

Annie Romanos: Gen X diagnosis, energy management & Arorere...

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SPEAKERS

Annie Romanos, Katy Weber



Annie Romanos 00:00

I've literally got reminders in my house in my office here, up by the coffee machine. It's that, you know, that accepting that, you know, this is a mercurial condition. It's going to be up and it's going to be down and you know, even asking myself the question on these notes, you know, are you in there? Do you want to cycle? Where are you at in the cycle? It's that are right. It's that set disrupter, that visual disrupter that's really powerful. Hello,



Katy Weber 00:34

and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school, jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens, and it has been nothing short of overwhelming. I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who like me discovered in adulthood they have ADHD and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Okay, before we get started, I'd love to share with you this review from a listener named M. e. J. Williams on the Apple podcast platform. It's entitled, grateful. I am so grateful to Katie and this podcast for helping me understand myself better. I am one of the tribe that has come late in the game having been diagnosed at 42. It is so validating and illuminating to hear my story among others and to hear the experts Katie has on the show in order to more fully understand my neuro divergence essay. I also appreciate the humor and positivity Katie and her guests bring to the conversation. She helps normalize things that I have always felt ashamed of and tried to hide. It is so liberating. Thank you, Katie. Oh, wow. Thank you. This is really lovely. And, gosh, I'm at a loss for words today other than to say I am so touched to know that this little podcast has become a source of humor and light and validation for so many of you. Thank you to each and every one of you who have written reviews or emailed me or messaged me to share how much these interviews have helped you. I honestly don't think I'll ever be able to adequately express how much it means to me. Okay, here we are at Episode 112, in which I interview Annie Romanos and he is an executive and

business coach based in New Zealand. She was diagnosed with ADHD last year at the age of 49. And in true ADHD fashion, she quickly pivoted her business to work with ADHD entrepreneurs and executives to help them learn how to turn their ADHD brain wiring into their competitive advantage. Eddie, and I talk about some of the unique experiences of getting a late diagnosis as a Gen X. Or we also talk about the nagging feeling of underachievement and missed potential that so many of us experienced in life and some of the coaching strategies she uses with our clients. We also talk about energy management and productivity and making sure we are taking care of ourselves as we age. Enjoy. All right, Andy, thank you so much for joining me.

A

Annie Romanos 03:14

It's such a pleasure. You know, I've been following you for a while you've been unbelievably tenacious and committed to podcasting. with ADHD. It's obviously a hyper focus of yours. That's a lot. That's a commitment. Yeah, I



Katy Weber 03:29

think it's the longest I've ever done anything. And, and I think a lot of it has to do with the subject matter, which I think grows and transforms with me in terms of, you know, the subject, but also, I mean, I just absolutely love hearing stories from women like you. And I feel like it's just I've learned so much. And I love the fact that other people are listening. Like there's so many things that feed me in terms of the dopamine that I'm like, Yeah, I don't know when this is going to end, but I'm still going.

A

Annie Romanos 04:02

Yeah, yeah. I wonder. Yeah, I wonder about if you were doing just the you talking, you know, the monologue kind of podcasts which are out there. I don't think I could do that. But you know, that could be hot focus with someone that's so unique. Because,



Katy Weber 04:16

yeah, I definitely knew very early on that that was not going to be the format for me. I was never going to have the the ability to sit down and write podcast episodes ahead of time. And so I was like, this is all it is. We interview and put it out there. So anyway, I'm super excited to hear your story. You were diagnosed about a year ago, correct?

A

Annie Romanos 04:37

God, that's yeah, half over half my life. Before I got formally sort of indicated to me that there was a situation going on in my head. Yeah, and I've got to say, Katie, because I reached out to you and I sort of gave you just a real real overview, but it's been a hell of a time and I think I'm like quite a typical Gen XOR. That's been diagnosed. I say that because you know, it's like the Gen X slash ADHD complex. It's like, we're often for women particularly, I'm specifically actually

talking about women Pirrie or perimenopause, or menopause, ADHD, there's a pandemic, there's often a time in our life where we're finishing our starter marriage, or our second marriage, or there's some big changes there. We're often parenting teens, we might be losing parents. And then we've got professional lives, you know, my case, you know, a business. And then other things, right, you know, the Hashimotos. With the ADHD, there's just so much going on. I know that that's my picture. But I think that that's often an unrecognized by the individual and wider society have that particular time in life for those later in life diagnosis, women with ADHD, it's not just the ADHD, it's the ADHD. And it's quite hard to tease out, I think the ADHD from everything else. But I think certainly, it's such a compounding factor. So when I got diagnosed last year, it was a relief, I lost a divorce two years prior, I lost both my parents and you know, lock downs, a year apart, the teens, the pandemic, the Hashimotos, the business, and I do want to say that, getting the diagnosis absolutely pushed me into sorting through it, and having that coaching relationship finding an ADHD coach. And that was probably the best thing I did, in order to kind of bring everything together actually was to work with a coach, which I did. And, you know, obviously, we were, you know, we were having conversations through the ADHD lens, but it was so, so useful to help me sort out just a lot of stuff, but come to terms with some of that, you know, executive functioning challenges that have been following me around forever, but it got worse, right. We know that stress and trauma and pack that, you know, executive function and capability, regardless of ADHD, that's, you know, trauma really challenges that that our prefrontal cortex, and so it was really, really useful. So yeah, I'm forever thankful to that six months intensive I had with my ADHD coach.



