

KC Davis: Self-care & keeping house with ADHD

Sat, 4/23 7:38PM 1:15:32

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adhd, feel, life, diagnosis, home, people, depressive episode, diagnosed, depression, realize, tasks, cleaning, dishes, talk, thought, person, laundry, system, relate, work

SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, KC Davis



Katy Weber 00:00

I am trying to do some deep breathing and focus because I have so many questions and I get so excited and whatever, I'm so excited, I have so many questions, I end up rambling incoherently for an hour and then I come off of it. And I'm like, what just happened? So I get it. So before we even start, I just want to say thank you for the voice you put out there because I'm so worried I'm gonna get to the end of this interview and not have just said a simple thank you because like, I you know, I am an acerbic feminist who has lived most of my life, you no railing against the misogyny and railing against the patriarchy. And I still feel like your voice was the first voice I ever heard out there in the in the ether, that told me that it was not a character flaw to be to not be a domestic goddess, you know, and I blink does it blow your mind that that voice is so rare for for us as women like the that we can, that there's so few people who are talking about this? Because like, once you hear it, once you internalize it, it's like common sense. You're like, of course, but it's so radically life changing. So thank you for articulating what so many of us have needed to hear.



KC Davis 01:21

Of course, it's not only like, What's odd is that when women hear it, and and people that have been socialized as women, it for many, many, many people, it's incredibly profound. And what's equally interesting is that many of the men in my life think that yeah, that sounds great. But they don't like there's nothing like profound about it. They're like, Oh, yeah, that's really, really well done. You know, they read the book, they're like, yeah, it's good, good book. But they it's like, not profound. And what's funny is that when people will comment sometimes and say like, Why have I been in therapy for six months, six years, and we've never talked about this. And, you know, it's easy to kind of jump to like, Well, I must be the best therapist in the world. But I actually think it's that I mean, how many of us, I think that we really do assume that being so, you know, having so many struggles with care tasks, is such a moral failing is such an bygone conclusion or a foregone conclusion for most of us that we don't even think to bring that up in therapy. Yeah, like, I don't like I bring up my, you know, my mom guilt in therapy, because there's a part of me that's heard the messaging of like, oh, you know, you shouldn't you know, you don't have to feel guilty. Ooh, but I do feel guilty. And I'm understanding that there's kind

of like something there. But like, like, nobody brings up in therapy, like, Hey, I killed that guy. And I just feel so guilty about it. Because you're just like you, like, you'd so deeply believe that that is a thing to feel guilty about. And so I think for a lot of us, you know, it never occurred to us. That, to challenge it. And maybe it didn't even occur to us how deeply we believed it, because it was just, again, a foregone conclusion. Of course, of course it is.



Katy Weber 03:21

Yeah, right. Absolutely. And, you know, we we spend enough time focusing on how can we improve? How can we build structures? How can we do all these things? That, like you said, we don't take the time to be like, do we even need to improve? I mean, what, what about us is flawed in the first place? Yeah, it's, and I think there's so many parallels to with that, and then a diagnosis of ADHD, right, where it's like, you go through your whole, you know, you just go over your entire life. And what you know, one of the things that we talked about all the time with a guest on my podcast is how you know, how profound a diagnosis can feel in adulthood and how difficult it is to articulate that profundity to the people in your life who just don't understand how life changing radically life changing diagnosis can be. So, so I like many of your followers, I joined tic toc after my diagnosis in 2020, because I had heard that there was a lot of great ADHD content on there, and you popped up in my for you page pretty quickly. And so I just assumed you had ADHD, because also, you know, you talk a lot about the shame around domesticity and care tasks, and a lot of the things that just like hit us on a really deep level. And so yeah, I just assumed you had ADHD. And then, you know, found out that you have such a great story about your relatively recent diagnosis. So what are you? You know, I know you've told this story before but for the sake of this interview, and my listeners, why don't you tell us about kind of what led to your ADHD diagnosis?



KC Davis 04:57

Sure. So the majority of kind of the house hacks that I Talk about on my channel. In fact, I guess all of them, they're all like my personal hacks that I have used in my home to make things easier for me. And when I talk about them, I use them as sort of like, Hey, this is an example of how I have sort of thrown the rulebook out the window and reconfigured this whole system of whether it's dishes or laundry or cleaning up. And I have some little tools and sort of mind games that I use when it comes to cleaning or tidying that I've always used. And so I did begin to attract a lot of followers that had ADHD, and I started hearing from them, like, Hey, this is the first thing that's ever worked for me, or this is the first thing that's ever actually helped me. And I my like, for you page on tick tock was also like a ton of ADHD creators. And I did relate to them. But I didn't have a diagnosis. Nor did I think I had ADHD, mostly because I always really, I liked school. And I liked learning. And for a good bit of my school career, got good grades. I had a career, I was very, very successful in that career. And so you know, what I had, in my mind as sort of what ADHD looks like, was very much sort of the stereotypical, like, you know, young boy who can't pay attention in class, or the young boy that's impulsive and running around and can't sit still. And I didn't relate to that. And so I just, I'd never occurred to me that I had ADHD. And it was actually my followers that started saying, you know, do you have ADHD? And I, unlike you, many of them just assumed that I did, because I was, I was speaking so specifically to things that really help with ADHD. And I was always very careful and to say to people, like, No, I do not have this diagnosis, because I didn't, I didn't ever want to sort of like pretend that I did for the credibility or for the follower count or for any of that. And,

