

# Courtney Ruckman: Music, memory & the myth of "so much poten..."

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## SPEAKERS

Courtney Ruckman, Katy Weber

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Courtney Ruckman 00:00

By singing was missing the magic that people walk away from our performance and think, Wow, that was that really moved me. My singing wasn't moving because I was so worried about making mistakes and so worried about forgetting and wanting to do things correctly, do them right and be as good as I could, that I wasn't making magic with my music Hello,




Katy Weber 00:25

and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens, and it has been nothing short of overwhelming. I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who liked me discovered in adulthood they have ADHD and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Okay, before we get started, I'd like to share with you this review from the listener, Clara cat on the Apple podcast platform in Germany. It's called Thank you, this podcast really helps me feel less bad about the things I struggle with that others seem to find easy. I feel like that is my mission statement right there. In a nutshell. That's exactly what I feel like these conversations are doing, they're helping us to de stigmatize some of these struggles, so that we can feel less alone, and then learn why we have these brain based differences, and stop shaming ourselves. And then we can spend our time and our energy working with our brains instead of against them. I'm so glad you found this podcast cleric cat. And I'm so glad that these interviews have been helping. And thank you so much for taking the time to write a review. The reviews makes such a big difference in getting this podcast noticed and found by other women who could really benefit from hearing these conversations too. I always say that finding our people is an important part of our treatment plan, which is why I'm so grateful for the women and ADHD online community. It's a space for us to connect, and ask questions and share strategies and advice or just vent. I'm continually amazed at the level of empathy and kindness and thoughtfulness that exists within this group.

It's not something you see very often in social media spaces. So a big shout out to everyone who is participating in the community and helping it grow. And if you'd like to join us make sure to head over to [women and adhd.com](https://www.womenandadhd.com). In addition to the online forum, we also have an extensive resource library and monthly live Q and A's with experts, all of which are recorded and archived for our members. Again, you can always find us at [women and adhd.com](https://www.womenandadhd.com). And there's a link in the show notes to join us. Okay, here we are at episode 95 in which I interviewed Courtney recommend. Courtney was diagnosed with ADHD in October of 2021. And the women and ADHD podcast was one of the first resources she found Yeah, Courtney spent about 11 years as a professional opera singer before retiring around two years ago and transitioning into arts marketing. Following her ADHD diagnosis. She looks back over her career as a performer and realize the extent to which ADHD was at the heart of her challenges as a singer and her decision to retire. She now loves using her neurodivergent creativity to help other artists shine online. And she's the founder of OCM. Media, a digital marketing agency for emerging artists and nonprofits. Courtney and I talk all about working memory as a singer and performer as well as internalized hyperactivity and racing thoughts. We also talk about just how damaging those very common words, you have so much potential can be too many neurodivergent children. Alright, enjoy. Well, let's get started. Courtney, I am very, very excited to hear your story. When you reached out to me. You talked about how you had been a professional singer for a number of years and then went into your own business. I was like, oh, yeah, that's got ADHD written all over it. But you were diagnosed not that long ago, right? The fall of 2021. So what was going on what was happening in your life that you started to make these connections and put some of this together and be like, I should really look into this?

 Courtney Ruckman 04:14

Well, I had no idea in childhood and early adulthood, absolutely zero idea. And in March 2020, like many others, my husband and I joined Tik Tok, as a way to connect with our niece and send her videos of him dancing. And I just started using the app for myself and I loved the for you page. And of course, tick tock knows you the algorithm does and it started sending me neurodivergent and ADHD content. And I thought, well, this is very interesting. These creators seem to have a direct line of vision into my daily life and my past experiences. So the summer of 2021 I went into therapy for issues with anxiety, depression and binge eating. And it was about two months in and at the first start of the appointment. My therapist said well, how is your mood today? And I said, you know, I'm I'm feel Feeling like that's getting better. But there's a lot of things that are not getting better. And she said, Well, please explain. And I was looking at my desk covered and post it notes and my alarms on my watch and my iPhone and my calendars everywhere in the house. And she said, Well, these are really lovely compensations for someone with ADHD, have you considered getting tested? So that started me on the process of going to a psychiatrist. And it was very clear from the beginning with that psychiatrists that I'm doing more harm by not medicating and not moving forward with treatment than I am by continuing this process. So that was how I landed on my diagnosis. And it was thanks to tick tock.


