

# Lafaya Mitchell: Hypersensitivity & moving beyond labels

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## SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Lafaya Mitchell



Katy Weber 00:00

I guess we'll get started. So, you know, this podcast started with me really wanting to find other women who were diagnosed in adulthood with ADHD. But I had so many different guests who came to their ADHD a lot of women came to it through their children, a lot of them myself, I was, you know, gently nudged by my therapist for years, that I might have it before I really looked into it. But when when we spoke, I wasn't even sure I know, you've worked with families a lot, but I wasn't even sure if you had ever been formally diagnosed, or what your journey was, so but I know that you have sort of come to neuro diversity through your child, right, your daughter,



Lafaya Mitchell 00:42

through my daughter, but then also my own experiences. So the experiences that I had with her were because of how I am. So I knew how to treat her and have her kind of Excel of, you know, a little more than maybe she would have with a different parent, because of my own sensitivities. You know, in my own way of being like, I don't like eye contact them. I don't like sales, and, you know, certain things like that. So, but she was as an infant, you know, she was like, times 1000. You know, for everything. I don't know how I was as an infant, but I had parents who, who didn't allow for, you know, much. Other than my dad said, Yes, you were a very strange Chuck. Is No, my dad is correct. So you are always

different. I was like, Whoa, yeah, no. And but yeah, so that just mean, she has a lot of traits that are like mine, and so never formally diagnosed, is more of a therapist. And I'm like, the reason that I even was attracted to psychology in the first place is because I was learning all about me. So, you know, it's moving along. So it's like, oh, oh, oh, this is interesting. You know, this, felt me. And then after a while, I think I just became really good at what I did. Because, to me, everything I did felt like common sense. So to me, it was like, Well, if a person has a struggle here, then this is what you do. Like you're always looking for the solution and how to relate in a way that's going to bring out the best and the other person that's just kind of like, naturally, function.



Katy Weber 02:12

Yeah, I know, that's something I talked about with my guests, too, because my experience since my diagnosis, I was just diagnosed last year. So it hasn't been that long. But I think for me, the biggest shift has been, rather than immediately thinking, What's wrong with me, I'm lazy, or I'm crazy, or I'm stupid, or like all of the ways in which we just immediately think that we are the raw, weird, the wrong element in the room, you know, changing that self talk and really kind of saying, okay, I this I'm reaching a barrier. So how do I then, you know, what do I do? What do I need to change in my environment, that's going to help me you know, as opposed to always immediately just sort of shutting down that's been such, I feel like, in some ways, really dealing with this diagnosis, dealing with neuro divergence at all is really yeah, about the fact that there's no shame, there's no guilt. There's just like, Okay, this is how I am different. I needs different accommodations and and like, when you say it out loud, it feels so obvious. Like, why wouldn't I have thought that my whole life, but I think like, so many of us, this diagnosis is such a revelation, because we weren't thinking that ever. Like, we were always thinking, Oh, god, what is wrong with me that I can't do X, Y, and Z. So I don't think it's very common at all, if that you would grow up thinking, you know, I have this barrier. And, you know, maybe for maybe for a lot of people it is but I think one thing with ADHD that so many of us have in common when we're diagnosed in adulthood is feeling like we were the problem all along. So that's what



Lafaya Mitchell 03:49

I went through throughout my 20s and a big portion of my 30s in a certain, like, in my 30s, I made a decision that I was really, really, really, at the end of being miserable, you know, all the time. And so then, after that point, I had to try to start to figure it out. Now, just to kind of give some background so that, you know, people are like, oh, shoot, you know, just suppose or whatever, right? When I would become overwhelmed, okay, my primary goal to be to cover my eyes, and usually it'd be like, almost straight into this little hellish little world. And I'll close my eyes and kind of bend over until by the body that I was just close to

trying to shut everything I possibly could out. And even though people most of the time, it's interesting, because they'll tell me, oh, we wouldn't think that at all right? About You. There's a lot that I go through. So this I carry with me a high level of anxiety. This is all the time. This is every day. This is I'm overwhelmed by most things, but I just understand that I'm overwhelmed by most things. So I keep moving anyway. But that's been that's been my journey. Like, even just today, like today is one of those days where I'm just kind of holding it also, it depends, I'm very sensitive. So what I expose myself to, too, so that actually makes a big difference for me anyway, because I kind of take in everything, you know, kind of the things around me. And so if I'm around, like more, a good amount of, you know, anxiety from other people and that kind of thing, then I'll just kind of be holding it sometimes. Right? It's very interesting, I guess, for me, like, in the work that I do, the people that I work with know depressed, anxious, you know, all those kinds of things. And it's interesting, because when I'm at work when I have to be on, then it's almost like I have this like, because it's this space in place that I'm supposed to do that. It's like, I have this like barrier, and I'm able to kind of hold everything in that. Like, it's space that's just outside of me, right. And so it makes everything okay, but it also gives me the ability to share, like, what I feel like what I call, like, it kind of gives me like the superpower to to actually do the healing thing. I'm feeling like, okay, you know, I need a little bit of that. And I don't mean to call it a virus, but you need a little bit of that whatever the negative thing is, in order to create the healing, you know, the healing peace, I've like I'm able to kind of soak that in and hold it create the like vaccine or whatever. And then injected back. So in the form of the healing substance,



