

# Lisa Dos Santos: Codependency & multipotentiality

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## SPEAKERS

Lisa Dos Santos, Katy Weber

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Lisa Dos Santos 00:00

When you have ADHD a lot of the time you question what is right and what's wrong and I always felt like I was wrong, inherently wrong no matter what I do, I'm wrong. It's almost like I look to others to tell me what I should do and shouldn't do. And so every single relationship I was in, I would chameleon myself. And it was very impulsive, which is the ADHD part. We were just like, Okay, now I'm this person. Now. I'm going to cut my hair. I'm gonna get tattoos. I'm going to start smoking weed. I'm going to be whatever you need me to be right now.



Katy Weber 00:34

Hello, and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school, jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens, and it has been nothing short of overwhelming. I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who liked me discovered in adulthood they have ADHD and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Before we get started, I'd like to share with you this review from a listener called Brie like cheese on the Apple podcast platform. It's entitled learning and growing. I am a new subscriber and have felt so seen and validated by this podcast diagnosed as a child, I have learned to compensate for my challenges. But after a divorce and a lot of therapy, I'm learning how much ADHD is still a big part of the challenges in my life. This podcast gives me hope, access to new resources, and is helping me explore my diagnosis almost 30 years after being first diagnosed. Thank you. Thank you so much for this perspective. And this review Bry. For many of us who were diagnosed late in life, there can be so much grief around the notion that the signs were there in childhood, but the adults in our lives didn't recognize them. So it often gives me a strange sense of comfort or closeness or camaraderie or whatever you want to call it when I hear from women who were in fact diagnosed in childhood. But there were so many misconceptions about the diagnosis that we're all still on this incredible journey of self discovery and adulthood together. And I'm so

glad when I hear that this podcast and these interviews are also helpful to women who have been aware of and challenged by ADHD for decades. So thank you so much for taking the time to write that lovely review. Okay, here we are at Episode 91, in which I interviewed Lisa Santos. Lisa is a 35 year old South African who was recently diagnosed with ADHD in a tenant type. She suspected something was different about her growing up, but always just assumed it was due to the trauma of being raised in an abusive home. However, when a teacher suggested Lisa six year old daughter might have ADHD, Lisa started connecting the dots in her own life. After 11 different jobs in 17 years in the corporate world, Lisa now runs an online mindful yoga practice called Yoga Lisa, where she focuses on as she calls it bite sized mindfulness breathwork and feeling good. Lisa's teachings are inclusive, spiritual and rooted closely in the origins of yoga. We also talk about her history of codependency and how ADHD has played a role in those behaviors. And we talked about the concept of multi potentiality and the inability to stay still in our lives, especially when it comes to our professions. Lisa and I also discussed the benefits of yoga and mindfulness specifically for ADHD, and how intentionally slowing down and listening to our bodies has helped us rebuild self trust, and have more compassion and patience with ourselves and with our kids. Okay, enjoy. Well, Lisa, I'm so excited to talk to you. You are my first guest from South Africa. And I just I love that this podcast is reaching and that we're sort of uniting right as this global community of women who have the shared experience. And I have so many questions for you. But I will start out with the one I often start out with, which is, you know, you were really recently diagnosed. So I'm curious kind of what was going on in your life that led you to start putting these pieces together and start connecting the dots that this was ADHD?

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Lisa Dos Santos 04:21

I think for me, it's twofold. The first part is, which is very common, which is what I've heard in your podcast is that my daughter, there were questions raised at her school. She's six years old. And when she was five, her, her teacher called us to the school and just said she's doing great, but she's just daydreaming a lot and not really concentrating and we just had to kind of watch out for it. And at the time, I just I felt very defensive and I felt I kind of had a bias against the whole ADHD thing. And I thought, you know, they just are to medicate our kids and I felt very like against that kind of that whole thing because I had the stereotype in my head, drilled And, and I ignored it. And then this year, she's she's six now and a second teacher different teacher said the same thing. And she said that she's doodling in class and singing and daydreaming. And I thought, hang on, I used to be like that as a kid. And I kind of did, I started doing some research online and realizing that I was exactly the same as a kid and I kind of, I had a very dysfunctional childhood upbringing, or was like, there was domestic abuse, there was alcoholism, there was like a whole, you name it, like it was bad. So anything that I kind of where I failed in life, or I didn't really do well, at school, or as a kid, I always just kind of put it in that bucket. And I'm like, Oh, it's just that I was just a troubled kid. You know, that's why I didn't concentrate. That's why I blah, blah, blah, fill in the blank. And then the other part of it is that I've been working in corporate for 17 years, and I've recently become self employed. I don't have the structure anymore. And I was like a fish without water. And it's almost like, hitting for like a mental breakdown. And I don't think they call it that anymore. But I'm like, Okay, this is what I'm doing. I really want to do yoga, mindfulness, I had this whole idea of you know, what business I was gonna have my partner, he is supporting me. And for the first time, I'm not earning a salary, which is freaking me out. But he's fine with it. But I find myself hopping from one thing to the next because I'm okay, maybe I shouldn't do this. Maybe I need to do this. And then I've kind of just dance around a whole bunch of things and then end up not doing anything. And so I was in that space. At the same time. This was happening with my daughter.

And then I just did some research. And then I think my, my algorithms changed because I was just started seeing all this stuff on Tik Tok. And I was like, No, this is way too relatable. And then, yeah, I came across your podcasts. And I listened to it for about a month. And then I was like, Okay, I need to get evaluated. And I got evaluated. And yes, I am ADHD type, inattentive. And I actually just went to my psychiatrist today to get meds so that I'm going to try out because I used to be really against medication. But now I'm, I don't know, I'm of the opinion. If something can like, have the potential to change my life, then I'm willing to try it. And if it doesn't work, then you know, at least I tried it. So I'm going to try my first pill tomorrow. So yeah, I'm very excited.



