The Real Reason People with ADHD Struggle (It's Not Focus) Transcript

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Intro to ADHD and Emotional Dysregulation

We used to think of ADHD as just being a disorder of executive functioning skills, distractibility, lack of focus. But now we know that ADHD is very much emotional dysregulation.

In fact, Dr. Dodson was the first one who started writing on it. So you'll start to see it online and in different videos here. About five years ago, nobody was talking about it, in fact.

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Hey there. Welcome to the Recharged Biomedical Podcast. I'm Dr. Edward Park. If you're curious about regenerative medicine, you've come to Hi, everybody.

This is Dr. Ed Park, the host of the Recharge Biomedical Podcast. Today, we're very fortunate to be joined by Jerry South, who is an expert and a therapist in ADHD diseases.

Jerry, thank you for joining us. Oh, and thank for having me. Excited to Okay. So basically, Jerry is very expert at treating ADHD. And as we talked about on the podcast, ADHD is something that has been recognized for centuries, but was given a DSM or a psychiatric diagnosis in the 80s, first as ADD and then ADHD, and everyone seems to self-diagnose.

I'm wondering, just from the outset, do you think that ADHD really is a specific disease? Can everybody have tendencies towards that depending on the circumstances.

I mean, we hear this a lot, like, oh, everybody's a little bit ADHD. I don't actually agree with that. And I do think that we might exhibit different symptoms.

Of course, you know that trauma, for example, someone who's gone through trauma will exhibit similar symptoms to those with ADHD, and we know trauma doesn't cause ADHD but it can magnify symptoms, but yeah, there has been, it's really interesting, I've done a lots of work alongside Dr.

William Dodson, studying his research and working with him a bit. and he cites different studies, but it shows that ADHD has been well researched. It's actually been around, it was first documented in medical journals in 1905, stimulant medication came around in the 1930s, and there has more research done about ADHD than on asthma or diabetes.

We've been able to document that it is a real disorder. We call it a disorder because of the executive function deficits. And so yes, it's very real, even though there might be people who have similar symptoms, and that doesn't necessarily mean they have ADHD.

Let's just get this out of way. Do you think that medicines are good, bad, neutral, situation dependent, particularly stimulants?

Is ADHD a Real Disorder?

Well, for me personally, I feel like treatment for each individual is unique. If you would have asked me seven or eight years ago, i would say no, stay away from stimulant medication.

I absolutely do not believe in it. i like natural things, but when you have, there's a lot of comorbidity with ADHD. There's just a not one case looks the same as the other.

It's very much like a spectrum. When you have a child attempt suicide, when you're working with kids in second or third grade who are being kicked out of school after school, they don't have friends.

They're not invited to a birthday party. they can't sit still in class. And then their parent puts them on a stimulant medication and they're making friends and doing well in school.

it's hard to say across the board no one should be on medication. So after doing this for a long time, I realized Treatment doesn't look the same for everyone.

I'm personally not on stimulant medication, but there's a lot of people who are and it has made a world of difference for them. That's fair. I think that's very, so your website's beautifully done by the way.

What I wonder what you used. It's JerrySouth.com, spelled J-H-E-R-I-SOUTH. COM. And it's just a very nice website and you talk about, you know, taking a self-assessment quiz and then there are scheduled lectures where they can engage and if they feel so guided to sign up for counseling and You counsel couples, you counsel kids, your counsel high-powered executive women.

And so those take different skillsets, but something jumped out at me that didn't jump out in the first ADHD webinar that we did, which was RSD. Now you have a cute other acronym, WIRED, we'll go into, explain what the concept of RST is and how it is associated and what prevalence with ADHD.

You bet. Well, we used to think of ADHD as just being a disorder of executive functioning skills, distractibility, lack of focus. But now we know that ADHD is very much emotional dysregulation.

In fact, Dr. Dodson was the first one who started writing on it, so you'll start to see it online and in different videos here. About five years ago, nobody was talking about it.

This statistic is a little bit old now, it's a few years old, but One third of all adults with ADHD said that RSD, rejection sensitive dysphoria, was the number one symptom they dealt with with ADHD.

So let me tell you a little bit about RST. If you could break ADHD up into categories, R SD would sit under that emotional regulation umbrella, or I should say emotional dysregulation.

R S D, Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria mirrors a major mood disorder. This is why bipolar disorder is commonly very commonly miss a misdiagnosis and it's really debilitating ADHD because RSD is unpredictable.