Katy Weber 07:33

Yeah, now, right. I feel like that's a thread throughout so many of my conversations, which is like, there's just so many variables, how do I even begin to understand and realizing how important it is to understand and uncover the why right in terms of our brains, but I just want to backtrack a little like, what were the some of the first things that made you think this is ADHD?



Annie Romanos 07:55

Yeah, I think I've got a quite a typical story. I came to ADHD through my children. Okay. My youngest child's teacher raised the possibility that he may have ADHD. And then it's funny. And then my older son, who was 16, at the time, said that he wondered if he might have ADHD, and then my daughter as well all quite separate from each other. And so I thought, Oh, I probably should look into this. And so I did. And that was the, you know, scrolling through the symptoms, and disguising bom, bom, bom, and it's like, literally was creepy. It was like, Whoa, that's just me. Whoa. Yeah. I mean, obviously, there's a process to go through with children and diagnoses and paediatric, you know, kind of psychiatrists in the school and all that. So the, what I decided to do first Kati, in the simplest thing was like, get my own diagnosis, which I did. And the speed at which the psychiatrist diagnose me was just unbelievable. I thought that demo lobbyists. And then I joined a ADHD Facebook group for adults with ADHD in New Zealand, and who should be in there to my cousin's from my father's side, why there, I'm like, hello, you know, open the messenger chat app and say, Whoa, and all the stuff came out about ADHD and on my own paternal side of my family, and my father just passed away and I have a really strong sense that he had ADHD himself and so yeah, and autism to on my father's side so my god, like last year was like, a after kind of, yeah, I think falling apart or, you know, feeling like life was falling apart with all these other things going on as well. It was really, really nice to

put some pieces back together. In terms of the year, then the ADHD side of things and really something I can control, right? Well, you know, more or less, certainly, elements of it, I can sort of start working on improving it. And so yeah, it was, it was it's been amazing, incredible journey. Yeah.



Katy Weber 10:18

Yeah, it is. That's very beautifully put, I think when I was first diagnosed, I felt like I described it as being feeling like a phoenix, where I had gotten to a point of sub being so low, you know, be having such a difficult time. And really feeling like I had just was at my worst and and had kind of emotionally imploded. And then this diagnosis just felt like I was rebuilding. And my identity had shifted so dramatically, and it just felt Yeah, it's so wonderful. Like, it is so difficult to describe to because it's like, you're telling people, you have a diagnosis of a mental disorder. And yet at the same time, you're like, this is like, the best thing that's ever happened to me. It's like, all right,



Annie Romanos 11:04

like singing, you know, from the rooftops about it, I ended up getting a having a piece and, you know, one of the magazines in New Zealand, New Zealand woman's weekly, which, you know, it's not particularly high brow, but, you know, suddenly got the circulation and it was a little bit like, was quite scary. Katie, it's like, I'm coming out. I was quite nervous. But my God, I had so many people write to me and say, Wow, just sharing their journey and you know, just feeling they're inspired and knock. I think this is me as well. And I think this is getting speaks to this later in life. diagnosis for women in particular, it's been very invisible, the inattentive ad, you know, ADHD, you know, a lifetime of folks who had suffering, but you know, yeah, I guess it has been for many of us, been really hard.



Katy Weber 11:51

Yeah, yeah, I remember my therapist said, it was like, realizing you've been walking around with a brick tied around your ankle, and sort of that feeling very early on, you know, that feeling like, I didn't even realized I had this brick. So it was sort of like, there's so much grief, realizing that the brick exists, and that it's not necessarily going anywhere, but at the same time, such relief, knowing that that's what it was. I feel like I would have so many questions about this idea of this specific, you know, Gen X time in life, right? I have some theories about why so many of us are diagnosed beyond just the hormones. But I'm curious for you, you know, what part of a diagnosis is looking back over your whole life with this new lens? What are some of the things that you look back? In earlier in life, where you're just like, oh, the signs are clearly they're all alarm?



Annie Romanos 12:45

Yeah. I think, you know, the school reports, you know, not performing to her potential distractibility, all those, so all those really cliché kind of, you know, experiences, and messaging as well from others. And then, of course, that leading to, I'm sick, I'm stupid. And so I better go

and do XYZ to prove to the world I'm not one of the things I always used to hear. And my family growing up was my mother saying, you know, there you go, again, I've actually full names and Mary, as it showed that to me when I was a teenager, you know, rising up again, and so there's this, you know, I think that that was a really key kind of connector for me, of this, you know, passionate, emotional sense of, you know, justice and fairness and, you know, always saying to my Mom, don't be mean to dad, you know, I had a radar for that. And, yeah, I had never seen it through the lens of ADHD, obviously, previously, but I really do think that was a key part of my, my neuro chemistry and that fit into my character, you know, and how I what I thought and how I behaved and you know, how I saw the world, you know, yeah, that's sort of a rich emotional life and I feel things really deeply and I kind of just thought, doesn't everyone I'd cry easily in movies and this is way before perimenopause case. Don't just describe, you know, menopause or perimenopause to there always have been, so that emotionality and empathy, you know, sort of the the ease, right, the energy plus that, you know, high emotions, or radar for people's emotions and all that sort of thing, which is why, I guess, you know, I do what I do as well, which is part of why, you know, with the energy and the empathy, I think I'm cut out to be a coach more than, say, a therapist or the patients of a counselor or a psychotherapist, I think people do employ me for that the energy that I bring to the conversation and kind of you know, the fire and making things happen and pushing people forward, which, you know, coaching is about the future right, creating the future and, and movement and momentum as well as other things that Yeah,