Katy Weber 06:27

oh, my God, I love that analogy. That's great. It's really weird. No, it makes sense that anyone who would go into psychotherapy probably has a, you know, is fascinated by their own brain and probably has some of their own issues to work out, right. We do what we need most, right? So how I'm always fascinated by you know, women who I interview who have done, you know, so much academically, right. And so I'm because for me, I had a dismal academic career, I made it, I graduated by with my bachelors, like by the skin of it, that I've always kind of held that, you know, taken that with me. And now I look back, thanks to with this new lens, and I'm just like, oh, all of these ways in which my ADHD did not serve me in school, but how did you? How did you feel like it? You know, looking back at your academic performance and your advanced degrees, like how do you feel like you succeeded with a with a neuro divergence?



Lafaya Mitchell 07:34

I feel like it was just it, I have kind of a weird, my history is kind of weird. Okay, so I have like this extreme, like, to an excess. It's like a push to, to, you know, try to be at be successful. Like, there's, there's something behind it. And it's based on my history, because I kind of came up and just, it was a high degree of poverty, really not much, you know, this kind of hungry sometimes and homeless sometimes. And, you know, those kind of things. So what, I think what it kind of stimulated in me, and it doesn't have for everyone, but for me, personally, I'm consistently trying to push past whatever's going on with me to make sure that I'm able to, and I think it's almost like a survival thing for me, you know, I don't ever want like for my kids to be hungry, or I don't ever want so then it just kind of gives me this, this is a weird push, even if I have to push through it in tears, and, you know, and craziness and because a lot of people think craziness. This is like trying to write papers, you know, and soaking the papers and tears because, you know, it's just, you know, it's it's hard to stay, you know, keep that focus and those kinds of things. So I don't know, I feel like it's like a weird combination of, I want to make sure that I can stay as far away from what I experienced in my history as possible. And I was a teen teen mom. So I've had my my son has been he's 29 now. Look, 29 You know what? Thank you. I'm super excited. But I have my own. Yeah, he's 29. And I will say that he was like, by my motivation for almost everything, because when I looked at him, I decided that he would not grow up anything like I had. So like, it gave me a different kind of push.



Katy Weber 09:34

Yeah, no, that is a topic I thought we talked about a lot. Or I talked about a lot with my guests in terms of just like, feeling like you have a lot to prove right and feeling like you know, very competitive and also feeling like there's a lot of that additional pressure to really kind of show show that you belong in the room. And so as a woman, I experienced that as a black woman, you have the additional you know, sense that there You know, you're always trying to you always come up against that, basically, you always have that sense of like, I have to prove myself to these people who are going to judge me, you know, before I've even opened my mouth, right? And so I'd



Lafaya Mitchell 10:12

Oh, excited that you brought that up because, you know, that could be that could be kind of tough to talk about sometimes, too. But yeah, it is because, you know, as a woman, they there are certain assumptions that are made about us as women. And as a black woman, there are certain extra assumptions that



Katy Weber 10:28

are made. Exactly, yeah. And so, you know, I and that's what I love about the ADHD community in the neurodivergent community is I feel like there's some of the wisest voices in this community that I found are coming from black women because of that, that unique experience, right. And it's so wonderful, because they're, you know, it's just lovely to be in a space where the conversation is being led by black women, as opposed to every other space where white men won't shut up. And so I do, like, it is a topic I love to, to bring up and, and I hope, you know, I never know if I'm stepping on toes or whatever, but I'm just like, It fascinates me. Because it is like, it's, you know, it's that idea that, you know, so many of us had to experience that, like the pressure to behave, and, you know, like, why boys are boys are diagnosed and girls aren't? Well, because girls are, have to keep quiet and have to behave and have to be liked, and all of those things that like I relate to as a woman, and then it's just amplified when you're a woman of color. Absolutely. So I just yeah, it hurts my brain, I think about it.