It is the extreme sensitivity to the idea that you have been rejected that You have you're being teased that. You failed to meet someone's expectation of you or that?

You even failed. To meet your own And the reason I say it's unpredictable is because it just shows up unexpectedly. You're just as surprised as the person around you.

you might be able to take some constructive feedback one day, and then the next day it sends you into a tailspin. I would say nobody likes to feel rejected, obviously, but when you have RSD, it is at an entirely different level.

It's intense, It is so painful. it can feel like an internal wound.

Medication, Stimulants, and Individualized Treatment

And we call them episodes because they come on and they're so big. Yeah. Well, you know, our other guest, Henry Frank, wrote a book called Stop Bullying Yourself.

So I want to take a little deeper dive, because RSD is, for me, reflex, sympathetic, dystonia, or dystrophy. But anyway, acronyms are tricky, but let's really dwell on what that means.

Rejection, that's social belonging, either to yourself or your identity or a group. sensitive, everyone's sensitive but you're saying it's on a whole nother level.

And dysphoria is a very interesting word. Foria meaning feeling and dys meaning bad. So it was something that hits you hard. You're seeing that there's a qualitative difference between just being sensitive or being situationally aware and people that the stakes are way too high in their nervous system for feeling rejection.

Absolutely. And usually we're focusing on the episode itself. So maybe somebody doesn't invite you to a party or somebody says something about a presentation you gave.

I had adults that I work with, they're ready to close up shop and really they are talking about maybe a different career they could start because maybe if somebody gave them a three and a half star review.

It's something that we ruminate on, it becomes a part of our identity, and usually it's perceived rejection. The majority of the time it is not actual rejection, so what I would say is a couple things.

Usually we're talking about these episodes. Nobody can get you out of an RSD episode. If you're the one with RSD, except for yourself, you have to remove yourself from the situation.

Go think through your thoughts. We talk about it as though the person is much more sensitive than everybody else around them. But what's actually happening is it's part of the impulsive component of ADHD.

Your brain is so quick to rush to meaning. And it is so convinced that what it came up with is true, that it has many times jumped to the wrong conclusion.

So what a lot of ADHD people, what we want to learn to do is learn how to pause because I've seen clients just, there's a a shame associated with this.

It's almost like after you come down from this episode, you're embarrassed. You can't believe how you acted, but also, There's just so much shame involved that not only can you not control yourself, but you weren't able to catch it in the moment.

There's some of my clients who say all I saw was red. That's not common. But some people will say I don't even remember what I said when it happened. And so learning how to pause.

Yeah, you're describing as kind of a freak out almost like someone who has like a thyroid imbalance or adrenaline secreting tumor, which we talked about yesterday, a pheochromocytoma.

You're describing something that feels like panic attack almost.

RSD and Emotional Sensitivity

in terms of the personality and its identity. And that's crazy. Let's take a dive into, let's assume that the human brain serves a function and our consciousness is organic.

A lot of that entrainment happens during childhood, right? The way that we perceive ourselves. So I can say with very great certainty that my sister's a brilliant person, but she has ADHD and she medicates.

I think that, the parenting style that particularly my mom had, And you know, I don't want to be too Freudian with it, but like when you have a parent that is constantly judging you and telling you to adjust and do better and that it's not good enough and it is never going to good.

I think that kind of entrains a lack of safety within oneself and may predispose to RSC. What do you think? Do you that parenting styles can influence that?

Oh, definitely. Well, at least how intense it is. I mean, according to Dr. William Dodson, 95% of all ADHDers will experience some form of RSD. But yes, environmental factors really make a difference.

Listen, by age 10, the average ADHDer has heard over 20,000 corrective messages. Why can't you settle down? Why Can't You Try Harder? Your sister doesn't do that.

Why do you do That? You're not trying hard enough. You are not applying yourself over and over again. So already without any kind of like trauma, abandonment, divorce situation, this child has already been exposed to these corrective messages.

Every person when they come to me, whether they're eight, or 80 benefits from starting on working with their self-confidence and self esteem. But then you add anything else into the mix, a difficult phase of life.

Even as an adult, to put into context, I'm almost 50 now, but when I was in my 20s, i could have been the walking poster child for RSD. I had gone through abandonment and some trauma and when you're going through phases of like that, the episodes will come more often and they will last a lot longer.

So as you heal your brain similar to trauma, It's not that RSD ever completely goes away. It might still come at last 10 minutes, but you can work through it, you could significantly benefit from healing the brain and then overcome the debilitating symptoms of RST.

