

# Liz Westinghouse: Chronic burnout & the MTHFR gene

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adhd, people, feel, brain, life, eating, feeling, histamine intolerance, talk, totally, person, abnormality, realize, sense, relationship, read, helped, posts, pandemic, therapist

## SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Liz Westinghouse



Katy Weber 00:00

This is like such a pleasant side effect of this whole journey for me was like accidentally coming out because I didn't I don't think I ever told you that like the posting about the podcast on my personal Facebook profile was a total accident. I it was like an ADHD moment where I thought I was posting it on this Facebook page that I had created that nobody knew about. And I accidentally posted it on my personal profile. And then I was like, Oh, well, I guess it's out there. Yeah. And I had, I had, like, a number of people messaged me and say, like, oh, wow, you know, I know some so and so or I know so and so has it. And then you were like, I'm there with you, girl. And I was like, oh. So that's been super exciting, because I love you. And I'm like, Oh, yeah, okay. No, that makes sense. Yeah. All right. Yeah, that totally makes I see it. I see it all. Right. Favorite part was me like, no, I, I'm right there with you. I see that funny, because that is sort of part of that diagnosis journey is realizing like how there are like, all of your favorite people in your life probably have it and how do you tell them? You know, like, what's, you know, that feeling of like, yeah, like, I remember as soon as I was diagnosed, I called both of my brothers and was like, so guess what, you probably have this too. And here's why. And we all have the same misconceptions about what it looks like. So I'm so excited to sit down with you and find out like, what what was this journey? like for you? I had no idea when were you diagnosed? How long ago and kind of what led up to all of that?



Liz Westinghouse 01:42

Okay, I am, I've always been all over the place. I think you know, that for knowing me. I've, I've never not even necessarily physically just like, I always equate my brain to being a train station. And some people maybe have one or two tracks that run in there that works for them. And I just see my brain is having like, 30 different trains leaving coming going what huh. And that's sort of how I like have always been, I've, I've always been a job Hopper, I get bored, I do I need to do there. And then I'm like, looking for something else. Or I think I have currently a list of 17 hobbies that I enjoy have never become a master at any, I actually feel like I can't become a master because I can't actually I tell my husband all the time I drive him crazy. And I tell him all the time, like I wish I had more time in this life, there's not enough time I want to do this job. And I want to learn with like this and I wanted to, and he's like settle and just choose one that to me, that's completely impossible. But sort of that's sort of how I've always been, you know, even professionally, I'm a registered dietitian. And I should be able to sit and read a scholarly article from front, I've should be able to do that I need to be able to do that. My brain just and I'm interested, I get through like the abstract and I'm literally like off in a daze somewhere else and I want to do it and I truly have had a difficult time really forcing myself to do that. I just can't actually do it.



Katy Weber 03:13

It's because you've got what you needed from the abstract. That's what I kind of realized is that like, usually when I get through the first paragraph of something, if it's well written enough, I'm like, okay, I've made I've already gotten what I need from this. And so why do I have to read the entire thing? It's just, it's just repetition at that point.



Liz Westinghouse 03:28

I don't get i like that i you know, so. So my husband and you know, you've met him, I believe he's an herbalist and he has. He's like the complete opposite brain of me, where he can hyper focus, you know, he has, he has this thing herbal ism, where he's so obsessed with it he hyper focus is so he could take a 15 page dry as bone article and sit and read it for fun and enjoy it and absorb it. And I like like, I start to twitch watching him do this thinking I can't even imagine. Yeah. So I grew up with a little brother who was extremely classic ADHD, what we would consider like, what most people would assume as ADHD, bouncing off walls.



Katy Weber 04:14

So my first diagnosed



Liz Westinghouse 04:15

my little brother. Yeah, okay. Yeah. off the walls. Absolutely. For his whole life. Very, very, you know, difficult for him to, like, chill. I remember growing up my mom, like, had to watch his diet very much. I always remember and even in the back of my head, it's like, those are the devil because he if he had corn syrup, or any food dyes, he was absolutely like off the walls, but if you didn't just chill, and I just always remembered that growing up. So to me, that's what I had in my head of ADHD and not you know, some of the things that now I'm learning women can be, you know, experiencing with ADHD, so I never really thought I had it until I went to a new therapist. Maybe five years ago, I really, yes, I really wanted another baby. And my husband wasn't on that same page with me. And I was really struggling with kind of needing to have a baby, but he wasn't really, you know, that wasn't on his life agenda, you know what I mean? So I kind of needed somebody else to sort of helped me cope with that. And I went to a new therapist, and like, three quarters of the way through the session, she just kind of like, held up her hand, and she's like, just want to just just throwing it out there. You know, you have ADHD, bad, right? Like, you know, you have this and I was like, me, me, What do you mean? And I, and I know, I'm all over the place. But I was like, and I, and I forgot what she said the rest of the time. Because I'm in my head. I'm like, huh?



Katy Weber 05:47

I have to go read about it. I have to go do this. I have to do research. Yeah.



