

# Ebony Washington: Masking & multitasking in the TV industry

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## SPEAKERS

Ebony Washington, Katy Weber

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Ebony Washington 00:00

So one of the things that is helping me is me being able to multitask. Because my brain, you know, having ADHD you're thinking about 10 different things at once. And so I'm able to have my brain go in different directions like a team. Okay, split up and then go do things.



Katy Weber 00:24

Hello, and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school, jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens. And it has been nothing short of overwhelming. I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who liked me discovered in adulthood, they have ADHD, and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Allow me to read to you this review from a listener called VIXX WJ on the Apple podcast platform in the UK. It's called Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Your podcast has given me the confidence to speak to a psychiatrist about ADHD and I am starting on medication. I cannot wait. I'm 41 and recently diagnosed with inattentive type. I've been listening to your podcast and it feels like someone finally gets me thank you so much for helping to change my life. Much love from across the pond. Well, this is just so lovely to hear Vic's. Thank you so much for this review and a big congrats on your diagnosis and this opportunity to reframe your identity and your view of yourself and your amazing brain. I am so glad this podcast has been helping you in this journey. Okay, so let's get started. Here we are at episode 94 in which I interview ebony Washington. Ebony is a writer, artist, martial artist and a writer's assistant on the ABCs hip medical drama Grey's Anatomy. Ebony was officially diagnosed with ADHD back in 2012 while she was in college, and we talk all about the various coping strategies she relied on in school before and after her diagnosis. We also talked about the many ways she masked as a girl as well as her journey to finding the right medication and treatment plan in adulthood. And we also talked

about working in the TV industry and how her ADHD has helped her with multitasking and hyper focusing in such a high stress environment. Enjoy. All right, so hi, ebony. It's so nice to meet you. Thank you so much for reaching out to me.

E

Ebony Washington 02:35

Yes, thank you so much for having me. I can't wait to chat with you about ADHD. And me.



Katy Weber 02:44

Yeah, so I guess I'll start out with asking you the question I asked all my guests, which was, you know, when were you diagnosed with ADHD and what was going on in your life that you started to put two and two together and say I really should, should look into this diagnosis.

E

Ebony Washington 03:00

So just to start and backtrack, in high school, and even in grade school, I was always known as, I guess, in my on my report card, can't focus or not paying attention. But I always found a way to cope with that. And work with that, because I just thought it was normal. And I always had good grades. So I guess the teachers noticed me just doodling or looking around. I was not the one to get up out of my seat a lot. So then in high school, I would always be the last one to finish my tests, I would actually sometimes not finish. And you know, I got tested. I was fine, because I guess I scored so high. They just thought I was fine. And I never, it never seemed like a problem to other people because my grades were just great. And so it was just like, oh, well, she's probably fine. Because usually people with ADHD, their grades are probably not as great because they can't focus. But I found a way I guess I just thought it was normal. So I, I just worked with it. And I was like, Oh, this is normal. Let me see how I can fix this. I would always do no cards, just anything visually. I always have to have visuals on my note cards to see and connect my brain with the pictures. I just found ways that worked for me without even questioning, is there something wrong with me? Then when I got to college, I was like, Oh, why is this so hard? Why aren't my coping skills working? Like? Why is my technique not working for me? And I was in a lecture hall. And I don't know for the life of me why I tried to major in biology because I'm a creative person. And I was in like a science. I think it was biology or something. And I was just staring. My brain just kept wandering, no matter what I did to try that tools I used in high school to focus in class. Now. Meanwhile, I'm telling you like back in high school, I was in a smaller school, so I was fortunate enough not to get lost. Oster left behind. But in college, it's so much bigger. So, you know, professors aren't going to hold your hand if you're not focusing or don't finish an exam. That's it. So I just knew something was wrong. And, you know, I was like, Oh, I thought High School was hard. No, this is hard, like this college adulthood, whatever it was, like I need, I think I have a problem. And so I, you know, went to get diagnosed. And I was diagnosed that like 19 1819 years old. And they told me that I most likely have ADHD. And that's, you know, when I learned about kind of what it was, I did my own research, because the person who diagnosed me did not like fill me in on everything, every detail. I actually recently found out the extent of, of what ADHD is, when I now am getting re medicated after not being being on medication for like, a gap of like six years, it was comforting to know that there was something a name for it, it wasn't just my brain. Because in

college, it was like, oh, there's something wrong with me. You know, I was like, there's this is not right. And just hearing that, oh, it's ADHD, and there are ways to help you focus. I knew that was it for me, and I was able to get down and do my work and be myself.



