**Episode #22**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Cabrera Lab Podcast. I'm good.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:09] You ready for today?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:10] I think so.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:11] I want to read you something, something we've been talking about a little bit, and I think would be interesting to our audience. It's something I find interesting. And I want talk about it, the two of us, from our different perspectives.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:25] Something you wrote?

**Speaker 2** [00:00:27] This is an article from somewhere called Very Well Mine. And here's where it starts. I'm just gonna read you a short excerpt and then I wanna talk about it. It starts with, we all wear masks. Every day we enter into situations that require us to hide certain parts of ourselves, our pain, our anxiety, or our self-doubt. Many of us are asked to code switch or adapt to the common denominator. It's a reality of civilized life that is pretty tricky to escape. But for neurodivergent people, The phenomenon of wearing a mask is more than just a periodic situational adaptation. It can feel like a survival tactic that's almost constantly necessary. So I wanna talk about this idea of masking and I wanna about specifically what it is, why we do it, and then also how increasing your self-awareness could maybe help you cope. uh in different ways and also be aware of when you're masking and maybe when you're not and things like that. That's my broad base for today.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:38] Yikes. That's kind of uncomfortable.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:42] Oh is it?

**Speaker 3** [00:01:45] I mean, I'm perfectly happy to talk about it, but it's...

**Speaker 2** [00:01:52] I'm not trying to make you.

**Speaker 3** [00:01:53] You know, masking is like, first of all, masking is like pretty new to me as a word. Obviously, I've been masking like my whole life because for much of which I didn't know it was even a thing. I just thought it was like something everybody had to do at the level that I was doing it. I think it is something that all humans have to do. So so if you think about it like a. Venn diagram, all humans have to mask some part of themselves, right, because just to deal with society, you have to like, not be the full blown monkey that you are. And then the more rigid society gets, the more you have to mask, right? Because you're, you know, limited to so I think it's something that all people can understand, you know. It's like you're sitting at this fine restaurant, right? And it's all pointy-toity and stuff, and you just wanna pick up the meat and eat it with your hand.

**Speaker 2** [00:03:01] turkey-like, like, everything.

**Speaker 3** [00:03:02] Yeah, exactly. Like, I think all of us have that in us. So that's a form of masking, right? Like, in the Venn diagram, that is all humans. We're all doing stuff like that. When we go to work, we don't, you know, cry and carry on. We try not to, you know. That's a forms of masking. So, I mean, I think everybody knows what masking is. The question is, are there certain populations that because they're out of alignment or out of sync with the norm, that they just have to do a lot more of it, right? And for neurodivergent people in a neurotypical society, a normal, neuro-normal society, it just means that you have to a lot of it. And oftentimes you don't even know what you're supposed to be masking. And I mean, that's the hardest part is like not knowing what, Because if you think about the metaphor as a mask like so you So say you have this mask and it's like half your face, one of those like, one of the- The Phantom of the Opera mask. Phantom of The Opera mask, right? And you're like, well, which part of my face do I, am I supposed to cover up? Right, is it this side that's offensive or is it because to me, they both look the same. So, you know, you don't even know which part of your face you're needing to coverup and you're not even sure what the mask is supposed to look like. So you're not even sure what to cover it up with so you're like, oh I'll use this

**Speaker 2** [00:04:33] Well, yeah, I think.

**Speaker 3** [00:04:35] Turkey feather. I mean, you're like, is this it? Or whatever.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:40] And people are like, what is that?

**Speaker 2** [00:04:42] Well, I guess the thing that's interesting to me is the distinction of, it seems like for non-neurodivergent, for neurotypical people, it's a situational choice that, even though it's masking, comes fairly easily and is a conscious choice out of necessity that you understand, right? But for neurodivergent people it sounds like masking actually becomes like they said, a survival tactic that's constant. And what you were just saying is, it's not always clear how to mask or what to mask, but that you know you need to be masking constantly because there's this mismatch, right, between how you exist and how people, neurotypical people could perceive you, I guess.

**Speaker 3** [00:05:30] Yeah, for sure.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:32] But I don't know, I just...