 Katy Weber 05:36

Yeah, and a parent and a therapist who really saw the signs too, which I think is always exciting when we have that, you know, I had, you know, I've been very open about the fact that it was my therapist who really suggested for a long time that I look into it before I actually really

looked into it. But I hear way more stories to the contrary of therapists who are like, let's deal with the depression, let's deal with the anxiety, who really have no idea what the signs look like and kind of steer, steer you into avenues that they're a little bit more comfortable with.

 Courtney Ruckman 06:04

It didn't feel like the closest alligator to the boat with the anxiety and things that I was having. But we didn't know that it was a symptom of the ADHD, we thought those were the issues. So it was a little backwards. But it we got to the right place. So

 Katy Weber 06:17

yeah, interesting. Once diagnosed, I'm assuming you started looking back at your childhood and some of the rest of your life with this new awareness of it's just like, it's like fireworks going off, right? Is it it's crazy how, what it feels like, you know, that grief, that emotional rollercoaster of going back and looking over the course of your life? And just I imagined even as a professional musician, and I mean, what are some of the things that really leapt out at you in your past where you were like, oh, yeah, the science were there all along?

 Courtney Ruckman 06:51

Well, in the beginning, I graduated, I'd say 2008. I graduated from undergrad and started going into the professional singing realm. And in the beginning, everything was so new, it was very engaging. And I was very interested in the work. And as the work started becoming more routine, I would say around 2015 2016, that shine was gone. And so as my attention and I really struggled with preparing music, you have to show up to all of your first rehearsals completely memorized. And that was becoming more and more challenging for me to be able to memorize the several 100 page books in a different language, and be there the first day ready to go. And I was just not capable of doing it in a timely manner, which was fueling a lot of anxiety about getting there, being unprepared for getting words making mistakes, and it was just kind of a avalanche of, of hard thoughts around my job. Yeah, but

 Katy Weber 07:41

I feel like that's got to be something a lot of singers deal with, right? I mean, how I'm always fascinated with when I talk to actors about memorizing monologues and memorizing lines, because it sort of feels like you're working memory is one part of your brain. And then the memorizing of lines is like a totally different section of the right. I don't know, it's hard to describe, right? It's just sort of like, the recall, isn't there until you're on stage, and then it just tumbles out of you. And so I assume it's the same with sing it with song lyrics. But it seems I'd also say I guess my point is, it seems like this would be a widespread issue for musicians and singers. It's So were there any hacks or anything that you knew about?

 Courtney Ruckman 08:23

I kept a journal, and I would write my words out over and over again. And now looking back at

I kept a journal, and I would write my words out over and over again. And now looking back at that journal, it just looks like an anxiety journal. To be honest, just I almost could have been writing don't forget, don't forget, over and over for pages. I found it so stressful. And I remember doing a run of child school performances. It was Little Red Riding Hood. And I was the character that set the scene for the next scene. And I told the kids what was happening. And it was a dialogue. There was no music, and I really could not remember those words without the music musical cues. I remember one performance getting up in front of the kids and completely blanking having no idea what my first words were, and it was just your worst nightmare coming to life. I realized how reliant I was on the musical cues, those external cues with cast mates and the conductor and I needed that support. And without that I really struggled.



Katy Weber 09:13

Interesting. Yeah, absolutely. Right. So what else was there? Was there other things in your childhood and school and I assume you come from do you come from a musical family?



Courtney Ruckman 09:24

I do. My grandfather always told me that my singing voice sounded just like his mother's but I never got to meet her. But she's saying the light just around the house and things. Yeah. My family was very musical. And I did really well in music through elementary school, middle high school when there wasn't the memorization component, and my church choir where I grew up at. We were learning new pieces every week, and that really fueled that like hyperfocus for me, and I could work on one thing intensely and then put it away and go to something else. And it was very exciting. And so settling into the classical music field was challenging because your work on the same repertoire over and over again, and I just could feel the the dopamine dropping out of my mind as I'm trying to work on these same pieces repeatedly. And I really missed that faster pace that seemed to suit me so well in childhood.



Katy Weber 10:17

Yeah. Now have you discussed adhd with anybody in your family?



