

Janet Murray: ADHD & our insatiable appetite for planners

Sat, 11/13 7:30AM 57:15

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, planner, adhd, feel, thinking, content, bit, person, sense, loved, post, realize, struggling, episode, podcast, planning, teacher, newspaper, apologizing, life

SPEAKERS

Janet Murray, Katy Weber



Katy Weber 00:00

I feel like I know so much about your story because like I said, I did listen to your interview with Tracy Otsuka a lot when I was first diagnosed about a year ago, I binge listen to the first like 80 episodes of Tracy, because podcasts are so grateful for that podcast. And I related so much to that interview did with her and I went back and listen to your kind of coming out episode, which I saw that you just released today. So I was able to go back this morning and listen to your update because that was something I wanted to find out for a year, a year in ADHD. In ADHD life is basically like a decade in terms of thoughts and changes and development. Yeah,



Janet Murray 00:41

yeah. Yeah.



Katy Weber 00:43

But first of all, I guess I'll ask you, you know, when were you diagnosed? It was during lockdown. Right? And so when were you first diagnosed? And what were some of the things that were happening in your life that really led you to seek out the ADHD diagnosis.



Janet Murray 01:00

So I was diagnosed last summer. So that would be I think, summer 2020 During lockdown. But actually, I've been researching it and looking into it for a little while because somebody who I work with someone who works for me, in fact, it said, I've just read this book about ADHD. I think I've got it and I think you've got it too. I was a little bit offended, which I'll come on to why in a sec. But I was hot. Because before I do what I do now I'm entrepreneur now. But I was a journalist. And then I was a teacher. And I've worked with loads of kids with ADHD, the classic boy bouncing around the classroom. I didn't really know much about it. And I

was a bit like, what, like, why would you say that, but I went off and read this book that she recommended. And actually, I can't remember what book it was. But the first line is something like you probably won't read all of this book because you've got ADHD, which I didn't. But I read the first part of it. And I thought, oh, so So I just started looking into it. And I certainly had always had this feeling throughout my life that I was different, that I didn't operate in the way that that other people did. And a lot of it was around my kind of tenacious, tenacious nurse and my driven nurse and like I was a massive workaholic, whatever I was doing. And I couldn't understand why other people weren't driven in the same way why they weren't like waking up in the middle of night thinking about what why they didn't like holidays. Or, like, why they why why I didn't like holidays, I should say, why I struggled to switch off like why I found weekends hard, why I found it hard to take time off why I just was driven all the time to be kind of working and and achieving. I also had these question marks from childhood around why I was really really good at some stuff, but really bad at other things. So I was really good at English history, music, things that I was interested in. And I mean, like really good, but terrible at things that I wasn't interested in. I had this growing sense as I was a child that I was much cleverer than people gave me credit for it. I don't even know what really where I got from. But my report cards were right the way through school, starting to top marks for things that I liked and was good at and scraping the barrel at other other things. So there was this kind of driven nurse and this kind of like, I just felt like I couldn't switch off the whole time like weekends, evenings, I was always thinking about projects, I was always like wanting to get back to my desk all the time, I found holidays really hard. weekends, I can be in a terrible state because the time is not structured and what to do with myself, I feel guilty about not being productive all the time. Also struggling with day to day stuff. So like how can I launch a really successful online business but not be able to pay a bill or not be able to not be able to remember somebody's birthday or? Or remember to say thank you to somebody who sent me a present or was always getting late payments. And so it's how could I be so high achieving and so productive in in some ways, but then also so well, just a bit of a mess in in other areas. So the more I started to read about all of this stuff and start to bring it all together when I started to research about ADHD. And I started thinking, Oh, maybe that could be made as Does that make sense?



Katy Weber 04:45

Oh, absolutely. And even the even the initial sense of feeling insulted. I think I relate to that as well because I you know, I've talked about this on the podcast like my therapist was sort of gently suggesting for a few years to me that I should look into it. And there was that sort of sense of like, you know, when you don't when you haven't looked into it, especially as a grown woman, you know, you have these misconceptions. And you have there is so much of that underlying stigma, in terms of like, do you view me as a chaotic mess, because I work really, really hard to seem like I'm together, and not really putting it not really putting together the pieces, which is like, no, the point is, you are really together, and you feel like a hot mess. You know, it's almost like the reverse.