Liz Westinghouse 05:50

So and I'm always one of those people that's like, ooh, a diagnosis, it must be what I am. Let me go. Like I get all into it. For a brief period of time, let's all be honest, until I move on to the next thing. But I remember coming home and reading about ADHD, adult onset, that's what she told me you probably have adult onset ADHD, which, looking back my whole life I've obviously had these issues. But it was fascinating to learn all of the different things that I had been experiencing was the thing I reading like the the list of symptoms. I mean, like, yep, yep, yep. Oh, my God. Yes. So kind of fun in a way, and then kind of like, what do I do now? Yeah,



Katy Weber 06:32

I know. Yeah, that was really a turning point. For me. It was like when my therapist who has ADHD, started suggesting it years ago, but I didn't really like it didn't register, like I was sort of like, Oh, I don't know what to do with that information. Like, yeah, I guess that makes sense. I am sort of I do have manic energy. And I do like, really, like, I take on projects I do, you know, take on new identities, you know, I'm like, I've had more jobs that I can think of, and like, I get super interested in things and then drop them and listen, like those things I related to. But then when I took the online self test for women from attitude magazine, when it was talking about, like how much you hate having somebody swing by your house without warning, and like this stuff, or like how much you hate traffic, like it was all of these ways in which I was connecting to the hyperactive mind element in a way that I was like, oh, okay, this is much more than just feeling like a scatterbrain. Like, there's much more of like a social and emotional element to this. But again, like didn't really know what to do with that information until the pandemic, when I really like, I had like a total breakdown in the beginning of the pandemic. And that was when my therapist was like, I think it would help you to look into ADHD a little more in terms of how to help yourself in this moment, because everything I was trying to do wasn't working. And so I think she sort of at some point knew that what I'm experiencing when I'm interviewing a lot of women was that sense of like, there's something about just like, making some deep connection that all of these seemingly unrelated struggles that you've experienced over the course of your life all have this one. Magical too good to be true source. And like what to do with that information? Oh, I can relate to that. Yeah, right. I



Liz Westinghouse 08:31

think I think what the pandemic, it's forced a lot of us to be like, totally shut down, you know, I, I kind of feel this way. And I don't, you know, just from talking to other people, I feel like I am exhausted all the time, because I didn't realize this until recently, I'm spending so much of my time trying to maintain control. Because I know that I can get off kilter so fast, I need the day to be exactly just so I need to know exactly what to expect of my day, so that I can keep that try and maintain some sort of sense of normalcy and, and function and with with the pandemic that just kind of got shot to hell. You know,



09:07

we bought we all



Liz Westinghouse 09:08

you know, I remember one time, we went to a wedding of a friend and I got so dressed up.

I was like, I did my hair, like, this was like, She's like a fancy person. So I like wanting to be fancy. And we got to the reception hall, and people were vacuuming and no one was there. And I was like, what, Where's everyone? How could this be? It's the time and I talked to like, the person came over to us and she was like, Oh my God, this wedding is tomorrow. Ah, I I remember I was my husband still remembers this, I shut down completely. I literally just shut down. I didn't freak out. I just like my brain could not cope with the fact that this was my plan for the day. We had set up childcare we had done all of these things. And that, that the fact that I had gotten it all screwed up and I had to do all this stuff now to create normalcy for the next day. I should Lay down, I could not cope. I'll never forget it. Because it was such an extreme moment of that. Yeah, my brain just could not grasp what to do next. It was it was bizarre, but I've seen a lot of that, with my research is that we so strive to have some sort of sense of order, that when the order we tried to create goes down, we go down with it.



Katy Weber 10:21

Yeah. And that really was locked down for all of us on why I think there's been such this proliferation of diagnoses. appier COVID? Yeah, you know, it's, it's interesting to bring that out, because I feel like that a lot of the time, I've related to that so much that feeling of like, you spend all of your time organizing, because it doesn't matter how much organizing you do, you still feel like an over arching sense of chaos. And so it's like the organizing becomes the goal, you know, like, it's almost like, there's no set, there's no time that you ever get to the destination of feeling organized. So



Liz Westinghouse 11:00

ever, but you're twitchy the whole time trying to maintain this that doesn't really ever come to fruition. And then trying to it's just, I realized, that's one of the reasons why I'm like, burnt out more at the end of the day than say, somebody else I know, that maybe doesn't have us because there's just this constant need to try to create order. Do you think it's the organizing that is exhausting? Or is it the belief that



Katy Weber 11:28

is it like when you suddenly come face to face with the futility of it all that you know, and then you shut down like is that the exhaustion because I so many people I talked to like talk about masking, you know, and that feeling of like, we spend so much of our time trying to present ourselves in a certain way to try to be live up to a certain Oh, yeah, view of who we are. And that sense of like, our public identity is one of like, very competent and

very organized and very sort of, you know, always up for everything. And then like secretly inside, we just feel like a complete chaotic hot mess. And that's something I share that. And so there's the sense of like keeping up an appearance or keeping up this idea that like, I'm supposed to be somebody that I'm not and and then you realize that not everybody feels that way. Like I just sort of believed that was part of the human condition. And so sometimes now I think like realizing that that's not how everybody feels. Almost like it's like you're staring the reality in the face. And then then that becomes the exhaustion is just the like futility of it all. I don't know.