Courtney Ruckman 10:23

I have a little bit. And now knowing more about it, you can kind of see the signs peppered around different members of the family. Right, yeah, you know, it does run in families. And there's definitely similarities and some of the things that I experienced and some of the things that they do. So the it's really opened the door to me to see myself but also my whole family in a new way. And just be able to relate better, I think to everyone.




Katy Weber 10:48

Yeah, so they've been accepting of it there. Because, you know, oftentimes, I hear that story too, of like, oh, I don't know what you're talking about. This isn't ADHD. This is just our quirky

family.

 Courtney Ruckman 10:59

I think it was my brother just a few days ago said, well, doesn't everyone have a little ADHD? And I'm like, sir, I think that's a tell so

 Katy Weber 11:09

yeah, right. Now, you said your husband also was drawn to tick tock, I feel like tick tock is the flame and neuro divergence or the moths? Yeah. Like the entire, the entire app is filled with neuro divergence. Has he gone on a similar journey of of self diagnosis? Or was he already diagnosed?

 Courtney Ruckman 11:29

He so he started sending me things. And I, when I was looking at the content, I thought, Well, I'm just identifying this, but maybe everyone could. And when he started sending me things that was really the tail. Well, someone else notices that this should be resonating with me. So maybe that's a sign that I should be looking into this more. But yeah, I think that was very helpful to get that information from him as well, seeing an outside perspective of of what my day to day looks like, and how it looks like No, neurodivergent Yeah, that

 Katy Weber 11:59

is great. Because I know sometimes the question is so often, like, am I struggling? To what degree am I struggling? You know, maybe that everybody's a little ADHD, you know, like a lot of those sort of ways in which we minimize our own situation, because we're so used to dismissing how we feel right? Like that same like, you could or you could do this if you worked harder, right? And so it can be really difficult to be like, I least I find it really difficult to sort of determine how much have I struggled over the course of my life? Am I stuck? Like, you know, that's, that can be really difficult. And then oftentimes feeling like, am I lie, you know, not lying, but like, am I exaggerating the struggle, right? Because a lot of the time, I think we have a tendency to just be like, yeah, it was, I'm always like this, you're like, Well, are you really always like that, like, it's really difficult to determine what percentage of time you are like this. But then I'm also like, but that's the ADHD that's making me feel like it's always like this. So then we're back to well, then you obviously have ADHD, right?

 Courtney Ruckman 13:02

We had a like, for a lot of gigs, we lived in group housing, and you would have roommates. And that's when it really started to show to me that I was maybe a little different than others and was struggling a little more because others could learn their music so quickly, they could get to rehearsal on time, they didn't have multiple alarms on their phones, you know, things like that.

And I was the only one that that was doing things differently. And that was kind of perked my ears up. But I didn't know what it was a sign of. I just thought I was a little different than everyone else. Hmm.



Katy Weber 13:32

Interesting. Yeah, I remember when it occurred to me that everybody used to use my notes to study for tests, because I was so like meticulous about, you know, color coding and everything. And so when I was in university, it was like, everybody always wanted my notes because I, I took such copious detailed notes. And yet everybody else studied with my notes and did really well, and I never did. And let's, I was like, what is that? Where is the breakdown here? Yeah. And it never even really occurred to me until after, you know, my diagnosis where I was sort of looking back over these patterns in my own life being like, oh, yeah, that that makes a lot of sense. Okay. It's that



Courtney Ruckman 14:14

hard work and achievement gap, that I feel like so many people with ADHD experience, you know, creating those beautiful notes, putting in so much effort, and not seeing those results that your work should yield that it does for others. And that's so frustrating.



Katy Weber 14:28

Yeah. Right. And I think also just that assumption that the desire is not there to succeed. And I think that's something a lot of us struggle with, right? Which was like, No, that desire was there all along in abundance, right, like we desperately want to do well, and yet we are being viewed so often as not caring. And you know, and that's where I think why we all of us end up so deeply depressed, is because, you know, it's just that I, I always laugh at the most traumatic moments in conversation, which I also think is like an ADHD tale. Right, like how we deal with trauma, right, which is like, Oh, we're also taught messes. But I just feel like it's true, like, the desire is always there to do well. And then when we can't figure out why we are not doing that thing, you know, I'm like, I'm just as confused as everyone else as to why I'm not I'm not able to produce results.