Janet Murray 05:33

Yeah. And I think there was another stage in life that it really started to come up with when I had my daughters and my daughter's now. She's just turned 16. But I'd always wanted to be a mum. And I was desperate to have children and had quite a lot of problems having children. But then when my daughter turned out, she did turn up, she was very premature. So it was quite stressful. But when she did turn up, I was like, Oh, so this is this is what it's like, like, why is it boring? Why does everybody else seem to be really enjoying this where I'm, like, at home, feeling trapped in this mess of sterilizing bottles and making baby food, and everybody else seems to be really happy. Everybody else seems to be really enjoying this lifestyle, like, are they all lying is is everybody having a great time, and I'm not. That was another another point for me as well. And at the time, I was like, work was just, it was my escape, it was just like, wow, I

can go off. I was working as a freelance journalist at the time, I can go off and just work in my office for a couple of hours. That was like the best thing ever. And I think it was, it was those times as well. And realizing that I wasn't like other women, I struggled to keep on top of all the different jobs in the house. And again, as I started to research and read all the books, and I started that was quite common, like other people seem to be able to keep on top of their laundry and keep their kids clean and put a healthy meal on the table every week or whatever. Every day, I should say. And yeah, I just was was I felt like an alien. I felt really different to other people, if that makes sense.



Katy Weber 07:14

Yeah, you know, bringing up your daughter, I remember you talked about that. In your I think maybe it was both the interview and your own episode about the that feeling of like, feeling like you should have gratitude for being a mother. And And yes, I mean, like, being a mother is a wonderful thing. I'm grateful for it. I love my children. And yet at the same time, there really is this feeling of like, why can I not be present with my children? And now realizing, you know, being present is something that's really difficult for us. So yeah, I really, really related to that feeling of like, why am I not enjoying this as much as I feel like I should be?



Janet Murray 07:54

Yeah, and play playing with children, like other people seem to enjoy playing with children. I'm like, I can only enjoy this if there's a purpose. So like baking or craft where there's an end goal. And I don't even like craft because I have got no patience with fiddly things. But like this playing on the floor with dolls, and like, there's no end goal, there's no purpose to this. So this is really hard, I had to really steal myself, because I am going to play for half an hour. And I am going to try and be in the moment and not think about all the other things that I could be doing. But everybody else seemed to be finding it fine. And getting on just fine with it.



Katy Weber 08:32

Now did things change for you, in the pandemic, where you felt like I really need to, I really need to get this taken care of.



Janet Murray 08:41

I think it was the kind of the sort of driven pneus around my work and my business, I think and I think that came more to the fore in the pandemic, because there was more time to work if you like so not being able to go out and mix with people not being forced to, to do things and go to things in the same way. Suddenly, weekends became even more difficult because the temptation just to sit and work and to try and achieve became more and more and more there was no excuse not to do it. And I was kind of thinking this. This isn't healthy at all. Like I should be wanting to do things in the house or I should be wanting to wanting to create things or decorate the house, whatever. But it was just like, I was just driven and driven and driven. And I wouldn't say that I became a no more anxious or I just, I just maybe even have more time to think about things because I have less time more time to think and less time to talk to other people or be with other people. And yeah, I just I just maybe it was more of that time and space. I don't know. Yeah, for



Katy Weber 09:59

me. It was really is a sense that I was like generating ideas on hyperdrive during the pandemic I think because there was so much downtime, and yet I didn't have the ability to follow through on anything because my kids were home and my husband was home and so my space was invaded. And I always felt like I had to be kind of on call especially with remote learning like it just felt like there was some some you know, emergency with Zoom or Wi Fi or something at all you know, I had to be kind of always have one ear listening for one of my children so I couldn't do anything and so it was that it was that pull between like having all these ideas and wanting to be productive and yet also sort of feeling like I spent a lot of time just sitting waiting and not being able to start any projects and that's when I sort of really felt like I was like that's when I started to have the emotional breakdown which is just like had I can't live like this and that's when I realized Rage was a big part of ADHD. You're 45 at this point right? Yeah, I you know I'm amazed at how many women I've interviewed who were the good kid, you know who have a sibling that exhibited the more stereotypical symptoms and they were the good kid and how that kind of led to the anxiety you know of needing to be less problematic or you know, like not wanting to disrupt things and you know leads to so many of us have that people pleasing element to our personality and to think about how the sort of comorbidities of people pleasing and anxiety just kind of foster and foster Throughout your life as you, you know, not only are you struggling, but then you can't even express that because you don't have the words to articulate the ways in which you're struggling. But also, you're not supposed to be the one who struggles.