Lafaya Mitchell 11:40

I spent my childhood teenagehood you know, all that portion, even in my 20s very, very misunderstood, very angry, you know, because I really didn't understand it, I didn't understand I was quite a few things. My sister was like this, you know, really calm, you know, very light, you know, person that that along with everybody. And, you know, I was at the other end of that, where I was the one that that nobody liked, and that everybody was kind of afraid of, and that was too, too honest. And I think rude, considered rude, most of the time. And I think still now, I tend towards being very honest. And people don't always like that. So I don't know how I get away with I get away with a lot. As a therapist, I think it's maybe because I'm so effective. But I really tell people the truth. And I'm like, I'm not doing you a favor, if I don't tell you the truth. And that's just kind of how I exist. So if you don't like the truth, I'm the wrong person for you.



Katy Weber 12:48

I had a I had a very similar experience, just in terms of like, I have lost count of how many times I've been dismissed by white men as just like, the angry feminist, right, you know, oh, you're just angry. And so it's as though that is a reason to dismiss you, right? where it's like, I have an opinion, and I'm expressing my opinion and so to be dismissed because you're angry. I mean, I think that's something we deal with a lot in our, in our society and our culture. And, and I totally lost my train of thought, Oh, I but I think it's like, I don't I can't be any other way. So it's sort of I feel like, I feel like there's some solace in the fact that like, I can't, I have no filter I even if I wanted to kind of be quiet or I'd be in line, I can't even do it

anyway. So yeah, I've taken your approach to which is like, you know, I'm not for everyone to move along.



Lafaya Mitchell 13:41

Somebody told me yesterday, um, you tell way too much through your eyes, you need to tell your eyes to be quiet. You know what? My eyes? I like that one. The reaction is what it is. Yes. You know, sometimes just like, I'm just looking at people like, oh, my goodness, what you're saying is not like, for me, especially if it's like not solution based. And they're like in a in a space where we're supposed to be trying to feel, you know, with progress. I'm just like, oh my goodness, can we move into some discussion that's actually going to be helpful.



Katy Weber 14:25

It's funny, I have the worst poker face when it comes to that. And you know, and I think I've often as I try to, as I try to figure out if I'm an extrovert or an introvert because I really related to what you were talking about, about being on stage, right? Like you really can like find your zone and be on in the moment. And I've always loved that I've always loved theater and I've always loved kind of public speaking for that reason. And so part of me feels like well, maybe I am an extrovert but then there are other times where I'm like, No, I need a lot of alone time. I'm really an introvert and I also like I I can't like If I don't like somebody, it is so obvious in my face that I don't like you. And so often I will like avoid people, you know, I will avoid those situations, some of my in laws, for instance, I get really nervous, and I get a lot of anxiety when I'm going to be around them. Because I just know like, I'm like, my face must show you how unhappy I am right now. Like, I cannot pretend to like people. And I'm so I'm like, that has to be an ADHD, we must have terrible our faces.



Lafaya Mitchell 15:29

I think so No poker faces. That's funny, because, like, like, I'm weird. So like, in real life, right? Real life, I can't hide anything, right. But if I'm playing a role, if I have, if I'm like, in a role, and I have to play that role, I can do that, like when I had to be on, like, it could be, I could just finish just full on crying or whatever, and come right on the camera head on, it's so weird, and go into place. And because I struggle with depression, so you know, sometimes it's just, I don't want to do anything, you know, so then driving to the office, and like, I don't want to listen to people talk. And so crying on the way that I get there, and, but it's weird, because it's like, I feel like it's like a part of my gifting allows room for

me to be able to, like, really operate in that gift, when I'm kind of called on to do it, you know. So if I were just sitting at home, maybe I'm not feeling the greatest. But if I'm out there, and I'm out there and I'm sharing a message, then then it's fine. Like in that moment, it really is like, it's like really fine. It's weird. The separation that I have, I think, yeah, and



Katy Weber 16:38

you know, it's interesting, too, because, I mean, so many of us relate to and talk about masking, right, and this idea that, like we come across as being very together and being very accomplished. NML. And here you are, you're talking about struggling with depression, but you're also this incredibly, you know, powerful speaker, and you've written all these books, and like, you know, To the untrained eye, you are very, very successful. And so then, and so I think a lot of us have that, like, you know, it can be very isolating and very lonely when we realize that, like the true version of us is so different from what other people are seeing. And and then, you know, I also find it crazy that people will say like, Oh, you can't possibly have ADHD, because you do so well.