Katy Weber 06:26

Yeah, you know, I had a really positive experience with my diagnosis that we felt very, you know, in hindsight, and all the women I've talked to, it feels like, simple, I kind of went to my doctor who I, you know, I showed her all the self tests and everything and, and we had a half hour conversation, and she diagnosed me there in the office. And then she gave me a prescription for medication. And that was it. There was like, no conversation about what it is, or I mean, I think she probably assumed that I was going to do my own research and you know, and sort of sent me on my way or could tell that I had already done some research but it still now in hindsight, I'm fascinated that there was no conversation outside of try this medication. And yeah, so was that you were medicated when you were first diagnosed in college? What made you decide to go off it for six years?



Ebony Washington 07:13

So going back to what you said about not being educated about it, which is I think, is a big portion of it's a big part of what you know, dealing with ADHD to understand it, how your mind works, not I mean, you know yourself but to know the extent of ADHD what, so you can identify little things if you're not sure. Is this ADHD? Is this what I'm doing etc. So, when I was diagnosed, I went to see behavioral therapist and he prescribed me, Concerta in the past I didn't know that there were so many drugs, so many medications for ADHD, that you just find one that works for you. And so he just offered me, Concerta, and it didn't seem like there was an option to take anything else. So I just thought that was it. So I took it and I lost my appetite. And it kind of seemed like it made me look like I have ADHD on the outside because I was just hyperactive. Like I just, it did something weird, where it's just like, oh, it externalized my ADHD. I don't know if it actually helped. And I just didn't feel right on it. I would have heart palpitations. And the doctor I had wasn't great, actually called him and asked him if I should be experiencing these heart palpitations. Is this a normal side effect? And he was like, Oh, I'm sorry, you have to make an appointment. He couldn't even tell me that, like you should go to the emergency room. That's not normal. And then I just stopped cold turkey. That was hard. It was like withdrawal symptoms. And I just said, you know, let me not take this because it's not helping me. And there's no point in me taking this and I was I'll just go back to how it was in high school and try to cope with it on my own and reaching adulthood and moving out to Los Angeles. You know, I was like, Oh, we're I'm in a job now where it requires me to focus. And in the career of writing, I mean, for someone who cannot for the life of me sit down in one spot to even do a simple task. Well, writing is not that simple. But just do a task like that of writing. It was so hard. That's kind of why stopped taking Concerta and now I'm taking Adderall as an adult.



Katy Weber 09:24

You're having a much better reaction to it. Yeah, yeah, there's so many different types out there. And so even just finding which one your body reacts to the best can feel like a full time job a lot of the time, right? Just it can be so exhausting. I've tried to at this point, and I'm at that

stage where I'm like, I really need something I really need some help. You know, what are my options? What is my treatment plan, what is happening and where you know, what else do I want to try?

E

**Ebony Washington 09:51**

Yeah, you have to like do your homework.



**Katy Weber 09:55**

Yeah, I know. When you said I'm just gonna go back to coping with it on my own. I just like had that visceral reaction, right? Because I feel like, there's so many times where we do that, where we're just like, oh, you know what, forget it, I'll just figure this out on my own. And then you think about your life in high school, doing all of that, right? And, and then as adults, the evidence of struggle is not there. Right. And it's like, if you have ADHD, you must have shown evidence of struggle throughout your life. And so many adult women sort of feel like we've been managing for so long on our own. How do I even prove the struggle?

E

**Ebony Washington 10:33**

That's exactly how I feel. And you know, just seeing that in high school. It wasn't a problem. Until, you know, after that, you just see that whatever you were doing doesn't work. But then I tried to make myself believe, Oh, no, it was working. I'm crazy like that it will work because it worked before, but it is totally not the same. You know, you're dealing with different things, you have different things coming at you. Adulthood requires attention to multiple things, because you have more responsibility, and it's just overwhelming. And maybe some parts of what I did in high school will work maybe studying wise, but so I'm grateful that I was able to find the help to flourish.



**Katy Weber 11:21**

Yeah, right. I know, I feel like I have, I talked about that a lot with guests that the ways in which we sort of experienced these peaks and valleys, in our executive functioning around ADHD. And then when we're in a valley that we start to look into this diagnosis, or, you know, feel like wait, there's more happening here than just depression, or all those ways where you're just like, Oh, my God, I can't cope and why so many of us during the pandemic, myself included, that's how I got diagnosed, do you know spelt? Like everything fell apart? Now, when you started looking back into it, or at least looking back into medication, this was after you moved to California. So what's the timeline there? How long have you been in California,