but followers just kept asking, they're like, Wait, I thought, I thought you I just assumed you had ADHD. Wait, are you sure you don't. And then, I posted this video one time about the coffee cup on my bedside table. And I talked about how like, almost for the more majority of my house functions, because I have so many systems and in place for my laundry and my dishes and tidying and restocking things, and ordering groceries and eating and all these things. And I talked about how you know, my laundry is done every week and put away and my dishes get done every day. But there's a coffee cup molding on my bedside table. And the reason for that is that I find it very difficult to get things done that aren't in the flow. And when things are in the flow, I said I don't operate by Okay, what's next, what's important, I operate through this really powerful, creative, energetic river that just flows where it wants to go. And I go where it flows, and I work really hard to create systems. And when I think about these systems, I think of them as like little dams that kind of encourage that river or, or, or, you know, direct that river so that it flows over certain tasks that need to be done in my home, right, like, the laundry, the dishes and things. And, but the coffee cup is never in the flow. And I talked about how it's confusing to a lot of people, like how could you How is it you can get your dishes done and your laundry done, and you can tidy your home and you can clean your bathrooms. But you can't pick up this coffee cup that is molding on your bedside table. I walked by it every day and I look at it go yep, there it is. Got to get that should get that I should probably pick that up and just can't. And that was my explanation is it's just it's not in the flow. And that was when I started getting. I got a bunch of comments on that. That said, Casey. I know it's inappropriate to diagnose people on the internet, but are you really sure? Are you really sure you need to revisit this idea and so I talked about how I was feeling like I didn't want to embrace this idea because I felt like an imposter. Like, well, I don't relate to it, but I, but there, I guess there are parts that I do relate to it. And I was lucky enough that I had just transferred to a new psychiatrists for some postpartum depression that I was dealing with. And so I brought it up with her. And she said, Well, tell me why you think you have ADHD. And I said, Well, to be honest, I have a tick tock channel. And everyone's telling me that they think that I have ADHD. And I'm relating, I am relating to some content that I've seen. And this is why it was so important, like tick tock is, has been, has changed my life in more than one ways. And in one way, it's changed my life, because the representation of what it looks like to be neurodivergent is something that I had never seen before. When it comes to ADHD, and when it comes to autism, and I'm not autistic, but somebody in my family is. And we found that out recently, as well, because the representation that I always had was young, white boys. So Young, white autistic boys, rockin scream, and young, white ADH D boys that, you know, can't sit still and don't pay attention in class. So when I showed this psychiatrist, my kitchen, and it was, of course, very, very messy. And I showed her my little planner, and I said, you know, this is how I run my whole life, I cannot get anything done unless it's part of a system. And even when I'm enacting that system, I have to come back and refer to the written down list over and over and over, I told her about my closing duties and how that was the only way I could get my home functional. I told her about how even though it's the same five things every single night, I have to go look at the list of 1000 times are good, because I can't remember what's on it. And I probably talked to her for 30 minutes about it. And she was like, well, this That does sound almost classically like textbook, ADHD presentation in women. And then I wasn't really convinced until she started asking me about my childhood. And I explained to her that I always liked school, and I always sat in the front. And I always listened. And she said, Well, the thing is, Casey is that ADHD is not about a lack of attention. It's about a lack of the ability to regulate that attention. And if you find something interesting, you can actually hyper focus on that thing. She said, and one of the reasons why ADHD is missed in a lot of girls and why it was missed in you is because you liked school, you were actually interested in learning. And so have you paid attention. But I never did my homework. Never Never. And she asked me why. And I said, Well, it's funny because as many times as I was in trouble for not doing my homework, nobody ever asked me why. So to

think about it, I said, Well, I never wrote it down. I always thought, Oh, I remember that. And then I didn't. And if I did write it down, then I would shut the little like assignment book and put it in my backpack and forget to ever take it back out and look at it. And she explained to me that the fact that I did so well in school when the structure was provided to me, and that I was incapable of doing well, when I had to create my own structure was almost classic when it comes to ADHD. She said the fact that I had addiction in my as a young child, as a high schooler, I had an addiction problem. And she said, Well, there's a very high correlation between addiction and ADHD. I was diagnosed with dyslexia and auditory processing disorder in second or third grade. And she was like, well, there's a pretty high correlation between auditory processing disorder and other learning disabilities and ADHD. And she asked me, she said, Did you ever have any vocal tics? And I was four obsessions, and I was like, you know, actually, I did. I kind of, I was like, you know, I haven't thought about that forever. But I had a vocal tic when I was growing up when my parents got was getting divorced. She's like a nervous tic. She was like, well, there's a very high correlation between vocal of all things, vocal tics, and children with ADHD. So long story, I'm sure longer than it needed to be. That's what happened. And I got lucky because she was very knowledgeable in ADHD and non ADHD and women. And she said, Listen, I'll send you all of the self ratings, but you can take it to the bank. This is ADHD.