Katy Weber 15:03

yeah. You had something in one of your blog posts. That was really poignant about underachievement, when you were, you know, as being a business, you're so you're an executive and business coach, you were before your diagnosis, which, you know, in hindsight again, it makes a lot of sense. And I want to talk about that too. But you had said something in a blog post that was so poignant where you said that you had you were coaching these high performing clients who were becoming very successful and surpass it. You said, my high performing clients were surpassing me. And I couldn't work out why there was something amiss, but nothing I could put my finger on, I was clearly limited. And I felt a deep sense of shame. I thought it was just a beautiful way of describing that sense of confusion around potential and an inability to meet our sense of potential, right. And that feeling of that that chronic feeling of under achievement that so many of us have felt over our lives and being like, Am I really just stupid, like, Yeah, but so I imagined coaching executives that that impostor syndrome, it's not even, I don't think it's impostor syndrome. What is it? Is it just like, it's like you said, it was like, I just can't figure it out. Right? That feeling like everybody got the manual, but me?



Annie Romanos 16:18

Absolutely, you know, it's this, why can I just do it? Why can't I just do it? Nikes, the global slogan, just do it. Like, it actually doesn't apply to us. It's just don't do it. Just do it. It's like, it's always been difficult for me in my coaching, practice coaching these incredible people, these high performers, these entrepreneurial spirits. And then, you know, loving seeing what they create, and just feel like when a coach and my clients are leaving me for deed, what's wrong with me? Here, I am able to facilitate, you know, kind of, you know, support them in their, you know, extraordinary growth and results. And they're doing it, I'm not doing it for them. But

aside, but what about me, and certainly that fit the imposter beast absolutely fit the imposter base. So what am I doing? And I think that was another really important part of the diagnosis. For me, that was like, our that's why, because I can't just do it. And it's not because I don't want to, it's because I literally can't unless the conditions are right. And I didn't know about that. And you know, think as a result, I've changed my business model, I've changed that the structure of my business. I've got far more partnerships and collaborations and make sure I've got a VA and all that. And when I say to myself, I want to do something, I bring someone else into it, that is the accountability piece, or even on my worst days using focus, mate. He's even remembering that focus mate exists, though, okay. So now, as I find myself, as I go down the ADHD, kind of, you know, the whole kind of spiral and obvious focus mode, I can just, I can just use focus night. And I think humor is really important. And I kind of laugh at the situation, laugh at ourselves, and, you know, take ourselves lightly as well, and that we've got this, I think that's really important. But yeah, I think that that was, that was a major factor for me. And, you know, again, like just add it to all kind of points of crises. And I know that, you know, I'm ultimately privileged, and I've got lots of great things going on in my life. But I kind of think about that sort of, you know, I talked about that Gen X, ADHD complex sort of thing there. You know, I think that just sort of added to it and that whole imposter thing, just magnified everything, just everything was harder, right? With that running in the background of what's wrong with me. What's wrong with me? Why can't I just do this? And I'm in the wrong business need to get a J. OB and all that. So yeah, that was a game changer for me with with the diagnosis. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.



Katy Weber 19:03

And now Okay, so So what led up to becoming a business coach, working specifically with executives, what was kind of the path that led you there,



Annie Romanos 19:13

I'd already decided that I kind of stumbled across actually stumbled across coaching about 12 years ago, and thought, this is something that really, really resonates with me, I think I've gotten like innate talent for it. And so I actually started my coaching career out sort of doing in the career coaching space for some public sector clients who were sort of, you know, kind of that sort of middle management, team leaders and all that. And it was great. It was fine. I I really enjoyed it. I know I was effective. I had the practice was sort of slowly but surely kind of growing, you know, with the word of mouth and so forth. I still had really young chill Aldrin, so I was only ever, you know, a part time thing that I was, you know, doing at the time. But I noticed myself a little bit, I leave the sessions feeling a little bit low of energy, because my clients were ultimately working in systems and teams, there was bureaucracy, bureaucracy, and I wasn't overly energized at the end of, you know, any of those coaching sessions. And when I had someone reached out to me see if they had a business, and could I kind of help them with XYZ, and you know, sort of actually just sort of with their thinking around stuff, not that it was sort of, you know, strategy work at that point, per se, we started working together with some sessions. And it was really, really obvious the difference of working with someone that designed the system, you know, designed their environment and made the calls, rather than someone working within a system where the pace of our conversations were a lot slower. There were quite a few outside and obstacles for this person, because they, you know, working in environment, as to take distinct from working with someone who creates their own

environment, someone entrepreneurial with a business, I absolutely loved the pace of those conversations and the creativity that could occur. And then now, again, I didn't know I had ADHD back then. But looking back that makes so much sense. I still work with corporate clients. I've got some amazing clients that you know, but I think that kind of knowing that, ultimately, we think about ideal clients and our businesses, right, I think they are my ultimate ideal clients, people have that have that energy, that momentum, and the access to creativity and experimentation, and trying things out and risk taking. You know, that's a great session for me in terms of pace.



Katy Weber 21:58

Yeah, you know, it's funny, because when I was working as a health coach long before my ADHD diagnosis, and I was working specifically with diet, recovery, and binge eating, recovery, so I'm pretty sure all of my clients had ADHD, not only because we were drawn to each other, and they were drawn to me, and I was drawn to them, but I think just coaching as a modality, you know, it's so effective in terms of the accountability and like, you know, some of the things you were talking about in terms of just like, the verbal processing and the thinking and the, the, you know, working through steps, all of that is so effective for people with ADHD that I think even just without knowing it being drawn to the coaching relationship, I'm not saying that everybody has ADHD who's coaching or, but I can see why people might be drawn to it, even if they're not undiagnosed.