Liz Westinghouse 12:38

Yeah, no, I get that. I totally get that imposter syndrome is real. I have that completely all the time, where I just feel like I'm just putting, I'm just trying to be this person. But I don't deserve to be there. I shouldn't be there. I don't know how I got there. And it's, I don't know if that is something you ever experienced. But my



Katy Weber 12:53

god, yes. Are you kidding me? Of course. And not only that, but and I call it a piece of shit syndrome, which I stole from one of my guests, Rachel, who talks about it a lot. But that's, you know, that was, I think one of the big tip offs for my therapist, too, which was like, I would come in there week after week after week. And I would talk about this thing, and I was talking about this, and I'm doing this and I'm doing this, and I'm Oh, I haven't really interested in this. And then, but at the end of the day, I would be like, but like, I feel terrible about myself, and I feel like a piece of shit. And she was like, how are you? Like, why are you always defaulting to this? And I think that was I didn't realize at the time that that was a huge part of the emotional element. And that rumination element was a huge part of female ADHD or I guess any ADHD. So I again, like I didn't, I just thought I was chronically depressed, because that's what everybody had told me. When were you so when were you diagnosed? Do you even say, so? had to be five years, five years ago, okay. I mean, a therapist told me this, I assume that's a diagnosis. So you've never medicated.



Liz Westinghouse 14:34

I have tried it. And it truly actually made me feel like a real human. I remember trying, I tried out a role just to see if it helped. And I remember I've talked to my dad about this because my dad also has tried it. He has he has ADHD and he doesn't like to admit it. But you know, we had to get it from somewhere in a sense, you know if it's genetic, and he tried it as well, and we've Both had this like, like connection moment, we talked about it

where it felt like the puzzle piece we've been trying to fit in upside down, finally turned the right way and locked in. And our and our brains were just able to focus I certainly I never felt stimulated, I never felt like, on like I was on something I just remember being like, I can breathe, I want to do this, I actually want to do the day, what can What can I do today? Like, I think I want to play with my kids today, I think I actually felt like instead of spending all of my time I hadn't even realized focusing on just existing, quote unquote normally, like a brief, it was pretty amazing. Pretty amazing, actually. But I don't necessarily want to take those things all the time. You know, and I don't, I don't know if to me that's like a once in a while thing if you know if I need to with my doctor, but I don't know, it felt really good. But I also feel like I kind of want to work towards figuring out how to do that if I can.



Katy Weber 16:00

Yeah, I had a I mean, I had a very similar experience with vyvanse, which is the same, right? I mean, it's they're both the same stimulant, so, and it was immediate, that immediate feeling of like, Oh, my brain is so quiet and home. And I had a very similar experience when I first tried SSRIs, you know, but also I took SSRIs when I have newborns. So like, I'm like, there's such so many other factors. There's the sleep deprivation and the crying and all of that other stuff. But I would like definitely have that distinct memory of like before and after taking the medication of just like after the medic taking the medication, just feeling like, just calm and feeling like I could do the thing. You know, like I always said it helped me cope. But then I also noticed with vyvanse, that after about a week, I didn't feel that anymore. Like I sort of felt like it wasn't do the things I was looking for, like help with focus or help with like actually accomplishing tasks and staying on those tasks and not getting distracted. It wasn't helping with that even though my brain felt a little quieter. And so then I sort of was like, do I want to stay on this? Do I not? And it's Yeah, I mean, I was when I first started this podcast, I was madly asking every single guest like, are you medicating because some people say like, it's the best thing that ever happened to them. And it's been life changing. And I'm like, what does that mean? What is life changing? What are you getting from it? What are you how, you know, and I just had so many questions, as I always do about any psychotropic medication, where I just like, I get so exhausted by the constant questioning of is this working? Right? That I end up going off of it? Because I'm sort of like, I feel like it's sort of easier to just exist at a baseline of no medication. And then and then, you know, it's like, it's like, even like as a registered dietician, where you're like, Okay, let's figure out what's bothering you internally. So we'll take everything out, and then slowly start introducing things one of us



Liz Westinghouse 18:19

sort of, in the middle of all of that myself, right now, I actually find you posting that

accidental posts to be actually genius for me, in a way for my own self, because I hadn't really considered all the ADHD, it was like back here in the back of my mind. And then when you posted, I was like, look into this, again, this is actually a thing for me, I should actually start paying attention to this more. And I started doing more research. And then, you know, just accepting that I have this whatever, in the last six months or so. And then recently, this is sort of going to come out of left field, but it's gonna come back to ADHD, because I've recently had this insane epiphany about my own health that is totally changing some things for me. I had a, I had the soup at work, I worked at a nursing home and I had the soup for lunch one day. And I absolutely had the craziest reaction. About an hour later, I got a red face. I had trouble breathing, my heart rate was all over the place. My anxiety went all over the like out of control of running to the bathroom. It was insane reaction and I did not know what was happening. And then I remember that I have similar but less reactions when I drink whiskey or if I have wine or coffee or something like that. And so I had asked the kitchen like Could you do something different? I eat the soup all the time. Why did you do something different? And he came in He's like, they got us some cheap soup. Basically after using it came in and the main ingredient was MSG. And I had never really thought too much about that in the past but I my dietitian brain kind of clicked on from I never focused on myself with these things. I think about other people but for myself. It's like I Like lose all, all cheeks all smart when my brain actually clicked in and I started thinking about histamines and how this was a complete histamine response that I had had with this with the MSG and the soup because chemistry is extremely high in histamine. So I started doing more research I like got mad about it like, like, so interested mad in a good way I started, you know, when you had ADHD, right? You just like voraciously, like absorbing like a sponge. So I started doing more research about histamine intolerance, which was like, I looked at the list of symptoms, and it was like, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. And I saw one of the symptoms was ADHD. And I was like, interesting, because I was meeting all these other criteria. But I also have this ADHD type of brain. So then I started going even further into researching this histamine intolerance, because my face is always red. I cover it with a ton of makeup. I always react to different foods, my hands swell, I get a you know, this like swollen saying this whole bit. So then I start looking into why people get this histamine intolerance. And one of them was having the mthfr gene abnormality. So I was like, Oh, I did 23andme years ago. Let me look. So I got all excited. I looked up what genes I'd have to look up. But then I looked on 23andme. And I looked into my you can like they have a bank thing that you can type in what you're looking for, and it will tell you. So then, it turns out that I have the worst possible case of mthfr gene abnormality, which, among other things, if you have this gene abnormality, and you're not doing anything about it, it's sort of like a toilet, that you're just you keep clogging. But trying to flush at the same time, a lot of these pathways get blocked up, that you're and so it's this whole cascade of events of things that can happen in your body, one of which is the system and intolerance. But then I found another connection with mthfr