Lafaya Mitchell 17:23

Oh, my goodness, people, like all my clients, they just know me, like I mean, my brain, like, as far as holding things, it just doesn't operate in that way. I can open I can say, Oh, I'm going to do this thing right here, pick up my phone open it, I will completely forget what it was I opened my phone for so much so that now my husband just he just he knows I'm gonna do it. So before he didn't believe me, he's like, are you? Are you serious? You know, are you okay? Right. And I explained to him, you know, these are my challenges. So you know, I have a hole and I always tell people, I'm a gumball. So we'll get food issue here since Rama over here. So just so you know, I haven't gave him seriously, I gave him a three by five card, when I realized we were going to be close, again with three by five card like explaining what different pieces look like, you know, this is what this looks like. And this is what you do on the other side. And he kept it for I didn't know, like, almost cried. He showed 10 years. 10 years after I gave this card to him. He still had it in his wallet. And he was still come back and refer to it. And he said, You told me I said because I'm like, I'm so proud of you for being able to deal with a person like me, because I know not easy, right? And he's like, you told me how and I was like, you know, what are you talking about? He said, You gave me a card you gave me like an information card or write like a little guide on you. Oh my goodness. What? And first of all, I didn't remember doing that that part. But it was in my head, right. But when I saw that, and I was like, um, How long ago? He said, he said, when we first got together, I was like, this was so smart. And he's like, yeah, it's helped me out with you for years.



Katy Weber 19:28

Okay, he's so smart. I always tell the story about why my husband who I've been with for 20 years now, and is the most amazing partner but when we first started dating, and I knew that I really loved him. I tried to break up with him because I was like he's going to he's going to discover what a hot mess I am eventually, and then it's going to be so heartbreaking when he dumps me that I'm going to dump him first. And you know, and I think and I did it on his birthday. It was like we were out for a birthday brunch, and I handed him this long. The sappy letter that I wrote about, you know how it's time for us to part it's at Oh my God, I don't even I'm sure he's probably kept that letter too. But he read it and very, like, sweetly read it, and then looked at me. And he was like, Don't be ridiculous. We're not we're not breaking up. And I was like, Oh, he would let me and I was like, Thank you like now in 20 years later, I'm like, God, I'm so glad you did let me and that you saw through that. But it just speaks to that sense of the right that sense of like, nobody knows that. Like, eventually you're going to find out what a hot mess I am. So if only I had thought about the index card. That's what you were nodding. Did you try to also do the same thing? Did



Lafaya Mitchell 20:39

you try to break up? I feel like you're too normal. To be okay for you. I'm just trying to warn you. And he was he was different though. Because he had come from a history of a couple of really bad sad breakups. He's a super sweetheart. bad breakup. So when I actually told him I, this is like really scary to me. Is that, right? Is that you? It's me. You just don't understand. Right? He was so baffled. He was looking at me like what are you talking about? Like, you know, it is for the best and right. And I drove off, and he was so upset with me. And as I'm driving off, I'm calling my sister and calling my best friend saying this is why they were like, Are you crazy? This is the first time we've ever seen you happy, what are you allergic to? And so I went back. And when I found him, I had to I had to do some a little bit of work because he was like, and then he just looked at me. He's like, you know, we promise not to do this. You know, we promised to stay friends. If we were if we decided that this whole dating thing didn't work out. We were friends for like three years before, you know, we started to date. He said, we made a deal. And you broke that deal. And I was always just really scared. You just don't understand. I don't feel like it makes sense for you to want to be with me. Right? And he, he just he explains it. Okay? He says so next time. Just talk to me about it.





22:22

You know?



Lafaya Mitchell 22:25

You're having these very weird thoughts. Just talk to me because I'm very sensitive. And you know, I can't you know, I can't handle just the random people. So I was like,



Katy Weber 22:36

that sounds like it sounds like a Showtime movie. Sounds like a romantic thing. Our whole life is a lifetime lifetime. Okay, so now so let's talk about the left a away and kind of how you started and the incredible work that you're doing your work you work with people of all ages? Or do you work mostly with children's or parents or no, I



Lafaya Mitchell 30:21

always fast myself, like into liking to work with like teenagers. And then what ended up happening is, in the work that I do, because I just am a perfectionist, I think that I have to, like, be thorough, and address the areas that matter. I had to work with the entire unit, though, what I had to work with the entire unit that meant the younger kids, the siblings, the older kids, the older adult, or young adults, siblings, the parents, the grandparents, teachers, right. So I ended up working with all ages very successfully, because I really just use a tangible approach. Like I want you to be able to leave from print for my presence with with real tools things are that are that are actually going to work more are hypersensitive kids. So my focus has always been on the kids like, like, this is how you treat this how you treat our kids with, you know, whatever it is ADHD, autism, we're, I'm in the realm of hypersensitivity now, where we're everybody we're, you know, no matter what it is, is going on where they dwell, right. And this is how you keep from making and not stuff out of Lamy kind of thing, but making things worse, for a person who's already experiencing challenges, right, this is how you do it,