**Speaker 3** [00:05:33] But it's sort of, I mean, this might be a literal case of me masking so much that I even mask when I'm talking about masking. But I just have this sort of deep need not to, not to not include everybody, you know? And to not to include, right? Double negative. It's like, we don't want to use masking as a way to say. we're different and you're the other. No. Right, like you neurotypical people, you don't understand, you know, blah, blah blah, we're, like, I think every human understands what it's like to have to hide a part of yourself in a given situation. Yes. What we're talking about is really the quality and the quantity of the masking that has to take place. And the confusion, the utter confusion that people have around what are the rules, you know, like so many social rules are so, they seem so logical to people, to like what I perceive as neuro-normal, typical people, but they're just very confusing to people that are not part of that club. You know, they're just like... I don't understand a bunch of them. I mean, as you get older, you learn to understand them, you know, but it takes a long time because they're just totally in opposition to your set of logics.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:12] Okay, so how do you learn? You just said you learn about them over time. So you're saying as you get older, you start to recognize them in yourself?

**Speaker 3** [00:07:22] Well, some of us do. I mean, some of us just continue banging our head against the neurotypical society wall and like bleeding and, but once you build enough scar tissue on your head and you bleed enough, you go, this isn't fun. Let's try, let's try learning and let's try to figure out what's going to please the And again, like I don't want to say neurotypical people because it's like more a neurotypical society because neurotypal people are wonderful. You're neurotypic and I love you. You know, and you made my life immeasurably better.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:59] And you have made mine a measure.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:00] Right, so it's more like the sociological edifice of the norm.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:08] Why don't you just call it the norm or the social norm.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:11] Yeah, it's like you have to go up against the social norm that is illogical to you, but is logical to the norm.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:20] because they're part of the norm.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:21] I mean, it's not so different from the metaphor that you've used before, which is like, yeah, school, we all just want to, the headmaster says, I want to make everything equitable and fair, so we're going to ask everybody to climb the same tree. And it's a bunch of monkeys and a fish. I'm a monkey. And so, you know, the monkeys are like, great, that sounds great. That's fair. everybody gets in the month and the fish is like tree you know like air what

**Speaker 2** [00:08:49] And then the fish is left behind.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:50] Yeah, the fish is literally suffocating as you're telling him how equitable this environment is. He's like, I can't breathe. That's terrible.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:59] I mean it's appropriate to them, I mean the metaphor is appropriate but it's really really sad.

**Speaker 3** [00:09:03] It's a little, it's a little sad. And then you're like, come on fish. What's wrong with you? Climb, fish, climb. There must be something wrong with you. And you're like, I don't know. And then, and then later in that fish's life by some hook or crack, this fish learns to like suck out of enough puddles to survive. And later the fish finds like, Oh, there's this thing called the Mm-hmm and people live there and there's other fish like me and that's like a big, that's a big moment for that fish where they're like, there's a whole place where all the air is water. That's cool. Cause I'm used to, I'm really good at breathing water and like moving in water. And all the monkeys are like, this is hard. I can't breathe, you know, and, and uh, I don't, I dunno how to deal with water in. In a weird sort of way, society has become a lot more like water, which is why we have such a huge incidence. I think people that are feeling more neurodivergent, legitimately so, I mean, they might not have a diagnosis of some neurodvergence, but they are feeling legitimately like they're neurodiversion because society is becoming more like water in its fast pace and chaos and, you know, and that's something that that fast paced chaos with signal coming from everywhere and never know when what's up and what's that that that's that is the neurodivergent mind. So we're just like, Oh, I'm comfortable in this.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:42] So when you say what you're saying what it feels like to be neurodivergent and you're making the analogy to the overwhelm of information coming in for people all people say more about what you how you would characterize the feeling the feelings that you're