Katy Weber 07:26

Oh, wow. Okay, great. Now, which medication? Is it that you're trying?



Lisa Dos Santos 07:29

It is new cotton. I think it's the same as Ritalin, okay, they call it Ritalin. I don't know if it's the same in the US. But they call it that side. It's the wish the the doctor to prescribe it, it's like a slow release 12 hour story that you can kind of, it's more fluid, like you don't have to take it every day. And which appeals to me, because I'm already on antidepressants. And antidepressants are a big commitment. So you can't just not take them if you don't feel like it, because you get really horrible withdrawals and stuff. So I'm quite happy that this is a like a take it or leave it kind of medication, which is nice.



Katy Weber 08:07

Oh, that's awesome. Yeah, I know, I feel like I talk a lot about my own journey with medication too. And sort of always asking, like, what does it mean when people say it's working, right? Because I'm sort of, I still sort of have that sense of like, I don't even know what I'm looking for a lot of the time. And so there's so many questions that can arise around medication. And it's a lot more difficult to just say I'm either for medication or anti medication, I'm not anti medication at all, I'm of the same opinion of view, which is like, Look, if you know if it's going to help, absolutely, I want to bring in as many things in my toolbox as I possibly can. But it's not that simple.



Lisa Dos Santos 08:40


It's not unfortunately,




Katy Weber 08:44

and also with children too, like I have that same impulse, you know, and I don't know, I think that impulse, just say like, do you just want to medicate my child so that they will conform to your classroom environment? It's, it's difficult because I think on the one hand it Yeah, it can be tremendously helpful, but at the same time, a lot of the time the motivation to medicate is

often feels not right. You know, like sometimes I get really frustrated where I'm like, Are we medicating because we want our kids to be quiet and be sitting in a classroom and we have these expectations of them that are unrealistic versus like what's the best way to help our child right now in the situation that we have right now? It's so it is complicated, and anybody who says it isn't as a liar.

 Lisa Dos Santos 09:32


It's very layered because like, what if my daughter just happens to not enjoy her teaching style? What if she doesn't enjoy the subject? Does that mean that that's should be medication like she is medication and solution there? At the same time, when I spoke to my psychiatrist today about it, she said that medication can actually be very helpful for my daughter because it can build her self esteem up and it might because I was worried. I said, Is it okay to give medication to a brain that's not developed? It's and she said that it is good because it might change the way it develops. And in the long run, she won't need to be on medication. And so I kind of waffle Well, I've never heard it that way before. So I am considering it, but I think I'm going to be the guinea pig first, see that we have the same genes. I'm gonna see how I react to it. And then we'll take it from there. But

 Katy Weber 10:21


interesting. Yeah, I do take a lot of as I think about my own children, because they're going through the diagnosis process right now. And so I'm sort of questioning, you know, what comes after that? What is their treatment plan gonna be? And I like the idea that it is one of the more researched medications out there for children. Right. So I feel like it's not just something that's been thrown onto the market really, really quickly. So I had to take a lot of consolation in that. And I liked that idea, too. But it's, you know, because I've talked about that too, with my husband, and like, you know, the the fear of labeling a child with ADHD and what that can mean for them in school and the stigma and you know, we often have that conversation, which is like, well, they're gonna get labeled either way. So do they get labeled with something that is potentially can give them help and accommodations and can can provide them answers as to who they are and why they are the way they are? Or will they get the label of lazy or scatterbrained are all the labels that we had growing up?


 Lisa Dos Santos 11:19

Yes, yes. It's very painful, right? Yeah, it was very painful to have those labels. Yeah. Yeah. And so

 Katy Weber 11:27

it's like, on the one hand, I feel like, what is put that way, I would much rather have an actual diagnosis where we can sort of say, Okay, what's the help you need? What do you need? What do you need to succeed right now, as opposed to what I had, which was just try harder? You could do it. You really could do it if you

 Lisa Dos Santos 11:45  
wanted to.

 Katy Weber 11:46  
Yeah. Yeah. I'm curious. You had also mentioned in when you emailed me that you were, I guess, diagnosed codependent or how does that work that you had sort of been going through a codependency 12 STEP program. When did that happen in your life.

 Lisa Dos Santos 12:01  
Um, it was actually just before the pandemic, to kind of explain it is my mom was a raging codependent. And she obviously had her issues that made her that way. I mean, her mother was bipolar, schizophrenic. And so she would have these exploding moments manic, like quiet highs and low lows. And I think my mom learned to walk on eggshells, and read the room and constantly take her temperature, her emotional temperature or energy vibe of the room. And so she learned to live that way. And then she kind of had the same kind of men in her relationship with explosive tempers. So like domestic violence, and alcoholism, and all of that was rife with all her her marriages, and she was married three times. And so I learned from her. So it's kind of like a generational thing. In a sense, where you you learn it's learned behaviors on how to have relationships and how to, like, interact with other people. And it's also how you kind of survive in that environment, the best way you can is to develop codependency tendencies. But it's not an official mental illness, I don't think. But it is a phenomenon that you know that a lot of people from 12 Step programs, all the non na that they actually ended up in coda, which is the 12 step program for Codependents Anonymous, because when I go to meetings, there's a lot of them. A lot of the the members mentioned that they come from another fellowship, and they realize that that was actually their problem. Their addiction was relationships. And I have watched or listened to read some articles on codependency and ADHD and how they work together. And it's quite fascinating. If especially when I look back at my relationships, I was very impulsive, but impulsive in a way where I would mirror what they are doing. And say that my, my boyfriend had a hobby. You know, he was a surfer or a skater, or a game, or whatever he did, I would do because I was codependent and I felt like I needed to be like him. And that was right. And when you have ADHD a lot of the time you question what is right and what's wrong. And I always felt like I was wrong, inherently wrong. No matter what I do, I'm wrong. It's almost like I look to others to tell me what I should do and shouldn't do. And so every single relationship I was in, I would chameleon myself. And it was very impulsive, which is the ADHD part. We were just like, Okay, now I'm this person, I'm going to cut my hair, I'm going to get tattoos. I'm going to start smoking weed. I'm going to be whatever you need me to be right now. And then I look back at my relationships, and it's just it's like, it's cringy to think about it. Like even in high school. I was a total pygmy girl. And yeah, I think a lot of it's got to do with the low self esteem and it's not just codependency on its own. And it's, it was a big relief for me to figure that out. Because I felt like I I guess I'm codependent. But there's something else is something else and I don't know what it is. And that's where the whole ADHD thing comes in. So yeah, I don't know if I answered your questions, but like I rambled?