Annie Romanos 22:50

Interestingly, Katie, a few of those early sort of business oriented clients, you know, as I came out with my ADHD thought, wow, Annie, I think this is me too. And it's like, I'm not surprised at the energy and the brainstorming and that high octane nature of our coaching, engagement together and the momentum, it makes so much sense. You know, the energy match, right?



Katy Weber 23:15

I'd like to take a moment to thank better help for sponsoring this podcast. If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know, I am a big proponent of therapy therapy provides me the best opportunity for verbal processing something that is so important for my kind of brain and my sense of self. What I love about better help is that it's not a crisis line. It's not self help. It is professional therapy that's done securely online from the comfort of your home. They assess your needs and match you with your own licensed professional therapist, and it's available for clients worldwide. So you get access to a broad range of expertise that might not be available to you locally. It also tends to be more affordable than traditional offline therapy and financial aid is available. If you visit their website and read their testimonials. There are actually quite a few reviews that specifically reference help with ADHD as a special offer for listeners of the women and ADHD podcast, you'll get 10% off your first month, simply sign up at [betterhelp.com/women ADHD](https://betterhelp.com/women-ADHD), that's BetterHelp h e l p.com/women. ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp. Now you had mentioned that there were you know, some of the ways in which you're you've changed as a coach since your

diagnosis in terms of like having a VA and you know, making sure that you've got the that accountability, I guess what are some of the unique needs that your clients, women with ADHD face as executives or as entrepreneurs?

A

Annie Romanos 24:44

Yeah. What I'm seeing in myself and I see in my clients is the emotional side of ADHD is a factor that we don't read enough about. You know, in terms of this feeling flooded, feeling reactive, then that impacting decisions with, you know, kind of the relationships management, and also sort of this overthinking part and this rumination, I think those are the two areas in particular that I see people, my particularly my female clients coming to me with not realizing that they're the issue. But actually, that being the thing that we really actually spend a lot of time talking about is our capacity to pause and disrupt, and then re reframe, and pivot, our responses. And the way we're seeing things and I think that's just a game changer, if people are able to have that awareness about the brain, and about their emotional state, and have a bit more, say in that a bit more control in there, be in the driver's seat a bit more with that, rather than it driving them. That's a really successful coaching engagement, because it has such an impact on everything, particularly relationships, particularly even productivity. So to have a little, you know, to even a tweak in that can make kind of a demonstrable difference to how someone operates and how they feel about themselves and not like feeling out of control. So I think that emotional, the emotional side of things, emotional dysregulation, that rumination piece as well, like, they're often actually what ended up sort of working with people on, it can sometimes look like a marketing issue or strategy problem, or XYZ. But actually, it's the sort of these internal challenges that people aren't necessarily aware of what ends up being on the table and what we talk about the most and what we move towards fine tuning.



Katy Weber 27:00

Yeah, yeah, I feel like 90% of my own personal self coaching has been about reframing, you know, and it's been really about the how that same idea of just like understanding the value in what I always saw as a deficit, and being able to kind of reframe and look at things from a new perspective, as opposed to feeling like, the answer is out there somewhere that I haven't found yet, right. I think we sometimes buy into that a lot of the time, at least I did, you know, having read every self help book out there. And always feeling like, I was still looking for whatever that missing piece was, and then having to realize, like, No, it was the answer was in me all along, as The Wizard of Oz says,

A

Annie Romanos 27:40

Yeah, this is why I think your diagnosis is really, really important. Somebody will say, Ah, I think I have it, so I'm not going to bother. There is something about that confirmation that we can actually, you know, like, you know, it's a rebuild and rework things and put put the sort of Jigsaw back, you know, with the pieces fitting in. And, you know, to find some sort of resolution and solution, right, I mean, so many of us, you know, do with life. And we're thinking that, you know, it's depression and anxiety, but actually, it's the Undiagnosed ADHD factor, right? We're not necessarily these depressed, you know, forever anxious. I mean, yeah, obviously, that's symptomatic. But when we address the root cause, which often ADHD and inattentive ADHD

and women it's really hard to spot. It was certainly not spotted back in school. Back in the day, that sort of thing was just people didn't know about, you know, the education system wasn't clued up about even the medical profession. You know, that how, how ADHD that inattentive subtype, and particularly when very, very hard to spot. And this is the thing I also even today, it's like, I'm too successful, or I'm doing too well to have ADHD. But this is this, you know, underperforming thing, right. I mean, I bet no one else was thinking, Oh, she's underperforming, you know, looking at me, but I knew it. I just knew that I there were some certain there were certain things that I found really, really difficult and there weren't exactly hard things easy or easy. They were easy things. And that's even more difficult to get your head around as why can I do something that's so easy? What's wrong with me?



Katy Weber 29:20

Right? Yeah, absolutely. In one of your blog posts, you talked about the ADHD self leadership pyramid. Can you explain the self leadership here medica found this really a great visual and a great tool?