**Speaker 3** [00:10:58] Well, think about it like we went we took the family bowling the other day, right and at the end of bowling I was like I Was like this, you know, because bowling is a very interesting. I love bowling and it's fun, but a bowling alley is a lot of people Making a lot a noise first of all just regular people noise But then there's all the pins at all random different times and you hear every single one of those pins. Yeah going down And then the ball, boom. Yeah. And especially when people are like hocking the ball on the ground. Little kids are like dropping it on the gram and it's like doosh. And then hitting of the ball to the pins and then the swiper thing and the golly and the ball return it. And it's just a lot of stimulus. A lot of very interesting sounds. And if you have kind of misophony or soundy kind of issues, then. It's a lot of sounds. Well, there's just a lot a lights. A lot of light, and then our son is whistling, and... Constantly. Constantly, and so... We love ourselves. It's just like, yeah, they had like a disco ball, and like, it's just lot of stimulus, right? Yeah. And if you have a brain that isn't filtering any of that stimulus, and is actually exacerbating some of that stimulus in cases of misophonia or something like that. meaning you're hearing sounds differentially or you're seeing light differentially than than the norm. By the end of that experience, you feel like you're you're like a frazzled cat, right. And, and I think, so take that metaphor of a normal environment that normal people don't really have an issue with. Well, I think the work environment of today, the political environment of Today, the social environment of for a lot of neuro normal or neuro typical people is starting to feel like that. I think that's it's like there's umpteen different messages. And even though they have executive function, even though they had filters, there's so much coming in, that even their filters are being overwhelmed. And so you're getting a huge number of people who are not They're not diagnosably neurodivergent, but they're feeling neurodiversion. And I honor that. I think we should be like, yeah, this is, come on in. It's a big tent.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:28] Well, yeah, I mean, there's a couple of things that I would say about that. Let me say, so the first thing is the bowling alley analogy. It's, it's, its frazzling for me, but it's frazzly for me in the context of I can focus on the parts of it that I need to focus on, but eventually over time, it it's like it's seeping in, in ambient noise, right? But like I have the ability to just focus on the pins or focus on the light or focus. Eventually, over time, it starts to be overwhelming.

**Speaker 3** [00:13:59] There's a lot of information in the, I mean the sources of information have just multiplied and multiplied and multiplied, sources of perspective have multiplied, we're getting just more signal everywhere.

**Speaker 2** [00:14:12] Oh, yeah. And the other thing I was going to say, and also there's a norm that's happened over our lifetime in the last two decades, and it's been going up, which is you are expected to handle more and more and take more and with no corollary space along with it. So it's like, we're expected to be on our phone and available by email or by phone 24 hours a day, now that we have cell phones. Well, when we were young. You walk down the street, nobody could call you. You were present in that moment. You're walking down the streets, and you could hear the birds and the trees, and you don't hear the trees. You see the trees? Right? But now, we're at this place where not only are we all experiencing the same pain, but it's also becoming normative that we're all suffering that way.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:01] Yeah, I mean, in a way, you could say that society has become much more almost interdisciplinary in its expectations of people, and jobs have become more interdisciplinary in their expectations of people. So now, it's totally normal to be like, oh yeah, you need to handle 20 more things than you used to handle in your job, and there's less resources to do it with. Yes. And if you take, for example, I mean, it's always dangerous to sweeping generalizations in these ways. But you know, take, take women, women used to be, you know you know this, they used to more in the household taking care of those kinds of things. Well, then women's lib, all that stuff. Well, you didn't get like, oh, let's exchange these duties for these ones. You got, oh let's do all those. And you get to have all these two. Yeah. Right. So it's not like you got less or different. No. You just got more. Well, there's... And less time.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:02] Yes, and there's a book on it called The Second Shift, which is written in the 70s or 80s, which is literally, you didn't gain, you actually now have two jobs. You have the job that's your job, and then you have all the other stuff that's called the second shift that you do from 6 p.m. till midnight.

**Speaker 3** [00:16:20] And again, that's not always the reality, but I mean, it is, you can notice that for sure for a lot of folks. And so if that's what you're experiencing, then that's going to make you feel a lot of these, these kind of what neurodivergent people are used to feeling all the time. Yes. a lot of the solutions end up being very similar. Ironically, which means in a kind of a strange twist of fate, neurodivergent people have the answers to a bunch of things that neurotypical people need to deal with a society that's going completely berserker.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:58] Right. But I guess for me, I think it's interesting to think about what we can offer to each other. So if I understand you and the places where you need things, then I can leverage my neurotypicality to focus or do this or do that or structure stuff a certain way, which facilitates you being who you are in this space we call society.

**Speaker 4** [00:17:25] Absolutely.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:26] And then you also can push me and help me with the things that I'm dealing with that are similar to what you feel. So it's nice that there's this common, there's now a place for a common conversation, right?