Courtney Ruckman 15:21

Yeah, it's that lifelong feeling of not meeting your potential. And it's depressing.




Katy Weber 15:28

Why that comment of, you know, not meeting your potential is so. So like, damaging to the core, when you have ADHD, I saw that there was a really great Twitter thread recently about that comment of like, you know, not reaching your potential and how there are certain neurotypical children that that can actually be quite motivating, right, which is like I see potential in you. Let's work harder. And and let's get finished. And the whole tweet thread was

about the fact that like, when you are divergent, it can be incredibly damaging to say that to them, because the desire and the effort is there, the just the ability is not there. And nobody is focusing on that. Right. And so it can actually be doubly damaging to say something like that it was really interesting to see it that way. Because we've always talked about how we have, you know, we all kind of have those comments in common from our childhood. But we don't often really take the time to articulate like, why they were so damaging. Yes.

 Courtney Ruckman 16:27

They're basically saying spin your wheels harder, because they're not giving you the tools or the structure that you need to be successful. They're just telling you to do the same thing. You're doing harder, which is not working in the first place. Yeah, right. So how can you be successful? Yeah.

 Katy Weber 16:39

Oh, my God. Yeah, exactly. I'd like to take a moment to thank better help for sponsoring this podcast. If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know, I am a big proponent of therapy therapy provides me the best opportunity for verbal processing something that is so important for my kind of brain and my sense of self. What I love about BetterHelp is that it's not a crisis line. It's not self help. It is professional therapy that's done securely online from the comfort of your home. They assess your needs and match you with your own licensed professional therapist, and it's available for clients worldwide, so you get access to a broad range of expertise that might not be available to you locally. It also tends to be more affordable than traditional offline therapy and financial aid is available. If you visit their website and read their testimonials. There are actually quite a few reviews that specifically reference help with ADHD 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](https://betterhelp.com/women) ADHD that's BetterHelp [h e l p . c o m / w o m e n](https://betterhelp.com/women). ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp Okay, so now I'm here I have some more questions about being a musician so you Was there something ADHD related that led you to retire? Or was it just time or what? How did you transition from being a professional singer into what you are now doing? Which is which is marketing right and helping other musicians? So let's talk about your retirement. Or I guess your transition? Let's talk about your retirement. Okay. Let's talk about your your new for your you're like so young. I'm like, Okay, let's talk about your new this new phase of life.

 Courtney Ruckman 18:19

Yeah, it was really this just this feeling like I was underachieving potential, you know, applied in so many areas of life, but particularly with singing. And I was really struggling with preparing my music for rehearsals. And I would get into these cycles where I was preparing later and later forcing these hyperfocus periods. But then I would get to the gig and think, Well, I didn't spend enough time am I actually ready and I couldn't take staging and rehearsals was another big issue. You come the first day memorized. And the director tells you where you're going on stage, who you're talking to what props you're using and moving. And you're just supposed to remember it on the first take. And I was never capable of doing that. And it started feeling these feelings of embarrassment and rehearsals that I felt like I wasn't matching the level of

my classmates and the feelings were getting so intense, having like nightmares about doing silly things on stage. And I just couldn't imagine living in that cycle every few weeks for the rest of my professional life. So I got into marketing. I was working with an opera company in Florida as a singer, and they needed help with Twitter and I loved Twitter at the time, it was my favorite platform before Tik Tok. So I started with them in social media. And that was my segue and onto the other side of the table as a marketer for music rather than as a singer. And it's so much more comfortable for me that I can create my own schedule. I don't need to be memorized. I can follow my creativity more and follow where my head's at with project rather than deciding two years ago. I'm going to be doing this project and getting to this point and realizing I just I'm not interested in this anymore.



Katy Weber 20:01

Interesting. Now, since your diagnosis, do you look back at kind of your relationship with singing and that feeling of like, you know, always that I guess, imposter syndrome, right? For lack of a better word or that feeling like because I know so many of us have that feeling like, somebody is going to find out that we don't belong here. Right? Yeah. And it sounds like that's what you were experiencing with your passion. And it's and so I feel like now through this lens of the diagnosis, do you look back and think maybe you could try it again? Or is there some part of you that's like, No, I'm much it was, it will always be fraught, and I would like a little less fraught Ness in my life.