and ADHD brain. And how if so many people who have ADHD also have this gene abnormality. It's very common. So I was like, then I was I've been like on a rip the last two to three weeks with this because I, on top of having this brain that's all over the place. I feel like garbage all the time. Like all the time tired feel like I have the flu brain fog, like you wouldn't believe like, like, like a like a blanket is on me. Was this before the suit person? Yeah. Oh, yeah, this has been for years where I just feel like garbage all the time. I chalked it up. I had thyroid cancer 10 years ago, which you know, and I am on thyroid medication. And I've chalked it up to that, like, it's just the thyroid not being there. So I'm just taking this dose every day of firing medication, whether it's the right dose or not every day, I mean, your body needs different amounts all the time. And I'm just shooting this one dose. So bring it all together. I decided to really go on like a histamine intolerance slash mthfr elimination diet two weeks ago, to this day, where I cut out anything with folic acid, which is one of the things that with mthfr gene abnormality, we can't take folic acid, which is the synthetic form of folate that they enrich and all kinds of, you know, when you see enriched flour, and rich products, they throw folic acid in there. And if you have this issue, your body cannot convert that folic acid to Foley. And so it's just it creates this whole cascade of events of things that should or should not happen. If you can do that one being like serotonin and dopamine production, mood and the way that you handle stress, I mean, all kinds of stuff. So I've been on this diet for two weeks, and I feel like a new person. I can't even explain it to you how much I feel like a new person just in two weeks. So I like freaking me out. But one of them in the last even few days is that I'm starting to feel that same calm that I felt unnatural. Or my brain seems like I know, I'm excited right now because I'm excitable about this, but I feel like oh, my gosh, yeah, could this be helping? I'm not saying it's gonna make it all go away. But was the way that I was eating even though I didn't mean to Was it the wrong way for my body. And it sort of made my ADHD exacerbated to help. I mean, it was it was pretty bad. And all of a sudden, it started starting to feel like the stars are aligning again, you know, that puzzle piece is starting to fit in. And it's kind of a miserable diet. I'm not gonna lie, but I would do it to the rest, you know, forever if it meant that I could have energy again, because I feel like I'm, I feel like I'm jacked up on something. I have so much energy in the last few days. I'm not taking anything.



24:31

So that's something



Liz Westinghouse 24:32

that I've been very excited about in the last, you know, couple of weeks is this whole connection, maybe with mthfr gene abnormality and mood and the way that we perceive

life.



Katy Weber 24:45

So interesting. It is you know, and I feel like there are many ways in which I wonder how many ADHD symptoms is I'm always fascinated with conversations about comorbidities, you know, because I feel like there are comorbidities like dyslexia and Social Anxiety you know, those sort of feel like those are co-morbidities when it comes to ADHD, but then I feel like we start talking about symptoms, as though they are co morbidities you know, where I feel like depression or you know, that sort of ABS or mindedness or rumination, like a lot of these things that are symptoms that may be ADHD, but also like, so like, could be a number of other things that, you know, there could be so many other elements that are exacerbating symptoms that look like ADHD. And I've heard a lot of physicians who will talk about like, you know, trauma, you know, that there are a lot of people who have PTSD will exhibit similar symptoms to ADHD. And so maybe it's not ADHD, maybe it's the trauma and I'm like, how do you untangle that because there's so much trauma involved in living an undiagnosed life, even if it's undiagnosed ADHD, if it's undiagnosed some other genetic malady, you know, not knowing what the source of of your problems is, is a trauma in itself. And so it's like, how do you even decide that something is trauma induced, or just sort of correlative to the trauma that is induced by something? I feel like we could, I could talk to you for hours about like food and nutrition with ADHD, because I like for me personally, like my hyper focus has been, why so many people with ADHD respond to intermittent fasting and keto. And so I have this history of being of like, being very anti diet, and you know, feeling like caloric restriction is just has so many other disastrous effects on our bodies, that it's not worth it. But then I'm seeing like, I've, like geek out about all of this research about a toughie, G, and ketosis, and like using fat for fuel instead of glucose for fuel. And like, when I tried it, it was freaking amazing. Like, I had a very similar reaction, which was like, I felt better than I've ever felt in my life. When I tried intermittent fasting, I was like, Okay, what is happening here? And like, what do I do with this information? And, and again, you know, and again, it was sort of like, how, like, what is it? Is this going is this long term? Is this not like, you know, I just felt like, I just threw everything I knew about eating and up in the air. And you know, and I always think of you when it comes to breakfast, because, you know, you were always one of those people in my life, who talked about the importance of like, putting fire on the, you know, putting, always putting a log on the fire first thing in the morning and using that fuel throughout the day. And I'm like, how does this but you know, how, what do I do with this information, because I also sort of felt like, maybe breakfast isn't the way best way to start the day, you know, like, or at least having breakfast at seven in the morning isn't the best way to start the day. And so I'm like, I don't know, I just feel like, there's so many of these crazy