E

**Ebony Washington 11:59**

I moved to California in 2019, right before the pandemic, October 2019. So I've been there for about two years. And I, you know, hadn't been on medication, not even anxiety, medication, because I also have anxiety. And a lot of people with ADHD, everyone knows that people who

have ADHD know that they also most likely have anxiety, that pairs with it, just one of the many beautiful things. And so, it was hard to move to LA to begin with, and having anxiety. And, you know, ADHD, that was a struggle. And so I started seeing a therapist again, along with getting medicated for my anxiety. So I took one step at a time went back on anxiety medication. And then when I got my job, and I realized, this is a job where I can't be messing up, I have to focus and be on top of things. And I'm going to need to go back on something because I need to do well at my job because me just working with my ADHD is not enough. I need to have that extra support. So I went to look up online from ADHD treatment center, and I got medicated, they educated me on ADHD, they told me all about the medications that I had options that we were gonna get through this together, I and I just felt relieved to know that, like, it's not conservative. There's more than that. Like, it's just not one size fits all. So I went on Adderall. I think I tried a few. It is exhausting. Because you're that first few weeks or so you're trying to figure out which medication works for me. And so I think I tried a few different medications. And I found that Adderall was working well. And when I was on it, when I first got on it, I was like, wow, like this is working. I was staying late after work after a whole day on Zoom, and doing the writing that I've been trying to just do for the whole time for that I was in LA just trying to sit down and do something. And I was able to, because I have Dr. I believe without my ADHD, and just having the medication to help me sit down and do it was life changing.



Katy Weber 14:23

Yeah, absolutely. Now, what was the treatment center because I feel like that's huge. Like, that's another thing I've talked about with with guests, which is like how isolating and confusing and arduous the whole diagnosis journey can be right? And how wonderful it is when you find these treatment centers that kind of hold you through the process of the diagnosis, but then also the treatment plan and you know, where you feel like people are actually looking out for you and looking after you which is so important in this journey. So that's amazing that you found that place. What is it so I'm like so we can recommend it to people?



Ebony Washington 14:57

Yeah, it's called millennial ADA. HDX located in California, I think they take people all over, I'm not sure, but people can look into it. And they have a great team there that helped me out. And they always check in and say, Hey, you're due for a refill? Would you do need more? And you know, and you just hold your hand and always available to speak, if you have questions, or concerns or anything, and, you know, they just hold your hand through, it's something I hadn't had the first time around. So I definitely recommend finding a place like that or going there getting that help.



Katy Weber 15:35

Awesome. Now, I'm curious, through this lens of an ADHD diagnosis, was there anything that you looked back at and on your childhood, where you're like, Oh, the signs were there all along? And then also, you know, how did your family react to this diagnosis? Have you talked about it with them?

E

**Ebony Washington 15:52**

Yes, I have spoken to the about it with them. So in high school, I have a story about that, too. But in high school, on tests, I would read a sentence over and over and over again, because it was not processing in my brain. I don't know why I would like I would think how many times do I have to read this? I read it five times. Why isn't? Why don't I understand? I know, I'm smart. I know what this is, I just can't process it. And that would be frustrating. And I just didn't think anything of it. Because I would always just read it a 20th time maybe and just be like, Okay, I got it. And I just had to work a little harder. Other things that I did was, so I had the extra time on my test. That was something

**Katy Weber 16:42**

was that a 504? Or was that just something that your teachers would give you?

E

**Ebony Washington 16:45**

That was just a regular exam, just like multiple choice, like in history class, just any exams, reading comprehension was hard for me. I was an excellent reader, but I couldn't process it out loud, just in my head. And so another thing that I noticed is it was very hard for me for summer reading summer reading lists, oh, I hated them. And you know, books are great. I enjoyed stories. I love the series unfortunate events. I think that book was okay. Because it really just the way it talked to its readers, you just gave me like, oh, by the way, this word means this, it was just like, the way it was worded, I think helped with me being able to read those books. But it was always hard to complete my summer reading list. And I remember, I had to read A Tree Grows in Brooklyn in English class, which is a great book. And I was so just nervous that I was not going to finish it by the time we got back to school. And so I had to go to the library, rent an audio book on those CDs, got my Walkman, pop them in. And I would listen to it and read along, I had to read long because my brain wouldn't just process it listening. Because my mind would wander and the voice had to be interesting. It had to be like, and then this happened like not just a robot, because then I don't think that would have worked. But fortunately, the woman reading the audio book was was interesting. And I read along and it was processing and and I remembered it and it was great. Because I finished it at the speed of the discs. I had a way to follow along and had a plan to finish the book. So I just after one disk was done, I had the next disc and the next disc and I think people with ADHD, or at least me find it helpful. When you break things into smaller pieces. It's less overwhelming. And that might be for most people too, but it's very helpful.