Courtney Ruckman 20:44

Yeah, it's, I'd say that classical singing is on the preservation aside with rehashing the same pieces over and over. So if I went back, it would be exactly what I was doing before. And that was just so fraught with anxiety, and tough emotions that, I don't know if I would want to go back. And recently, I listened to some old recordings. And I felt like walking question mark at the time. And you can absolutely hear that in the recordings there. They're trying so hard to be perfect that my singing was missing the magic that people walk away from our performance and think, Wow, that was that really moved me. My singing wasn't moving, because I was so worried about making mistakes, and so worried about forgetting and wanting to do things correctly, do them right, and be as good as I could, that I wasn't making magic with my music. And that was why I started it in the first place. So I really did lose my personal mission over those few years with music, and that made me interested in retiring or moving on to marketing. Because I felt that inspiration in that direction. And that was really missing in my life for a long time.



Katy Weber 21:55

Ah, now what would you I guess? What would you say to somebody if there was a young singer? Who or performer who was is listening to this? Who is struggling, I'm sure with a lot of that same of the same issues of like, I don't know, this is everybody else's figuring this out, but me like, do you? What would you say to that young person?



Courtney Ruckman 22:14



I would say it does seem like everyone has it figured out. And that's really not the case and talking with everyone, whether it's for neurodivergent reasons or other reasons, entirely, everyone struggles with a career in their own ways. And if you're still feeling the passion for it, keep pursuing it. And maybe there's avenues adjacent to what you thought you wanted to do, where you can still be involved, you can still be a part of it and still pursue something that you're passionate about.



Katy Weber 22:43

That's lovely. With a memorization issue. Are there accommodations that exist now looking back at three years, like, is there another way you could kind of approach this to compensate for some ADHD traits in that field?



Courtney Ruckman 22:56

Yeah, you know, in the beginning, it was so easy because a lot of the work was in foreign languages. And I really enjoyed foreign languages. And I enjoyed learning the vocabulary. So when the vocabulary was fresh, it was very exciting to me, and I was able to focus. But as you spend more time in it, you realize, well, all the stories are out love. So there's a lot of the same words over and over again, love, love, or friendship, mother, father, these words are so repetitive that I started losing the attention for the language learning. And then it became more of a chore of memorizing what I already knew there was no like discovery element for me. I really loved preparing my score, putting in my tabs, getting everything ready to start memorizing. And then once that start, time came, I was over. Just, I just wish I could have sustained my attention. That was the challenge.



Katy Weber 23:46

Yeah, that's really interesting, for sorry, perspective about language in general, because I always felt like I had such a difficulty with vocab. But you know, it was I, when things logically made sense. And there were logical patterns that I could follow. I loved language, but when it just came to rote memorization of vocabulary, that's where it all fell apart for me. And still does. Yeah, it's not exciting. Exactly. And I can't retain anything too. And so that's what always was frustrating about growing up in Canada and learning French and ice, literally. And I took French all through university. So I've spent I'd spent like 12 years learning French, and yet I feel like I'm still a beginner, because so much it's so difficult to retain and let you know, unless you're immersed in it. So it's interesting to hear that from the point of view of somebody who's like, not dabbling, but it's like you're not like actively learning the language, but you really are right through these pieces.



Courtney Ruckman 24:39

And it's not functional language anymore. A lot of the poems are so old. It's archaic forms of verbs that you would never use in real life. And so if you feel like you're not living through the music, I didn't feel that way. I felt like I was just, I was a vessel for other people's thoughts and

creativity. And I guess that was truly the missing one. For me is I didn't feel like there was enough of myself in my work. Hmm, yeah.



Katy Weber 25:07

Moving into digital marketing and I love, I love the niche. You know, I love how you are sort of almost like a doula for musicians, right who are like, if this is if this is confusing and confounding to you, I speak this language as well, so I can help you, you know with that. And I love that it's very, it's like very caring way to kind of deal with your clients. And so you said that you got into this because you were just sort of already felt like you were savvy at Twitter are sort of what led you to kind of make this your profession.