rabbit holes when it comes, Oh, my gosh, a, what you're eating, what supplements you're taking. And like, it's just dizzying. And the irony of it being dizzying on somebody who has ADHD in the first place is not lost. How many radicals you can just jump from hole to hole? That's, I know, right? And it's, and so I mean, it makes sense that, you know, like you were saying in the beginning, like we are just like chronic learners, we are obsessed with finding answers. And that is that's part of our identity, too. Yes, I always think of you when I think about my own like eating journey over the last year because I've been doing so much tweaking in terms of like what's working and what's not or even sugar, you know, like sugar god, it's so problematic to talk about sugar like it's this addictive substance. But then at the same time, like I certainly noticed a huge behavioral differences in my children when they had had sugar and when they didn't and so what do you do with that you don't want to limit it because then you have all these other issues when you start limiting foods because then you get into like restriction and binge eating and but at the same time, like it's, there's a lot of tweaking when it comes to what you what you're putting on your body and then you



Liz Westinghouse 29:56

ovulate and that it's so frustrating because there's not one answer. They're never It'll be and that's all I think we ever want is one answer.



Katy Weber 30:03

Yes.



Liz Westinghouse 30:04

You know, for some people eating early in the morning, as soon as they wake up is going to change their life. And for other people, they're going to feel like they've got a bowling ball on their belly for the rest of the day. Yeah. Like, there's no one one answer, you know, I, I think with when people start to feel better, when they change their diet, whether they do intermittent fasting, keto, or any changes, a lot of times, one thing that they do is cut out. Because you know, when you start when you're like, Oh, I do intermittent fasting. A lot of times we also with that, like handheld, we're going to probably make better choices at the same time, right? And so a lot of times, I wonder if it just comes down to cutting out all the junk. And, and every feeling better, even like bringing it back to maybe mthfr, which a lot of the population has either one or two copies of this gene abnormality. Are we cutting out all this enriched flour that's everywhere, and those pathways are able to function again, that's why we're feeling better, there's, it's almost impossible to figure it out for the

for the masses, what's making them feel better, if they try keto, or if they try



31:11

whatever it's



Liz Westinghouse 31:12

almost like, we have to look at every single individual and break it down, which is exhausting. But that's really what it takes, because for some people, it's cutting out folic acid, and for some people, it's cutting up sugar, or inflammatory oils, or maybe their body just shouldn't eat them morning. It's exhausting.



Katy Weber 31:28

It is and we do not tend to have casual relationships with things. Like I gave up drinking, because I finally came to a point where I was like, I cannot have a casual relationship with alcohol, I never could. I just was able to kind of be you know, live with that knowledge. And and I think there was a point when we were during lockdown very soon into lockdown, like, March 27, was the day that I was like, I am drinking a bottle of wine every night. And I'm not okay with this. And I don't know how to stop it. And I don't know how to have wine in the house without drinking a bottle of wine. So I have to get rid of it. And then getting rid of it was really easy because I wasn't leaving the house or seeing anybody or going anywhere. And then like after a couple weeks, I was like, Oh my goodness, I have this feels amazing. I didn't realize how much alcohol was like, was bleeding into the next day in terms of brain fog and energy and, and then suddenly, it was like the thought of drinking was no longer appealing to me. Because it came with all of those other things that then come with drinking, just like when you have a food allergy where you're like, it's really easy to give up food when you have an allergy to it. Because it's like your motivation becomes wanting to avoid all of these negative side effects. It's really difficult to give things up when you enjoy them. And you feel like you should give them up for some other bigger reason. And so like yeah, so like, I have been just, you know, thinking so much about deprivation in its different forms, and how like, we don't have a really great relationship with moderation. And so like you said, like when it comes to when we make food choices, and when we get on these diets. The reason why some of these diets work so well is because yeah, like you're just generally thinking about your food more and you're thinking about and so you tend to eat better food in general and yeah, but that never state like you can never like keep that going for its own sake. Usually we end up becoming either Orthorexic and become obsessed with how far can I take this? Can I how

far can I take organic? And how far can I take? You know, whatever. Or you just give it all up and you throw your arms up in the air and you're like, forget it. I'm going to go back to eating Halloween chocolate for dinner, which believe me I did a lot of and I was even just having that conversation with my husband the other day because I've gotten back into this habit of like always having a bag of Halloween chocolate in the house and like and I was like, I just feel like it's it's, it's like affecting my sleep. And I feel like I'm just like, I really just need to stop eating the chocolate. And he No, but I was like, I can't have it in the house without eating it. Like it has to be gone. And I was like that feels disordered. God So anyway, if this. I'm assuming this is all this rant is making sense to whoever's listening, just like that I did. Like we, I think moderation is so important in life and it goes easy to certain people. And I think for us moderation is so difficult thing.