**Katy Weber 18:47**

I know I definitely have that with with TV shows versus movies. If it's like you know if it's like seven o'clock my husband will say do you want to watch a movie? I'm like God, no, I don't want to sit for a movie for two hours but will easily watch you know, five TV shows for half an hour. Yeah, yeah. 100% This is going to date me but I really hated reading when I was a kid I was not an avid reader until I discovered VC Andrews which this is definitely dating me. But VC you know, I grew up in a very Christian household very religious household, VC Andrews is not. And so I remember my mother being so excited that I was reading anything. She had no idea what

Casey Andrews was. I would like be in my room reading those books. Like for hours. It was like the first books I ever that actually captured my attention and it's like you said there was like something about it. I don't know if it was really just the subject of the horrific subject subject matter but, or, you know, I see that with my kids to where it's like they don't just like generally like reading. But when they when they get into a series where there's something about the writing or the topic or the subject matter or the wording or something the flow, they'll just inhale them and that's really it. Just saying. Yeah, and going back to the math thing, too, I also had a lot of struggles with, like word problems in math, right? So it was like I was fine with with straight multiplication, division, all of that stuff. But whenever it was in paragraph form, I would have to reread it over and over and be like, What are you asking me? You know, when you said you couldn't, you know, in a testing situation when you couldn't say it out loud? I was like, oh, yeah, that's like, even more frustrating when you can't. Like when you have to kind of do it all in your head as though the saying it out loud auditory piece helps, right? Yeah, I totally relate it to that.

E

Ebony Washington 20:37

Yeah. And math. Forget it. I mean, algebra was great. I don't know, a lot of letters in there. But those word problems, forget it, I would have to draw pictures to figure out the word problems on my paper. I'd be like, Oh, this many balloons are here. And I need to, you know, this many, or I had to draw it because my brain was not about to read each sentence and figure it out. In my head with words.



Katy Weber 21:06

Yeah, I think I said this on other episodes, where the only time I remember cheating in high school was in algebra, because of the I could never remember the formulas. And so I would write the formulas on the inside of my Texas Instruments calculator. And you know, I'd write them in pencil and the plastic case, so that like, as soon as the test started, I would write them all on my test paper, and then erase them so that I didn't get caught with my calculator. But I was like, I absolutely could not memorize those formulas. I don't know. Like, why it was ever expected of us to do that. It just felt so unfair. Yeah. And so I'm like, Yes, that is the one and only time I definitely cheated.

E

Ebony Washington 21:42

I mean, do people use those today? No, I don't think they're



Katy Weber 21:46

I don't think they're required. Although my daughter's in high school now. And there are some, there are some tests where she's required to like memorize formulas. I think it's like a physics she has a physics test coming up a final and there's all these formulas, she's really struggling with memorizing and I'm like, Why? Why on earth is that required? I don't know. It's really frustrating. And then I also was reminded of Shakespeare, I could not read Shakespeare, I had to listen to Shakespeare, like on records that's also taking me I would like go to the library and



find Shakespeare records. Yeah, I'd have to listen to them as at the same time, I still probably couldn't, I still probably couldn't just like sit down and read Shakespeare. So I don't know if that's a neurodivergent thing, or if that's a Shakespeare thing.

E

Ebony Washington 22:30

I mean, it's probably a little bit of both. But to go back to, to my English class, in high school, there was one teacher that I had, who didn't make us read. I think it was my junior year. And she would always show us the movies. Instead of making us read, I think we would read along in class, but she was like, Oh, we're gonna watch the movie. And I was like, I love her.



Katy Weber 22:53

I know, right? Yeah. Yeah, so maybe that's just a Shakespeare thing? I don't know. I'm curious. I see what people respond to this conversation. 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 help.com/women. ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp. Okay, so now I'm curious, how did you end up majoring in biology? And then how does a biology major end up being a writer in Hollywood? Well,

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Ebony Washington 24:17

I am a writer's assistant. And my goal is to be a writer in Hollywood. But I started out, I think, wanting to do physical therapy. When I was in college, going to college, I you know, put all my eggs in one basket and basically applied to like maybe two or three schools before I went to college, and the school that I really wanted to go to I didn't get into so I went to community college and I took all my prerequisites there and I didn't know what I wanted to major in and you can major in an associate's degree you know program so I was looking down the list and I think I just from high school I had done like some editing from the The sports teams on our in our high school and I did some editing from the footage for the, you know, for the local sports channel. And so I was like, Oh, I think I'm interested in films. I love watching TV. I love movies. So I just randomly selected film editing. I was like, I'll do that. And then, you know, I'm thinking as I'm going, I'm like, Well, I mean, this is fun as a hobby. But I think I'm, I want to do physical therapy because I I didn't mention this, but I'm a black belt in Taekwondo. So I also grew up doing Taekwondo for a big portion of my life. So I was, you know, always interested in like, sport, sporty things. And, and I guess it has a lot to do with exerting energy and with my ADHD, yeah. So I said, Okay, I want to do physical therapy, you know, I like I want to, I like helping