Katy Weber 14:56

Yeah, I feel like I had a very fortunate experience as well. Not only was my therapist who kind of gently suggested I look into it for years. And I had a similar experience to you, which was like I don't know, I'm first of all, I'm not hyper, I can literally lie on the couch for days, like I've never made the connection between hyperactive, internalized hyperactivity and like paralysis, right? I thought those were opposites, I didn't realize they were really very much connected. And so I didn't think of myself as hyper, I didn't think I had attention issues. But I was very lucky that, you know, she knew a lot about it, because she also had ADHD, Hannah had done her work. And then also my my nurse practitioner, who had a psych. Specialty, so she was able to diagnose me, and she knows her stuff as well. So I feel like I had a very good experience. And I can't believe how many stories I've heard since, you know, starting this podcast and listening to women and getting DMS all the time about women who have just had like, such nightmare experiences. And one thing, you know, I, you were talking about working hard. And I think this is just occurring to me now. So it's probably going to sound very unFormulated. But like, I think boys are, you know, they are disruptive right? So that maybe they're like more physically hyperactive. And so it's noticed in a classroom where a teacher says, like, this boy probably has ADHD, he needs help, let's help him. Whereas girls, the traits that girls are exhibiting forgetfulness and attentiveness, maybe chatting too much, you know, they are as well being disruptive, but they're interpreted as character flaws. And so the teacher is saying, You need to work on this. So there's not the help that says, We will help you. It's like, you really need to work on this. And then you internalize that, like, Oh, I got to work harder. I got to figure this out the same reason why it was like nobody ever told me, you know, you know, the messages that were told to me in school were like, you know, just keep trying, just keep working. I'm like, Well, the thing I'm doing is not working. So why would I keep trying at that? And it wasn't until I got my diagnosis that my, you know, my doctor was asking me questions, you know, on the on the list, like, are you forgetful, do you lose your keys? And I was like, no, actually, I'm not really forgetful. I work you know, I don't lose my keys, because I always know where they are. And I have a special place for them. And I actually have, you know, I have glasses in the car and glasses here and glasses. And I have reminders. I'm like I so I don't lose my glasses, because I own six pairs of them. And I you know, I have a calendar reminders that go off all day long. And

you know, my phone is buzzing all the time. So I'm not really that forgetful. And she was like, You work really, really hard, to not be forgetful. And I started tearing up at that moment, because I was like, nobody had ever acknowledged that I was working hard. Like I had just this, I didn't realize the degree to which my inner narrative was laziness. And that here was somebody acknowledging how hard I was working just to like, stay afloat. You know, and since then, I've heard the, the swan metaphor of the, you know, madly paddling under the water, but it was really just like, that validation of having another person acknowledge how hard we work. And part of me, like, I feel like a lot of that has to do with the way in which, you know, the traits are kind of genderized from a very young age as to like, what is your responsibility? Versus like, what is the community's responsibility?

K

KC Davis 18:16

Yeah, and, and my psychiatrist said something similar, she said, You know, nobody has noticed this, because you had been compensating at such a high level for such a long time. And that was huge. And it was the other thing that was mind blowing, was the realization that I actually didn't remember anything. And so the context here, of course, is that I had become a stay at home mom, four years, four years ago. And so I had primarily been spending a lot more time in my house. And then of course, the pandemic hit, and I had another baby and, and so I, obviously, in my house, all day long. And so, one could say I honestly, sort of hyper fixated on these care tasks about like, we're gonna figure this out, we're gonna figure out how to get this place into shape. And what was interesting was, you know, I went about my day, all day long in my home, caring for my children and trying to do things, you know, around the house. And what I did not realize was that I never remembered anything. And this was one of the reasons why it was so messy, you know? Because it was, it was common for me to have like, food all over the floor for when the kids ate when they were babies and toddlers, and then it would be there all day. But what I didn't realize was happening was that, you know, they were they would eat right, and I would sit there and go, oh, I need to pick that up. And then you know, one of them falls that they run to the playroom and one of them scrapes their knee. I need a band aid so I go to get the band aid and So I opened the band aid app, and I put the little like scrap scraps for the band aid on the table, and I go to put the band aid on. And you know, and then I realized, like, oh, we need to start getting ready for the park, or we're not going to have time to get there and have this nap. And so I go upstairs, and I get clothes. And I bring them down, and I get my kids dressed. And they take their pajamas off and just set them down for a second, right? But then I have to go makes and so and then I'd come home from the park, and walk in and see that mess on the floor and be like, oh, yeah, there's mess on the floor. There's Band Aid stuff here. There's PJs on the floor. And so I go over, and I pick it up. But I also just dropped my bag down when I came in, because I saw that, that that needed to get done. And so I would do it. So I didn't relate to the classic, like I get distracted narrative, because I just didn't like, there wasn't a lot of like, I'm doing something and then I wander off. But what I realized was my working memory was almost non-existent. And I and I told the psychiatrist, I said, I don't remember anything. I only remember things when I get visually prompted. Like, I can literally walk on the other side of my kitchen island and forget what was there. And, and this became obvious when I had two little kids under the age of two, where things were moving so fast that I was noticing. I almost like can't get anything done. Because the moment I turn around, I forgotten what it was that needed to be done. And I was constantly interrupting myself, right? Because I only noticed there's no toilet paper when I am, you know, walking going to the bathroom. And then I have to you know, but I was I was only up here because I was going to do something when I stopped to go to the bathroom. And so now I have to choose, am I going to go to the garage and get more toilet paper and forget what I was on my way to do? Or am I

going to keep doing what I was doing and forget the toilet paper like I was going to forget something. And I will only remember it when I come across it in my visual field. And so that was the other that part that really sold me was realizing oh my god, this isn't how other people operate.