Liz Westinghouse 34:40

Now it's all or nothing 100 or zero. You know, but I think like for us, it has to actually make sense to us personally, to be able to say eliminate something if we need to, like with you with alcohol. You're able to do that now because it makes you feel that much better and to you that's worth But it's worth it to you to not have that fog and to not have that lack of energy. But if it didn't provide you those things, and you were just like, Oh, I'm not supposed to drink that screw, it feels good. It's like, we have to actually have a personal like, rooted attachment to the feeling we get from eliminating something that we shouldn't have. Otherwise, it's just not going to be worth it to us I feel it's just gonna be too easy to come off of it. But like maybe for you alcohol, it's, it's actually pretty easy right now to say no to it, because it's giving you a real personal better a feel it's worth it enough to you, you feel better enough, that it's worth it. You know, and



Katy Weber 35:37

it's funny, too, because I sort of wonder, like, will I ever drink alcohol again? And what will that say about me? And what will that mean? You know, like, it's so I feel like we get so wrapped up in like, what our choices me in terms of who we are, and even even intermittent fasting, like I did the whole fit, you know, I tried it completely in the closet, because I was like, I can't be open about this. Like, I can't, if I start like talking about intermittent fasting as somebody who is anti diet. Like, I would get so much vitriol, like, nobody can understand this journey of mine. And I haven't had to really sort of come up with that idea of like, no, this is my own personal journey. And I don't have to answer to anybody. But it still makes me feel really sad when people who are in like body positive intuitive eating our DS that I follow who are like intermittent fasting is terrible. And I'm like, oh, that means I'm terrible. And what does that say about me? And I'm you know, yeah, you know, it can be I don't know, I I don't want to I'm just fascinated by the whole thing

and I certainly am not like everybody should be doing intermittent fasting because I you know, I just read that book intuitive fasting that there was all this like outrage Did you hear about this? So there's all I read it so that the world doesn't have to because it's terrible feeling but it's so diety Oh my god, it's so awful. But I was curious because I was sort of like, there is a part of me that felt feels like there is some intuitive element to playing with, with risk with not restriction but like playing with time windows when it comes to eating. And I felt like turning windows on and turning windows off really, really appealed to me, because then I didn't have to think about food when I when my window was off. And I was like, for me, that kind of like intense structure really, really worked. Yeah. And I had the like, I had the least complicated relationship with food I ever had with intermittent fasting because I didn't have to think about am I hungry? Am I not hungry? Am I doing that? You know, it was just like now I eat now I don't



Liz Westinghouse 37:44

it makes sense. So why that worked for you in a way because if your brain is very all or nothing that's that's what's black and white for you. black, black and white. Like Yes, I can eat No, I cannot. And you know, I think maybe doing things like that for the sole purpose of looking fit, having weight loss all that yeah, that can get really messed up real fast mentally. But I do think it's a totally different ballgame when you are playing with your food when it comes to feeling really good. Right if you if to me that's a totally different animal in a way because the end goal is to feel really good and not just look good in whatever bathing suit you've decided that you need to fit into that year. I mean, the the thought of seeing like, Oh my gosh, if I don't eat breakfast, I have much more energy at the end of the day. That's a cool thing to play around with. If I don't eat breakfast, so that my jeans button that's not going to end well mentally you know what I mean? That might put you down a bad rabbit hole mentally but playing with things to better your your daily well being and quality of life. Mmm, cool that personal.



Katy Weber 38:49

Yeah. And I think at the end of the day, that was really kind of what I how I ended up after much like constant questioning with my therapist of feeling like am I doing something terrible for myself? Is this going to bite me in the ass at some point? Like, at the end of the day? It was Yeah, it was like, What is my motivation? Why am I doing what I'm doing? If it's if it's to feel better than that's just between me and my body. But it's also not that simple. I feel like there's a lot of choices that we make that do have weight intertwined in some way like I think it would be great if it was that simple, but I don't feel like it is so what was it like telling your parent because since your brother had was diagnosed as a kid now what

and how does First of all, what was it like talking to your parents about this? And then what was it like talking to your sister about this? I'm like a

 Liz Westinghouse 39:38

I'm a real open book person. So it's, I don't know, I can't keep anything to myself unless it's like somebody's secret and then I will take it to the grave. I'm real good at other people's things but my own life. So as soon as I got out of that appointment, I'm texting my mom and my sister like she said I had to and I started getting on hold is like but when we I started looking at the symptoms of adult onset for female or just adult ADHD for females, my mom and my sister and I were like, Oh, yeah, that totally makes sense. And my sister was even, like, I think I might have a little of this myself, like, we were all really open to it. And we all have known that, like, you know, my dad also has, you know, a similar traits as well. So it was kind of like a bonding for all of us, like, okay, like, maybe we weren't all bouncing off the walls like my little brother. But we all do have at least my sister and my dad. And I, I'm not sure my mom so much. But my sister, my dad, and I all have this like sense of like, Oh, yeah, maybe we do all have the same thread woven through us that,

 40:41

yeah, we, you know, we

 Liz Westinghouse 40:42

come from the same root issue now.