people, I love people. And then, you know, I, I was in chemistry class in college, and I was sitting in the lecture hall. And oh, my gosh, I looked at the board, and I just saw lines, circles. They were speaking another language. And I was like, I can't, I cannot. And so I got up and left. And I changed my major. I said, Why am I doing this to myself, I'm a creative person. I was taking art classes in between the science classes. And like, you know, I've always I was always into art in high school. I was in the honor society, Art Honor Society and doing like actual art. But you know, creative wise, I was just like, I am, this is not helping me exert any creativity. There's no way I can draw pictures for this. I mean, what am I going to draw a flask? I mean, I can't. So I just got up and left. And I was into TV. And I had been doing some research. And I didn't know screenwriting was a job until I did my research and looked at all the majors at my college. And so I, you know, I went to them and told the professor Hey, you know, I, I'm interested in majoring in screenwriting, and he was like, Oh, you're gonna have to restart from the beginning. And I was like, oh, and he's like, but you can do cinema studies, which is like film, history, and minor in Screenwriting. So that's what I did. And it's a lot of watching movies and analyzing movies. And I think, for me that that was like something that just drew me in like, that was good for me writing essays on films and stuff. That was for some reason that was, I was able to do that.



Katy Weber 27:30

Oh, cool. Yeah, that's, that makes a lot of sense. I think through you know, I think of all the ways that we kind of look back at who we are and why we did things through this lens of ADHD. And you're like, Oh, yeah. Okay, that makes sense. When it comes to your work right now, in the television industry? Do you feel like your ADHD is helping you like, is there? Is there anything about it that you sort of feel like, is driving you?



Ebony Washington 27:57

Yes, I do. So one of the things that is helping me, is me being able to multitask. Because my brain, you know, having ADHD, you're thinking about 10 different things at once. And so I'm able to have my brain go in different directions, like a team, okay, split up, and then go do things. And I'm able to do that and think about multiple things at once. And my job as a writer's assistant, requires you to focus because I'm taking notes in the writers room when all these writers are talking and I have to be able to focus. And that's also why I got back on medication, because I was like, oh, no, this is not going to work, I need to have a system because you know, when I'm talking to someone, one on one, I will just space out. And so I can't do that here, because they're leaning on me to have their conversation recorded. So I need to get myself together. So being able to have my brain split up, has actually kind of helped along with my medication to be able to take notes, because so many people are talking. And now I'm finding myself like being able to hear what one person is saying. And then my, the other part of my brain is like, Okay, the next person is talking, and I'm still so like my brains working to be able to take all these different notes from all these different voices. So I feel like somehow, if that makes sense, that's how it's helping me and my job right now.



Katy Weber 29:30

It almost sounds like you've kind of a video game. I know it does. You know, the way it's like all these moving parts and pieces, and you're just sort of like directing them all in your head. You

know, that reminds me you were you had said you had a funny family story about your ADHD diagnosis. I want to go back to

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**Ebony Washington 29:48**

my mom is a teacher, my dad's a pastor, and he was an assistant teacher, teacher's assistant. And so my mom has been a teacher for years and you know, she's seen kids with ADHD and mostly the kids that she's seen are the ones that get up and get out of their seat and keep talking and or just disrupt the class. And so I wasn't like that. So I think that's probably why she, she didn't think anything of it. And also, I just spoke to my mom recently, and she believes that she also probably has ADHD because I told her a bunch of, you know, different things that I identified, like reading texts over and over and different things. And she said, yeah, she she has that too. And my mom is in her 60s. So she was like, Yeah, that sounds I probably have it. And I said, you probably do. And, you know, she's coped with it, too. And so I feel like, because I didn't look like the typical ADHD kid, how she seen it. In her classroom, she probably didn't think that I had it. Even when I was running in circles around the house, as a kid, and she just left me until I got tired. And she just thought, Hey, she's athletic. Because in school, she's doing great. She's just an athletic kid. That's what she you know, I don't blame anybody. Because, you know, I, I just coped with it on my own thinking it was normal, because my mom thought it was normal to she just because she coped with hers growing up, and you know, and I was getting good grades. So as long as that was working, and I wasn't complaining, I think that happened. But that's the funny story is I I used to run in circles around the house, and I don't understand how nobody said she's got ADHD.