Katy Weber 22:27

Right? If you give a mouse a cookie scenario, but you're right, it has so much more to do with memory than distraction or at least you know how it's interesting to think about how incredibly intertwined they are. Because I Yeah, it's true. I think a lot of us don't really relate to attention deficit that that we're you know that the phrase and that's something we'll talk about later because it's my favorite question to ask everybody which I can't think of a worse name for Neuro divergent thinking than ADHD. But anyway Now you also talk a lot about like cyclical tasks versus novel tasks, which I think is really interesting because I, I, when I saw I became a stay at home mom after about a year of trying to be a working mother in New York City. And it was a disaster, I had to go back to work after 12 weeks, which I was lucky. I mean, in this country, that's lucky that we were financially able to go back after 12 weeks, suddenly, I was a terrible mother and I was terrible at my job for the first time and it was just I couldn't handle it. So I became a stay at home mom, which was like a whole other issue of, you know, the being incredibly stultifying ly boring and then feeling like I'm a terrible person, because I'm not enjoying motherhood. But I, I remember, my husband would come home from work, and he would immediately drop everything and start cleaning the house. And I had such a hard time with this because I thought it was a passive aggressive statement on what an inadequate mother in Wi Fi was. And I would get so angry because it just felt like he was throwing it in my face that he had to work hard at work and come home on the subway and then immediately have to also do my job. And I really struggled with it. And I remember like, you know, something we would argue a lot about in the early days where he was like, I'm genuinely trying to help you like I know how hard it is to, to, you know, shovel in a snow storm. Thank you Do Erma Bombeck you know, that idea of like how difficult it is to sort of feel like you're pushing this boulder up the hill all day long with young children. And he's like, I want to help, you know, I want to do the thing I can. And it really took years for me to be able to accept that help and like really feel like it wasn't somehow a statement on my inadequacy. And I think you know, I'm sure I'm not alone in that feeling right of like, how difficult it is to accept help as women, and you know how even if you can get to the point where you feel like I need help, I'm not morally flawed person, if I require help, I can get to the point where I'm like, this is fine. But it's the like, accepting it is like a whole other level of heart. And like, how do you even articulate what you need? Right? That I think is the other issue too, right, which is like, I don't even know how to stop and ask for help. And what away because sometimes it's just easier to do things than to ask for the help, too. So. But I think initially, I was talking about the cyclical, versus novel tasks, right? And just how, like, so much of that. So much of the executive function is wrapped up in the like, inability to feel like it's worth anything, you know, like, I think so much of it is, it's the mundanity of it all that we really struggle with. And I think why so many of us get misdiagnosed with depression?



KC Davis 31:30

Oh, absolutely. In fact, I, I believe that my postpartum depression was a consequence of my ADHD. There's been so outside of addiction. So I had an addiction problem when I was in high school, but I also got sober when I was like 16. And so obviously, there's some depression

present there, because that's like a horrible way to live. Outside of that, though, there's only been two instances in my life that I've experienced a depressive episode. And because I'm a therapist, I know a lot about depression. And I know that in order for someone to have a depression diagnosis, so there's a depression diagnosis, and then there's a depressive episode. And in order to get a diagnosis of depression, or bipolar, or like any of these depressive diagnoses, it tells you that there must be the presence of a depressive episode, and they'll tell you how many there should be and whatever. So a depressive episode is a period lasting at least two weeks that has and then there's like a list of criteria, right. And it's your changes in appetite, changes in sleeping, hopelessness, lack of interest, you know, negative self concept, yada, yada, yada all the way down the list, right? So the first time that I experienced that was in 2013, maybe or 2012, I was living overseas. And I, my I was working. But my job. I was working really fast. I was hired to do this project, I was working really fast. And so there were almost entire days where I didn't have anything to do. And I was just kind of like tootling around on my computer. And it was boring. Also, I didn't speak I spoke a little bit of Spanish, but not enough to have like Spanish friends. You know, I had some friends that spoke English there. But so I was I was pretty isolated, too. And I found myself in this place where I was feeling like the only words I had for it was that I felt emotionally flatlined. And kind of numb and apathetic. And I would come home from work, go to my room, and watch TV. And I would watch TV till like 3am, just binge TV. And then I would go to bed, wake up, go to work, come back, watch TV. And I would do that over and over. And it got to be maybe like, the seventh day and I hadn't showered. And this is what woke me up from it was I was actually living with a family. And I heard them come home, it must have been a Saturday and I'd done nothing but sit in bed and watch TV. I heard them come home and I always had dinner with them. And I thought, oh my god, I have to shower. And I need to like sneak across the hallway and such that nobody sees me. So they didn't realize that I've just been doing this all day. And that sort of woke me like oh, now I'm like hiding things. Now, something is going on. So I say all that to say that when I got postpartum depression in 2020. It felt very similar. The circumstances could not have been any different. Right now. I am married. I don't have a job. I have these kids. And, and but I didn't experience any sadness. In fact, I experienced a lot of rage. The only things that I was feeling was rage or or apathy. And, you know, I wasn't doing anything for the house, I just felt apathetic. I felt like there was nothing to look forward to. I felt emotionally flatlined. And I didn't even recognize it as depression at first. And when some friends pointed that out to me, I said, okay, and I went saw therapist. So we talked about this postpartum depression. However, when I got diagnosed with ADHD, I realize, because it never, it never made sense to me. First of all, it was odd to me that I had had these couple of depressive episodes, but I did not have a depressive disorder. I didn't, I wasn't somebody that struggled with depression. And the other thing that was weird was that never in either of those episodes, did I experience negative self concept. I didn't feel I felt hopeless. But what I said when I said hopeless, I didn't mean like, I'm not worthy, or I'm in pain. What I meant was, my day is so unfulfilling. And I have nothing to look forward to. And every night, I go to bed, and it feels like I'm staring down the barrel of a shotgun, because I know I have to just wake up the next day and do it again. And my husband at the time was working seven days a week. So I mean, literally nothing to look forward to. No weekend, no trips, remember, this is COVID, lockdown, no, nothing. And everything is a dredge. And this light bulb went off when I realized that what was happening was that when I get bored, when I get under stimulated, I get depressed. And I don't get sad. But I have such a lack of dopamine reward center activity, that it's like my brain. I don't know if this ever happens to you. But this might be an old school thing. But do you ever have your computer go into safe mode, where like it would, it would reboot in safe mode, and you'd like it would be weird, and it would be grayscale, and you wouldn't have access to all the functions you were supposed to have. That's what it was, it was like, there was so little stimulation, so little optimism that I would almost reboot in safe mode and just feel paralyzed and not want to

do anything. So anyways, that again, I'm rambling. But that's that's the long way of saying that, like, I think 100% That, that I experienced depressive episodes as a function of my ADHD not as a function of having a depressive disorder.