**Speaker 3** [00:17:39] Not just a common conversation, but a bigger impact, right? What we're seeing is that when we get true neurodiversity on teams, which includes – that doesn't mean create a team that is entirely neurodiverse. It means create diversity across the team, which means you have neurotypical, you have neurodiverse of all different kinds. you have true diversity of thought and thought style and kind of brain chemistry on the team, you actually have much more innovation, much more impact, all kinds of things. And that's because of the diversity. And by the way, if we think that's new, it's not. That's as old as evolution.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:24] the benefits of diversity.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:27] Yeah, like the goal of evolution is biodiversity. That's right. In many ways you could have, Darwin named his book Origin of Species. He was talking about the origin, how a group, a species of organisms originates. Yeah. Right? So he was talking about the, he wasn't talking about the beginning of life. He was taking about how a group, species of things originates in the tree of life He could have equally called that on biodiversity. Yes. He could've said, how do things get so diverse? And nature is bringing about diversity because diversity is more stable. Well, it creates resilience. It creates resilience in systems, absolutely. So we want diversity. It seems crazy to me, people are like, oh my God, diversity works. So you're like. Yeah, diversity works, real, genuine, authentic diversity, especially diversity of thought and brain chemistry and like approach and not superficial diversity, but real diversity, like people that are really actually different, they're coming from totally different angles. Yeah. That kind of diversity is going to always lead to better stuff. That's what's remarkable about the United States and being a melting pot, is that we have this tremendous rich diversity and somehow we find a way to have it be a melting pot of remarkable diversity.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:07] Yeah, I think that's interesting. I think also when we talk a lot with, you know, different people we work with around diversity, there's been a bit of a shift I've seen when we're talking to, I don't know, corporate execs who have noticed that there is a need for that intellectual diversity. I don' t know if you want to call it like thought style, nerd, you know, like actual neurodiversity and I can't remember where it was. I read something about, oh my gosh, the more that 40, I think it was 40% of neurodiverse people are unemployed. But when you have teams that are neurodiverse, like made up of people who are neurotypical neurodiverses, you increase your production by like 30%. I mean, so think about those two numbers together. I mean that's.

**Speaker 3** [00:21:00] And that 40%, I think a lot of people think, they don't think about the dynamics of that 40%. They think 40% of neurodiversity ND people are unemployed. that number, I think a lot of people will reflect on the people, the neurodiversity people, but that number should reflect on the interaction between those people and the environment. Yes. We are not creating environments that are friendly to these folks. And believe me, I know, like I'm in academia, it's like not a friendly place for neurodiverse people. and very few places are very friendly to neurodiverse people. Yeah, I do think that's why masking is so, so critically important. And there's so many different kinds of masking that we do just to like

**Speaker 2** [00:21:57] Just to be able to sit at a table and have...

**Speaker 3** [00:21:59] Just to sit at a table and just to like not piss everybody off, you know, because it's hard to even talk about this stuff because you know in order to talk about it, it sounds like you're ripping on other people. But generally speaking, like people are sensitive, yes, you know, and neurodiverse people sometimes lack, there's not a huge filter between like what's going on up here and this. and you don't really... It's not everything's personal like there's just sort of factual things that just seem incredibly factual and they're not personal and there's There's no way that you could imagine them being taken personally and yet somehow they're taken personally

**Speaker 2** [00:22:43] Yeah, I mean, I think one way to think about it is...

**Speaker 3** [00:22:45] So there's a lot of landmines in every meeting if you can't say like, the sky is blue. And people are like, I can't believe you said that. And that's what we experienced. We're like, all I said that the sky was blue.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:57] Yeah, but part of that is that because I'm not nerdiverse, but I can speak to sort of what I know experientially.

**Speaker 3** [00:23:05] You're definitely not.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:06] No, I know.

**Speaker 3** [00:23:06] You took the, the, uh.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:09] The first child for neurodegenerative.

**Speaker 3** [00:23:10] all the tests and you got like the lowest scores I've ever seen.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:16] Well, it gave you a nice contrast.