Janet Murray 15:15

Yeah, and I think I spent most of my childhood, obviously not not conscious of it at the time, but trying to achieve to get myself noticed, in a way because having a sibling who, like I say, hasn't been diagnosed, but I would say, you know, is pretty dead set. Would you know that they were very preoccupied with what he was doing and what he was getting up to, and quite rightly so because there was usually something going on. But I think part of my overachieving was to do with Hey, look at me, look at me, I've got something to add, I'm valuable, I'm good. Like I'm good at. I'm not good at everything. But I'm really, really good at some things. And I don't think that's probably a healthy pattern. And I think we're the ADHD brain. You just take everything further, further than the next person, if that makes sense.



Katy Weber 16:10

Oh, my goodness, absolutely. I'm sort of dealing with that with my own children in terms of the way I notice that, as parents, it's so it, it's, it's so easy to fall into those like categorizations, right, like, you're the good one, you're the easy one. You're the one who gets straight A's. You're the one who messes up and like I see it through looking back at my own life, how problematic that was that my parents did that to my brothers and to me and how that kind of really shaped to my view of myself. And as you know, as I was the poor student and I had a very similar sense to you, which was like no, I realize I'm bright. I just can't show it in any meaningful way. And and so yeah, like it's I really sort of as a parent now have to keep that in check a lot of the time of like, placing these labels on my children and realizing how what that does to you as you grow up. No, it's interesting looking at your, at your CV is is very ADHD. Right? I mean, I think they I think when you look up like best jobs for people with ADHD journalist and teacher both show up on that list. And as a former journalist, it makes complete sense to me. I loved working on newspapers, I love deadlines. You know, the first time in my life that I ever really felt like, I was excited about anything. That was when I joined the newspaper and University. And I was just like, so motivated. And I just loved this room full of snarky, you know, underachieving bastards who chained smoked, and drank copious amounts

of coffee, and like, it was just, you know, they were my people, I just loved it so much. And I loved that pressure. And I let I really thought it was interesting that you talked about how teaching, there are so many elements of teaching that weren't ADHD friendly, like the mundane tasks of having to remember and keep track of things. And you know, it's, I get how teaching can be very popular, you know, a lot of people with ADHD end up teaching because you're on your feet, and you have you know, things change, and you have these one on one, interpersonal relationships, but I hadn't thought about all of the underlying stuff like marking grade grading papers, and really, you know, the, the repetition.

J

Janet Murray 21:25

Yeah, so the things I loved about teaching, were those things that you just mentioned there. So being on your feet, like the idea of having a job where you have to go and sit at the same desk for weeks on end, like just doesn't doesn't appeal to me. So I liked that. And it was interesting what a teenager, so quite challenging every day is different. But I remember, we used to have to fill out our teachers planner every year, which is quite ironic, because I now have a plan that I sometimes think about out when I'm using. But and it used to form with this with this sense of dread, because I used to think, Oh, I'm going to be in this classroom at the same time with this same group of kids. For the rest of the year. Sometimes you might have a two week timetables or there might be a little bit of variation. But generally, I'm going to be here with these kids, maybe teaching them Macbeth instead of Much Ado About Nothing or something. But I'm going to be here doing this thing. And that used to fill me with dread. But the other thing that I found really hard, and maybe my perception of it is worse than it is I was thinking about this, whether I felt that my colleagues thought badly badly of me. And maybe they didn't even but I felt badly of myself because I could never get a set of books back in. So for me that was just thinking was. So if you had 13 Macbeth's, and you give them out and the idea that, like, you'd be able to record all the numbers of the books, because they were numbered in the right part of your register, and then get it back off the child without losing it was just like the hardest thing in the world or filling out the wig. And I remember getting a few I roles and if you raised eyebrows about my books, it might well be that I, I perceived myself as being worse than other people or being chased up because I lost paperwork I was, maybe I was better than I thought I was. But I certainly felt that, that that was where my inadequacies showed up. Like I was a good classroom teacher. And I was very diligent. But also I just had no I had no control over my workload, which is kind of like I just couldn't teachings hard, you know, and you talk to any teacher, and they'll say, Well, you're busy all day. And then you go home, and you have to plan your lessons and MacBooks. And it's hard. But they didn't seem to be up to like two o'clock in the morning, like I was hard, or they didn't seem to be working every weekend. Like they seem to be able to get it done. In you know, long hours, but not not the same as me. So, yeah, there were a few things about teaching. Generally, I liked it. But I was heading for burnout at a very young age, which was why I decided to move over to journalism.