Katy Weber 37:56

Well, and I think it's sort of that, you know, when you come to that intersection of the lack of ability, in the face of a desire to do things, right, so it's like, you know, I remember when I was when I was diagnosed with postpartum depression with both my kids but it was my first kid it was it took me about 14 months before I finally went to the doctor in tears saying, I need help and, and, you know, it was the same thing I would go for my beds every three months, I would have the checklist, the DSM checklist, and I never felt like I related to any of them, except for the one thing I did relate to, because I never felt despondent. I never felt like I had never had thoughts of hurting myself or the baby. You know, I never had changes in appetite. I mean, sleep How can you even tell with kids but but, you know, the one thing I related to the most was just feeling like a disappointment to my family, and especially to my husband. And you know, because what was happening was, like you said, like, I wasn't really sad, I was angry. And I would get thrown into the array into a rage. And it's something I talk about a lot with, with guests on this podcast, sort of like sensory how sensory issues kind of relate to emotion, emotional dysregulation. And so you know, you've got a new baby, you're crying, sleep deprived, like, the moment I finally like, broke and went to the doctor I had, my daughter had just gone down for a nap. And I was in the kitchen, which was right next to her bathroom in our tiny Brooklyn apartment. And I pulled out you know, a pot and like the shelf broke and all the pots came out and I was so worried that she was going to wake up from her nap. And I started I just like sat on the kitchen floor and started crying and my dear cat who every time I cry, my cat would be up right up in my face, trying to like nuzzle with me because she's wonderful. And I I like smacked her away from me in a way that just horrified me because I was just like, it was the first time I had done something like that where I really had to stop and I was like, You are not this person. You need to go help get help. But like, it was that feeling of just like I don't know how to be any other way right now. And I'm very disappointing to the people around me like, you know, my you know, I just felt like everybody was walking on eggshells, and especially my husband, right, which was just like, are you okay? And so that's what was fascinating to me. And then again, with the diagnosed with ADHD diagnosis, I was diagnosed with the beginning of the pandemic, because my kids were home, my husband was home, I was in suspended animation, right? Like, I just, I had no purpose other than to be the butler for everybody in my family, and just, I just sat there waiting for somebody to come running out of their room, because the Wi Fi wasn't working, or, you know, they were all doing remote learning. And so it was just like, and then they wanted to be fed again. And I'm like, I just fed you like, it was just, you know, and at the same time, because I had all this downtime, I, my brain was going a mile a minute. So I was like, I want to focus my business, I want to do this, I want to create this, I want to do this, and I had the just utter inability to do anything. And that's where I think I kind of like imploded. And then my therapist was like, dude, take a self test. And really started to like, make those connections. So yeah, it was really it's been fascinating to me to kind of think about depression, in its many forms, and the way in which so many because you know, so many of us are initially diagnosed with with other mood disorders before finally coming to ADHD, and then you have to kind of really look over your life through this lens and be like, is that what it really was? And, you know, it's interesting to me, because you when you talk about getting the early diagnoses of auditory processing, and dyslexia, like one thing I have noticed, anecdotally, in talking to women who were diagnosed either in childhood or adulthood, you know, a lot of the women I've interviewed who were diagnosed with some other learning

disability and received accommodations early in life, it was instilled in them, that they were not the problem, right, that they had, they needed an accommodation, they needed help, the system wasn't working for them. And so it wasn't a big deal. Like, you just needed to figure out the right system. Whereas those of us who were missed, for whatever reasons, you know, grew up with that belief that we are the problem going back to that idea of like, you need to fix this, you know, get on it. And that, you know, we were never it was never really instilled in us that we just needed a better system. And so it's always fascinating to me to think about, you know, we still all of us, at the end of the day still tend to end up with diagnoses of depression, which then like, you know, that I'm like, Well, are we are we just all depressed because we're women living in this society.

K

KC Davis 42:40

Like People always ask like how I, how I came to believe that care tasks are morally neutral. And I don't have like a huge turning point because it was something that I did kind of always no, just because when I went to rehab for my addiction in high school, I was there. I was in long term residential rehab for 18 and a half months. So I received intensive therapy at like a very pivotably developmental age. I got out of that rehab when I was 18. I stayed in therapy, I became a therapist, I did a ton of work on myself and for myself, from the age of 16 to 26 it just like intensive just like 10 years of this and so, you know, by the time I am, you know in my 30s and having kids and you know I'm making tic TOCs, or whatever I kind of knew. And I also married to a man that has has a very kind of like, whatever, we're messy, you know, so, so I kind of just knew I just kind of came to that naturally of like, you know, this might just always be me because especially in rehab, they made me clean everyday, they made me shower every day, they made me do these things. And then I got out and I didn't do any of them anymore, right. So I knew it was like, you know, this was that, but I continued to also be like, healthy. So I realized, like, you know, because I went in with an addiction, with some, like, almost personality disorder, ask sort of things going on, and like, pretty selfish and entitled. And, and add on the things that that we also thought right like lazy unhygienic, you know, not trying hard, irresponsible. And so we rehabbed all of that, including making me shower every day, making me clean every day, teaching me how to clean and be organized. And when I got out, I stayed healthy, sober, altruistic, but immediately became messy and showering every three days again, right. And so I kind of just knew, like, Oh, this is just me. This isn't a function of me being whatever. However, I still had a moment when, when I got my diagnosis of grief. Because although I did not feel as though I was a failure, or I wasn't good enough. I had to fight so hard to believe that I had to fight so hard and do so much work, to come to this place of acceptance and not hating the ways that I didn't measure up to what I felt like the world's that I should be. It was so hard fought and hard won. And when I got my diagnosis, I still felt the grief of I shouldn't have had to fight that hard to not hate myself. Had I known this earlier, had someone told me this. It wouldn't have been that hard. And I think that that's the experience that a lot of, for lack of a better term, like high performing people with ADHD have, there are people that have been engaging at a very high level and compensatory behaviors is that we don't get singled out as having ADHD because we're quote unquote, falling behind. But once we do figure it out, it's like, we realize that we've been working so much harder than everybody else, just to do the simple things everyone else can do automatically. And that was a real moment of grieving. God, what would have been different for me? Yeah, if I had known this,