**Speaker 3** [00:23:18] I know, it's awesome.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:20] I think what's interesting is what a lot of people may not realize is that a lot of different types of neurodiversity and neurodiverse people, they literally are taking a lot in, but they're also very observant and perceptive and also kind of literal in the interpretation of reality.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:40] Literality is definitely one of them.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:42] So if a nerd-averse person says to you, I don't like that tie, not that anybody said that, but I'm just using the example, it's literally that maybe there's black and white stripes that are bothering your eyes, and you just literally are just saying, I don't that tie. It's not, you suck because you bought that tie

**Speaker 3** [00:24:01] Yeah, no.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:02] It's like, I just, I actually don't like that tie.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:04] Yeah, that tie is ugly.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:06] No, not the tie's ugly. I don't like that tie, which is totally.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:10] Or that tie is ugly.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:12] Well, okay, so it could be that Ty's out because that's also not personal, but I'm just saying, you know.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:15] It's personal to the tie, like the tie if the tie got upset, I would understand that because you called it ugly, because I just called it ugly. You don't like it. And I don't like you tie. Yeah, but the time I would understand that if the time was like, wait a minute, you can't say that.

**Speaker 5** [00:24:33] F you, I like myself.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:37] Like, you're not the tie.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:39] Yeah, again.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:39] So I don't know why you would get upset about that.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:41] Well, I think I don't know.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:43] I don't know why you'd be wearing a tie in the first place. Well, that's a whole nother issue.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:47] That's a whole nother.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:48] I like ties. Some ties are cool. I'm totally fine with ties. That was just a joke.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:55] That's another example.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:56] Another filter problem.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:58] All of us just eased our filters up a little bit. Would we actually be more honest with each other?

**Speaker 3** [00:25:03] Yeah, that'd be cool.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:04] Would communication be far more meaningful, you know, if we weren't?

**Speaker 3** [00:25:08] Well, I think one of the things we could do is make words a little less important and actions far more important. Yeah. You know, because I can think crazy things. I can that there's a squirrel riding a bicycle. That doesn't mean that there is an actual squirrel riding the bicycle. I just said those things. Yeah, we can think and say all kinds of things that aren't meaningful in any, in any practical or behavioral sense, actionary sense, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:25:47] Like they're not loaded with intention or.

**Speaker 3** [00:25:48] And when you're short on dopamine, a lot of times you say things just for the entertainment of saying things, like for the entertainments of imagining them. Because you have this rich imagination and you can imagine this crazy thing or you just think things. You just think things and then you say them. Yeah, I will say and I think this is probably one of the most misunderstood parts of Maybe I shouldn't say most, but for me, in my opinion, one of the most misunderstood parts of neurodivergence is that we're somehow not interested in being social. Right. We're not great at big social things or social things, per se. We don't know the rules. They don't make a lot of sense, that kind of stuff. But we actually desperately want a team. We desperately want connection. We want to be a part of things, and we don't want to hurt people's feelings, you know, by saying something like, you now, something that's something that to us feels like just a logical statement, but maybe to someone else feels like an insult or that you're masking, a lot of masking is is to avoid it's not masking isn't masking. A lot of asking is us trying to avoid hurting or insulting or being perceived as mean to other people. So it's actually an act of like, hey, I don't actually want to have this effect. And if I'm having this fact, I will yes mask in order to s- stop having this effect because I really don't want to have this effect, but yet everywhere we go, we have this affect and we get fired and you know, I mean, I've been fired from so many jobs. You can't imagine why, because I'm not competent. No, I'm one of the more competent people. I'm very good at things. I am very competent, but I keep getting fired from jobs, you know, why is that? Oh, because navigating the social thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:03] To what degree do you think your own, the work you've done to develop self-awareness has helped you navigate things a little bit better for yourself, knowing the challenges that you've been facing over your life. Do you think that metacognition, self-witness has been a key to you? For example, you now exist in a world successfully.

**Speaker 3** [00:28:31] I think without metacognition, I mean, you said to what degree. to the most degree, to 100% degree, I can nearly assure you that if I didn't find metacognition and DSRP, I would be dead or in jail.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:57] interesting because of your inability to control your impulses or your

**Speaker 3** [00:29:02] No, I'd probably be in jail for some weird like misunderstanding, you know, where I just was like, no, this isn't true. I'm being, you know, like that wasn't what I was. And then they're like, and then all of a sudden you're like in jail somehow.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:18] some bad, some bad series of misunderstandings in events.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:21] Yeah, like, not like hurting anyone, but like, just some bad series of like not knowing how to

**Speaker 2** [00:29:31] Like you butt up with a system.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:34] and you don't know how to deal with it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Not hurting another person. Butting up against some system, and then the system just chewing you up. Yeah. That's how it happens. The system chews you up

**Speaker 2** [00:29:47] because you don't know how to navigate the system because the system is not built for you.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:50] The system is illogical for me.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:53] Yeah, it doesn't work. You're the fish, trying to climb a tree, and somehow along the way...