Katy Weber 23:59

Yeah, cuz journalism won't burn you out.

J

Janet Murray 24:03

Well, the thing I like about journalism, or I liked was it was that you were genuinely working on one thing at a time. So I say I say that, but you might be working on four stories at a time. But there would come that time, where you would go, right, I'm going to, I've got to write this the deadlines at this time. I've got to pull all of my notes together. And I'm just focusing on this one thing, and then I will, I will move on to the next few things. But there were always these points in the week where you just put your head down and

you have to work to the deadline. And I was just because I taught journalism as well. I was a journalist, journalism lecturer, a few universities in the UK and I used to say to my students, if you were the kind of kid that got your homework done at the last minute, but did it well, like journalism, you'll do well in journalism because you have to be able to hold your nerve that you can leave it to the last minute because the News, the news doesn't kind of conveniently happen at times that fit in with your deadlines like you have to be would sit, pull, pull out the all the stops and produce a good piece of work. Even if you're not feeling creative or inspired, or you know, you just have to go to do it and do a high quality piece of work right at the last minute. And that did suit me. And I liked the adrenaline. And I also liked things like getting shouted out by, by MPs, by politicians, or like, even like people putting the phone down. Or like, there was a certain amount of excitement and, you know, celebrities like managing to get an interview with a celebrity that you didn't think you'd ever be able to get or a politician or being being on the phone and somebody giving you that killer line, either. Oh, my God, or did they realize they just said that, because that's just gonna be such a great story. There was a hell of a lot of adrenaline in that I think. And I can see you're smiling. You know exactly what I mean. But it's high at the high, low, high, low, high low. I used to have a lot of neck pain, a lot of problems, because I knew I was conscious. Hence all the time, which I don't get now even though I spent a lot of time at my computer, but I think it was because there were deadlines and deadlines. It was I was often so close to the wire



Katy Weber 26:11

that absolutely, and he would be holding in your your bladder for for hours. And you know, it's funny, I actually yeah, I loved all of that I actually sort of went from writing, I started out writing, reporting and writing and editing and moved into the design elements of page design and art direction. And again, it was the same of like putting together the front page and all the different puzzle pieces of layout that I ended up loving and doing more of and more of the copy editing the headline writing and small copy. Because I felt like that was even less pressure than writing the article. But I loved working at small papers where you had to do everything, you know, where it was like all of these little bits and all of these different plates and everything was coming together. And then finally, you know, deadline would hit at midnight and everything would go and it would go off and you would, you'd let out a big exhale. And then you could go home with it with a with a clean slate and start again in the morning. And one of the like most boring jobs I ever had was at the most prestigious newspaper I worked at because everybody did one job. And you had to do that one job really, really well. And you had to wait for everybody else to do their job before you could do your job. And it was just the most boring job ever. I mean, it's the first thing I ever talked about when I because I'm like, Oh yeah, I work there. But it was my least favorite job in terms of being a newspaper designer, because I loved. I loved all the small places where you had to do everything.



Janet Murray 27:41

Something that's come up for me recently I've been thinking about this recently is I used to fill in for an editor at The Guardian. And I used to upset people big time. And I'm really like, I think I'm quite an affable person, and quite a friendly person. But when I was editing on a newspaper people, so sometimes they would be quite well known people, but they'd send their copy in and then I'd say, thank you for that. I just need you to change X, Y, and Zed. I don't quite get this bit if you could just change that bit or whatever. And I used to say to myself, because these are often like Oxbridge educated like a really intellectual men who who were maybe not used to being addressed or directly on are realized. And, and I used to just, I was very direct and used to say like this bits, great. But I need you to change this, this and this. And I don't know if it was partly because I was like the supply teacher and they were playing me up, or it was I suspected it was because I was a woman but my regular editor was a woman. But oh my god, my editor used to come back to us and laugh and say like how many economists if we lost this time, and I was just

really direct. And I've only started to think about that in the last few years. Because I think I'm actually really quite an emotionally intelligent person. I think I am quite aware of other people. But for me, it was just so straightforward. Like I am in this job as the editor, my job is to give you feedback. So we can get this to be the best possible article and get it get it on the page. So in that context, it seemed perfectly reasonable for me to just say how it was and just kind of say, This is what I need you to change, can you change it up, but people used to get so upset? And now reflecting on it? I do wonder whether it there was a kind of neuro divergence about it. But I in that context, I just couldn't. I just I've spoken to people about it since and people saying I'm very direct and giving feedback, but I, I don't take offense to feedback. If the context is I'm working for somebody and you know, my job is to give them the best piece of content or whatever. I just take the feedback and I change it and that's always how I worked as a writer, but I look back on that now and wonder whether I was very sort of neurodivergent about it and I didn't appreciate that other people. I was straightforward. I am a writer, I get feedback. And I act on that feedback, whether I agree with it or not, or if I disagree with it, I might, you know, I might talk about that. But ultimately, I know the editor is boss and I have to deal with. But I don't know if you can identify that with Katie. But I really look back at it now. And like, maybe I was just being really new diversions.