We'll get into your hacks and tricks for doing that. But before we move on, I just want to, you know, there's an emerging field called attachment disorders, right?

Which kind of inform romantic, mainly romantic relationships, the avoidance, and the anxious. And, obviously, what you're describing could have some overlap with that.

People who have this negative image of long-term romantic relationship, might trend towards that and it all kind of comes back to this image of self, right?

Of belonging, of integration. And so there's so many ways that we can be disrupted in terms of how we, you know, I guess what you're kind trying to create a dichotomy around is people who are mostly okay, most of the time, neurotypical, and those who just freak out on themselves and over-interpret and are ruminating after the fact over perceived rejection, That's right.

And I also just wanted to highlight that many times it can be a freak out sometimes. In fact, I would say a lot of the time one can keep the episode internal.

They're still freaking out inside, but anyone on the outside wouldn't know. So it looks different person to person. a conversation, saying what they should have said, what should they have gotten, and that can, yeah.

I mean I see that, you know, I started watching this couples therapy thing on the AIs giving it to me and I just see these patterns of people just repeating loops, these trauma loops.

These codependent sort of victim blaming, shaming. It's really quite hard to watch actually. Right. Yeah. I mean, I definitely think that's part of it.

And there's so much out there. One of the presentations of OCD is just relationship OCT. It looks like an attachment style. Also, one thing I want to highlight, and I just think it's worth mentioning, in my field I see so many people who've been diagnosed with ADHD that are actually odd-EHD.

Back in 2013, when we had just the DSM-IV, We were told you cannot have both. You cannot add ADHD and autism together. It's one or the other. So most people were put into the ADHD bucket.

This is why you have so many people now being diagnosed with autism, especially in women. The presentation is

different. But the reason it made me think of that is because autistic individuals tend to hyper fixate on the sports team, on a collection.

And for women, it's usually on person or a relationship. I see. Yeah. Interesting. Well, no, let's talk about autism. So autism is self-directed obsession or internal obsession.

Again, that presupposes that there's an appropriate range of normal internal introspection, rumination, and that people who are autistic are just too much in their heads, right?

That's right. Yes. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, there's some misconceptions. It's interesting because a lot of people who come into my office, they're okay having an ADHD diagnosis, but they don't want an autism diagnosis.

So we really have some work to do around the stigma of autism because I would say there are so many gifts with six of my seven children are on the spectrum as well, you know, are ADHD.

And they're popular and witty and hilarious and comedians. They're all different, even within the family. It's like some of them are outgoing and have friends and others are introverted and they have more sensory difficulty.

But the biggest misconception that I find with those on the spectrum and what people believe about being on this spectrum is that because there's a social component or impairment there that this means they're not good at talking to people.

They're introverted, shy, keep to themselves. No, absolutely. I think that's why they call it a spectrum because you know, you see a lot of the TV and media portrayals of people who are just socially inept and you can be largely, you know, kind of nuts, if you will, in a playful way.

Like, my family's on the spectrum as well. And then they might call it Asperger's or Socially, whatever. But you're right. I mean, when we talk about the autism shows that we've done, we're more focused on non-verbal.

kids, you know, and we're focused on people who have apraxia. They cannot integrate mechanical motor control of their body wealth. And that's why they can't speak because speaking is complex.

But so I think this is why there's a stigma, right? Because we are blending level one, two, three and four in there. What I want to say just quickly about the social context is What I find to be the real impairment is the overthinking and sometimes misunderstanding the social situation, either not picking up on the sarcasm or not sure if they should be offended or they're being left out.

Childhood, Parenting, and Self-Esteem

It's just not understanding the full context of what's going on. There are many people on this spectrum that can carry on a conversation just fine. Just fine, yeah.

No, I mean, like to say like I, you know, doing improv comedy for the last few months and like it's very easy. Yeah. It's very fun. But it's easy for me to adjust to other people and mirror them.

Right? So that makes it easy to blend. I definitely, you know, I'm very autistic also and probably a little ADHD. So I, what did you call it? Odd-y-h-d.

Yeah, okay. You did a portmanteau. Fitting right in. That's the cool thing to be these days. So let's ask a question about, you have seven kids. Did I hear you correctly?

That's right. Amazing. I have only had two, and something just came across my feed, thanks AI. It said there's this eudaemonia lecturer about parenting, right?