Katy Weber 15:12

Well, no, it is. I mean, it's brought up 1000 more questions, right? Because I think about how that journey of the learning more about ADHD in adulthood like brings about that way that we look over the course of our life through this new realization, this new lens, right, and I, I feel like I think that way about, you know, my relationship with my body image and my relationship with eating and dieting, and all of those ways, it's the same idea, right? That same need for reinvention, that same need of like escaping who we are fundamentally, when you were talking, you made me remember a conversation I had had with Kto Soros and her interviewer, we were actually talking about like sexual relationships, but she was talking about how difficult it is it is for us to be at the wheel in relationships, right? Like, it's so much easier for us to allow the other person to be in charge, because then the onus is off of us to did from disappointing them, right. And we're so afraid of disappointing others, that it's much easier for us to be sort of the follower or just, you know, the more passive person in the relationship. And so it reminded me of that thinking about the way in which that kind of combines with the impulsivity and the reinvention and that desire of like, to fundamentally not be who we are. Because of that disappointment, and but at the same time, like how, yeah, it makes total sense, why we would want somebody else to decide for us like, what we like and who we are and how we're going to look and how would we do have that tendency to kind of latch on to people in that way, especially strong personalities? And you know, unfortunately abusive personalities to



Lisa Dos Santos 16:49

Yes. Well, they can smell it a mile away, they can smell it a mile away.



Katy Weber 16:55

We're like magnet. Yeah. And now looking back, and through this new lens of ADHD, I'm curious about looking back at your own childhood, but also, you know, you mentioned your grandmother who was bipolar, schizophrenic, and then your mother so so I'm like, this must be so mind blowing to you to think about the genetic component of all of this. Now, your mother's not around either. My mother also passed away. And I also feel like she's the one person I want to have this conversation with, right? Because I, I feel like she really struggled with who I was as a child, too. And she struggled to help me. And so there is, I feel that grief doubly, you know, where I'm like, Oh, God, I wish I could have these conversations with her. For you like looking back at your childhood, what are some of the things that you look back at and think, Oh, my goodness, the signs were there all along.



Lisa Dos Santos 17:45

I remember being told, like since I was five, six, that I was lazy and messy and forgetful. And they used to call me in Afrikaans. It's called an otoscope. And it means your head is lost, like literally lost. And it was, I remember daydreaming a lot and watching a movie and then being in class and just like reenacting the movie in my head, or I would picture myself doing everyone's here and what it would look like, like I would go to things like vivid imagination, and then I would look down and realize I hadn't done any work. And at one point, I remember, I think I was about seven. I remember in our workbooks, I glued the pages together. So when they flipped

through my books, they didn't see any incomplete page. And it took like, a whole year for the teacher to figure out what I was doing. And I just remember, my mom was like, kind of impressed. I remember having a habit of forgetting losing things, and forgetting to take my lunch out of my bag, or out of my locker at school. And I remember on one occasion, I think I was about nine and I left like a sandwich or something in my bag and we had school holidays, we were on break. And then it was like the first day we were gonna go back the night before we were busy packing my bag and we opened up my bag and there's cockroaches came out my bag. And it was like something out of the mummy. It was they filled the room and my mom was like screaming and we're like just trying to vacuum them up and resized to do shit like that all the time. I would just once forget things. And then obviously, I think when I when I was in high school, I remember being told a lot that you have so much potential and even through in a working environment. I remember people saying to me, like why are you working in this role? Like it's beneath? It's almost like it was beneath me. And I would be offended and be like, Well, what do you mean? And I think people the way our people would receive me was like, I am smarter than what I'm doing. Or they expected more than me than what I was doing at the time and I just felt so like irritated because I was okay well what do you want me to do? What do you think I shouldn't do and it's almost like I needed them to tell me what to do, which is where the codependency come Have him, which doesn't help. But yeah, there was mostly the childhood things. And I think as I got older, it was more it was relationships, I think I seek that novelty and the validation from relationships. And it was like the little dopamine hits. And I would go for, I think I thrived best in environments and working environments where I was super busy, and doing like 100 things at once. And there was so much pressure, and I would pitch about it and moan about it. But I felt alive. And I felt like, you know, like, there was no time to sit. For me being idle, it's very dangerous. I feel like I can go to a very dark place if I'm idle long enough. Because I just sit and think and I think and I think and I think and then all the negative, like voices start coming and not literal voices, but like negative thoughts. And it's just, you know, what are you doing, and you're wasting your time on, you know, especially with my business, I'm like, I'm just building it up now. So it's still really new. And I'm just putting pressure on myself, like you can't believe and if things are quiet, and I don't have a lot of clients for that day, then it's all of a sudden, like, it's the end of the world. And I shouldn't be doing this, I should write a book. I grew from one thing to the next. And I think one of my biggest pains is having great big ideas, and then no follow through on them. And the other thing would be my hobbies. I have a hobby of starting new hobbies. I have like a workshop return or garage into a workshop. And there's just like, so much crafting tools and like little dremel kits and jewelry making and clay and painting and sculpting. And yeah, everything, which is great, because my daughter loves messing around all that stuff with me. But it's a lot.