Katy Weber 31:43

my son is going into fifth grade, and he has not been formally diagnosed with ADHD, I'm pretty sure he I mean, he has it. I know he has it. But I also am like, really struggling, my husband and I are talking, you know constantly about whether or not to get him diagnosed and whether that will be helpful, or whether we can help him at home

organically because like I you know, through learning so much about what the structure is that we need and what works and what doesn't work, I find it often a lot easier to advocate by just labeling what he needs for his teacher, as opposed to saying My son has ADHD, right. So like, for instance, he needs to sit at the front of the classroom. If he sits at the back of the classroom, he gets distracted. And he often gets a lot of anxiety if other kids are talking to him because he's worried he's gonna get in trouble. And, and so instead of saying, you know, my son needs to sit at the front of the classroom because he has ADHD, I just explain kind of why he the logic, like you were saying the logic behind his needs. And I feel like that's so much easier to advocate that way. But I also don't know if it's if I'm shooting myself in the foot by not, you know, having this diagnosis yet. We're kind of taking it day by day with him. I'm not sure so. Yeah, I mean, I guess I love the fact that you are working with everybody in the picture. Because I think sometimes when you just when you just talk about the the label or the diagnosis, and not what it entails, you kind of you have no idea what that person is hearing, right, like I have when I say I have ADHD, I have no idea what people think I'm saying they Some people think, you know, when I came out and said I had ADHD, when I had this diagnosis, there were some people who were saying, like, I'm so sorry, like I had told them I had terminal illness, right? And I'm like, why are you telling me you're sorry, this is not this is a miracle that I'm learning all of this, right? But it's just telling me how little you understand about what what this is?



Lafaya Mitchell 33:42

I feel like I do strongly and I have strong opinions. So everybody Forgive me. But I do strongly dislike kind of the dehumanizing effects that sometimes labels will have like is as opposed to now you're dealing with another human being, who like other human beings have challenges in certain areas, right? Well, you know, there's there's just more clearly defined and fit into this little, you know, this box here of ADHD or this box of right now that those who didn't fit neatly, but whatever, they have enough of those things in the box. Right. So that'd be the criterion for the diagnosis. But yeah, what ends up happening is a lot of misunderstanding. And just I wanted to speak to, as you were kind of just wondering, if it was working against, you know, maybe working against you know, what your goals are for your son to not having formally diagnosed it. I would say this, given your focus on dealing with what the issues are, you have that problem solving focus, I think that it may or may not become necessary for the diagnosis. The diagnosis is necessary when what when you need to medicate. The diagnosis is necessary when you need to get formal accommodations through the schools through IP Bible fourth, if you're able to get those results that you need. Without the other things because medications do what they take time, people don't get mad at me, okay? medications take the edge off of the strength of what your challenges are, okay? They take the edge off. I mean, some people will say it takes even more the edge off, right? We're dealing with psychosis and stuff, man, okay,

please take your medication, right. But other thing things outside of that, that aren't as severe, then remember, you're just taking the edge off, there's no magic, it's not a magic wand, it's not going to automatically, you know, make you completely and totally, you know, one great way that you some perfect, you know, I said, grass greener on the other side kind of experiment is not going to happen that way. It's just going to help you so that you're able to use the tools that you need to make things happen. But if you're able to use the tools that you need to make the things happen, then your end goal is to get to the results, right. So like for my daughter, now, people it doesn't really, you know, for me, kind of doesn't really matter to me what people think, you know, so so so for my for my daughter in particular, I know a lot of things about her sensitivities, I know that she was born as an infant, with an aversion to eye contact, noises, voices, things like that, right. So the all those things that get in the way of being able to properly bond, right, and are being held close, even all those things are getting away, of properly bonding with other people. I understood her challenges. So I worked with her in a different way. I didn't personalize it. This is where the my philosophy ended up coming from is, is just my own experiences with her is I didn't personalize it, I understood like Oh, baby, you don't want people, all the ugly faces looking at you and your face, I understand. And so, so so it was just almost like turning her out and not allowing other people to judge her for these things. But then we work with the wrong and if she does have a version of eye contact, then we turn her away for a time when she starts to char stars, their friends turn away from time, let her regulate and bring her back slowly, little periods of time. Now you have to spend a long time doing this back out. And then in writing until she can stay longer and longer than she could stay with me, you know, and, and then when it came time for the noises and that kind of thing. When she got old enough, I gave her a way to verbalize a way to respond where she's like, I don't like that noise instead of the grab, squeeze. It screamed bloody murder, right? As she learned to I don't like that noise. She's still she's seven, she'll be 17 Oh my goodness, I think next week, or two weeks, whatever. She'll be 17. She's my youngest. She'll be 17. And I didn't find out until two years ago when I was writing a blog, that she still hates the sound of flushing toilets, that she will flush and run. Like she does. She's like, and she'll be fine. After before, right? And she still has these. And I know she has sensory sensitivities. But now she deals with them in an entirely different way Has she gone through her life being judged for those, they will create more anxiety for more lack of ability to function in ways that she could because this is and this is the thing, most of the time, it's not that bad. The kids, you know, adults, whatever can't get there is that there's a there's something, there's a gap between the ability and then and people can see that they there's the ability, like I know you have this ability. And so then they judge them for not being activated, you know, within like being able to use that ability without understanding that you have to create you have to build the bridge first. Right? And don't be upset because you have to build the bridge, just understand there's a gap so that you can help build the dang bridge. Right. Yeah, I