**Speaker 3** [00:29:59] Right, so like if I brought like a little bit like a bowl of water where I could breathe into it up the tree and they're like, no water in this tree and you're like but I needed to live and they're, like, No, you're cheating. You're now you have to go to jail. You go to monkey jail.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:16] as a fish.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:16] As a fish.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:17] it's not good. Then you die because you're in monkey jail and you're a fish.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:22] Exactly.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:22] That's terrible.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:24] All right. No bowl of water for you.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:26] one thing I would really want you to talk to is what advice would you give to people in terms of developing the kind of skill sets or awareness that have helped you? Like, what would you say to somebody who said, hey, I am you?

**Speaker 3** [00:30:45] young person?

**Speaker 2** [00:30:45] Yeah, I'm you ten years ago. Well, you're older, so I'm you 20 years ago

**Speaker 1** [00:30:51] I'm you, I'll have this years ago.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:54] I'm you.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:55] And I'm 50.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:58] You know, somebody who's, you know, trying to navigate it.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:01] Well, I mean, when you're first starting out, the most easiest thing, the most important thing is just the distinction between difference and disability, right? I mean. You just have to see yourself regardless. I mean regardless of what it is, you've got to see yourself as a unique fingerprint that is, that has a place in this world and that can, that can. bring something good to this world. you got to see that. And that doesn't mean that it's not going to be challenging. It doesn't mean that. It's not gonna be difficult. That doesn't mean that there's, you know, you got dealt a hand, which isn't, which is in a straight flush. You're gonna have to take your hand of one ace, a six, a five, a three, and you know. A 10. A 10, and your gonna have to live your life with that hand. So you're gonna to have to turn that hand into a different hand, and then utilize the hand the best you have with, you know, bluffing and all kinds of, whatever. I'm just using a poker metaphor now. That's your hand, and it's a unique. hand, and there's a gift in that hand. And if you can find the gift in that hand, you can play that hand and win for you, for your and find your place and help the world be a better place and contribute. And because because you have this unique thing, and this unique brain, and it works weird and different. And it's your job. I say this all the time. Um. You know, you're like this monkey, and now we're mixing metaphors because you're no longer a fish. But you're this monkey and this primate, and you're also Jane Goodall.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:10] Yes, we've talked about this.

**Speaker 3** [00:33:11] and you're both. You have to be the monkey and you got to be Jane Goodall and you've got to become this incredibly wonderful observer of your monkey and learn about that monkey and understand that monkey and if you do that you will gain self-awareness and everything else comes from that. Everything else comes You will find new ways to engage with social situations without having to mask as much from self-awareness. You will you will find new ways of having deep and loving relationships without having the mask as much. You'll find a way to have a steady job without having to feel like you're in a cage.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:04] Well, and to see a contribution that you're making.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:06] Yeah, you will be able to find your unique way of contributing and be seen without being ignored. So it all starts with that, that if you see it as a disability, a non-ability, you're just looking at the glass as half empty. Right. If you see it as a difference, then I think you're looking at the glass as... both as just a glass that has water in it and also doesn't have water in that. And that's great.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:45] Well, I think a lot of it is. taking what your perceived weaknesses or differences and turning them into your gifts, your strengths, your unique contribution, you know, and seeing the value that you can add in whatever situation.

**Speaker 3** [00:35:02] So I think that's the first thing. I think the second thing is, and I'm sure like, you know, I don't know, this is my own, my own path is different from everybody else's path. So I don' know, you take whatever path you wanna take, but it's an important idea to understand that nobody's coming. It's a little harsh, but... I know, it's harsh, but nobody's coming. And if you take the approach that nobody's coming and somebody comes, then that's just a bonus, right? If you take that approach that I'm gonna rescue myself out of this terrible situation in the mountains and a helicopter shows up, that's not gonna screw things up for you. That's gonna be like, oh, great. I was on my way out and now I can jump in this helicopter and go. Yeah, yeah. But if you the idea that I'm just going to stay here until the helicopter comes. You're just going to sit still. You might just sit there for a long time and, you know, freeze to death or something. So I just think that you've got to, so to me that's along the lines of what I call BYOC, it's like BYOB, but it's BYOC. Meaning? BYOC is be your own coach.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:27] Yes, I like that.