Annie Romanos 29:35

Yeah, well, it's, it's sort of, you know, influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. I love that visual, it worked for me. So which is why I shared it, but it really highlights the fundamental componentry we need to function. So the self leadership pyramid is this you know, It's a way of understanding the component tree that's important for us to, to not only function but thrive. And so, you know, the bottom of the pyramid being, you know, what I call the dealmakers and that's the the eating the hydration, the exercise, the sleep, the medication and community and not necessarily medication for everyone. But that community piece being really, really important. I mean, there are people that come to me that want coaching and are doing sort of okay, and wanting some sort of help with their business and so forth. And when we, when we sort of start to drill down to looking at this pyramid and seeing what have they got in place right now. They're wondering why things are falling apart, and the sort of the basics these deal makers of eating and sleep, and community even, and so forth, and medication for some people, that they're not even in place. And so it's a really good resource and reminder, just to check in, you know, have I covered these off? Am I getting these things done? I also think with ADHD, we just get so busy, we're on to the next thing and to the next thing to the next thing that we absolutely forget, we forget about these dealmakers, you know, we don't have great memories. And so we can forget, we can be hyper focusing on something and so we don't take time out because we're just so enthralled in what we're doing. We forget to go toilet, we forget to eat, right? So there's that but we just forget that they're important. And I think Ned Halliwell talked on one of his, you know, videos, tic TOCs, or something it's, you know, often actually, it's about remembering to remember, what do we need to remember about, you know, remember the important things? So, yeah, so at the very basis of our, you know, hierarchy of, you know, ADHD needs, are those absolute basics, are we getting those in place? And then, you know, even better Earth is, what has ADHD to me? How does that play out uniquely to me? We know that, you know, there's obviously there's key symptoms, but what does that look like for me, because we're all so unique? And so yeah, insights into, you know, our emotional life, how our regulation or dysregulation, what triggers that it's really just about unpacking who we are. And even, you know, is one of those skills to developers, like, how can I support myself? I've put here self coaching, Is it writing? Does it help me and if I'm a, someone who's got like, a written

sort of processing kind of brain, making sure that you know, I do that? How do I manage myself and relation to others, really, really unpacking that self awareness thing? You know, I've always said that, who we really are as the one thing we own. And the one thing that makes us different, owning it, being it using it. And I think, really the ADHD coaching piece is about knowing it, and owning it. And then moving on to how do I be this more on the world? How do I use it more? Really, that's the strengths based model, wasn't it? Katie, and I've heard you talk about that a lot. And obviously, if you know, again, at the top of the pyramid is of getting that support from the outside, which is not easy. For many of us. And I've gotten the ADHD coaching, therapy, accountability and support. There are things of course now which are fantastic, like focus mate, for that co working that body doubling aspect, you know, that's free, up to three sessions a week. So that is great that there's that they're out there. Now. I know it's a little bit of different in the States and is in New Zealand, but there's very few ADHD coaches in New Zealand. And it's not, it's not cheap. Again, accessing therapy, even see a psychiatrist in New Zealand, very, very difficult. We're working hard to change that now. But so yeah, but I think even looking at the sort of the self leadership pyramid, right, like, what can I do to, you know, say that I can't that concept of no one's coming to save me, I can, you know, I do have, you know, control over these things. And certainly the one at the bottom we do, eating regularly, hydration, exercise and medication. Obviously, I say there is about taking leadership of your own mental and physical well being which is fundamental.



Katy Weber 34:18

Well, I love the fact that you call them dealmakers, I've always called them non negotiables. And I think there's something what I love about the visual of the pyramid too, is I think we require the sort of acknowledgment of some of the importance of some of these things, right? Like there's certain things that are non negotiables in our life, like sleeping and eating. But there's other things that we tend to forget are just as important, or we're always kind of brushing off and and not making a priority. And I think you know, there's some things in that pyramid that I totally agree with in terms of movement, and community support and medication where it's like these things need to be categorized as non negotiable in our life and, and so it's like then you're thinking about when you talk about the toolbox, like there's certain things that just have to be non, you don't even think about like they just have to be no brainers. In in terms of our treatment plan.

A

Annie Romanos 35:14

Yeah, I think the mindset shift Katie, to seeing that is absolutely non negotiable, like it is for me to drink water and eat food, like it is literally seeing it as absolutely critical. That was a real shift for me, even in the last 18 months to see that exercise for me, makes my day and can absolutely break it. And it does if I don't do it. And so when I start to see that as an absolute necessity for my survival, and my well being, I'm able to make it happen more, it's not just a nice to have, like, I've always considered it and throughout my entire life, it's great. If I can fit it in, it's so great. If you can fit it in. It's absolutely critical. I'm going through a phase of experimenting with not medicating, and it's a deal breaker for me.



Katy Weber 36:10

Yeah, right, exactly. And I think that's so well said I have the same relationship with exercise,

which is, you know, and I'm not talking about like going to the gym and doing, you know, CrossFit for six hours. Like I'm literally just talking about a half hour walk in the morning with my with my husband, but it's really that idea of like, it's critical. Like it's not, it's not something that I is no longer in my eyes should or it would be nice F category. It's the absolutely critical. It's like coffee. And I think that's been a huge shift for me to write. And, you know, what are some of those things that may be in the it would be nice F category that need to be put into the absolutely critical category. And the other thing I think is downtime, which is scheduling downtime, it has another thing that I've never done before in my life until after I was diagnosed, which was like, I realize how little priority I give rest. Because I have so much guilt around it right? I have such ambivalence around rest, I feel like I always shouldn't be doing something. And yet I realize how important it is. And so I have to schedule blocks of debt or entire days where I'm like, This is not a work day. Because I you know, and also being self employed, it's very easy to work seven days a week. And so like, that's been another, like critical for me.