And her premise was very interesting insofar as you had to inculcate the message to your children. There's nothing

fundamentally wrong with them. which I don't want to make a joke about it, but if you've ever been parented by an Asian immigrant, it's kind of the inverse.

There's nothing fundamentally right about you, right? The old bait and switch is always like, well, you got to be a doctor, lawyer, marry a same ethnic group, and then we'll withhold the love until you get all those things.

And then even after that, I think that's an interesting parenting style and one which I have to confess I've sort of deviated to. So, you know, not critical of the kids, setting goals that project from my own wishes.

And in the grand scheme of things, I wonder if that kind of free-range parenting If we can call it that in a negative way is good. Cause a lot of the kids these days are kind of rudderless.

They're not driven. they, they're always okay. So, you know, going back to we're almost the same generation. I'm a bit older, but there was that transactional analysis thing in the seventies.

You know? I guess there's a, there is a little balance in life. If you just tell your kids they are okay and there something fundamentally wrong with them, maybe they'll just be see students and work in food service.

What do you think? Well, part of the problem is that they're so affected by, you know, everyone around them, society today, and so parents have less and less of an influence, in my opinion, but there is no one parenting situation that's alike.

Even in, my own family, I have to parent my children differently. So, for example, one of my daughters has debilitating RSD. Some of them don't have RST at all.

So I know that she's working to control her Rst. I'm looking at things on a case-by-case basis, like what are they aware of that they're doing? What are the skills that have and what do they not have?

The one who has RSD, she knows there are just some lines she cannot cross. She can't yell certain things at me when she's having an episode, I've let her get away with slamming a door because she always comes out 10 minutes later and apologizes and tells me how she is working to control it.

I would not let a child in my home that does not have RST slam the door at my. There are different rules for different kids based on what their diagnosis is and what they're struggles are.

The same way I have some kids that really thrive in the world of education and academia, and then I some that it is a struggle every single day. And so my expectations are different.

When we look at the four main parenting styles, we know that the authoritarian type parent that I said so and you're going to do it the way I want you to has some of the worst results.

It teaches children not to be able to speak up and talk to authority. They can't speak their mind. And so we want a blend. We don't want permissive parent parenting either where it's child-led and they're making the decisions and we're never wanting their feelings to be heard.

You know, we really want an authoritative parenting style where we are sitting down with kids, where having conversations, were creating rules and boundaries together but ultimately the parent decides but we including them in the conversation.

We want to know about different diagnoses and what they come with. If you have a child with ADHD or autism, and it's turned into ODD or PDA, there are just certain things that won't work.

So as a parent, the best advice I can give is educate yourself and don't expect to parent all of your children the same. And definitely don' parent your child based on the way your friend is parenting their child.

Do your own research. Some people will go the opposite, right? So it skips the generation, you know? My siblings and I are free-range parenting in reaction.

And I feel like that has been a disservice, too, because… There's research on that, I don't mean to interrupt you, but people who grew up in authoritarian-type households then become permissive parents, usually.

Yeah. I mean, I remember a conversation, it must have been 18 years ago with my sister and she was like, you know, at the cusp. Since then, both she and her husband have embraced their children's paths.

And I would just, they're very creative people. They're wonderful people, but she like my kids are snowflakes. She was at that time saying all this new woke culture that they've been inculcated with in the liberal arts colleges is you know, excessive, like to the extreme.

But anyway, that's an interesting conversation as well, but you used a couple of jargon terms, I want to break it down, ODD, PDA, those could be many things.

Oh, right. So ODD is oppositional defiance disorder, and that's typically connected to someone who's ADHD. Their tagline could be, you're not going to control me.

Difficult to parent, it's defiants and it usually cannot negotiate with them. There's no compassion for them hurting people's feelings or not following rules.

PDA used to be known as pathological demand avoidance, and now we know that it, we're not that we now. And also I should highlight, ODD is recognized in the DSM and PTA is not.

So now, when we look at PGA as a pervasive drive for autonomy, because PPA is attached to autism, OD is attach to ADHD, they look the same on the outside.

They look like defiance, sometimes lying, not being willing to be, to do what they're told. But for ODD kids, it's, I just will not do this just because you're trying to make me.

Autism, ODD, and PDA

With PDA kids it is, there is a lot of pressure, anxiety around the demands of life and what people expect them to, do that they are shutting down and trying control their environment.

So it really is drive for autonomy. I've seen that in real time. Yeah, I was treating an autistic kid and he would have minor little power struggles over just stupid things that had no consequence but it was the overarching principle of I need to control me and you're not gonna control.