Katy Weber 21:51

Yeah, I know I that's definitely one of the ones I've had to reframe for myself. The My hobby is trying new things. As opposed to, you know, always getting down on myself for all of my unfinished projects, and always sort of switching directions halfway through something and Oh, my God, I relate it to so much of that. And also in your email to me, you had mentioned that you had 11 different jobs in 17 years. And I was like, I should probably count how many I had, because I probably had a similar. And I often talked about, like not being able to work someplace for longer than two years for various reasons. But you were said you were working in corporate. So I'm curious kind of how you ended up there. And then how yoga entered your life.





Lisa Dos Santos 22:34

I was like a lot of my journey was just mostly survival. So I moved on really early. I was 17. And so and there was no money for like university or anything like that. So everything was just, you know, entry level job Secretary receptionist, anything I could take basically. But then as I got more comfortable, and as I got, you know, I would work my way up in a company. I would just reach this point of a Campbell now. And I was starting to get complacent. And then you know, maybe I should do this, maybe I should and then I would eventually just leave. And it would be two, three years tops. And after my divorce, my daughter was two weeks old when we went through divorce. So I was like, left with a newborn. I was was incredibly like life changing for me and traumatic at the time. Yeah, yeah, but I am happy for it now, obviously. But at the time, it felt like, you know, the carpet had been ripped from under me and I had to get my shit together. So as a kid, I need to get in a good company, I need to get a better job. And so I did all of that. And I was highly motivated for the first time in my life to like really just because I was the relationship I was in, he earned more than me. And I had a comfortable job, but I wasn't really pushing to get more money or anything. That was never an issue for me. But then when I was alone, I was like, Okay, I have to you know, be a boss, babe, or whatever you want to call it. I got into one of the biggest online like econ companies, and I did something very, like menial, I think it was just dealing with suppliers. And then there were engineers on the same floor as us. And I just remember watching them and it was so cool. And you know, like software developers with the little Funko Pops, and it just didn't look so you know, exciting. And I started training there in my shadowing and during my lunch breaks, and then I eventually got in there as a software tester. And then I loved it. And it was I was definitely not the smartest in the room when it comes to computer science and machine learning and all that kind of stuff. But that was like fed me. And it really I loved it. And then the pandemic happened and then I ended up working from home. And then I realized, realize that I wasn't getting my little dopamine hits because I wasn't seeing people and nobody could see what I was doing. And I realized a lot of what I was getting out of that job was like that. validation that you get from people. And when you're working on your own left to your own devices, and nobody's watching you, then I just got lazy and I was just like, ah, and I got demotivated. And then I started, we started doing yoga, we had a private instructor come to us during the week, just to like change ideas, because we were so bored. And I really loved it. And I felt like, wow, this is amazing. And I felt felt so like in bliss, and I felt like, why can I do this every day, you know, I rather much be doing that than sitting in front of a laptop the entire day. And I was almost like, I was just wanting to join the great resignation. And I was just like, I'm joining them. And that's it. I'm against capitalism and everything. And so I was like, I'm just gonna do a yoga course. And there's yoga studio right around the corner, from my house walking distance, I was like, it's a sign from the universe, you know, and then I'm only going to think about, I'm just going to do it, because I didn't want to talk myself out of it. So I just did it. I did the certification. And then I got my online site growing up, because I wanted to do online yoga and focus on that. And that's where I am right now. In the building stages of everything.



Katy Weber 26:13

Yeah, it's it's got ADHD written all over it, right is where it's just sort of like, yes, getting super passionate and wanting to then, you know, be an entrepreneur, but at the same time, being an entrepreneur, which so many of us are comes with, like its whole other basket of issues. Because, you know, on the one hand, it it really is, like, there's so much motivation, and there's so much like energy, finding your passion. But so keeping sustaining that momentum can be really difficult for so many of us, especially without the instant validation. Oh, you know, and I



remember one of the, like, most sobering pieces of advice I ever got from a business coach was like, she used to say to me, you know, it's really quite deluded to think that you can be as successful as somebody who's been doing this for five years, 10 years, right? And has she just, I don't know, if she said, deluded, but it was what you know, it's just that idea of like, she really kind of made me think, look in the mirror and think about, like, my own expectations of myself and my own expectations of my business. And, you know, we're so impatient, when it comes to growth, right, that we want to be, we want to be immediately successful. And so it's really difficult to have your own business when, when that is not always the case. And if it is the case, good for you. But that's certainly something I struggle with all the time.



Lisa Dos Santos 27:33

I totally get that. I mean, I would do a session and feel amazing. And I'd be like, Wow, I really enjoyed that. And I felt like this is what I'm meant to be doing. And I get all excited about it. And the next day, I'd be like, should I don't think I don't think I should do this. And I could just go highs and lows and all it takes is like one moment or one quiet day. And then I'm in my mind overthinking, ruminating, and then I want to not do it anymore. Yeah, I know, right?