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Annie Romanos 37:26

Absolutely. And I I actually, I mean, it's not fleshed out in here, but that sort of awareness of your ad, you know, ADHD DNA. You know, I think energy management is really, really important than that. It probably should be in that, you know, dealmaker thing at the bottom, you know, reminded me maybe I think I'll revisit that pyramid, Katie, because I do think that is something that we overlook, you know, because especially because we have this capacity to be absolutely tunnel vision and something when we're in a hyper focus sort of scenario, and then wiped out. And then the adjacent thinking that comes with that, what's wrong with me, I can't cope and that, but actually seeing that the energy management pieces, really, really huge for us, and it throughout the day, and then throughout the week could look different. But, you know, I know, for me, it's like, I took me ages to realize that I could do it, but she juuling buffer time and my online scheduler like Calendly, you know, it's like, and now we're between calls. Katie, I would never even have considered that, you know, I never considered it years ago, right up until recently, it was it's been it's really, really important that I don't go from session to session at all. So yeah, and of course, it's different for everyone. But what are those things that give us energy? And what are those things that drain us? And it's okay to, you know, take time out. In fact, it's not only okay, it's critical, like you say,



Katy Weber 38:56

Yeah, I have a client who calls those joints and I just love that visual, like sort of joints, you know, like, just like, in between bones, we need those joints. And so she talks about those time, windows of like reflection, or the transitional time periods that are so critical in terms of like, making sure you've done everything or just getting mentally prepared. She calls those joints I find that I love that. Right but I think and that was sort of one of my theories about this time of my life, right? Like I'm I'm about to turn 48 And one of the things that I think at this age might be a unique struggle for women with ADHD is that like, for the first time in my life, I am feeling like I'm feeling at my smartest I'm feeling at my freest I have so much like capability in terms of what I you know, my kids are older so I'm through that phase like it's, you know, it's like, you come to this phase of like rebirth almost as a woman when your kids are old enough that they are for the most part self sufficient. And you see all these I I see all of this potential and all these things I want to do. But at the same time, like you said, there's the energy management

piece, which is like, I'm also older. So like, they're, you know, I do have issues with like estrogen and ADHD. And that's a huge question mark. And then also, you know, I can't pull all nighters, I can't drink, like I used to, like, there's all sorts of things that I can't do anymore that I used to be able to do in my 20s. And so there's like a real grief around that. And I see that a lot with women my age, which is like, I want to be able to, like, catch up to all the emails and do all this. And you know, it's like, we have this internal energy, but also also feeling like often the answer is to do less and like, How can I do less and still honor, the desire to do all the things and

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Annie Romanos 40:44

Moza and the restlessness, right, yeah. But also knowing that I've got to conserve what I do have. So you know, what am I choosing to put my attention on and put my energy into? It's just the intentionality? Because I actually don't have that, you know, forever. Reserves that, you know, we obviously had when we were 20, we, there was no such thing as a hangover. Until there's an age. Remember the days? Yeah, so absolutely, I just wanted to say one more thing about just the coaching piece in like we ADHD kind of intersects with entrepreneurship, that I noticed, and a lot of my clients as well, and that's this rejection sensitivity, dysphoria, right, and how that massively impacts our ability to be visible to, you know, marketing to do sales, right. And I think it's, you know, something that's under considered as well. And I've seen that for myself, this RSD piece, and again, it's part of this emotional kind of landscape, this emotional dysregulation, this sensitivity, this, you know, kind of all that. And that, one of the things I realized, for me, which was part of the redesigning how I do things is that I really, really wanted to build a referral space to business because I thought, yeah, I can do all kinds of practice, and sort of courses on showing up and all that. But at the end of the day, I know my happy place is when I have people coming to me and saying, Hey, maybe we could work together. That is in terms of energy management, one of the ways I manage my energy as not having to be so visible and show up, not having to be on social media, Katie, every single day, you know, even the idea of like throwing a post out that you know, that there might be a bit of engagement with, and I've got, I've got to go back to it. And I've got to find time, because I've got to get back to everyone. And I've got to respond to every, like, it's really understanding yourself, and who you are, and what's going to work for you. So yeah, I that's been a really, really good sort of awareness piece for me understanding my the intersection of my ADHD with that side of business, and reconfiguring things that work for me better.



Katy Weber 43:07

Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more about the social media piece. I feel like there's like, I see that lifecycle of the social, especially with both like ADHD influencer, just you know, do a posting things like five times a day, and I'm like, that is not sustainable. That doesn't say well, and then eventually burning out.

A

Annie Romanos 43:27

Yeah, it's probably an interest and a hyper focus area for them. And then that's fantastic. But we're all different. But coming to terms with that, and being okay with that, you know, that's been a journey as well. But I think it's really important for us to get this piece of who I am and knowing we don't want to put my energy and what where's my energy best spent?



Katy Weber 43:46

Yeah, and realizing that that energy is, like you said, cyclical, so it's going to, you know, realizing that there are these patterns and seeing them and seeing the worth in all parts of the cycle. So that's another bad thing about reframing for me, which I've been able to really fit, you know, enjoy the hyperfocus and enjoy all of the energy that will put into a new project, but also realizing that it's just as important for me to then have that rest and the recharging or, you know, and obviously, it's not sustainable. So I rather than feeling like I'm a terrible failure, because I couldn't keep up with it, realizing that, you know, this is again, part of a cycle where I'm, I'm becoming more internal so that I can then think of whatever the next thing is gonna be. And so that's been I so appreciate I've had so much appreciation for that ability to have faith in the cycle. I don't necessarily think I can see it as it's happening, but I at least have faith in it now. And, you know, my default isn't like, I'm a terrible person.