Katy Weber 30:22

I feel like we could do an entire episode on like, the etiquette of communication as a woman. Yeah. Especially because I'm, you know, I'm the same way I'm like, cut to the chase. I remember a theater teacher of mine in high school, said something that I still remember to this day where she said, if something is really, really good, you have a lot of feedback and a lot of places where it could be better. If something's not very good, you have nothing to say about it. And so I always thought about that, yeah, when it came to editing pieces, right, where you would, you would only give the editing part and, and I would have to stop myself. But this was something I had to learn over time to which was the same, I had the same issue, which was like, I just was very brusque, people always complained that I, you know, was was, I didn't like, pander to kind of that sense of validation. And, in my mind, I'm sure they just called me a bitch. But, you know, the, I have to go back, I would always have to go back after I got all of the like criticism out of the way, and kind of dumped that out, then I would go back and start the email with like, here's what I loved great job on this, you know, and I would actually have to, like artificially put that in as a sense of like, you know, warming them up for for the criticism, because I got that exact same feedback from people. And I think it's the same even with emails now, right? Where you have to go back and you have to look and be like, how many? How many exclamation marks? Do I have? Do I have enough? Do I have too many? Do I sound crazy? You know, where? And I think that that's like a very female situation, which is that kind of need to be likable and need to not sound overbearing, I don't think men have that. Same. You know, I don't think they self edit in the same regard in terms of like, how it's coming across. And and then then I think there's also just sort of the nuances of the written word, right? Where you, you have no idea it sounds very, it sounds very light hearted in my head. But then when somebody is reading it, they're like, Wow, you're really just



Janet Murray 32:24

I used to have people say things like, Well, I've done as much work on it as I can now. And so I've spent three hours on it, I can't spend any more. And I would say things like, well, I can't publish this just to be nice, which was absolutely, I can't publish it just to be nice, because you spent three hours on it, it's got to be like, it's got to be have the, you know, in the right kind of shape for us to get it on the page. And I realize now that being that kind of newspaper environment, when you're in deadline, you know, part of it is about you don't have time to kind of give it I don't if I'm allowed to square but like a shit sandwich type thing. And but I'd be like, I can see through that. Like, I can see through someone saying, Well, this is to

have lay, but if I could just change this, this and this. So I just be like, you know, this person is a professional. They're a writer, they're economist, like, I would imagine that they it wouldn't even occurred to me that they would need to have it sugar coated or whatever. But I realized now that that might have, I was just so black and white about it. I think that's what it what I'm getting at is that it was this black and white thinking. And I used to often say that I thought that my I think I was a really good editor. And I say, I used to joke that because I wasn't as clever as some of these Oxford, Adan type people, I was able to see where it was just fluff, like where it was just fluff and bluster. And I could just see it. And I'd be like, and I wasn't embarrassed to say I don't understand what that means. I don't I don't think I our readers will understand that is it? Oh, well, it's the audio and I was like, well, just because people read the Guardian that doesn't mean that they have time to decode this very complex metaphor. So So So yeah, that was always the joke that I'd always lost half the half the column economists and and I think it was a little bit of being a woman but also just being very straight talking and just far too black and white on that particular issue.



Katy Weber 35:30

Now it seems like there's not a clear connection between being a journalist and being a making planners and journals and diaries. But when you actually it's quite a logical chain of events, right?