Katy Weber 27:56

I'd like to take a moment to thank better help for sponsoring this podcast. If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know, I am a big proponent of therapy therapy provides me the best opportunity for verbal processing something that is so important for my kind of brain and my sense of self. What I love about BetterHelp is that it's not a crisis line. It's not self help. It is professional therapy that's done securely online, from the comfort of your home, they assess your needs and match you with your own licensed professional therapist, and it's available for clients worldwide. So you get access to a broad range of expertise that might not be available to you locally. It also tends to be more affordable than traditional offline therapy and financial aid is available. If you visit their website and read their testimonials. There are actually quite a few reviews that specifically reference help with ADHD has a special offer for listeners of the women and ADHD podcast, you'll get 10% off your first month, simply sign up at [betterhelp.com/women ADHD](https://betterhelp.com/women-ADHD), that's BetterHelp help.com/women. ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by better help. I was really taken I think it was maybe it was a on your website or somewhere where you had talked about like, the struggle that you have had your whole life with depression and body image and worthiness I think was the word you use to which really struck me like this. Yoga is such an incredible tool for those things. And so I see how, like, for me, it's been so beneficial. And I you know, I immediately want to help somebody else right? I think we have that really deep empathy, which is like, this has been such an amazing tool for me, if I can help one other woman, you know, with these issues, it will have all been worth it. And I certainly relate to a lot of the issues with the yoga body, right and that idea that somebody who is quote unquote good or successful or to can teach Yoga must look a certain way and how we have to talk ourselves out of that as well. Right which is like I did a post a couple years ago on reminding my Self mostly, but reminding others that like, the reason why you see a certain body type more than others isn't because they're better at yoga, it's because they have more confidence to show themselves because of the society in which we live in, right. And so the other people are marginalized for a reason the other body sizes are marginalized for a reason. It has nothing to do with how good you are at yoga. And I have to remind myself that all the time,



Lisa Dos Santos 30:25

I struggle a lot. I don't actually like telling people what I do. Because as soon as I do, I get the eyeball and they look at me up and down. And there's confusion on their face. Like, what do you do? Right? What I'm like I practice, I'm a mindful yoga practitioner, then they look at me and look me up and down. And then there's just this awkward silence. And then it's just like, Okay, let's change the subject. And it just really wrecks my self esteem. And to just keep reminding myself, that's not why I'm doing yoga. I'm really, I mean, a lot of people enjoy yoga four as a form of exercise, and they do hot yoga, and they sweat it out, which is great. But I feel like yoga closer to its origins is more about like breath and mindfulness and just that, like ultimate amazing feeling that everybody gets when they are in that space. And it's just so difficult to market that because it's not productive. Where mindfulness is not seen as productive. It's a very quiet, subtle thing that happens. And, you know, like power yoga is like, Oh, I'm, you know, I'm being productive. I'm burning calories, I'm getting, you know, this hot yoga bod. And it seems like, you know, it's, it's worth your time and money. And I think, especially as a woman, it's like, if you do anything for yourself, especially if you're a mom, it's like you feel guilty. So if you do something for yourself, it's better to be productive. And that's the kind of like world we live in. But nobody does things just because it feels good. Or it's good for their I don't know, mindfulness or, and I really struggle with that. A lot of things all. I don't know if it's hate labels, but codependence or ADHD is is me, trying to like I, instead of looking at the audience and seeing, okay, what did they want? I'm focusing, okay, what do I want to offer what is authentic to me, and just hoping that I'll attract the people that want it. But it's, I think it's trusting that process is scary. And it's just trusting that somebody is like, they want what you have to offer. And just standing by your kind of truths as like, this is what I'm offering. And that's it, I don't look like a yogi, that I'm not in it for that. I'm in it to, like, get you mindful and get mindful with you and have that amazing, kind of like, if you want to call it spiritual or like mindful, whatever, but like, have that experience that you get. And I think especially, it's just so ironic that I'm in the mindfulness space, because I have ADHD. And it's like, it makes no sense. But that's why I started, like making sessions on my site that are like, express mindfulness. So it's like 30 minute sessions, as opposed to like an hour, because we can't like, you know, we can't sit for that long. And I think it's adjusting your expectations. And that, yes, you can have bite size, mindfulness, you know, you can just walk in the park and be mindful, you can do anything, make a cup of tea mindfully. So I think it's just about like changing the narrative, I guess, not being so like stringent and serious about it, I used to be very all or nothing. And it's like, if I can't sit and meditate on a hill for an hour, then I've stuck, you know, but now I'm kind of lowering my expectations and realizing I can get little bite size stuff throughout my day.



Katy Weber 33:30

Well, that's one thing I think that always appealed to me about yoga, even you know, 25 years ago, long before I was diagnosed was that I saw the value in meditation, I just couldn't sit still. And so yoga sort of felt like the best of both worlds where I could continually move, but still have the benefits of the stillness and the mindfulness. And I think also, like you said, about trusting yourself is so scary, right? And one of the things that I've benefited the most from with my relationship with yoga over the years, is that ability to tune in to who I am my authentic self, right. And so I think it makes sense that when we have ADHD, or like you said, like, as you're trying to kind of parse through, like, what is ADHD? What is the trauma of childhood?

What is the codependency, like, that same theme of self trust and lack of self trust runs for so many of us, we know, like, who we fundamentally are, was was labeled wrong. And so we stopped thinking that we knew what was best for ourselves. And you see that theme a lot and a lot of ways for women, right? Well, you know, like eating, for instance, you know, we're taught that the way that we naturally eat is wrong, that we have to change that we have to follow new diets and what our body is, is naturally wrong. We have to make it smaller, and we have to, like, behave and conform. And so you know, I think the one thing that is so powerful about yoga, especially for people with ADHD is that it's such a wonderful way to build that muscle in ourselves to I trust who we are right in that slowness and to kind of trust what is what feels right in our body. And I think that's something that is so powerful for me, like, I know that when I'm having bad days where I'm just like, oh, you're a failure, you're fat, you're ugly, you're stupid. Like yoga is one of those things that really kind of brings me back to how powerful I am, you know, and how powerful my body is. And just like it gets me out of my head, and kind of into the wisdom of my body, for lack of a better word, like the, you know, just that full connection of the wisdom of like, what is feels right? And the, I don't know, I feel like I'm getting tripped on my word, you know what I'm saying?