Courtney Ruckman 25:41

I started with a social media marketing class, I had a knee injury, and I wasn't able to work out as much as I liked. So I took this class thinking, well, it'll be really helpful for me as a singer. And then after that class, I took that social media management job, and it just kind of started going from there. I did a lot of classes online to learn on my own. I joined a mentorship program. And I felt when I was going through as a singer, there were so many classes on language, stage combat, so many things to train us for the work on stage, that they didn't give us enough on the business side. So a lot of singers really know that social media websites, recordings, YouTube pages are important, but they don't know how to execute them properly. So that's the niche that I'm hoping to fill the void that I'm hoping to fill, I guess you'd say, to help them put a digital foot forward for their music, not just focusing on the music itself. Because now especially after COVID, so much of casting and things are happening online, that's even more important.



Katy Weber 26:39

Hmm, yeah, I know, right? I feel like I've seen a lot of that on social media that kind of like, bitterness about, you know, just having something that you're passionate about, or even just being a small business owner, right, as a small business owner, as an entrepreneur, that this new element of like, mastering social media and being constantly present on social media is basically a must at this point. And it's really frustrating for people who actually want to focus on their art, that this, this also has to come with it right. I'm trying to think of what it was that I saw the other day where it was, like, an unrelated field where they were basically like, unless you are already successful on social media, you're not even considered. I think it was a musician in terms of like labels, right? Like music, music labels, it's like you have to have a song already go viral before a studio will even look at you. And it just the whole thing felt so backwards, and so frustrating at how much I'm bitter. I'm certainly better as somebody who already has a platform of a podcast that I love. I'm also sort of like, but like, I feel this overwhelming duty to always be present on all social media platforms. And it's it can be really frustrating.



Courtney Ruckman 27:51

It's exhausting. And there's always the questions. Well, what should I put be posting? Should I

it's exhausting. And there's always the questions: Well, what should I put be posting? Should I be posting the same thing everywhere? When should I be posting there's so many of these basic questions that it feels like you have to have the answer to and it's exhausting.



Katy Weber 28:05

When I was diagnosed with ADHD, it completely turned my world upside down. I looked back at so much of my life, my grades in school, my multiple careers and hobbies, my friendships, my marriage, motherhood, my relationship with food and my body, like all of this with a new lens. And it was overwhelming to say the least, if you've been diagnosed with ADHD, and you're feeling blown away by this new insight into your brain and how it operates, I totally understand I can help you begin to sort through this chaos, explore who you are and how your brain operates. So you can finally start to lean into your strengths and begin to use them to your advantage moving forward. Together, we can work to identify what obstacles you've been facing, and create strategies to help you start living a more fulfilling, gratifying life, head over to [women in adhd.com/coaching](https://www.adhd.com/coaching), to book a 30 minute initial consult with me. So we can figure out if my brand of one on one coaching is right for you. Again, that's [women and adhd.com/coaching](https://www.adhd.com/coaching). And you can find that link in the episode show notes. So what would you say that you love most? Since your diagnosis looking back? Like what are some of the patterns that you see? Or what are some of the things that you can really appreciate that ADHD has brought you in your life? Because I always joke, right? I always like, I like to joke that I'm like, nobody came to their ADHD diagnosis because they were like, my life is great. What is the name of this superpower that I have? Right? Usually, we're in some kind of moment of crisis. And so I think once you know, it's interesting, because it's such an emotional roller coaster going through this diagnosis to see some of those things that you're like, Oh, yeah. Okay. Well, there are a lot of things that I do bring to the table. Right?



Courtney Ruckman 29:48

Yeah. And that you know, that makes me think of the *Driven to Distraction* book because the author talks a lot about how so much of ADHD treatment is deficit based. And you do forget that there come a lot A lot of strengths with it. It's easy to forget that when you're going through the diagnosis process or just living day to day, but I'd say what I love about my ADHD is the creativity and the learner abilities that I have to hyper focus on something, and really deep dive and have a great breadth of knowledge in a certain area.