**Katy Weber 31:37**

Right? Yeah, well, yeah, it just goes to show how much we've learned about it, and how the signs were there, but we didn't know what to look for them. And I think that's what I'm going through with both my kids right now, which is like, they don't have a lot of those stereotypical signs of ADHD. So their teachers or their teachers think that they're wonderful and well behaved and doing well, and everything's fine. And, and yet, I'm talking to all of these adults who are like, that was me. And now I have all this anxiety and perfectionism. And, you know, and I'm like, okay, so how are you? Right? So I'm like, what do we need to recognize in these kids? If they're not running around in circles? Like how do we help them as children so that they don't end up becoming these balls of anxiety? And as adults hate us sometimes, like, I don't honestly know, right? Like, I feel like a diagnosis will help. And when I look into like, executive function coaching, like the fact that that even exists, I think, is really helpful with ADHD or not, I think it's such an important. These are such important life skills to be teaching kids like how to write emails, and how to clean their rooms, or come up with schedules and all that stuff. Like you were saying, when you go to college, and you're just like, Oh, my God, there aren't people looking out for me, there's not people making sure I wake up, there's not the teachers don't make sure I'm doing my homework, like you're just kind of pushed out of the nest. And where are the ways in which we need to help these kids? Any of them, you know, so that they don't end up feeling like, you know, I'm I'm just doing I'm just managing on my own, and I'm coping with it on my own. And then you get to adulthood, and you're like, am I coping? I don't know, was I ever coping? I don't feel like I'm coping.

E

**Ebony Washington 33:19**

Yeah. You know, my dad is a pastor, and he's been a pastor for over 40 for over 40 years. And so, I would always be in church. And now, I mean, I can go back and see because this still happens, where, you know, you're trying to listen to a sermon, I just thought, like, I like, I should be listening to this because it's important. It's part of my faith, and, and I can't listen, and I can't. So like, you know, for for even church was hard for me still, to listen, and just listen to someone talk. You know, it's just hard. So that was also a struggle. And I looked back down. My dad's like, so what did you like about the sermon? And I'm like, oh, and he doesn't know this. But one time he asked me that, and I hung up the phone and pretended that I lost connection. Because I was like, I was like, You're doing great,

**Katy Weber 34:15**

true confession time. Well, at that's what's I think so interesting about the concept of masking, right? That's a great example, sitting in church having to sort of sit still stare straight ahead and listen to a sermon. I mean, I did that growing up. And now that you mentioned it, my father always took notes. And when he was listening to sermons, I don't think he ever looked back at them. But I think it really helped him be a more active listener to take notes. And then also, I think it kept him from falling asleep. So but like, you know, the expectations to just stare straight ahead and listen, when you have ADHD, that's the worst way to listen and you can't be an active listener and stare straight ahead. So it's like, you know, that's, that's really such an important part of masking which is like I if I look like I'm listening, then I'm not listening. If I look like I'm doing a million other things while you're talking, then I am like really interested and I'm really paying attention. If I'm also writing or also doodling or dry, you know, or fidgeting, or all the other things that help you actually focus and listen. But the expectation is on you to like, sit, still put your hands in your lap and sit forward. And you're like, that is the worst possible outcome to get me to listen. So yeah, that's such a great example of, of, you know, the, the way in which we have to kind of mask to listen.

E

**Ebony Washington 35:35**

Yeah, and, you know, it's just, it's hard to just sit, sit down for some people in one spot, as well. But when I asked my mom, what did you now that you look back? Do you notice anything that I used to do to be able to read things or understanding? She said, I would write things down. So, you know, I don't remember, I guess, but I would always write things down. Like when I was studying or, you know, just so when of my brain because writing it down, I had to see it. I'm a visual learner, as most people with ADHD I'm sure are so yeah, writing things down really helps. And I think you're dead. Smart. Yeah.

**Katy Weber 36:16**

Right. I mean, I did the same thing in university where I would, you know, I would just sit in the front row, I had to sit in the front row center. And I had to, I just took copious notes, mostly because it was how I it was the only way I could listen. And I still do that sometimes, too, with like, you know, with the interviews, right, like, I'm always taking notes as they make. It's funny, when I go back and look at them, they make absolutely no sense. And I have no idea what I've written. But, you know, they're just this like random references. But at the same time, it's like it

the act of taking notes helps me listen in the moment. So fascinating. 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 soar 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. When I was diagnosed with ADHD, and I looked back at being a newspaper journalist and being like, Yeah, everybody in that newsroom had to have ADHD, because it's just seems like the perfect job for somebody with ADHD. Do you look around now in your own industry? And do you? Do you feel like, there are a lot of people with ADHD? Or like, how is it viewed? Is it openly talked about? Or is it something that you sort of feel like, it's not something you want to advertise?