Janet Murray 35:45

Yeah. So I kind of fell into entrepreneurship. And so basically, people would ask me, like, how do I get into the guardian? Or how do I get press coverage? So I was getting this really nice, lucrative consultancy work where people were paying me to go and teach them how to get press coverage. And so how can I get more affairs? I know what I'll do is I'll start, I'll start a blog. And then I started to think, Okay, I've sorted this book, how can I get more people to read it? So I started reading about that. And so I started learning about search engine optimization, and email marketing and all this stuff. And then suddenly, I was in this, oh, maybe I could make a business out of this. Maybe I could teach people about initially, it was press and PR and marketing. So I kind of fell into that. But yeah, so what happened was when I got into the entrepreneurial space, people were really struggling with content. And they were, I don't know what to post like, I don't know. Or I was looking at people's content and thinking, that's not very interesting. Like, what? Why would you post that? That's really boring. And I was I was learning about my own content. And as a journalist, obviously, you have this innate sense of timing. So it's all about my editor used to say to me, or why would somebody need to hear about this now because as a journalist, you work from a calendar. And you'll know I mean, when I talk about on diary and off diary, I think so on diary has events and things that are scheduled and coming up and you know about so, in the UK, that might be parliamentary debates, or sort of key events or sort of key, select committee meetings, or whatever, in the government. But then off diary is obviously breaking news, things that happened. So I had this real sense that you should only be talking about something like so we talked earlier about my ADHD episode on my own podcast and how it's gone out. I've republished it today, because it's ADHD Awareness Month. So it's this sense of timing. But I could see all these other people struggling around me like with, I don't know what to publish when, and I don't, you know, and this just felt like the easiest thing in the world for me. So is that, okay? So in my usual sort of ADHD way, I thought, wouldn't it be really cool if I created this content planner that had all, like awareness days and key dates and like prompts that would help people come up with content. So I got my designer to mock up a picture of what it would look like. And then I just sent an email, it's my email list and said, like, do you want to buy this? If you buy it, now, you'll get it for I think it was 1950. The first one. But if you hang on until later, you'll you'll you'll pay more. And it was literally was just a test. It was like a very simple page that I created. Enough people bought it for me to validate the idea. And I thought, okay, that that's good. So we made it. And I think the first time I did it, I had the idea

in November when we made it in November. And since then, so that was five years ago, I think it was, we've got a bit more sophisticated, but basically this planner that I created on the back of an envelope on a whim and just sold, just see what has become like the kind of pivotal, pivotal part of my business. So I now have this planner that I that I sell, I have a content planning event that we do every year, and I have a content planning membership as well. And the irony being is like, I'm the worst planner in the world, like, like I'm very consistent. And I've had I had a podcast, I've got a podcast, and I had one that went for 450 episodes over four years and over a million downloads and very consistent, but I'm not the best planner in the world. So I regularly laugh at myself about that I've now got this whole business, this multi six figure business planner when I've got the world's worst plan, basically.



Katy Weber 39:29

Well, I think it's I think it's really understanding what structures you need, right? I mean, I think I am the I forget I forget my children exist when they're not home. So I have a reminder that says go pick up your kids, you know, like I so I have to be I have reminders that pop up on my phone all day long for the simplest tasks, because I know that I will forget them right and so I don't forget them because I have these reminders. So then am I a forgetful person or am I not a forgetful person because I've set up a structure that works for me so that I'm reminded constantly throughout the day, if I didn't have those, I wouldn't do any of those things. And so it's sort of again, it's like, you've sounds like you've set up this content creation planner, which is does everything that you wouldn't normally think to do yourself, it's already sort of set up for you in a structure that works.



Janet Murray 40:18

Well, I think it works for somebody who, who finds planning hard, which is how I came up with it. So I have this thing called overhead planning, which, which is a strange term. But anyway, I think what a lot of people do a concept planning or any kind of planning is to do in a very linear way. So they're like, Okay, so I'm going to plan some content, I'm going to start on Monday, and then I'm going to do Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then say, they start in January, by the second week of January, they're like, Oh, I'm all done with content planning. Like, this is awful, you know, because it just feels too much. So I have always been able to look at the bigger picture. So I would look at my content planning, I've never started with what am I doing tomorrow or next week, I'd start with like, next year. So for example, we're recording this in October 2021. I already know that next year, I'm going to be launching my planner again, in August 2022, I'm going to run an event in November. So I would start there. So I'd start like next year. And I'd be like I divide my year into quarters. And I just start by just putting a few things. Okay, so I know that that plan is going to launch in August, and then November, I've got my event and then I've got this happening. So that for me feels a lot less overwhelming, because you're just starting by looking at across your year, writing down a couple of things that are happening. And then that because this plan that I've created is all based around this content planning system, and then looking at it in quarters, and just like breaking it down. I say okay, what was going to be happening over the next few months and putting like big picture ideas in there. So the detail because I really struggled with detail. So I'm great at coming up with. And the thing about this, when you run a business and my clients for my planner, they will they will business owners, is that that's how you sell more stuff. Like if you can look next year, if I'm already thinking and when I've got I'm not sure my planner next August. So that means that I need to book in to get the branding done in next February. And it means I need to do a podcast episode on this, you know, in eight weeks time or whatever. I can tote my brain can totally do that. Because it's not overwhelming because it's not details. It's just big picture thinking. So then it's about breaking it down from quarters. And then every month they just sit down and look across the month and go okay, right what aware, you know what awareness days are going on ADHD month, maybe I'll put that podcast episode out again and know,