**Speaker 3** [00:36:28] be your own coach. And that doesn't mean don't look for coaches and mentors and all that, but if nobody's coming, that's not a reason not to be your coach. Yeah. And that relates to the idea of being Jane Goodall is like, if you're a student of your own monkeydom, then you're gonna be a great coach to yourself and you're going to figure out ways, you're got to figure out many, many little productivity life hacks. And I mean, I've been collecting life hacks. I didn't call them life hacks until recently, but I've collecting what I call models. Yeah. Little models that I use for everything for my whole life. I love models because the models help me be productive. I mean I got models for my email. I got model for my- Tooth brushing. Toothbrushing. I've got models. I got a models for everything because I can't function without the little model that helps me understand it. So. Be your own coach just means come up with your own models that you need, that are designed just for you, just perfectly for you. Because that one that the store doesn't work.

**Speaker 2** [00:37:36] Right, so whatever, what works is what works.

**Speaker 3** [00:37:38] What works is what works. And so you build your models. And that's why I created DSRP in many ways was to understand how to create models. And DSRP is like a model engine. You can just create as many models in whatever way you want to make them that are custom fit to you. And you can change them and evolve them on the fly. And you could make a model that serves you now in this moment for this thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:06] helps you navigate something.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:07] helps you navigate that and then you know some of the models you'll keep some of them models you are one-time use Some of them you keep for years. Yeah, I think those are the main things difference not disability

**Speaker 5** [00:38:20] Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:22] the Jane Goodall to your own monkey. and be your own coach. You know, nobody's coming. And again, that doesn't mean that there aren't people out there that can help you and that will help you. There's wonderful people out there, mentors and all kinds of other things, but don't count on that. Count on you. And if you help yourself, usually there's gonna be people around to help you, but if you're just waiting for somebody to help, that's rough, it might be a while.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:55] Yeah, I also think, I think...

**Speaker 3** [00:38:57] I'm saying that from experience, not from like, judging. I'm saying, I've waited a long time for somebody to help. And you know, like, they often don't, it's not because they don't. It's not, because people are mean or whatever, you know, they just don't exactly, they're not in your situation. So they don't know what to do. They don't even

**Speaker 2** [00:39:23] Maybe I might have been real as you did, though.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:24] They don't even realize you need help. Right. And even if they did, they wouldn't know how to help you because your situation is unique.

**Speaker 2** [00:39:31] Yeah, but in a nice way, your three things all tie together. And the Be Your Own Coach is a way to facilitate you seeing your differences, not as a disability, but as a difference in maybe a unique strength or contribution, and also allows you to be self-reliant, but also learn how to be other reliant in different types of situations. So I think, in a Nice way, the BYOC sort of encapsulates Thanks for watching! all of it.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:02] Yeah, like a simple example, just to make it practical, a simple example of that is like, for example, if you're ADHD, I'm ADHD, and, you know, we have high, we have attentional lack of agency and attentional things, right? Which means we don't always have the choice, the agency of what we're paying attention to, but we're really actually very good at hyper attention, or hypo, not enough attention. We do both of those things quite well. Well, so if you learn what leads to hyper-attention, hyper-focus, and you learn which things are very difficult to focus on, you can actually utilize your hyper-focused abilities to find a way to become hyper- focused on the things that you're not very good at focusing on.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:55] Oh, I like that.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:56] you might not be good at attending to this thing, to brushing your teeth, let's say. But you're really good at hyper-focusing on something. You're really at making one thing the thing for a long time, like DSRP. Like I've made, doing the science of DSRP, that was my singular focus for a lot of time, right? I can use some of those skills to build the system that I need to be focused on tooth brushing.

**Speaker 2** [00:41:31] which is a system that you need in place.

**Speaker 3** [00:41:33] Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So you're taking your strength and using it to kind of like overcome a weakness.

**Speaker 2** [00:41:41] Yes, you're leveraging that which is unique about yourself to deal with something that you need to deal.

**Speaker 3** [00:41:47] But that's not going to happen if you don't Jane Goodall your monkey, right? You got to understand the monkey that is this monkey mind that is you. You got understand it. And that means awareness. Yeah. You got a Jane Good all that shit.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:00] I was just thinking that we should make a t-shirt about Jane Goodall and her monkey. She's a hero.