Katy Weber 30:19

I love that, you know, it's funny, I had a moment of kind of sadness. Today, I was thinking about buying business cards, because I haven't bought business cards yet. But I'm going to a conference in a few months. And I was like, I should buy business cards. And I opened up this drawer and found just like five boxes of business cards from past business. Where you know, where I bought, like 500 cards and use two of them. And then you know, and then it was, I just had this moment of like, Oh, God, it makes me so frustrated. To think about all of these past businesses and all of the like, you know, we do tend to focus on like the loss, right, the ADHD taxes. But then I quickly and I think this is one of the things that is lovely about ADHD is that grit that we all have right where you can where I was like, I looked at it, and I was like, but all of these past businesses have led me to where I am today, right? So I was like, able to kind of

think about how insatiable we are for learning and excitable and how like, we really just love so many different random things. And then they all kind of come together in the present moment where you're like, I am doing this because of five different random hyperfocus is that I've had over the course of my life, right? And you're like, This is how I ended up here with this interesting, niche job.

 Courtney Ruckman 31:40

Yeah, they don't feel like stepping stones when you're in it either. And that's the frustrating part. They feel so disconnected. But when you get to the destination, and you look back, you think, oh, yeah, well, actually, they all helped in getting me here. And that's kind of a beautiful thing.

 Katy Weber 31:53

It is. Yeah, I can see that. Sometimes. Usually, I have to go through the oh my god, I'm a chaotic shitshow before I get to that point, but it's right. It's a process. Yeah. All about the journey. Right. I love that. Okay. And so I always like to ask if you could if you could rename ADHD to something that's a little less problematic. Do would you call it something else?

 Courtney Ruckman 32:16


I kept thinking about the original acronym, the Add acronym, almost attention directional disorder, but then it doesn't really apply to the working memory piece. So I don't know, I guess that would be my standing answer at the moment

 Katy Weber 32:33

to go back to add, because I think a lot of women, especially adult women are more comfortable with just getting rid of the age, even though I think we all come to our own understanding of where the age is in our brains. But yeah, I like the I like the changing deficit to directional because we do talk a lot about that. But you know, this idea that it's not, there's no deficit of anything. But yeah, interesting. Okay. I like that one,


 Courtney Ruckman 32:59


the hyperactivity piece I didn't really see in myself in the beginning of the journey, I guess you could say. But then I realized that that can be applied to thoughts. And I would say my brain is always over over overactive racing thoughts, 20 radio stations at the same time. And so I guess it just represents presents in different ways for me, but yeah, well, even


 Katy Weber 33:20


and I know you had mentioned earlier in the conversation about binge eating, and that's


something that I you know, very open with my own very long struggle with binge eating and, and binge eating recovery. And it was, so it was really interesting to me to think about ADHD and binge eating, and kind of the, you know, because so much of the binge part of binge eating is that feeling completely out of control, like you are not at the wheel. And you cannot stop yourself from doing these behaviors. And so the harder you try to stop, the worse it gets, right. And so that, that, in its way feels very much connected to the internalized hyperactivity and that feeling of like somebody else is driving this car.

 Courtney Ruckman 34:01  
Yeah, you have no control, right?

 Katy Weber 34:03  
It always fascinates me the random ways that hyperactivity pops up again, in behaviors.

 Courtney Ruckman 34:11  
I didn't know anything about binge eating in relation to ADHD. And so when I initially started therapy, I thought that it was more a symptom of chronic dieting and under eating and just being frankly very hungry. And getting to these points where I just needed calories. I needed food, and I didn't see it also, as dopamine seeking stimulation seeking. So I think if the ADHD part had not been diagnosed, I don't think that I would be as successful with that where I am now. I really needed that piece to fall into place. Yeah, and

 Katy Weber 34:41  
that's the thing I just do frankly, do not understand I'm not a medical professional, but I do not understand why there are certain amphetamines like Vyvanse that are used as binge eating medications because their appetite stimulants because I feel like if you have an appetite stimulant all day long Long that wears off at night. That's the prime environment for binge eating right, which is like, you know, not eating all day long and then having this ravenous hunger, the so I'm like, how does that work? I don't understand maybe somebody out there that's listening who knows about Vyvanse better than I do can make that connection for me because I'm like, that feels like the worst idea for a binge. Right? And so I'm always fascinated me that people were like, oh, yeah, go on Vyvanse it's great. It's, you know, it's an appetite suppressant. It'll help with binge eating. And I'm like, either I'm missing something, you know, which is how we always feel right? I'm am I missing? So did I not get the memo? But I like it just does not make any logical sense to me why an appetite suppressant is used to combat binge eating right?