are there any sort of like fun days, I can create content around? So for me, it's about just taking, I would say it's like a videographer. So you take a look at what I'm actually doing with my hands now. But it's like a wide shot of the year. And then you gradually get closer and closer. And I think if you're somebody who struggles with detail as I do, that feels a lot less overwhelming. So I think I almost without meaning to created the planner that I wish somebody would create for me that started big and wasn't about the detail if that makes sense.



Katy Weber 43:07

Yeah, I mean, I think for me with my coaching, online contents, the biggest issue for me is remembering to post and then once I remember to post, you know, thinking, Okay, what, what do I even have to say? I mean, I always have a million things to say it's just a matter of like, what's the one thing I'm going to focus on today? And so yeah, I mean, what I want is somebody to tell me today's, you know, Monday, you posted this Tuesday, you post this right? And then even better have someone else to post it for me. But it's the same, like it's that same idea of like, yeah, you you. I think so many small businesses run into that with social media, which is just the mundane city of modernity. That sounds weird. Anyway, the how mundane it is to post over an O You know, the fact that people need to see messages over and over and over again, I create a thing I post about it once and then I don't understand why nobody comes flocking to it, you know, where I'm like, Do I really have to post about this every day? Do I really like is that really what it comes down to? We just need to be hit over the head over and over and over again. And as a consumer, the answer is yes, absolutely.



Janet Murray 44:22

But the other thing was that everybody was always saying to me, I just wish somebody could tell me what to post like when so like because exactly what you were saying that. But the problem with that is that, obviously, we have to create content that's for our it's like work your newspaper, like if you work in a newspaper, you have to create content for the audience of that newspaper and what they're interested in. And if you create content that you're only interested in, or that would be better suited to another audience, it's not going to land. So unfortunately, what what most people want is they want templates. They want you to kind of just say hey, just post this and but actually then ADHD brain would get really bored with that anyway, but so I've been working probably for the last five years to make this plan a better and better, and I kept mulling that over in my head the whole time it's like, so people want me to tell them what to post where and when I can't do that, because that's not going to help them get sales and they're going to get it off their to do list but they're not going to get sales. And then I came up with this thing this year, which I call a four by four strategy, which is just basically a kind of came to the conclusion by working with only people that most people post too much anyway. And like if all of us just showed up four days a week, and posted something like four days out of seven. That's it, and we did it consistently, you know, with the odd weekend, you know, or sometimes I have times where do I want to post, then that will be a lot better than what a lot of people are do is I call it yo yo content creations, that yo yo dieting where you like starting a Monday and then by Wednesday is totally cheesed off. So I came up with these like this four by four strategy, four styles of content four days a week, really easy to remember, that's always thinking as well, how can I share something with somebody that's like really easy to remember four hours of content four days a week, and my planner has evolved. And that's really what it's about. But it comes from that whole thing about just wanting to make it easier. And just to break it down smaller and smaller. And I'm, I think I picked this up when I was a teacher as well about. Most of us need frameworks or templates or not templates to copy, but almost like a column like your bicycle stabilizers, kind of thing. But if you can give somebody like a template to follow the first few times they do it, that, you know, I've got these four styles of content, but people might decide that actually, they only want to do one of them. And

that's fine, but showing up and doing that. Because you know how to do that is better than not showing up at all. And there were lots of other things that inspired me this is what were the crazy places that my brain goes. But I was thinking about, you know, those water bottles that you can buy where it tells you how much water you drink over the day. And, and so, and I was thinking, how could I? How could I turn that into content to help with content planning. So this year in our in the planner, we've actually got little bits that you can tick off just you know, so that you've done your four days for accountability. So you can say, oh, you know, I can color in the little circles and tick them off and say like, I've done my for four days this week. Actually, I've done five so like brownie points for me. And so yeah, this is really evolved this planner, and I kind of laugh and say that I'm like the worst person in the world to start a planner, because I'm really disorganized. I struggle with detail. But in a way, what's evolved is, is something that does work for people who struggle with detail because you could literally with you know, four styles of content four days a week, you could open up your planner and just post spontaneously every day. That's it's not it's not like, if that works for you. But if that kind of makes sense. So, so I think there is method in the madness of me having a plan.