Katy Weber 53:01

I know, I have so much envy and pride around my teenage daughter, she's 15, she has a dirty hamper, and a clean hamper. And, you know, when the when the clothes come out, because, you know, at a certain age, I was like, That's it, you're old enough. You need to fold your own laundry. And she was like, why? And how to, you know, came to her own conclusion where she was like, it comes out of the dryer, I'll just put it in the clean hamper. And then this is great. And she feels no shame. And that's the thing, right? Like, I'm like, I love the fact that she came up with this system on her own feels no, you know, inherent shame about it. Because, like, you know, we it's true. Like, we so many of our care tasks are motivated by shame. And I think it's also why in the pandemic, when we didn't have people coming over all the time. So we stopped cleaning. And we stopped showering because we weren't going to work and like all, you know, we had to like really deconstruct a lot of those self care tasks that were motivated by like, the fear of judgment from other people. And, you know, I remember like talking about tooth brushing it anytime I anytime I post anything on Instagram about tooth brushing, and the difficulties with brushing teeth, I get so many, you know, responses and DMS from women who are like, Oh my god, I had no idea that was not just me being a horrible human being that this was related to ADHD. Right? And so it's always fascinating to me, you know. And, you know, I remember my daughter having when she was young, she was eight, I think, and she had we were talking about how like, it was a week before she was going for cleaning. And so I was talking about the fact that like, you really have to start cleaning now because your hygienist is going to know that you haven't been cleaning your teeth and so you have to start you know, and I was like there's a cycle where it's like when you know you're going to the dentist you start madly flossing because you don't want your gums to bleed in the office. Because that's a telltale sign that you haven't been flossing so you like floss madly for that week before going to the dentist and cleaning to minimize the shame and judgment Then from the hygienist and so and she was the one who was like, Yeah, it's true. The reason why we struggle with brushing our teeth is because there's no immediate reward. And there's no immediate consequence. And I was like, that is so brilliant, in because I think that's like, I think about that a lot of the time when it comes to like automating self care tasks. You know, for me, it always was about, like, I have to find the motivation, it may be its shame, maybe it's fear of judgment, ideally, it'll be something that's a little healthier for my mental health. But like, I really, like you've sort of taken that even to the next level, which is like, rather than trying to even find the motivation, just take the you know, make it an, you know, automate it in a way that like, separates it from you, you know, and I think that that is also so important, too. For those of us who are interest driven,

K

KC Davis 55:53

yeah, and there's something about systems that really just like tickles my brain in the right way. And, and I actually worked in health care compliance for a while. And it was, that's all it was, was like looking at problems and then creating systems that solve that problem. And so that's kind of what I did when the pandemic happened is kind of looking around and going, okay, but and for the first time, I had to automate things, I'd never had to automate things before. But, you know, a bunch of things happened at once was was we moved to a slightly bigger house, we had a second baby, and the pandemic happens. And so we had to shut everything shut down. And my husband got a new job that was very, very demanding. And so for the first time, you know, this sort of, like, fly by the seat of my pants, and just like, do it when the inspiration hits, like, wasn't working anymore, wasn't keeping anything functional, right? add on to that the postpartum depression. And so that's when I started realizing, you know, I need to, I need to do I need to sort of automate some of these things, I need a system for some of these things. And it's not like I hadn't tried systems before. Like, I think every single

one of us has some dusty Marie Kondo, or home edit book somewhere that we thought was going to revolutionize our life. But it was always somebody else's system. And it was always really based on a, I mean, I laugh, I thought tweet one time that was like, Why do all my life changes? Like, hinge on me waking up a completely different person with a different personality? And then the next day? So you know, I had to learn? Yeah, I had to make this change of, you know, okay, who am I? What am I really going to do, and let me go slow, I'm not going to revamp my whole life today, I might just make one, Institute one ritual and try to find some rhythms. And, and I remember early on getting some, some kind of like, nasty, judgmental comments about like, this, what, like, You're thinking too hard about this, or like, that's a lot of work to save two seconds or something like that. And, and I remember coming back and saying, like, you know, people want, people will look down at how hard I think about how to make dishes a little bit easier. They'll be like, are you that lazy, that you can't just do it like, you don't have to make dishes easier, just just do it. But the thing is, is that that in and of itself is like deeply rooted in misogyny, and patriarchy. Because I know for a fact that there's somebody working for Amazon, and there's somebody working for Dell, and there's somebody working for Apple, and there's somebody working for all the biggest companies that manufacture anything, and this person's only job is to shave two seconds off of production time. This person's only job is to figure out how to hack the psychology of their workers to make them more productive by point 005 of a percent. Like these are real jobs that people are paid lots of money to do to to come up with systems that make companies more efficient by shaving seconds off of certain processes. And and that's like allotted it's only when somebody tries to apply that sort of deep thinking about their home that it's met with, well, just don't be lazy and do it the right way. But because if I was increasing profits, then I would be ingenious, but increasing my quality of life. You know, that time isn't as valuable.