 Courtney Ruckman 35:45  
Well, it was very strange in the beginning, like, when I first started taking Vyvanse, that's a medication I was given. And I came to therapy with intuitive eating already been marinating in my head. And so when I'm on the Vyvanse, you know, it is an appetite suppressant. And I have

my head. And so when I'm on the Vyvanse, you know, it is an appetite suppressant. And I have to make myself eat when I don't feel hungry. And it feels so counterintuitive to those Intuitive Eating principles of honoring your hunger. That was a lot to marinate on in my brain. It felt almost backwards in a sense. So that was challenging.



Katy Weber 36:15

I know. Yes, I had a lot of issues around that as well. Even still doing all the work that I had also done with diet recovery, and an intuitive eating and I found Becca King, so helpful. She's on Instagram, the ADHD dot nutritionist. I don't know if you follow her. She's so amazing. She's done a lot of podcasts who I should actually get around here. Shout out to Becca KIG. I'll put a link in the show notes too, because she's so amazing. And she does talk a lot about I think, what does she call it, there's like a convenience, eating or there's like a name that she gives it where you really just have to like even when you are not hungry, you need to develop habits around food. And around mealtimes which can be especially difficult for us because especially when we're hyper focusing and all of that. And so I really struggled with I was like, I'm a terrible intuitive eater. I always felt like I was doing Intuitive Eating wrong. Because you know that before my ADHD diagnosis, but you know, because of that idea that like, I didn't know what my hunger cues were, I didn't know what my fullness cues were until it was way too late. Like all of these sorts of ways of being a quote unquote, good intuitive eater. I just always felt like I was screwing up. And I feel like she handles a lot of that anxiety around food very well. addresses it. You know, it's so helpful. Yeah, she's fantastic. Such a gift to the community. Yeah. And that was the other day, I was like, I can't believe how common eating issues of all sorts are with for people with ADHD. And it all makes sense. Now. Yeah.



Courtney Ruckman 37:46

Once you get that diagnosis, it's it, you don't feel alone anymore. And you realize that a lot of your experiences other people are having, and there's actually solutions to things that you're struggling with. And that was one of the best parts of being diagnosed is there's there's help out there. You just didn't know what you needed until the diagnosis. So that was wonderful.



Katy Weber 38:06

That's so well said, I like to use the example of the Left Handed scissors, right? You just need the right tools. There's nothing wrong with you. But there's that sense that like, why is everybody else able to do this? And I'm not and you know, and when you go through life, always feeling that way. Like you get to adulthood, and you're just, you know, you believe that you are the problem in every situation. And it's so important to turn that thinking around and a diagnosis is set, you know, I know and why I'm always kind of like, it's not necessarily to get a diagnosis, but I feel like it can do it can be tremendous in terms of helping changing that perspective and changing that inner narrative, so to speak. Yeah.



Courtney Ruckman 38:46

Yeah. To feel like it's not you, it's something else. And it's not that you're the failure or a failure. There's something else driving the ship that you're not in control of until you know, and you can

build a system of supports and the right environment to be successful.



Katy Weber 39:01

Yeah. Very lovely. Well, you're much more articulate than I am today. So I appreciate that. Okay, so how can people find you and I'm sure there's gotta be some musicians who are who are listening to this podcast because I feel like the the profession is probably rife with with ADHD or so who do you work with? And how can people find you and better yet work with you?



Courtney Ruckman 39:25

So I'm on social media personally, yes, see our soprano relic from my singing days and I'm on a social media professionally as OCR media, oh, SSI, a media, just a fledgling business and really looking forward to working individually with singers and small nonprofits to help them bring their projects and visions to life.



Katy Weber 39:47

Beautiful and Osia. What it is, is that is that a musical term? For the uninitiated? Yeah,



Courtney Ruckman 39:54

so when you look at a musical score at the like end of a piece, there might be a high note But there could also be an optional high note at the end that can bring special sparkle and color to a piece. You can also see osios If there's a challenging musical passage, and Osia is in a small print above, and it's a simplification. And I loved the concept for business because it's taking something that's complex and simplifying it for equal impact. That's awesome. So that was kind of the concept for naming. Yeah, it was a great term good find.



Katy Weber 40:26

And I also feel like that's a strength. That's an ADHD strength, too, right, which is to be able to sort of make those connections. Yeah, we're not short on. 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 assay, 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](http://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