Katy Weber 38:47

mean, right. I, I think there's so many instances in which children are behaving in ways that are, you know, considered inappropriate by the adult, right. And so the adults their reaction is, what are you doing? Stop it, you know, what's wrong with you, you know, as opposed to trying to understand the what is happening, and it's just, you know, it's so upsetting to think about how that, you know, just gets beaten into kids over and over and over again, when they are just really trying to protect themselves, you know, like, what I deal with a lot of, or work with children and teenagers as well with eating, you know, and I often tell parents, like, you know, binge eating from children is a way that they're self soothing, right? And so it always comes from a way of helping themselves and like so you really need to rather than think like how this is a terrible behavior, and we need to stop it really trying to say like, they're taking care of themselves in the best way that they know how so let's just take a moment to be grateful for the fact that they are taking care of themselves. Right. And so like really trying to like come at it from a different point of view. And so I think, yeah, it's so important when we're I didn't even realize how hypersensitive I was how many sensory issues there are with this neuro divergence that I had just sort of never thought about? Until I thought, yeah, wait a minute, you're right. I can't brush my teeth and keep my eyes open at the same time or, you know, like, things like that where I was like, Yeah, you're right. There's all of these noises that really bother me or motherhood. I mean, newborn babies, like everything about having newborns was just like sensory overload and nightmare. I know, right? It's like, and I, you know, whenever I, whenever I talked to a mom with a young child, I just like, give her a hug, because I'm like, Oh, it was the worst. And I love being a mom. But it was just really, yeah, it's fascinating to me, all of the sensory issues that I had kind of never really acknowledged until looking back through this new lens.



Lafaya Mitchell 40:47

And you know, with the lufia way, that's that's like one of my one of the things that I'm trying so hard to bring out for everyone. That's why I didn't want to get pigeonholed in any one particular little area, I don't want all the rest, you know, sensitivity. assitivity hypersensitivity is hypersensitivity, it doesn't matter what they throw on it, what diagnoses you know, what the traits are, or whatever, if you have it, you have it, right. So then we don't dismiss those kids out there without the dang diagnosis, because that's that that's, that happens most often that bothers me the most are the kids that can especially our little girls, or females can function at that, what looks like that higher level, right? Because there are certain girls are different, like we desire to be, we desire to be liked, like we're innately made, to want to be close to nurture, right, that kind of thing. And so, so for the girls, most of time, things are so very hitting. So all the sensitivities are just kind of like,

down underneath, and they have to hide, right? Which leads to a lot more binge eating, and a lot more things like self harming behaviors, and you know, and things like that. But but it's what I want everybody to understand is there's some things that are like, are very similar crossover, the same ish, whatever we are dealing with hypersensitivity, and that sixth sense or that I always talked about, which is probably inaccurate, but I don't care. I'm where I'm talking about like that, that emotion soaking piece, that unintentional sponging of the feeling energies of other people. That one right there that's so widely, so usually missed, they oftentimes will get acting out behaviors from your hypersensitive person, because of the way they this just the way that they present to the hypersensitive person. So hypersensitive person is like drawing all of this negative energy from you, and you don't realize it even though it especially No, no, sorry, this question, say especially. This tends to be a hidden thing, when you're dealing with people who would fancy themselves to be calmer. So on the outside, they speak quietly, they speak calmly, they do all of that, but internally, they are the most anxious thing you can meet right? And so for hypersensitive people, then and this is why when you don't like people you don't like people by the way, I learned this about myself when I don't like I don't like you bring to me things that I don't want inside of me. So I don't want to be around. So, but then you'll get this dynamic of this emotion soaking piece that it disrupts the ability to respond in non anxious ways for your hypersensitive, sponging person, right. So that's such a big piece that it'll seriously look away. That's what I find myself primarily addressing is how to decrease that negative effect on the hypersensitive person. Now