Katy Weber 59:55

Yeah, and I think that's one thing I think was also felt very revolutionary. When When I first discovered your videos, which was also like, why are you spending time beating yourself up over the fact that you don't like to do the dishes? Like, why would anyone like to do the dishes, it's frickin dishes, you're like, you have other things you want to do. Now, the dishes still need to get done. So let's focus on, you know, the easiest way to get it done. But it was also like that I don't just like giving me permission to not want to do these things, but trying to find the way to kind of hack into it, which I feel like is a great segue to your five things tidy video, which was really sort of the first of many of your viral videos that and which I'm assuming is also featured in heavily in the book, which is the which is coming out the new expanded version, which is coming out really soon. So let's just review the five things tidy cleaning method for, you know, the handful of people who may not have seen it yet.



KC Davis 1:00:53

Absolutely. So the five things tidying method is the first sort of what I call gentle skill building that you're introduced to in the book. And I talk about a lot on my channel too. And basically, the idea is that when you're looking at a room that needs to be picked up, and you're overwhelmed by how many things are in there, and you don't know where to start, that we tell ourselves that no matter how many things that looks like there are in this room, there are really only five things in this room. There's trash dishes, laundry, things that have a place that are not in their place, and things that don't have a place. And so if we pick a section of our home, you

know, a room or a floor, and we just start going down by category. And there's some key points that that really make the difference. So one is when I'm picking up trash, all I'm doing is picking up trash, I'm looking for trash, I might be pick picking, you know, picking things up and looking for trash, and but I'm not putting anything else away. And I actually physically carry a trash bag with me, I don't pick something up and walk it to the trash can. I am picking it up with me. And this does a couple of things. One, it cuts down on how many times I'm walking around, so I don't get distracted. But it also keeps me on task and physically holding the trash bag, right. And I go and I get all the trash, tie the bag off, just set it down somewhere, don't even take it out to your garbage, right, then you move on to your dishes. And you take all of your dishes and put it in the sink or stack it up next to the sink and you leave it there, then you move on to your laundry, you get all of your laundry into a laundry basket and you set that down, then you move on to the things that have a place. So this is when I typically will go to like smallish, I'll look at my desk. And I'll say, Okay, now when you're looking at your desk, the only things left are things that have a place and things that don't have a place. And so you can begin to pick something up and go, Okay, this here, this has a place and the place is right here, boom. And then you pick the next thing up and go this, this does not have a place and you just set it in a pile. And so you're putting things away and creating a pile of things that don't have a place, then you move to your next section. And you put the things away that have a place and you add to your pile. And when you're done with that you are you're left with a very, very livable space in a very short amount of time. And you can take the trash out, throw your laundry in, I always ignore my dishes. And then you have this pile of things that don't have a place. And then you can choose what you want to do, you may decide I'm putting this all into a huge basket for now because I'm done with this. Or you might decide, alright, I'm going to tackle it, and you put on a podcast or a Netflix show or call a friend. And you start to try and see if you can find some permanent homes for at least some of those things. And that's the way that I've been cleaning my house for years, because it's the only thing that keeps me not overwhelmed. It's the only way that I found the kind of game of fire that doesn't have me paralyzed or having decision fatigue. And I move so much quicker than if I had to just pick a thing up at random and figure out what to do with it. Yeah, and then pick another thing up that's a totally different category.



Katy Weber 1:04:02

Well and that's what I love about the your your fridge where everything is in the front row because that's something I struggle with which is you know, the out of sight out of mind issue which especially with my desk, right so like if I put something away in a drawer, I It doesn't exist anymore. That's basically deep storage. So I have these piles on my desk and it's the Organized Chaos piles that a lot of us deal with with ADHD right which is like no this is definitely urgent pile you need to deal with this right away pile but then something goes on top of that and you forget that exists. And so then you start a new pile of the like no seriously deal with this today pie hole. And so then I got you know, I have all of these piles and it's like the minute something gets put on top of the paper or the bill or whatever it is it doesn't exist anymore. And so then you start putting them up on the wall and then everything's taped and you know, on the bulletin boards because everything needs to be a central you know, everything needs to be seen. But then I liken that to the you know, those little boy As they give you a chain restaurants, right, where it's like to tell you your table is ready, then I sort of feel like I'm spacing this table where there's just like 20 of those buzzers all sitting on the table because everything is urgent, I think that's the thing I deal with when it comes to like

organization, which is like, I can't sort I just mentally cannot sort with through, you know, what needs to be dealt with dealt with immediately versus what can wait and sort of how to punt things without punting them to the Nether where they will never proceed to

K

KC Davis 1:05:31

them into you know, non existence. Yeah, I'm I'm similar, I actually don't have I don't buy desks with drawers. I don't have any drawers. And if you could see me, I'm actually sitting in it's just beginning, which is hilarious. I live in a halo. So it'll start by me putting something on the ground, right. So I have things on the desk, but the desks have resources on the ground. And then there's a pot and then the next pile and the next person, the next pile. And there's a dish back here from lunch that ate yesterday. And it'll eventually literally create this halo around my chair. And that's, that's how I do it. But I have also learned that I, it's funny, because I can't do like digital systems with anything except for my work for my business. Everything has to be like a visual system. But what I did was I started using, like monday.com, I don't know if you've heard of Monday, it's like a task management, whatever. But I because I have a large secondary screen, I basically exclusively use that screen to have up this website, where I'm I list what I need to get done. And even as I checked my emails, this is hard, but I try not to respond, like unless I can respond to an email immediately. But like a lot of my emails have like action items, right. And so what I used to do was like I would keep unread, anything that I still had to do, but then that was untenable. So I will literally like immediately write it down, and then go to the next email and go to the next one and go to the next email go the next email. So I still have a visual system. But, you know, I never know where anything is in the piles. Because I just I have to keep it as a visual system.