 Katy Weber 40:45

Yeah, the hardest thing for me has been not being able to talk about this with my mom, because I feel like there's so many answers that have come from this. And there's so many times that like, I know, I made her cry, like, I made her cry when I dropped out of school for the 12th time, you know, like all of these ways in which she, excuse me, she wanted to help me and couldn't and like ways in which she saw me struggling and so many things that I've talked about with her over the years. And like, it was so hard after this diagnosis, I was like, the one person I know would be super interested excited about all of this. I can't talk about it.

 Liz Westinghouse 41:23

Here for Totally, yeah, she is a child. I'm sure she experienced so many things watching you grow where she'd be like, yep, she would totally affirm it for you. You know,



Katy Weber 41:31

I know. I know. Yeah. Yeah. Because so much of this diagnosis is like going back over your whole life with this new lens and this fine tooth comb and being like, Oh, right. Oh, right. Yeah, it is. Yeah. And then when I went back and looked through my report cards to see like, what more did were the signs there? I feel like they were there and then seeing it so clearly in black and white from like, a very young age. And again, just being like, wow, nobody had a clue.



Liz Westinghouse 42:02

Yes, totally. I have a similar thing. I stopped caring and fifth grade, I remember specifically fifth grade math got hard. And my brain is not math geared. And I just decided I just like, and I always had, like, has potential and like has all these things in my and the things I was interested in. I got great grades, but the things I didn't care about, I got terrible grades, and there was always like, has potential, you know, needs to pay attention, like all of your add ons, like.



42:29

So it's all right there. Sorry, there.



Katy Weber 42:31

Well, and the other thing that's been fascinating to me, because I'm sort of out about it and have like, become the ADHD person in people's lives now, you know, and so I get a lot of like, people will forward me things and be like, I saw this thing about ADHD. And it reminds me of you. And I'm like, that's nice. Thank you. I've already read a lot about that. Don't worry, I've got it covered. But I also like sometimes I will sort of make these light hearted posts about like things that people with ADHD struggle with. And people who have ADHD will respond to those posts like you do, which is like, oh, man, I hear you. I relate. Oh, my God, right, preach. And then there's other people who respond in this way. That's like, I'm sorry that you are struggling? Have you tried? Have you tried getting a planner? And you're like, Are there like, ways in which it's really feels like, like a violation, I don't know. Like, I feel I get really like, irrationally angry at those responses. And then I'm like, I'm gonna stop talking about ADHD, because I feel like the the, the misunderstandings

and the stigma around, it really bothered me. And I'm sort of like, I'm in this point right now, where like, I want to advocate and I want to show people what it looks like. But I also get so irritated when people think it's like, a disease, you know, or people think that somehow I'm struggling about it. And I'm like, I don't I don't know how to talk about the struggles. But at the same time, like, feel like I'm not actually struggling, or, I don't know, but like, I don't want your pity goddamnit

L

Liz Westinghouse 44:07

stigma about it? You know, I think a lot of people think that it's like a weakness in a way, you know, like, we'll just figure out how to organize better. I've never thought of that. helpful. But yeah, there's a lot of this, like, some people can be a little holier than thou when it comes to things like this, because it is, you know, some of the manifestations of ADHD do appear like you don't have it together and certain things and it is difficult to be out there. And I'm sure it's very difficult to be out there with it and have to deal with. But on the flip side, you might be helping somebody who hadn't thought about ADHD realize what something that's been bothering them their whole life, right.



Katy Weber 44:45

Well, and I think about that, too. Like my whole life. I've been an oversharer who impulsively just blurts out things about my life. And then I and then I regret it because I'm like, Oh, now I see him like whatever blank to people. You know where it's like you can't manage people's reactions to you. And that can be frustrating. But I also realized that like, when I talked really openly about dieting, there were so many people who were so grateful for the fact that I could articulate these things and talk about my personal experience. And I was like, this is a gift. This is a gift I have of being impulsive and blurting things out without thinking about it. Oh, well, you know, and I would just kind of talk about that. I'm Sophia from the Golden Girls, and I don't have whatever self censor you need. I don't have that. And so sometimes, like, sometimes I regret saying things and posting things, but for the most part, I always feel like yeah, you know, it's my cross to bear. I find,

L

Liz Westinghouse 45:43

I know always gonna have some people that are going to, you know, Pete, quote, unquote, peanut Cheerios, but I think somebody, actually, you helped me when you posted that, because it really got my brain going again, which sort of triggered out this whole entire little sequence of events that has led me to where I am right now, which is in a, I hope, a really good place of me finding my own groups and my own root cause. So you helped me

tremendously and you might not even own it.



Katy Weber 46:10

Wow. I love Yeah. So okay, so we have been talking a lot about some of the struggles, but what's something you love about your ADHD



Liz Westinghouse 46:19

i, this is, I don't know, even know if this makes sense or not. But I love all of my train tracks because I can, I love that I can talk to you, I could, if I wanted to, I could talk to you text somebody on my phone and listen to a TV program and totally have a full, you know, full comprehension of everything that was going on. I truly love that.