Lisa Dos Santos 35:44

I know exactly what you mean.



Katy Weber 35:46

But that idea of self trust, I think, can be really, it's something that can be achieved really beautifully with yoga, if you can share if you can get rid of all of that desire for power yoga, and all that bullshit about like using it as exercise, but like really what it's that sort of mind body connection, which is the name yoga, right union. So it is amazing to me, and I'm often sometimes, like, proud of the fact that I came to yoga, organically, you know, that even without an ADHD diagnosis, you know, those tools that you kind of bring into your toolbox over the course of your life that you gravitate towards? Yeah. And so it just, I feel like those of us who kind of use yoga, or even like CBT is another one. Oh, so many of us have kind of organically found cognitive behavioral therapy, or just the ways in which I'm like, Yeah, you know, what, I was taking care of myself all along, in the best way. I knew how at the time, right? So



Lisa Dos Santos 36:46

I was speaking to my therapist about it, she was saying how that I've gotten this far, without knowing that I've had the diagnosis. And I've clearly built up like coping mechanisms. And I didn't realize that I have, I was like, Well, what are the coping mechanisms, and I kind of went through my life, and I realized, it was time I'm very, I could have high anxiety when I have to be somewhere in a certain time, like, even for this. For this podcast. I was like, the whole day. I'm like, I mustn't forget, I must begin an hour, like, hours before the time and it's like getting my daughter to bed early. I couldn't sleep, I have to do the podcast now. It's like having this thick anxiety until the moment it's like, I will not let myself think of anything else. And I realize like that's a coping mechanism. Like that's how I've managed to, to be on time for things and do things, because I drive myself crazy with it. And normal people will just be like, Oh, it's about that time and they do the thing. I wish I could live in a world where I did that. I think every

interview I've ever been in I've I've always been like an hour early. If I think about it now. And I've always thought Ricky Well, I can't be ADHD, because I'm Adelaide for anything. But I think it's because I have built a big coping mechanism around that. And perhaps my grandfather was ADHD, because my mom told me that when they were kids, they used to go to the driving, and he would drive away with him in the car before the movie had finished. Because he was worried about the traffic building up. So they would always miss the end of the movie, and they would watch it through the window outside leaving. Like that is just like me, I would do some shit like that. Yeah, so the coping mechanisms are funny. That's really



Katy Weber 38:31

interesting. It's true. Plus, we hate traffic. I don't know about you, but like sitting in traffic sitting in any kind of lineup is enough to not even go at all. Yeah, absolutely. That's a that's a really interesting observation. But I know it was very fascinating to me to to think about all the ways in which I didn't realize I was working so hard to do something that is seemingly effortless for other people and not realizing that it is effortless for other people. And I think I've shared that story on other episodes about like, losing things like I don't feel I don't think of myself as somebody who loses my phone or my keys because I spend so much time keeping track of and then the things that I do lose a lot like I have you know, we live in a two story house so I have upstairs and downstairs versions of things. I lose the family time, right? And a lot of it has to do with like efficiency and laziness. Like I have to have the exact same cleaning supplies upstairs and downstairs because I don't want to have to go upstairs and downstairs to get them so if I double of everything, but even just like my glasses, I have glasses, you know in the car, I have glasses next to the TV like I bought a bunch of them so that I never have to worry about where they are and and that realization you know, once I was getting diagnosed when I was like Oh right. Yeah, like No wonder we're exhausted all the time. Like look at how much mental effort we have to put into things that are seemingly effortless. And yet still I have to laugh because you kind of talked about how you still do battle with the imposter syndrome of the diagnosis itself. Like maybe you maybe you like accidentally convinced your therapist that you have ADHD? I laughed at that, because I relate to that so much.



Lisa Dos Santos 40:12

Yes. I don't know what it is. Is it like a voice in the back of my head? That's like, Are you sure you weren't just convincing her that you have, you know? And I'm like, Am I that great at convincing people at things like, you kind of, it's almost like you have this, I don't know, like, I have such a big ego that I think I'm capable of convincing a health practitioner of a diagnosis. I'm just looking for an excuse, you know, I just want to get medication, you know, and I'm not even a fan of medications. I don't know why I would even think those things. But I think it goes



Katy Weber 40:43

back to that same theme of self trust, right, which is like, I don't even know if I am the one who should be in charge of my own life. Like I, you know, like, it's and not only that, but always looking for the answers to these seemingly huge questions. Never feeling like things, fits. You know, never like I certainly I've talked about, like, never feeling like depression really fit, you know, and, and looking for the answers. And then an ADHD diagnosis comes along, and it feels

so convenient. It feels like the answer to so many things that of course, you're gonna question it, because you're just sort of like, I don't know, I'm the kind of person who's always looking for the answer. And so, of course, I'm not going to trust this one that feels too good to be true. It feels too easy sometimes for so many of us, right? And then you combine that with the fact that like, we don't usually think of ourselves as an authority of anything, because we're also told our whole lives that the way we see things isn't to be trusted. Because it's Yeah, so yeah, oh, my goodness, I totally feel that way. And I often say to people, like if you feel like you have a lot of doubt around your ADHD diagnosis is a pretty good chance you have ADHD. That's usually sign enough. When I was diagnosed with ADHD, it completely turned my world upside down. I looked back at so much of my life, my grades in school, my multiple careers and hobbies, my friendships, my marriage, motherhood, my relationship with food, and my body, like all of this with a new lens. And it was overwhelming to say the least, if you've been diagnosed with ADHD, and you're feeling blown away by this new insight into your brain and how it operates, I totally understand I can help you begin to sort through this chaos, explore who you are and how your brain operates. So you can finally start to lean into your strengths and begin to use them to your advantage moving forward. Together, we can work to identify what obstacles you've been facing, and create strategies to help you start living a more fulfilling, gratifying life, head over to women in [adhd.com/coaching](https://adhd.com/coaching), to book a 30 minute initial consult with me. So we can figure out if my brand of one on one coaching is right for you. Again, that's women and [adhd.com/coaching](https://adhd.com/coaching). And you can find that link in the episode show notes.