E

Ebony Washington 38:20

Yeah, I do think a lot of people actually do. And I think there are more people adult with ADHD than, than we realize, who are coping with it, whether they are diagnosed or not. And one thing I'm able to see now is like, you know, with Zoom, I feel like that's also a really good way to tell. Because you need little breaks in between. What's just like, I mean, I know I do, but you know, like, when cameras are off, I'm like, What are they doing? You can just tell like, from other, even from seeing different rooms or something you can see like, writers, if sitting down in a room have to sit there and talk, you know about story. So sometimes that might be hard to sit there for that long, and you need little breaks. And sometimes you can be like, Oh, well, you know, this person needs to go to the bathroom. Do they? Or do they just have ADHD because they can't sit there. So I'm like, sometimes I'm looking at like, who else is? Who was who else is a closeted ADHD person?



Katy Weber 39:26

Yeah, I saw an article recently about Martin Short and Steve Martin, whenever they were on breaks for only murders in the building. They were never on their phones. They would only like play board games or play card games, and everybody else was on their phones. And I was like, Yeah, I guess that's like a generational thing. But it was fascinating to me, because I think the constant use of our phones adds to a lot of our traits and symptoms right? You know, like, I think it's pretty obvious at this point that phones are terrible for our focus and attention span and for people with ADHD We're like moths to a flame with our phones. And so I've like I love the idea of these two just like totally rejecting modern technology and just being like, yes, on my break, I'm going to play a board game.

E

Ebony Washington 40:11

Yeah, I mean that that is so real, because I, especially on when you're on Zoom, like, let's say, I

need to do two things, two things at once. So if I'm not taking notes, and someone's talking, I need to either be drawing or playing a game on my computer. So I can listen, because, you know, it's not going to go, I need to be my brain has to be doing. Not one thing, like one thing, and it has to be doing a few things at a time. So I, you know, maybe I'll play solitaire. And I'm listening. Because my brain is moving, I'm moving somehow. So it's getting that dopamine going. So I in order for me to listen, so I think a lot of writers have ADHD.



Katy Weber 40:59

Yeah, it's funny that you mentioned Solitaire, because I that's one of the things I do on my phone all the time, when I'm listening to books or podcasts, if I'm not like moving around, or walking or driving or something. And I and I'm just sitting and I still want to listen, I will play solitaire, because it fascinates me that like I can do both that Solitaire, like takes up, Solitaire requires a part of my brain that is not interrupted, not doesn't interrupt my concentration when I'm listening to a book. And it's so weird, because there's other games, I've tried that I can't do it, you know, I can't split my focus that way. But for there's something about solitaire that I'm like, this is fascinating. And then the other thing I do I have like a you one of those, like paint by numbers apps on my phone, but for some reason I can like do paint by numbers, with like the touching of just the you know, touching the images. For some reason I can do that. That also does not take up the part of my brain that is required for listening. And so I'm like always looking for new games that I can play at the same time. It's such a you know, it's such a silly little children's app. But I'm always looking for, you know, new games that I can let you know, that won't interrupt the part of my brain that is needed for when I'm listening to a book. Yeah. So yeah, if there's any recommendations, because I'm bored of solitaire,



Ebony Washington 42:20

I tend to play a lot of board games. And I for some reason, can listen, sometimes I can listen when I'm playing word games, which is wild to me because I you have to focus on that. But like I played Wordle every day and like I have to get that done or York time spelling bee that gets my brain going like I for some reason, always have to do it every day, those little word games. So that that helps me to and drawing, drawing doodling,



Katy Weber 42:46

I have the same ritual. I have the same ritual every morning. I have like three word games that I have to play first thing in the morning, as soon as I start my phone, I'm like, sit down with my coffee. And I have to get them all out of the way. Because they all have like a daily dopamine hit where it's like, you know, the daily streak. And it's so it's like the Wordle you know, the word game of the day. And so I have to get them all out of the way and like clean my slate before I can even begin my day. Oh, yeah. I bet you there's so many listeners who are nodding.



Ebony Washington 43:15

I mean, I'm not in right now. If you can't see. But with Wordle I always feel so distraught when I miss the word of the day. Like if I'm it's been 24 hours and I forgot to play or some I just had so much going on like like. Oh my gosh, like I will literally just feel horrible because I didn't

much going on. I'm like, Oh my gosh, like I will literally just feel horrible because I didn't complete the word of the day. And it's feels like a streak has been broken.



Katy Weber 43:40

I know. I know. The first time I broke the streak was over spring break I had and I was devastated because and now I'm kind of like I've broken it enough times at this point that I don't pay attention to it. But yeah, streaks can be like wonderfully motivating, but at the same time, they can like rule your life in a way. Like I need some balance. Okay, so I'd love to ask the question. If you could rename ADHD to something that's a little less confusing or complicated. Is there something you name it? Have you talked about that? I'm also like, I'm so fascinated because of your mom and teaching and have you discussed that with her at all? Like what would you call it?



Ebony Washington 44:23

I would call it E. B. D. Energizer Bunny disorder.