They look the same but they stem from different kind of clusters I guess. Fascinating. So what are some of the real-time hacks that you are training people to do without giving away secret sauce?

Well, you know, I'm always creating new tools to show people their brain. I mean, if we're going to rewire our brain, this is the thing. Neurodivergent brains are fascinating, highly intelligent, creative, out of the box thinkers, fantastic at pattern recognition.

There's just a lot. of gifts there. And what I've found to be true, especially for ADHDers, is that when the impairment is constantly surfacing and relationships and our work, whatever it is, the gifts seem to really stay hidden.

So it's kind of like a healing process that, when you can learn to do things differently, to think about things, differently and rewire your brain, all of the the, gifts come to the surface.

That's what i'm trying to help my clients with. I have a specific a regulation model that I teach my clients to show them how to reframe their circumstances, to just show how them to question their thinking.

I have some, I love working with acronyms. One that's really popular that use with my client is PAUSE. So I've different methods to help them recognize when they're having an RSD episode.

RST, similar to maybe OCD at times or catastrophic thinking, many times one can't immediately identify whether or not this is actually a problem. Their brain just decides it is and they absolutely believe their thoughts.

So I have some different tools, Paws being one of them, where they're able to in real time question what's happening. It's really interesting science.

I'm trying to remember the name of this book. A woman had a stroke and then she studied her brain. i think the book is Insights of a Stroke or something close to that.

But she was able A chemical wave runs through your body, but it only lasts 90 seconds. So you're having this vibration, right? Whether it's anger, frustration, whatever it is, But it over in 90-seconds.

Most of us, when we're upset, it lasts longer than 90 second. And it not because the feeling doesn't have a finish line. It's because we continue to tell ourselves things over and over that keep us mad.

Yeah. Exactly. I find it interesting that you used a phrase that is encountered a lot in people who meditate. But in general, when people go deeper into, let's say, entheogenic psychedelics, they have this breakthrough that, you know, not only are you not your thoughts, but you shouldn't believe most of your That's right.

They come from a place of the amygdala of these sort of schemas of negative self-worth or fears of abandonment or rejection, right? So you can always choose to Ask yourself, well, what am I missing that's abundant?

What's the gift in this negative thing? And although some people call it a spiritual bypass or a hack, uh, we really do. And I think that the most alarming thing, the, most frightening thing is that we have responsibility over the thoughts that, that choose and the things that believe.

I that that is a lot for people. They would oftentimes rather be automatons or just sort of automatic non-player characters. but the kids call it. What do they call it?

NPC. Yeah, NPC versus main character energy. Like a lot of times we don't want to be responsible. Oh, that's just me saying something negative that I don' even believe and yet we'll go with it, right?

So the ability to interocept, to know how your mind, body, and spirit are moving with something, it's not that easy. But then to actually take responsibility and agency is a whole nother level.

And I wonder if anyone really ever gets good at that. Well, I know I have. I was able to almost completely get rid of my RSD symptoms. It's hardly a factor for me anymore by learning the emotional regulation model.

And it was interesting because when I learning it, was in a certification program that was not for ADHD. So it helped me so much that I then, when was first certified as a coach.

I wasn't specializing in neurodivergent. Have a whole journey of trying to, I really got into this because I was trying help my family. Nothing was helping.

We kept getting a different misdiagnoses. It was just kind of a nightmare. And so getting good information, Dr. Dodson says 93% of psychiatrists today have no idea how to treat ADHD.

So we're doing a terrible job evaluating, identifying and then treating. And that was my experience. So as I kind of went down this rabbit hole, my whole family, and my husband's on the spectrum, I have 80. But that, the mindset work and adding to that adding tools, changing it to work, it's almost like CBT for neurodivergent individuals.

So for those that don't know, CBT is cognitive behavior therapy. So yeah, it's retraining the schemas the way that

your mind works, right? So you were born out of necessity, Right.

I mean, I was already using a lot of these tools and I working primarily with women at the time. When I felt like coaching saved my son's life, moved into working with teens and realized, oh, you can start teaching these at a very young age.

But I find them to be very effective. What happens with, what I think really sets me apart for the majority of ADHD coaches out there is that most people are looking at this as a disorder of executive function.

And I do not see it that way at all. I actually believe that 90% of everything we experience with ADHD is rooted in emotional dysregulation, period. So like, for example, let me give you this, do you have time for a quick story?