Annie Romanos 44:45

Totally, you know, and reminders that part of the ADHD condition as this fluctuation. I've literally got reminders in my house in my office here, up by the coffee machine. It's there, you know, The setting that you know, this is a mercurial condition, it's going to be up and it's going to be down and you know, even asking myself the question on these notes, you know, are you in that? Are you in a cycle? Where are you at in the cycle? It's that are right. It's that set disrupter, that visual disruptive, that's really powerful. So I don't sort of sink down into the, you know, the abyss of the fact that that sort of rumination, rumination, having those visual reminders is really useful.



Katy Weber 45:30

Right. Yeah, I loved what you said earlier, when you were like, it's, you know, I've got all these things in my toolbox, but it still takes work to remember that the toolbox exists.



45:39

Absolutely, basics.



Katy Weber 45:42

When I was diagnosed with ADHD, it completely turned my world upside down. I looked back at so much of my life, my grades in school, my multiple careers and hobbies, my friendships, my marriage, motherhood, my relationship with food, and my body, like all of this with a new lens. And it was overwhelming to say the least, if you've been diagnosed with ADHD, and you're feeling blown away by this new insight into your brain and how it operates, I totally understand I can help you begin to sort through this chaos, explore who you are and how your brain operates. So you can finally start to lean into your strengths and begin to use them to your advantage moving forward. Together, we can work to identify what obstacles you've been facing, and create strategies to help you start living a more fulfilling, gratifying life, head over

to women in adhd.com/coaching, to book a 30 minute initial consult with me. So we can figure out if my brand of one on one coaching is right for you. Again, that's women and adhd.com/coaching. And you can find that link in the episode show notes. So I feel like we've covered a lot of this, but what would you say you love most about your ADHD brain.

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Annie Romanos 46:55

I love my I love my energy, and I love my empathy. And I really am enjoying working with ADHD clients because like you were sort of saying before, there's an understanding and an energy match. I think when we are in that relationship with someone just gets us and we don't have to do any explaining. I really love being able to be in those relationships and that very generative way as we're moving towards goals and desires and, you know, addressing that, you know that the ADHD blocks, and whatever that is, or all the things that get in the way, but really, it's just having that awesome relationship with another human being that you just get, you know, at first, when I joined the Facebook group, the New Zealand Facebook group for adults with ADHD, it's like I'm with my people, you know? It's like, Yes, I'm okay. I'm okay. I think that's the thing is like, I'm actually better than OCaml. Right? You know, when I went on this six month intensive with my ADHD coach who was from the States last year, it's like, yeah, but this rich, he began to like myself again. And I think that's what I love being able to have. It's a privilege to be in those relationships. So I love that empathy. And, and, of course, their energy as well. I do love my energy. Well, I've got a really conservative. I think that's what I love most about my ADHD. I think the other thing too, Katie is you know, if we've got the snack about seeing to the heart of the matter quite quickly, we can circumvent a lot of roundtable, goddamn discussions. I could never be on a board. I've been on steering groups before I found them the most frustrating things. Now I know why. And I do really appreciate that about sort of that ability to see that high perceptiveness. Me and my clients possess that. And I just think it's a wonderful strength.



Katy Weber 48:49

Yeah, absolutely. Now, who was the ADHD coach that you worked with? Cameron got? Oh, okay.

A

Annie Romanos 48:58

Podcast. Do you know him?



Katy Weber 49:00

Of course, I've I've never met him, but I definitely know him and his wonderful podcast. So Oh, that's great. Shout out to Cameron got,

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Annie Romanos 49:06

yeah. And this podcast partner, Shelley Collins, great podcast, because at the time, I mean, we've looked at such an ADHD sort of coaching and therapy is in its infancy in New Zealand

we've looked at such an ADHD sort of coaching and therapy is in its infancy in New Zealand. And when I went to look to work with an ADHD coach, there were some coaches here, but mainly teens and parenting was really wanting that professional aspect that executive ADHD coach. And so yeah, and Ken was just, you know, Cameron was brilliant. And if whoever's listening to this check out, you know, obviously women on ADHD is a fantastic podcast. It's good to sort of, you know, different perspectives and different ways in translating ADHD is another great podcast, too.



Katy Weber 49:42

I agree. Yeah, we actually talk a lot about that one in the in the online community, the women in ADHD online community, it's very popular podcast. And yes, there's plenty of oh my goodness, I'd love to promote all of the ADHD podcasts you can never have enough. Because, you know, I understand the lifecycle of By podcast two, which is people come in, they get really excited. They listen to a bunch of episodes, but then they forget my podcast exists. That's fine. I get it. Nobody's gonna listen to them all.



Annie Romanos 50:09

Crazy. I've got a question. What do you love most about your ADHD?



Katy Weber 50:13

Oh, gosh, great question. Thanks. I think the thing I love most about my ADHD is my desire to know the why behind so many things. I think, you know, it's the questioning of, like, we've been talking about, like, what is the root of some of this issue? I'm just very inquisitive. And I think that I don't have any pride around not knowing the answer, and always looking for the answer. You know what I mean? Like, I feel like I'm a seeker. I like that about myself, even though it can be frustrating, because I'm like, What are we you know, sometimes I'm like, I'll never get the answer. And I'll never quite understand what we're actually talking about. But I do feel like I, I love the journey of seeking. And you know, and I was going to ask you about your kids too, because I feel like one of the things I really appreciated about my diagnosis is how I felt like it's made me such a better parent to my children. And I feel like we're just like, on the same team, I feel much closer to my children now than I did before. And so I just was curious if you had a how your you feel like your relationship with your kids has changed, if at all.