Katy Weber 1:07:21

Yeah, I know. Right? And I think a lot of us who end up with with, quote unquote, helpful partners who are like, Oh, let me just gather this all up and put this in a closet somewhere in your life. Right? And then you end up with the this whole concept of of organized chaos versus put that away out of sight, I think is probably what breaks down a lot of churches of neurodiverse and neurotypical. Okay, so I know we're running out of time. And I really want to ask you, if you had did you think of another what you would call ADHD? If you could call it something else?

K

KC Davis 1:07:52

Well, it's hard because I wouldn't. So like, you know, one of the things that comes to my would be like attention regulation disorder. But I also don't like how faux how attention is, is become in the sentence because it comes focus. And I've heard people talk about this before, where they come up with different acronyms and different this is different that and if I'm being honest, I wish that it had a name more similar to autism. Because autism doesn't have any of the traits listed in the word autism. Right? It just is. And then you have to go well, and so if you don't know what autism is, and you say, Well, it's a way of being neurodivergent. You go, oh, and then you you'd have to explain what that means. And I actually think it'd be much more beneficial if there was just a term that almost like didn't mean anything. So that you had to go well, what is that, and then you could explain it as opposed to, you know, highlighting the one

word attention, or one word, you know, memory or one word of destructive, right, because it's so there are so many facets of ADHD. And they the presentation of it looks different from person to person to person. I also wish that there was a way of being able to use identity first language with ADHD like there is with autism. So, you know, the DSM lists autism, as you know, autism spectrum disorder. So it's ASD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, so you can talk about it in that way. Right? This person has an autism spectrum disorder, this person has autism. But there's also this identity component where many, many people who are autistic are able to say, oh, yeah, I'm autistic. I'm an autistic individual. Like this is something that shapes My very identity, and you have ADHD attention hyperactive disorder, you can be a person with ADHD. But there is no ability to have an identity first relation to it. You're not an ADHD or person. Right? And I, I actually wish that it was a little more. And listen, they're not the same disorders. I'm only using them for the metaphor like the the comparison of there being an ability to describe this isn't a dis, this may be a disorder in that it can absolutely be disabling. But this isn't a neatly shoehorned one thing. There isn't one presentation, it is absolutely a neuro type that affects how I show up



Katy Weber 1:10:58

in the world. Yeah, and that's where, you know, oftentimes I get so wrapped up where I'm like, I get I get so bungled, where I'm like, What are we even talking about? Like, because a lot of the time it feels like, when medical professionals talk about ADHD as though it is the exhibited traits from a neuro divergent brain that is, you know, in a hostile environment, right. And they come and go, you have peaks and valleys throughout your life, when you reach hostile environments, like school, or new parenting or motherhood, you know, like all these times when your symptoms peak? So I'm like, so I'm like, is that what we're talking about with ADHD? Or, you know, I feel like autism is yeah, like, it's, it's talking more about the neurodivergent brain. And then it's how that brain interacts with its environment that then sort of is how you talking about ADHD. And I think so many of us relate to the neurodivergent brain part. And then we look over our life with this new lens, and we're just like, Oh, my God, all these seemingly random struggles, were all coming back to this neurodivergent brain and, and so then I'm sort of like, yeah, like, should I even be talking about my brain as being ADHD? We're or is the ADHD just sort of the result of, you know, traits that have been kind of popping that pop up as a result of being in hostile environments? I don't even right, because like, I don't know what we're



KC Davis 1:12:19

action. It's not that depression looks exactly the same and everyone. But it's the presentation of depression is not all that varied. And so I dislike that, because when you talk about like, oh, I have depression, or I am depressed. So when you say I have ADHD, it makes it seem as though ADHD is a much more easily identifiable thing that you could put on, as opposed to being a different way that your brain works. And that being combined with how everyone has such a different personality, and everyone's in such a different environment, and everyone has such different skills, and everyone has such different privileges and barriers like that, that can look so drastically different. Just like the autism spectrum, there's a spectrum of ADHD. And so I, I've always thought about that about how autistic individuals can say, I have autism, but they can also say I am autistic. And with ADHD, you really can only say I have ADHD, there is no I am. There is no thing there to describe. This is baked in to who I am. It's not it's absolutely can be disabling. But it's not. It's not outside of who I am.



Katy Weber 1:13:48

Yeah, no, I that's very well said, I feel like that's something I struggle with a lot, especially because when I came out and said, Oh my god, I was diagnosed with ADHD, that's the best thing that's ever happened to me the response from the vast majority of people in my life was I'm so sorry about your disorder, or Yeah, you know, and then you're just like, oh, really, you just get hit in the face with like, how you're being perceived. Anyway, I really, really appreciate you sitting down and chatting with me. And I mean, I feel like the conversation about around so many issues around mental health, but especially around neurodiversity, and mental health on Tiktok has just been so life changing for so many of us. And yeah, thank you for elevating the conversation and being kind of on the forefront and yeah, changing so changing our lives for the better so many of us and and really just thank you there I didn't get to say it in the end. And you know, your book is coming so the the revamped book and the audio book, which I'm very excited about because I only I exclusively listen to books so I'm very excited that there's no audiobook coming that you also narrate which I'm very excited about. And anything else where can people find you if, like I said, for the handful of people who aren't already following you, where can they find you?



KC Davis 1:15:11

So you can find me at domestic blisters on Tik Tok. I do have a website called struggle care.com And the book is how to keep household drowning.



Katy Weber 1:15:19

Awesome. Well, thanks again for sitting down and sharing your own incredible journey and insights and I really appreciate it.



KC Davis 1:15:27

Absolutely. Thank you.