parents who want to live experience, but don't want a long term commitment, we do have, you know, long term coaching groups, but people can come in for a month at a time and get support, which is really great.



Katy Weber 1:02:18

And so that's all under the umbrella of the of the online community



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 1:02:22

with everything. Yeah, everything impact parents, there's a programs page and everything, one way or another. And then you know, as I say, there's lots of free webinars and free ways to get in and get a sense of what we do. But in terms of programming, it's it's a combination of training and coaching, basically. And then everything has a support component.



Katy Weber 1:02:40

Awesome. Yeah. Yeah,



Elaine Taylor-Klaus 1:02:43

we feel really lucky.



Katy Weber 1:02:46

I know it is, it is incredible. I've learned so much about how I learn to which I think has been really interesting since my diagnosis, because I had such, you know, I had such self esteem issues when it came to my own intelligence because I perform so dismally in academia, right. And so it's been really interesting to, for me to and to be able to kind of be okay with how I learn. And I think for so many of us how we learn about our ADHD is through conversation and

through shared lived experience, and it's not necessarily going to be found in the DSM, or even you know, it's by sharing and realizing, Oh, I'm not the only one, there's other people this is incredible.

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 1:03:26

And and what we really pay attention to is to make sure that it's multimodal so that you know, that you can watch it, or you can listen to it, or you can read it, or you can talk about it, or you can like now we started discussion groups like like, it doesn't matter what your mode of learning and processing is, you should be able to do it. And so everything that we do, we try to design it so that however you process information we can get you to and we can help you process the information. Like there's no stigma that you should be able to do it a certain way. It just doesn't work that way. And Diane and I process very differently. So that helps a lot. Yeah, I



Katy Weber 1:04:06

actually didn't know that Diane did not have ADHD until I heard that in your podcast. It's like Oh, interesting. Because for me, I've started that's the other thing. I'm so immersed in it. I'm like, does everybody interesting have babies? Oh, well, thank you so much. It's been such a pleasure. I was so excited to hear your personal story and your journey but I also feel like I eked out some free parenting. No, but but really appreciate your perspective and what you are doing for for parents, as you you know, if you know, you know, when it comes to the term complex exchange, right?

E

Elaine Taylor-Klaus 1:04:43

You're like, you don't really have to ask, but the publisher had to ask so you know, what can I do? Thank you. I really really enjoyed it. And if we can support you just let us know.