Yeah. Okay, so this is just one example of many, but most of us who know that we have ADHD just believe, oh, I just can't focus. I have ADHD, and I'm so distracted.

And so one woman that I was coaching, she just started working with a new group, She was very excited about it and she had this great opportunity to put together a project.

And she said, but Jerry, my ADHD kept me from working on the project, next thing I know, I'm scrolling my phone and I am looking for houses even though I not in the market.

So I asking her questions like, well, what were you thinking when you were sitting there supposed to be doing the product? And said I wasn't really thinking anything just that it's boring.

It took her a while because everything about Her story about this group was positive. I love the people. They're so great. There's a positive about me.

But finally she admitted it took her a while, 15, 20 minutes. She said, well, I actually am a little bit worried. My experience is a lot different than theirs.

Tools for Regulation and Reframing

And her thought was their thought leaders and I'm new. And it's like, there it is. That's the emotional dysregulation because she thinks, here's a thing.

If you have ADHD and you really believe, man, they're going to love this. You will hyper-focus and work on that thing all night and be so excited to present it.

I think when we start with executive functioning skills, we're starting in the wrong place. That's just why so many ADHDers are so frustrated. They've tried all the planners, they've listened to the podcast, They read the books and nothing works long term because it's all rooted in emotional dysregulation.

Kind of rhymes with autism, right? So autistic kids can play a video game for 45 minutes, you know, they can focus. So the stakes are low, there in mastery, their in a flow state, arguably, but I do definitely sort of grock your idea that Not only is it associated, it's largely causal.

The emotional dysregulation, It manifests as procrastination. Fear of success. Even though it is something you want and achieve, there's that latent seed of what if it sucks?

I'm just going to procrastinate and make sure that it suck. And they've been doing it wrong since childhood. They can't sit still or they're not motivated enough, they are not following through.

And so there's about 10% that is, I don't know, biological that you really can, like trouble with time, trouble was sleep isn't always emotional dysregulation.

So there is a few things there. Everything else with my clients I'm able to show them that if you can work on your emotional dis-regulations, everything else, Especially since we are so impaired when it comes to self-esteem and self confidence, you start improving that and the way you're showing up, focus improves, procrastination goes away.

It's actually emotional dysregulation. Yeah. I mean, but you know, at the end of the day, when we look at it from 10,000 feet, right, the job of a good parent is to make their job unnecessary, I hate that that's true.

I love being a mom. But at the end of the day, we're out there in the world for the rest of our lives, parenting ourselves, and we are not always doing a good job.

We're maybe mirroring things that were maladaptive, you know, excessive negative self-talk, sort of rejection. So I guess it's incumbent upon us if we want to be less unhappy to just be a little nicer and set little goals and kind of get mastery and take the wins and have some positive self-talk.

Because so much of what we see from the culture of Instagram to, you know, the billionaire IPOs, we're like, no one's ever going to be good enough, right?

We just sit in there torturing ourselves until we die, like so. There's better ways to self talk. You can ruminate over your blessings instead of your failings.

and just little hacks, maybe regulate your diet, your exercise, you're breathing, and your sleep and wake cycles. Just be in a position where you can succeed more and self-torture less, I guess.

Yeah, and I mean, until I'm able to demonstrate this, it sounds a little bit jarring, but I teach my clients your circumstances are completely neutral, even death itself.

It's just a thing happening in the world until you have a thought about it. And so when you get really good at connecting what you're feeling with what your thinking, you realize how much control you.

Like every pain we're feeling is just coming from the story that we are telling. So the response I'll get initially is, okay, I get it, but how do I change that?

I can't change it. This is what my brain believes. And so that's the work. It's some deep work, and it's so worth it and very effective. I did want to highlight with individuals on the spectrum, maybe you can confirm this, there is a little bit more intensity there when it comes to the catastrophic thinking.

the worst case scenario, the going to a place. that maybe is even irrational. And many of my clients who are on the spectrum don't know that their thoughts are irrational, but they are feeling a lot of anxiety about what could go wrong, what people are thinking about them, about why this won't work, the future.

More than ADHDers, we see that catastrophic thinking, which can be so impairing with autistic individuals. It speaks to the larger issue of just wanting to be here, right?

The non-player versus main character energy. People get stuck in loops in their relationships. They recapitulate negative thinking. It's easier to pick a scab and revisit.

it's easy to cast yourself as the victim. And so it just, on a mental level, it is just kind of hard to do the work. The work doesn't look like necessarily cognitive behavioral therapy.