Annie Romanos 51:23

I think I've because I'm, you know, a highly empathic person. And I've got a really great connection with my children. I always have. Here's the thing, right. And it was one of the things actually, I was thinking about before we hopped on this chat, and has been really, really difficult parenting children who have ADHD, as someone as a parent who has ADHD, and who doesn't know they have ADHD. So incredibly bloody difficult. So I think because that's in the room now, and we know it's here. My daughter's formally diagnosed with ADHD she was at the beginning of this year. My youngest, still not, but we know it's highly likely it's, you know, there for him. My oldest, probably not so much, but certainly, I think two out of my three children, it

is that, okay, that's what that is. So, you know, get know you're saying about the wife, wanting to know why that kind of incessant curiosity. And that sort of, you know, the two of them get locked in and the sibling rivalry and I'm able to back down and really triggering each other, especially with my daughter, actually my youngest, they're the one that actually have the trickiest relationship. And other ones or sooner My daughter has ADHD, and my younger son is highly likely has it. It's like, okay, that's what that is. This is like, appreciating that they've got those challenges in the picture, but particularly around emotions, emotional dysregulation, and then bringing mine in. So it's like, okay, maybe I can't control them. But I can control mine, and have some impact on how I respond to this, even if I need to walk away and have timeout, because I am so incredibly flooded by will now, whereas previously, I didn't. And it would just be Mount Vesuvius.



Katy Weber 53:12

Yeah, yeah. That's



Annie Romanos 53:14

been good. But then I think it's someone with ADHD, parenting a child with ADHD absolutely comes with a subset of extraordinary challenges, but also opportunities for change, particularly knowing that that's what's going on. Absolutely.



Katy Weber 53:30

Yeah. I don't want to paint it like it's wonderful. Or like, it's there's no challenges because parenting is always difficult no matter what age they are. It's always challenging. I think one of the things that I have appreciated the most as a mother is just feeling like, I'm not a terrible mother, you know, and I think that was something that I felt like it before My diagnosis was I just thought I was a shit mom and I and I don't feel that way anymore. So I have gratitude for that. I have challenges. Absolutely. But do I feel like I'm terrible at things? There's a difference there?



Annie Romanos 54:04

Yeah, absolutely. You know, it's like, absolutely love my children. I've got a great connection with all of them. I think I've got a really good relationship with my kids. And yet, the job of parenting like realizing that just low interest low dopamine activities and jobs for me. My No wonder I've struggled and I think my mother, my you know, my late mother, you know, I think she used to think I wasn't committed a committed enough mum. Now I can see it's not about commitment. It's this other quite significant factor. I don't love them. It just means to say I maybe need to approach the job of parenting Katie a little bit differently.



Katy Weber 54:46

Yeah, well said. Now, if you could rename ADHD to something else, would you call it something else?

else?

A

Annie Romanos 54:53

Well, I actually, I'm going to borrow our indigenous people. The Maori. They've got one under full phrase for ADHD, and it's uploaded a teeny, and means attention goes to many things. And I think that's just such a really accurate description, the attention going to many things rather than not having enough of it. We don't have a deficit, we've got too much. I just think that's a really, it's not loaded. It's not super medicalized. It's not pathologized. It's just a year. That's what it is. Attention goes to many things. So yeah, that would be I'd probably say, Yeah, I borrow that from them for Maori to add it into me.



Katy Weber 55:41

Beautiful. Oh, I love it. Well, thank you so much. This has been really wonderful. Annie, how can people find you and and work with you? I know you're doing a you do the you have a group program? Right, the ADHD Vantage group program?

A

Annie Romanos 55:56

Yeah. Well, due to COVID, we've had to shelve that the site of Christmas, my colleague had lingering COVID issues. So we'll put that on hold. But we'll be offering it in the new year, and obviously one on one. But I'm on LinkedIn, my website and oh, man, this.com. And, and all those most of the places so yeah, I'm pretty visible online, even though I don't show up that much.



Katy Weber 56:21

Oh, yeah. Your website is wonderful. And I had such a wonderful time looking back over your blog posts, too. So there's a real wealth of wonderful resource there. So yeah, that's great. That's fantastic. And so I'll have links to that in the show notes. But yeah, it was been really wonderful. hearing your story. Thank you so much.

A

Annie Romanos 56:41

Thanks for having me on the show, Katie.



Katy Weber 56:48

And there you have it. Thank you for listening. And I really hope you enjoyed this episode of the women and ADHD podcast. Also, you know, we ADHD ears crave feedback. And I would really appreciate hearing from you the listener, if you're a fan of the podcast, please take a moment to leave me a review on Apple podcasts or audible. And if that feels like too much, and I get it, then just take a few seconds right now to give me a five star rating, or share this episode on

your own social media to help reach more women who maybe have yet to discover and lean into this gift of neuro divergence SE and they may still be struggling and don't even know why. And if you'd like to find out more about me and my one on one coaching for women with ADHD, head over to [womenandadhd.com/coaching](https://www.womenandadhd.com/coaching) and you can always find that link in the show notes. I'll see you next week when I interview another amazing woman who discovered that she is not lazy or crazy or broken. But she has ADHD and she is now on the path to understanding her neurodiversity and finally using this gift to her advantage. Take care till then