

Diversity in Neurodiversity

**Help for Underrepresented Folks in Tech
and Allies with New Mental Health
Diagnoses**

How to consume this talk

- I've highlighted some **important bits**
- I'll mention some friends along the way.
- I may say ADHD more than I intend to (replace with your neurodiversity and it will most likely still apply)

If you find the footnotes distracting, I'll read the important ones so you don't need to focus on them.

Hi I'm Jay

ADHD, PTSD, Social/General Anxiety

- Diagnosed at **29**
- *Currently Unmedicated*
- Working with a **support group** for folks with ADHD

"Neurodiversities don't define you. But they help make you...You"

Your quirks will be the thing that people love you for. At least that's my experience

I'm here to help, if you'd like 

Privacy is important and No One **Needs** to know your business.

4 ~~Myths~~ to Dispell

It used to say quick and it wound up being an entire section

~~Having X Means I Can't Focus~~

- Focus is a **Vibe**
- Don't throw off the groove



Ask me how much I focus on getting the right bag of coffee or structuring my conference talks.

~~Medication turns you into a~~ 🧟

- Medication is **optional**
- Medication affects people **differently**
- Work with your **psychiatrist** to get correct dosages and forms

~~Being Neurodivers makes me a Bad Employee~~

- work in **different rhythms**
- **appropriate accommodations** can make you an excellent employee.

My optimal work schedule: coffee > work > talk with friends > work > eat > nap > tetris > work > dinner > light work > sleep

~~My diagnosis isn't a protected disability~~

"Accommodations are your friend so **ask for them**. They don't just come in the form of an ergonomic chair and software, but can help managers understand what you need to be successful."