Doesn't necessarily look intense life discipline planning. the Work is really just to accept more of what is. not be so negative, right? And that's so hard because we are problem-solving creatures, and so when the problem is ourselves, it's very hard to get on the same page and be like, you know, yeah, there's no disasters.

You're not in pain. Everything's good. Yeah, You not going to do this. And you're never going do that. to gaslight

yourself right like you're too smart for that too it has to be real work if sometimes it does i'll get that question like what's the difference between that and gas lighting myself well the differences you are poking holes in your story you aren't lying to yourself like maybe the person did say something really mean or you were being rejected but let's investigate it before your brain just gets to that place yeah yeah i mean i think that i'm really interested to see how smartphones, you know, that we, we talked about UK last week.

It was Denmark last summer and an Australia band for the kids. I think that the. The reflex loop is so quick now with the social media that people's maybe criticism of themselves is getting that much more acute, leading to probably mood disorders and also other problems of self-worth.

So perhaps this social-media ban will help, but it's just a very interesting question to see how this new generation, which is apparently testing at a lower IQ, And the previous generation is very sobering when we reach like the inflection of life expectancy of intelligence.

And I can't help but think, you know, with my own very prolific use of AI, I'm becoming much dumber too. So it'll be interesting to see how these generations go.

Mindset, Self-Talk, and Neurodivergent Growth

You know I said I do improv comedy and the majority of people in that are. 25 to 35, and just, I cannot express to you how different their social skills are.

They really cluster around group acceptance. Yeah. Virtue signaling, which to me is the antithesis of comedy in a way. But yeah, there's this idea of you never punch down, but like in some frame, anyone is like worthy of being mocked, you know, it's very interesting sort of culture.

Cause they're all sort like very angry at the system for not having the economic and financial opportunities. And they just have this sort group ethos that someday will rise up and destroy the And it's all because of them.

But I'm just like, this is very like kind of simplistic. I don't know. You're so sensitive to language, too. My work revolves around words can't hurt your feelings, right?

Well, yeah. This is why, as a former screenwriter, they used to teach that horror films are comprised of two genres. The human that becomes a monster and the human becomes And both of those are the antithesis of what you're talking about.

You're taking about humans becoming human, fully capable of judging, reacting, changing their views, right? And so it seems like the core values of Gen Z, maybe Cust Millennials is like, we all need to get on the same page, believe the the things, judge, use language the way.

I mean, even the word trigger words, you have kids going up to their teacher and saying, I can't read To Kill a Mockingbird because these are my trigger word and I'm not I'm therefore not responsible for my behavior if you say one of these words.

So it's kind of crazy. Well, there's no room for growth with that attitude and that way forward. And I mean, I don't want to say it is no fault of their own.

I think there is a lot of different responsibility to go around, but this is the way that they were raised. They were raise on social media. Right? Well, and if you don't allow your children, like I didn't, allow my children to have social media until they were 18 because of the work I do.

And they couldn't have cell phones until. They were 16 and it didn' matter. All of their friends did and they got burner phones and I mean, you can't get away from it.

This is what we're being told is like, well, technology is here to stay. The schools are giving them computers that

they're hacking in sixth and seventh grade.

It really is a problem. I think that we should rethink a lot of what. We're doing in that area for these kids, at least for the next generation. Yeah, I used to be quite sanguine about AI.

I find it very deeply intelligent and it does overwork in terms of emotional metacognition, like how are you feeling about this? It's a very manipulative thing.

But now that I've seen some of the latest research and we've had in the last month, autonomous drones killing humans. I'm starting to rethink the ultimate existential threat of it, because not only are we getting dumber, but it's like, where does it end?

I mean, we're breeding ourselves into being docile, non-thinking entities, you know? Exactly. Yep, I am right there with you. It's troubling for sure.

And then just from a neurodivergent perspective, ADHDers are three to four times more likely to have some kind of substance abuse problem, or stimulation seekers.

Uh, and so we're always looking for the next dopamine hit. We're already wired to not want to pay attention and need something novelty or interesting.

And so that's really ruining. Phones are ruining that for our youth. When it comes to those on the spectrum, they hyper fixate, as I mentioned earlier on things.

Teenagers kind of addicted to their phone. They're on the spectrum and this has become their hyper fixation They can't even last five minutes without talking about it or being on it because their wiring is now hyperfixated on this thing So it's especially dangerous.