Katy Weber 46:18

I, the more I learn about various neuro diversity is, the more I think about all of us kind of having this neuro type, and we're all kind of on the same side of the room, right? So I'm like, sometimes I'll read articles about autism. And I'm like, Yeah, I think I should really look into that. You know, and, you know, and I think like, so many of us have various like, symptoms of this neuro diversity and, you know, OCD or hypersensitivity, but like, we're all it's almost like we're randomly given diagnoses, like some of us are kind of given the ADHD diagnosis, and some of us are given autism. Asperger's is another one where it's like, I feel like it's being phased out because it's, you know, really just autism. But like, I sort of feel like, at the end of the day, it's almost pretty arbitrary. What we're diagnosed with, it's just a matter of like, we're all sort of have this neuro type, and we're all kind of on the same team. Speak, right. And it just has manifested itself in different ways based on our childhood and based on whatever traumas we've experienced. Exactly, no, and this is my thing. So when you is almost It almost sounds cringe, cringe worthy. If I were super stuck on words, like I used to be that superstack only a little bit stuck there. But when you say symptoms, that word is so frustrating, because now that automatically sets people's minds to think that there's some kind of dis order, right? Instead of just a write a different chord,

right? We're just, you know, just make different we function will be perfectly fine. If you exist, let us learn how to be the best us we could be and not expect for us to be you. Right? It's so frustrating. And that's why I'm super focused on I want for everybody out there to start to use the word traits. Yes, thank you. traits, traits. It keeps us from being so sick, right? This is not a you know, we're not we don't have diabetes, right. symptoms, you know, these are these are traits and and you're that's why I just I don't tell people Nope, never been formally diagnosed with I see myself in anything hypersensitive, OCD, yeah, check, ADHD Check. Check, right. PTSD check, right. And this is why I get so frustrated when I hear women who have sought an ADHD diagnosis with a medical professional. And they are told no, it's not ADHD, it's just depression and anxiety. And, you know, I think any medical professional who is not willing to see the causal relationship between a life undiagnosed and depression and anxiety, like depression and anxiety, those aren't, those are symptoms of an undiagnosed like, like those are not medical, you know, those aren't medical diagnoses on themselves like they. I don't know anywhere I'm tongue tied, but you know what i'm so you know what I'm saying? Like, it just frustrates me something else from the experiences, right? Yeah. And so the fact that somebody would say, it can't be ADHD, it's got to be you know, it's trauma, or it's depression, anxiety without seeing how fully connected all of this is of like, you know, the accumulation of an entire life of feeling like you, you know, like you were a square peg in a round hole and and all of that feelings that we've grown up with so I feel like what would you say to somebody who gets who feels like they? You know, so many of us were were like, I was worried when I went to the doctor to get my diagnosis. Because I felt like when I started looking into ADHD, I felt seen and understood for the first time in my life, you know, and I had been diagnosed with depression and anxiety, and PPD and PPA, and I've been on all sorts of different SSRIs and medications, like for my whole adult life, and never really felt like anything fit, you know, and I never felt like the medication worked because I but I also had that fear, where I was like, Well, if this is what I'm like, on medication, imagine how bad I'll be off the medication. And so I never wanted to go off of it. But, you know, I was so afraid that the doctor was going to say, no, this, isn't it, because I felt like this really was something I that, you know, I felt so validated by all of the literature and everything I had heard and seen. And I feel like, you know, and thankfully, it went really well for me, the minute you know, I walked in the room with all my paperwork and everything. And she was like, Yeah, don't worry, you had me at hello. There was no problem. But so many of us, I think are afraid of, you know, being being dismissed by our medical professionals. So like, what, and so as a result, I often will say, like you did, like, I think self diagnosis is the most important thing I don't think we need, like, I mean, unless you really want to, you know, unless you want to go for medication, or you feel like in some way, you will feel fundamentally validated by getting this diagnosis, I don't think it's necessary at all. To live a very successful and happy life. It's, it's really about understanding yourself. So I guess my question is, like, what do you what would you say to somebody who's really struggling with like, do I or don't die? And should I

get this diagnosis? And yeah, and



Lafaya Mitchell 51:54

I feel like it really is, is a personal, it's very personal thing, I really don't have anything against, per se, someone going out and seeking that, you know, the, the medical professionals opinion, but if you've done the research yourself, and you see yourself in, you know, falling within certain criteria, and you know that the only reason it doesn't show up for others is because you are able to mask it, well, then it's okay for you too. Even if you don't want to, like you're not the doctor, okay, you know, you know, if you don't need a formal diagnosis, then you can say to yourself, hey, yeah, I definitely have these traits. And I want to learn everything that I can to, to every coping skill that I can, so that I can deal with the traits that that actually plague me or bother me, right? And things like that are in there, quite honestly, I put it most simply, if there are things about something about you that you don't like, Okay, then that's worth changing, because you want to like you. Okay, that's it. And if you if you are, is it important for you to hear from medical professional, then, you know, go for it and do that, if you feel like there's something going on with you, and you don't get the right answer from a medical professional, then I just urge you don't get a second third opinion, because medical professionals aren't, they are experts, okay? in all areas, most of the time, it's just they have their one key area that they're an expert in. And maybe they might have a couple of things that they specialize in. But sometimes they are missing it in certain other areas, right. So then you find someone who, who you are referred by someone else who knows that they know ADHD will or for autism will, you know those kinds of things, or like for, like I said, For me, personally, if you can handle just, I recognize myself in this, I understand that I have traits, and I'm going to work on improving the things that I don't like within this space. Right. But then also celebrating things that you do like, because there are a lot of positive things about some of these disorders, right, too. So a lot of positive aspects, I think give you superpowers in certain areas. Like I'm super powered and and I'm very gifted at helping people feel first of all understood and validated because I understand their experience. So personally well, but they're also in helping to heal, you know, when you've been wounded because of how you've been treated out there. And including how you treat yourself by the way. And so but you know, so but that's my superpower and I wouldn't have it if I didn't have the channel.