- Wesley Faulkner - Head of Community,
Neurodiversity Advocate

for more information: <https://adhdwork.add.org/employer-responsibility/>



So You Just Got Diagnosed

Not by me. Again I'm not a doctor

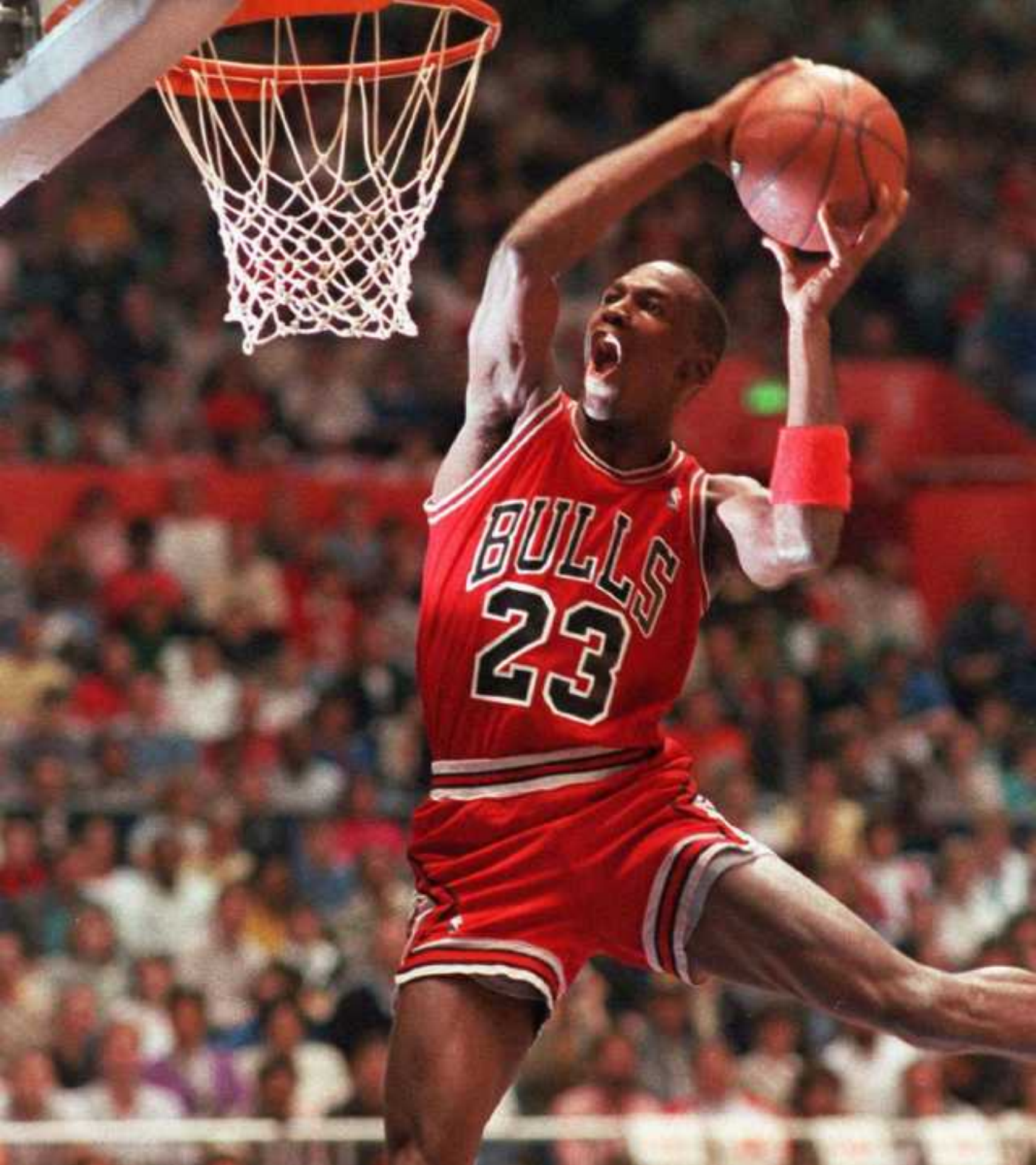
Congratulations 🎉

You possibly overcame a lot of systemic barriers and seeking help is hard









It's okay to Slow Down 🐢

Fun Fact! The 2012 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles series officially diagnosed Michelangelo with ADHD

Saying No to things may mean saying Yes to your mental health

TIRE Technique

- Time
- Intuition
- Resources
- Energy

Priority Matrix

- ~~Do~~
- Delegate
- Defer
- Delete

If you can, confide in someone

Going through it alone is much harder than with a friend

*"**Communities** of people who aren't neurodiverse in name but definitely in attitude were essential in helping me own by unusualness and lean into it. These include live action role play, theatre, cosplay/nerd conventions...A **career that genuinely is a strength of mine** was the final puzzle piece..."*

I was given permission to be we weird as I needed to be to be me.

- Colleen Rutledge - ADHD Coach

She's also my ADHD Coach!



Allies

Keep your friends close, just make sure they don't overdo it

Intersectionality is a force multiplier for and against those suffering

Being _____ **AND** _____ means that you often have to focus on the issues of one while neglecting the issues of the other.

People may not be ready for **your** help

Don't Take it Personal, **Prove** that you can be trusted.

*"**Tokenization** is a big reason why I'm not fully out at my company. I don't want them to get brownie points for my own personal business" - Cass*

Minimization is what got us here

"When my freshman year college English teacher asked me if I had been tested or diagnosed with dyslexia (because her son was), I realized that I wasn't dumb or lazy, and I wasn't going to be called out as **not belonging** or **faking** my way into college."

- Jeff Triplett - Developer, Board Member

Jeff is someone that has created success for many people around him!



If you are neurodiverse and you suspect a friend or colleague is as well.

We don't share because usually a diagnosis brings about other emotions and feelings

No Two Cases are the Same

- **DON'T** assume what's worked for one will work for all
- That's why it's important to showcase many different solutions and treat **ALL** of them as **VALID**

Also don't be comparative

~~"I have a friend who is _____"~~

I don't know your friend. And their situation and life circumstances is not equivalent to mine (for better or worse)

Instead

- "What have you tried that worked in the past"
- "If you want to talk about it, I can make time. I may not understand it all but if you can help me I'll try my best"
- "Let me know how I can help you. Even if you just need me to cover for you while you adjust"

Leadership!

The biggest help comes from you!

The standard comes from YOU!!

"I appreciate you sharing your thoughts with me! I have found some of the exact things you have said as frustrating but it helps to talk to through and try to understand other perspectives. (even if I don't agree with them 😊)"

- *Elyssa Emerich, Community Team Lead*

That's my boss and she's awesome!



Don't let work take precedence over self care

"hi jay! I notice you're online and want to make sure you know it's a shut it down day. i'm working an event today with [REDACTED] so I swapped my shut it down day to wednesday this week :)"

- *Faith Westdorp, Community Programs Manager*

Faith really helps me a lot. Keeping me accountable but also offering help.



Normalize Diversity and Neurodiversity

Diverse teams:

- reduce tokenization
- diversify life experiences
- create diverse solutions to problems (of many kinds)
- creates an pathway for empathy

You've made it to the end! Great Job!

Seriously if you read all of these, you're amazing! I hope they were helpful. 😊

Thanks to my friends (for quotes and feedback):

- Colleen Rutledge - <https://www.greendoorlifecoaching.com>
- Jeff Triplett - @webology
- Cass - Privacy Respected
- Wesley Faulkner - @wesley83

shout out to my guildes for coworking and body doubling with me to get this done!

My Amazing Teammates that offered feedback

- Elyssa and Faith
- Work with us for search or more conversations like this one (*community@elastic.co*)

Resources

- [Commpassionatecoding.com](https://commpassionatecoding.com)
- ADHDatwork.add.org
- [Askjan.org](https://askjan.org)

Me if you need someone to chat with (@kjaymiller)