Lisa Dos Santos 43:01


Well, I was fixing, hyper fixated on ADHD for the last month or so. So I was just like, that's enough evidence for me the way I I was just like stuck on this thing. And every week, I have some, I think, the week or the month, sorry, the month before that. I had heard of multi potential lights. I don't know if you've heard of that term. No. And some a woman did a TED talk on it, it's being a multi potential light. And that means like, not having one interest. So it's like a, you know, someone that's like a lawyer. And then they're also an artist, and this and that. And I thought, well, maybe I'm a multi potential light. I didn't just have one passion. And that's exciting. But then I looked at my life. And I'm like, Well, I'm not successful in one thing. So how can I call myself that? So at first I thought I was that and then I'm like, Man, that's not it. And then the ADHD, I don't know, I just felt like Cinderella, like the slipper just fit. And I'm like, Okay. And it's funny, because I was trying to convince myself more than anything else. And I would go on these sites, and I would do all the quizzes and the screenings and like, just to make 100% sure that I'm on the right track. And then I think also, the problem is, again, the codependency part comes in when I start speaking to other people about it, like what do you think, what do you think? And I don't know, if it's just because it's South Africa, but we're still very behind when it comes to ADHD. And nobody really speaks about it at all. And it's normally like a hush hush thing. And it's only for like, you know, little kindergarten boys that are just out of order. And that's, you know, what ADHD is in South Africa, it still is like that.




Katy Weber 44:36

So if you talk about ADHD people think you can't possibly have it because you're, you know, and then insert something positive. Right? Well, that's the other thing that bothers me too, is that you see how stigmatized it is in our society because people are like, you can't possibly have it, you're successful or you can't possibly have it because you went to school like all of


these things that insert positive trait, yes. And therefore if there's something positive about You can't possibly have ADHD, which I think is something that we kind of have to really also deal with, which is like realizing how this has been such like, for me, this was such a revelation, it was such an incredible shift in how I viewed myself as a human being. But at the same time realizing that like being open about my ADHD has changed who I am to so many other people in my life, who now view me as this flawed person, right, this person with a diagnosis with a disorder and like all of the ways in which people kind of like almost like, back away from me, you know, and I sort of just have to ignore that and really kind of focus on the fact that this is my own journey. And like, I'm not going to make anybody else understand what I'm going through right now. I had to give that up really quickly, because as soon as I started talking about it with other people, I was like, oh, yeah, yeah, you have no idea what I'm talking.

 Lisa Dos Santos 45:53


Exactly. It's difficult because we knew someone with ADHD, we knew through some research something, you really do it with that with a fine tooth comb, and you really let go in crazy, you go all in, and then you try to explain to someone in one like little conversation, and it's not going to come across. And it's just like, I want to shake them and be like, Do you realize how much research I've done it, you don't understand that? It's like, I want to explain myself to them. And what's funny is that when you try to explain yourself to someone who you think has ADHD, and they say to you things like, but isn't that everyone? Well, maybe you haven't, too, but I'm not going to tell you that. So, but everybody has ADHD taught me somebody who doesn't have and it's just like, Okay, I was kind of back off. And I think realizing it's my own journey, and that it's really good thing to do than anyone else. It's been a lesson for me.

 Katy Weber 46:44

Yeah. Oh, yeah, I know. And that's often the kind of the, the advice I give women who are sort of like, how do I get my parents to see what I'm going through? How do I get people in my life to see about what's happening to me? And I'm like, you don't, you don't


 Lisa Dos Santos 46:58

know. And my partner, he says to me, he says, Your para, I don't want you to change, he's worried that I'm going to change on the medication and that I'm, he thinks it's like funny when I'm forgetful, or he loves it when I get into my moods, you know, getting into it a new hobby and stuff. So he's worried that my personality is gonna change overnight. It's and I'm trying to explain to him it doesn't work that way. Because he laughs at me, like, especially with my road rage, I have really bad road rage. And he thinks it's hilarious, because he's just like, What is your problem? Just like the cyclists, especially. I don't know why there's a lot of cyclists where I live, and it's like a very windy, narrow roads. And there's, there's not even a bicycle lane. But there are on that. Let's, yeah,


 Katy Weber 47:46

I'm the same way about cyclists because we live in like a rural area with curvy roads. And I am like I'm glad for you that you're out there and cycling. And in theory I'm very supportive of


like, I'm glad for you that you're out there and cycling. And in theory, I'm very supportive of what you're doing. But oh, my god, I hate being stuck behind you.

 Lisa Dos Santos 47:59


Especially when they put the hand out like that. And I'm like, Oh, my God, you are not a car like really?

 Katy Weber 48:06


So I'm curious. Now, I mean, going through all of this thinking about you know, your life through this new diagnosis, what is something that you love about your ADHD, because we have talked a lot about kind of the struggles and how crazy it is. But it is, I feel like it is really transformative in so many ways. So what's something that you love,

 Lisa Dos Santos 48:26

what I really love is the creativity part of it. I feel like I can be super creative at the drop of a hat. And it's just like, out of the blue. And like if there's a project or my daughter has to do something for school, and it's just like, I can get really excited and get her excited. And then we like spend hours doing something or my partner like he's got into, he built upon for us and like, and then I got into koi fish, and like, yeah, I'm really like studying all these things and how they do this and, and then he loves it, I get excited, like I kind of like jump in with him, which is fun. And I think it's so nice. Instead of just having like one kind of hobby or one singular way of looking at things. I think it's the drop of a hat excitement for me, definitely in the creativity aspect.