Katy Weber 44:32

Dice very simple. It gets the job done. I know I feel like I've used the Energizer Bunny metaphor many times. I definitely relate to that.



Ebony Washington 44:41

Yeah. You need that juice to keep you going.



Katy Weber 44:47

I know right? And then the other thing is like when you look at the Energizer Bunny, he's He is just like going and going and going. It's not necessarily like he doesn't look hyper. He looks like he's just like in the groove, right. So there's Not there's not like a manic energy about the Energizer Bunny, he's just got his sunglasses and he's like I am run by a motor. And until he runs out, which is sort of how I feel a lot of the time, it's the three days, it's the three days in a row that I can't get off a couch that are the part that I'm like, where's the hype? You know, like, that was the confusing part for me with the hyperactivity because I was like I can I can go into such a state of paralysis. I always thought that paralysis was the opposite of hyperactivity. And now that I, you know, I'm like, oh, no, they it makes perfect sense that they coexist. Yeah. And



Ebony Washington 45:35

a lot of people don't know that. Because you they think, like, oh, the little, the little boy of a class that running around with scissors is that's ADHD. But you know, no, sometimes it's, it's just being, like you said, paralyzed and unable to do things. And I don't know if that's to do with

the fact that you've just got so much going on that it's just like your brain just shuts down because it's over on overdrive. So it's just like, Okay, it's time to take a break. Your body's like, stop. Because you just without trying to your brain is constantly going the other night, I couldn't even sleep, because thoughts were just over just flooding my mind. And I was like, why? And that randomly happens sometimes. And I was tired. It's just like, my body wanted to rest. But my brain was just going like, you know, just going going going. So some people can't see. It's internalized not always externalize.



Katy Weber 46:32

Oh, I know. Well, and that's why I liked the battery analogy, too, because it's given me a lot more grace when I am in that tired, exhausted, burnt out, can't get off the couch phase, because I instead of thinking to myself, like, why are you so lazy? What's wrong with you? Why aren't you getting stuff done? I look at myself now. And I'm like, Okay, you are necessary, it's necessary for you to recharge your battery right now, probably because you were doing a lot of stuff the last few days, right, like so it's much easier for me to kind of see the cyclical nature of my energy, and that my batteries need recharging, as opposed to before my diagnosis where I used to just be like, what's wrong with you? You You could you should be doing this, you could be doing this now. So I'm curious, what are some of the projects that you're working on right now? And do you have anything interesting that you've got coming up?



Ebony Washington 47:21

So I just, you know, wrote a pilot. And that's what I would use as my piece to becoming a writer is using my sample as a pilot. So I'm always working on that. And I'm going to start a new one. And right now, I'm a writer's assistant on Grey's Anatomy where I'm sure you have heard. Have you heard of that show? Yeah, I've heard of it. Okay, yeah. And so I love that. I also love that show. And it's one of my favorites still to this day. And as far as projects, working on my own stuff, writing pilots, and, you know, soaking up knowledge in the writers room, where I get to hear all these wonderful voices create these amazing stories.



Katy Weber 48:07

Oh, well, that's fun. Sounds like you've got a really fun gig.



Ebony Washington 48:10

Keeps my brain juiced up.



Katy Weber 48:13

Yeah, right. I know. I feel like I don't know. I mean, it feels there are those every once in awhile, you come upon those like lists of jobs that work for people with ADHD. And I definitely feel like working in that kind of fast paced industry has its pluses and it's minuses for an ADHD brain. But for the most part, like, Yes, super exciting to always have new things. And it's the stuff I



missed the most about working in a newspaper was all of that fast paced, plate spinning. You know, I always felt like I was on fire in those moments of like, running around and doing stuff. And yeah, that's the part I missed.

E

**Ebony Washington 48:47**

Yeah. And before that, I had been the showrunners assistant, like when I first got my first job in TV. And, you know, that was like a whirlwind. Because it's so you know, you got to do so much. You got to show runners busy. So you got to schedule roll calls, you got to schedule meetings, and I was like, so, like, great. I think at that, because my brain was like, I get to multitask. You know, this is what I get. I get to do all these things. It was so exciting. Because every day was different. Some things would happen. If meetings got canceled. I'd be like, alright, you know, what's the next thing? You know? So my brain, I think, really appreciate the career path I am choosing to take.



**Katy Weber 49:30**

Yeah, awesome. Well, thanks so much for reaching out. I was so glad to hear your story, a very, very interesting perspective. So So Thanks for sharing.

E

**Ebony Washington 49:41**

Yeah, thank you for having me. And thank you for having this podcast. And I hope that more people, more women find it and it helps them to go get their own diagnosis and see if they have it.



**Katy Weber 49:54**

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