Katy Weber 54:30

Yeah, I love that that and uh, yes, like, you are not the problem I feel like like that was the biggest shift for me right now as you know in all of this was myself talk just being like, when when it feels like something is too much. You are not the problem. You have to figure out what is the barrier to get you from point A to point B, which has shifted so much

in terms of just shifted my marriage, it shifted my power my parents, you know It's been it's been overwhelming. So now I'd like to ask my guests. What you if you could rename ADHD to something else that's less problematic and less medicalized or whatever, would you I know you use traits. I don't know if you love the term vast, but what would you would you have another name for it? If you could? Oh, 488 Oh, I like df eight, d f h. Okay, what does that stand for? It really focused humans. It's right. It's like, that's just the side of the room we're on, right?



Lafaya Mitchell 55:46

And if you can figure out, you know what works best for us, right? To get like to get the best thing you're in a good state. Like for my daughter, she can't remember to close her windows in the daytime. So what do we do? beginner so the best her she's not gonna remember that on our own. I'm gonna teach you to do what mommy does calendar, everything, make sure the alarm goes off, and it goes off three or four times. Then all sudden, by yourself.



56:21

Right? Yeah.



Katy Weber 56:23

Yeah, that's another thing I love talking about too, which is like how hard we work to come up with accommodations for ourselves to in those, you know, ways in which I have. I have 50 reminders that go off all day long that are some of them are so basic, like I have to literally be reminded to feed my children. Because if I don't if I'm not reminded, if I don't have an alert, I will forget they exist. But at least I'm I'm you know, at least I've found the structure that works for me to feed the poor kids. I mean, obviously, they'll probably come to me eventually. But like, you know, I love thinking about all of the ways in which we kind of do build these structures for ourselves to do well. So So let's talk about how people can find you and how they can work with you and support you and what kind of services you offer for somebody who's listening. And they say, oh, my goodness, I need to work with Sophia. Well, how can they reach out to you? And what do you what do you do? How do you work with people? Oh, man. Okay, so



Lafaya Mitchell 57:27

I have a variety of things that I'm doing right now I'm actually developing a curriculum



who I didn't know that's what I was doing at first until I started and then it turned into that. But I basically have taken information from my three published books. And I've now created a 12 week curriculum from that for parents but also have a general curriculum too. Because as I've been moving along, like this is just not this is not just for parents, people need to know these things to help themselves out, you know, to work for on the job stuff and you know, all that so I have it in general it is I call it the pet program. The parent program is called a pet program. And the the parents and parent parents and actually my keep pet for my general and just call it people empowering people I like pet is right. And so maybe put an extra e in there so we can be peeps. Like Craig So anyway, um, but yeah, so right now like right in the middle of kind of building on that curriculum McKenna's I'm talking about its most excellent. I also have a hybrid q&a, what I call q&a will have fairway little session for people who come in, ask questions live, I love answer questions live, I love for people to try to stump me come in with your most difficult situations. It's my favorites. And it's live q&a, live fairway, also on my YouTube channel, lots of parenting education, but I'm gonna broaden it out. I'm gonna open it up. Now, to be more general. And you can pull from that parenting piece, a lot of good information for yourself and others. It's not just for children, it's relationships in general. I call it little fairways and advanced relational philosophy. So even though my focus has been with parents, it really and everybody reads my books, they know this already. They're like, this is not just for you know, it's not just for parents. This is for life in general. This helped me with my marriage. This helped me at work. This helped me here, right. And I'm like, I know, but you know, that's like my, my, my niche right now. So that's the that's what I say. Right? But it's for everything. So I have my YouTube channel, which helps a lot to have a sensitivity understanding not just what it is, but how you know how to effectively tangible weight, force, the force that formula for how to work through and get to a better space like build the bridges that you want to that behavior that you're looking for. Right? And so I have that and you can find everything it is that I do on the fairway calm, everything failing the fairway comm my website will take you to everything else my Facebook communities. I'm doing so many different things right now for to spread the word that is insane. So will fairway calm?



Katy Weber 1:00:11

I love it. Yeah, there's there is a wealth of information on your website too. So yeah, I will put links to all of that but that's great.