 Katy Weber 49:11

I love that. Yeah. Also, you know, where you were like, I took a yoga lesson. And it was a really great and I love to yoga. And then I was like, I'm going to become a yoga instructor. Now I have a business, the way that we're just sort of like we go, you know, you're sort of like, Oh, I really like this. And the next day, you know, you kind of go in this fog, and you emerge and you've got a website and a logo and you now have this business and you're like okay, this is me now, which can be frustrating. But I you know, I think frustrating when we think of ourselves as terms of like in terms of, you know, being consistent is a value. But I think when we shed that and we get rid of that paradigm, that idea that we have to be consistent. It's an amazing talent to just be like, all in with things with that enthusiasm, like you said, which I have. I'm learning, learning It's a process but I'm learning to love that about myself that like I am, I will go like feverishly all in on things.

 Lisa Dos Santos 50:10

I think I'm enjoying it, especially now that my daughter's getting older. So I have more time to myself because I think I really, really struggled during the newborn stages, especially because I was a single mom at the time. And I remember, it's almost like you want to do something. But



the way I am when I do something is that I immerse myself in it and like hours go by, and you can't do it when you have a newborn. So I would like want to do something and realize I couldn't do it for hours on an NCAA. And then I just don't do anything. And like it was just like, everyday was just the Bible. It was just survival. ticking off like a list of like checkbox, things to do then repeated the next day for like, it felt like the first three years. So now I'm finally at a stage where she's doing playdates that are just like, Yeah, I can do things for hours on end. Oh, she can join me. And it's just I love it.



50:57

Yeah,



Katy Weber 50:58

I know, right? I do not miss those days. My brother has a one year old and they were visiting us this weekend. And he's like, just started walking. And they're at that age where you literally just have to watch them that you cannot take your eye off of them, or they will like accidentally kill themselves. I couldn't believe how exhausted I was after spending like one hour with that I wasn't even in charge. I was just watching it. And I was like, oh my goodness, I do not miss those at that age. Yeah, well, that's lovely. So now, let's talk about your business. Because I'm curious about the online yoga classes. Are you teaching individually? Like do you take clients one on one for private lessons? And is that basically that can be anywhere in the world? Right? If the timing is right, where can people find you and work with you? Well, it's



Lisa Dos Santos 51:46

yoga Lisa dot online. And that's, that's the site, and it's the same on Instagram. And my email address is connect at Yogi Lisa dot online. Yeah, I mean, I it's, I've kind of built the site to be like a like, it's almost like an online shop where you just like, add a session to cart and checkout. And there's PayPal, and it's all really easy. Which is, I was thinking as we were talking, you know, all the job hopping, it's really helped me in a way with my business, because I've been in engineering. And so I've watched people build sites, and I've tested, I've done software testing, so I know what to look for with, like user experience. And I've done design. And I used to do blogs for this other company and like content management. And so it's all like, it's all coming in handy right now. And I've done sales as well. So it's just like, yes, I've done all those things, but they weren't for no reason. I feel like what's like extraordinary is that, yes, I've done so I've been in like 11 different jobs. But I've been in completely different jobs that have like nothing to do with each other in different cultures. And I've managed to adapt into every single one of those and make it work. I mean, when I was testing, when I was doing software testing, I had no business doing that I had no experience. But within the first year, I've got an award for like raising the bar and I got promoted and all those things. So like, it just shows you that just because you do like a gazillion things, it doesn't mean that you are not successful, it just means that you adding more strings to your bow, I think essentially, and you can use it, make a beautiful song out of it.



Katy Weber 53:21



Though that is as beautiful it is I think about that too, with how you know my own history with like graphic design and how I bring that in, and all those things that are so fun, like, yeah, all of these crazy directions we've taken over the course of our life really just add up to that. The bow that's a lovely image, I always think of it was like the patchwork quilt, right, sort of who we are, and how it's so interesting to think of all the ways that everything makes perfect sense. At the end of the day, when you look over the course of your life. Yeah, it does. Oh, well that's so lovely. And I'm, I love the fact that I'm sitting here having a conversation with somebody from literally on the other side of the globe, and that we are able to kind of find each other right, because I feel like I'm a broken record when I talk about how important it is for us to find each other and to have these conversations with each other and just realize we have this shared experience and maybe it's ADHD I think it is like you know the but it's that questioning that way in which we are kind of really just trying to get to the bottom of who we are and and uncovering the puzzle that is our brains I think is so interesting and why I'm so grateful for these conversations. And I learned so much from these interviews. So thank you so much for sitting down with me and sharing your story.



Lisa Dos Santos 54:38

Thank you for having me. Awesome



54:47

and there you have it.



Katy Weber 54:48

Thank you for listening and I really hope you enjoy this episode of the women and ADHD podcast also you know we ADHD ears crave feedback, and I would really appreciate hearing from you the listener if you're a fan At the podcast, please take a moment to leave me a review on Apple podcasts or audible. And if that feels like too much, and I get it, then just take a few seconds right now to give me a five star rating, or share this episode on your own social media to help reach more women who maybe have yet to discover and lean into this gift of neurodivergence see, and they may still be struggling and don't even know why. And if you'd like to find out more about me and my one on one coaching for women with ADHD, head over to [womenandadhd.com/coaching](https://www.womenandadhd.com/coaching) and you can always find that link in the show notes. I'll see you next week when I interview another amazing woman who discovered that she is not lazy or crazy or broken. But she has ADHD and she is now on the path to understanding her neurodiversity and finally using this gift to her advantage. Take care till then