**Speaker 3** [00:42:06] She is a hero. She's amazing. I watched her, we watched her one time sign books at a convention and she was not young. No, that was like 10 years ago. I don't know how old she was but she was like getting up there at age and there were thousands of people and they wanted their books signed and we walked down and there was a line out the building.

**Speaker 4** [00:42:28] I remember.

**Speaker 3** [00:42:29] Remember this? And we went to dinner, we went dancing, we did all the like, came back in at 1230 at night. Oh, I think it was. And there was, there was still probably a line of like 50 people. Yeah. And I said, What is going on? She's up at the front signing books. And they said to her manager, What's going on. And she said, she won't leave until she signs every single person.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:52] You remember it was a, I remember and it struck us because it was the book she wrote for children. And so we got at the back of the line and we have the copy that was signed for our kids.

**Speaker 1** [00:43:02] She's amazing. Yeah, she was. Yeah. She is an amazing person.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:09] Alright, my love, I think it might be time to rest.

**Speaker 1** [00:43:12] Is that it? Wow, that was so short.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:14] It wasn't actually. Well, I don't know. Maybe your neurodivergent brain felt it.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:18] We don't have sometimes sense of time, so that felt like five minutes.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:23] It didn't feel...

**Speaker 3** [00:43:23] Mostly probably because it was intimidating.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:25] It was? I'm sorry. You don't have to be sorry.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:28] I don't have to see like that. That's a good example of it. Yeah, something that's intimidating just is

**Speaker 2** [00:43:34] Yes, but as a neurotypical person, this is going to be fun on film. It's not my intention for you to feel intimidated or uncomfortable. Right. I don't want you to be intimidated, which is me putting my perspective on you.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:45] Yeah, exactly. But that's a great example. Like you're like, you're sorry. Why would you be sorry that I'm intimidated? Like that makes no sense to me.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:53] Right, but to me it makes total sense.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:54] Exactly. But I mean, that's the point is like, it takes all kinds. But if you're just aware that to some people When I hear you're sorry that I'm intimidated, I'm like, huh, why? And then I'm, like, I just don't even know what to say. Well, but you just said it. Yeah, I'm just made a bunch of noises.

**Speaker 2** [00:44:21] Well, but you also said, no, but at the very, yes. But you also say, oh, I don't know why you're sorry, which is an interesting thing. So that's what I'm saying is those kinds of conversations can happen all over the place where you say that and I say, Oh, well, to me, I don't want to make you, I Don't want to feel like I've made you, I don' want you to be intimidated. But to you, it's just, you are intimidated, right? So it's, it just talking through the difference, I guess, is what I think.

**Speaker 3** [00:44:49] since unsafe.

**Speaker 2** [00:44:51] What's unsafe?

**Speaker 3** [00:44:53] I don't know if it's intimidated per se, it's just an unsafe place to talk about something that you're masking for good reason. When you talk about things that you've spent your life masking, there's a reason you've been masking them. I see. It's because most of the time, it doesn't end well.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:12] Yes, it's like I'm poking a hole through your mask.

**Speaker 3** [00:45:15] Yeah, it just doesn't end well when you share with people what you really think and what you really feel, or that you don't feel something that they think you should feel, or that don't think something that you think you think should think, or whatever. Or that you do not think at all like them. You think very differently than them.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:34] Yes, but I think we should be working towards a space where I can be NT and you can be ND and we can still speak to each other in a way that is honoring both of us.

**Speaker 3** [00:45:47] Not only that, I think NT and ND people can heal each other.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:50] Absolutely.

**Speaker 3** [00:45:51] You know, like we have the secret sauce of each other is like kryptonite. You know? Because we're cool. You are? Andy, people are cool.

**Speaker 2** [00:46:00] Yes, you are.

**Speaker 3** [00:46:01] We're creative, we're like wild and crazy, and we do great things, you know, and like we're fun. We're really fun.

**Speaker 2** [00:46:11] Lots of random bike rides.

**Speaker 3** [00:46:14] neurotypical people are not comforting when they want to be and they're like grounding and and like they can get from point A to point B without efficiently and you know like get shit done and

**Speaker 2** [00:46:31] All right. Well, okay. So with that, we're going to wrap. Like, subscribe, comment. We love to hear what you think. Until next time, we'll see you again.

**Speaker 1** [00:46:42] Buh-bye.