46:42

Let them have it.



Liz Westinghouse 46:43

That's right or wrong or good or bad. That's one of my favorite things is that I can, I can like I'm so I don't know, I could never focus on one specific thing. I like that I can have my ear.



46:55

As a mother, I think that's a good thing. I



Liz Westinghouse 46:56

can have my ear to all kinds of different things. I don't know I like that. I used to freak my coworkers out because I would sit and type a note for one of my residents at the nursing home. And I would literally typed a note while talking to you about something else. And the note would come out. My boss used to freak out. And I just like those little things that I don't know if I'd be able to do that if I if I hadn't grown up with a brain like this.



Katy Weber 47:19

Yeah, no, that's true. And I've always related to that idea of if you want something done, give it to a busy person, because I certainly feel like I'm most productive when I have a lot of things happening and a lot of things on my plate. Yeah. Which I like. And I love you know, I love your train tracks analogy. That's great. I'm gonna steal that because it's like the, you know, the other thing that I really like about it is how you can be so many things like how I've had like so many pivots, and so many 180s and so many different things I'm interested in and that like constant learning and being like, yeah, now I'm certified in this and oh, yeah, now I'm gonna be this and then be like, Oh, yeah, no yoga. That was last year. Okay, now I'm doing. That's so much. So it doesn't surprise me that you're taking this total 180. Now from the USA register, registered dietitian and personal trainer, are you still doing personal training? Or is that



48:16

last? Well, I'm not.



Katy Weber 48:19

But it's okay. That's why we like I love knowing that you're like it, it ran its course. And now I'm doing this.



Liz Westinghouse 48:24

That is another thing I like is that I am impulsive. And I am because of that I have not I've never been afraid to do things that maybe others might be afraid to do. Like, like right now. I've been a dietician for 13 years, and I'm totally about to change careers. I'm not telling people so much yet what I'm doing, but I'm about to, like totally leave healthcare and try something new, which, you know, I talked to people maybe without this type of brain, and they're like, Why? Why would you do like, you have a stable job and why but I don't know, I went to last year now two years ago, now I really wanted to cut all my hair off. And for some people that might have taken a whole lifetime to build up the guts and I was like, let's go do it. And growing it out. It was a nightmare. But now I'm a pixie cut survivor, you know, and but it was worth it. I loved it. I like to see what happens. Yeah, I do also like for some reason, my brain is very stable. And I like stability when it comes to relationships. That makes me happy. Like, like with my husband. I don't feel over the place. I'm super chill. I'm so happy here. But like everything else in my life. I want to try I want to change it. I want to do this. I want to do that I want to. So it's nice that I have like a little bit of an anchor.



Katy Weber 49:39

Yeah, you know, I was talking to Matt about that recently because I was thinking about like relationships and friendships because something that we struggle with. I'm trying to use words other than struggle, because I feel like it's not necessarily a struggle, but it's something I think that a lot of women with ADHD that I've talked to have in common is feeling complicated when it comes to French Especially with other women and feeling like a bad friend a lot of the time, because you're not able to show up for people in the way that you feel like you should. And yet you are, you know, you have a hard time valuing the things you do bring to relationships. And, and I certainly have like hot, cold relationships with most people in my life where like, I come in hot, I'm really super into them, and then I fall off the planet. And you know, and years go by, right?



Liz Westinghouse 50:29

Because we're both that way. And we both mean no harm when it's cold. It's just, it's not the time for that right now. And then we come back together. And it's like, I know, well, and that's



Katy Weber 50:39

what I know. And I, that's what I love about, about knowing that you have ADHD too, because it gave me the freedom to just be like, Oh, I don't have to feel bad anymore. Because I sort of always felt like I had done something to get us off whatever communication track we were on, and then and then you start to internalize that guilt. And then you're like, I'm a terrible person. And then you're Homer backing into the bushes, and never to talk about that again, with that person. And I was just like, I feel like we have so many of those relationships in our life, where it's like, I feel like I've done something wrong. I don't know why I've offended you. And I'm just going to slowly back out of your life for your own sake. And so I was talking to Matt, I was like, how is it that we have had this, like, totally relatively uncomplicated relationship for 20 years of just like, you know, you're my person, and I don't have any of that complication with you. And, and so we talk a lot about that, because he was, he just immediately was like, Well, I'm not, I'm not another person to you. I'm an extension of you. You know. And so I think that there are people in your life who become extensions of you, where you are just yourself with them, like, you can't help that. And so you don't feel. I mean, I certainly feel guilt and shame in my relationship in certain ways. But you don't have that same sense of like, how I'm supposed to be acting or how I'm supposed to, you know, obligation or anything like people, there's right people that you love your kids, your parents, your your partners who are just extensions of you, and they're sort of in your orbit, and you don't have to worry

about cultivating the relationship, so much like that. I don't know. I mean, I certainly feel like relationships are work and there's certain things you need to do, but I don't know. Yeah, it's been it's been interesting to sort of feel like why is that I can have this super stable one stable relationship, and not have any issues with it. And yet feel like so many other instances in my life end up being problematic. Yeah. This has been so wonderful. It's been so nice to catch up. And yeah, hear your story. I was so curious, and I'm grateful that you were able to do it in this kind of formalized way. Thanks for having me.