Katy Weber 47:52

Oh, no, absolutely it, I love it. I'm I'm sold. But now on a more broad spectrum in terms of you know, if you're not a content creator, if you're just sort of a mom and a partner and a woman trying to get through your day, you know, why do we have why do we continually collect calendars and and we can't seem to ever feel organized. I mean, I feel like there's that sense of needing to be organized is something that eludes us. I think just because of the level of chaos in our brains, I think we're just never going to feel settled the way that like you said, you know, like, we're never going to feel relaxed on vacation. We're never gonna feel relaxed on the weekends. It's just a certain like, base level of chaos that we kind of have to live with and forgive. But I'm curious what when you talk about the love hate relationship with planners? Why, what's what's falling apart there?




Janet Murray 48:53

Well, this is really interested selling a planner has been really interesting for me, because I think our problem with planners isn't the planners, it's our it's us thinking that to get value out of a planner that we have to write in it or use it every day. And actually, I've created a lot of content about this. So objection content for selling my planet is actually I, I sell this fella the funny thing that I don't really want him when that much but I do use it. But to get value out of a planner or some kind of planning tool. Where did we get the idea that we have to use it every single day and we have to I think it's like everything that we buy we think it's only valuable to us. So I find myself saying to clients a lot like I've got clients who never write a thing in this planner, I've got some that write in every single bit you know, but why does everybody want to be that person who writes in every single bit because we're not all like that. Some people just use it as a reference they look up these awareness days some people they might use it to plan out a project in it you know there might be but if they get a value from that bit and I've personally come to convention that our problem with planners isn't the plan. as planners themselves, it's that we think we have to use them in a certain way. And, and that's where all the problems come is the fact that we're putting pressure on ourselves. I think I buy a planner. And it's only valuable if I use it in this certain way. And I use it every single year. And I don't pick it up and put it down. And I certainly don't use pandas like that I don't know about, you



Katy Weber 50:21


that self acceptance and that that sense of like no longer apologizing for the way you do things, but really kind of, you know, not trying to change yourself or other people but really finding the superpower in AI even though I hate that word sometimes. But, you know, finding, you know, really leaning in to what your strengths are and being able to kind of change that inner narrative because for me, that's absolutely been the biggest change for me, which is like, yeah, we spent our whole lives being told the way we do things is wrong. So I get it. We really, really have some terrible self esteem. But you know, the biggest change for me is to realize like what I embrace bring to the table and to Yeah, not apologize for who I am. And and to see the value in how I have been doing things. And yeah, I loved I loved the way you articulate it much better than I'm articulating it right now.

 Janet Murray 55:17

I sit well, I shared in this this podcast episode, which was a update of the episode that I did about my ADHD diagnosis that, like with my team, I often used to feel like I, I was almost like apologizing. I was giving people work like and apologizing for well, you know, if you weren't with me, I'm not the most organized person in the world. And like, don't expect me to have my cup my content planned and, you know, and then I was like, well, actually, there are other entrepreneurs that people could work for. And if you're the kind of person that it really winds you up, if somebody is a little bit more chaotic than the next person. There are other people that people can work with. And, and I felt like for example, I've come to the point where I have my ops person who just tells me what I need to do. Because we use Asana, we use this tool called Asana to help keep us organized. And I just find it overwhelming. There's too many tasks. So I just get to tell me what I need to do. And I feel a bit guilty, like I'm making everybody else use this tool. But actually, it's my business. And this is, you know, this works for me. I shouldn't be feeling guilty about that or thinking, well, if I'm making everybody else use Asana, then I should do it. I think that's part of the kind of cycle you can get into, isn't it?

 Katy Weber 56:25

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Another entire episode could be dedicated to apologies. And we apologize for simply existing, it drives me crazy. Yeah. And that's another thing I kind of have to go through with my emails to like, am I apologizing for something that I really should be apologizing for? Or am I just apologizing for existing? And I have to go through and edit that out? Because my you know, I feel like our tendency is to be like, I'm so sorry to interrupt you. And it's like, I used to bother me so much with coworkers who would start an email with I'm sorry to bother you. And I'm like, we work together. Your job is to bother me. Well, thank you so much.

 Janet Murray 57:05

Thanks for having me. I'm an avid listener. So it's always nice to be interviewed for podcasts that you listen to. So that's very nice.