Absolutely. My 89 year old mom is doom-scrolling YouTube video at 2 in the morning and sending me content I'm like, it''s not just the teenagers. It's the dopamine cycle is so well adjusted, curated, and relentless.

Now yeah, we're all becoming these dopamine farms. Well, let me introduce people to your websites. JerrySouth.com. Beautifully done. Which did you, what did he use to design it by?

Was it professional? I hate to admit this, it was AI. Oh, I did a great job. And so you do good work for people and they can learn more about what you and get some of these hacks and hopefully live a more you know, abundant and grateful and tranquil life while kicking ass.

Well, and I just want to say it is my mission. I mean, I've almost lost two of my children to suicide and you see things differently when it comes to treatment.

When it come to the way that you're parenting. And I probably did everything wrong for a long time. So I vowed, you that once I figured out what I needed to figure out, talked to some and studied with some of the top specialists in the world.

I've traveled, I'm interviewing people all over the world. My mission was to help people. When I was looking for help, i really believed I would lose my child.

I couldn't get answers. Not only could we not get just like medication right in moments of desperation, we couldn' even get correct diagnoses. Nobody could reach them.

There's a lot of comorbidity with ADHD. The statistic is or the research shows 60% likelihood you'll have one comorbit condition, 40% likely you will have a second pulmonary condition, so there's a lot of co-occurring condition.

There's, a, lot, of overlap. So I really tried to be that person that I was looking for when we were struggling so much as a family. Yeah.

Social Media, AI, and Dopamine Loops

Wow. Excellent. Well, thank you so, much, Jerry, for joining us and for giving us your wisdom and connect with her website. This is a love great stuff to peruse and, and any books that you would recommend on the topic.

Oh, goodness. I mean, there's so many. One of my favorite books for autism, by the way, is Look Me in the Eyes. It's a man who wrote it, who was pretty severely autistic when he was younger.

And he talks about his whole journey and how autism is a gift. He wrote himself. on ADHD. I mean, I know that, oh, shoot, i'm on the spot. Why can't I think of his name right now?

He does the podcast ADHD chatter. He just put out a good book on RSD. Cannot think his his right. Now, probably anyone who knows ADHD, they're shouting the name out and then put it in the comments or the B roll.

Don't worry. Oh yeah, that just came out on RSD and I think that's a fantastic book. And then one book I just want to put out there that isn't neurodivergent specific, but I have loved it so much.

It's an easy read and it's mindset book is The Gap and the Gain. Have you heard of that book? The gap in the what? The Gap and the Gain. Oh, and The Game.

I like that. Yeah. Like G-A-I-N. So the gap and gain. GAP thinking or gain thinking. He actually works with high performing entrepreneurs, millionaires, billionaires.

And he talks about the mindset and hedonic treadmill. It's an easy read, but there's a lot of gold in there. and so I'm usually pulling things out of that in my sessions as well.

The gap in the game. That kind of reminds me of a Leonard Cohen lyric. Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There's a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets in. I like it. Yeah. So we're not trying to break something. We're trying repair it with gold filling and make it more beautiful.

You've done that for two of your kids and for yourself and your family and you're seeking to do that to others. Well, and the last thing I'll say before we go is just that there's this idea that the brain is fixed and it needs to be broken, that neurodivergent brain just doesn't work correctly.

And I really want to just debunk that. It works perfectly well when you know how to use it. You just need a different owner's manual. And so that's what we're trying to teach people to do is work with their brain instead of continuously working against it and using neurotypical ways and ideas and learn neurodivergent ways of getting things done.

And you're amazed at what you can accomplish. Kind of reminds me of breaking horses, you know, training them. They can do very complex tasks or they can just run wild and trample.

Exactly. Yeah. That's right. All right, well, beautiful. Thank you so much for talking to us, Sharing Your Wisdom, jerrysouth.com. And I'll put the names of those books also.

Alex Partridge, that's his name. There it is. Alright, thank you. Thanks a lot, Jerry. If you guys like this content, please be sure and like and subscribe and hit the notification bell and we'll see you in the next episode.

Closing Thoughts and Resources

Many clinicians are getting interested in exosome therapy and they hesitate for good reason. Questions like, does this work? What forms do I need? How much should I charge?

how do i stay out of trouble? All these questions are addressed in my online course. That's why I created it to help you get started. The online Course is your permanent turnkey resource to get start either treating yourself, friends and family or to expand your practice and help more people as well as increase your revenue.

Thanks for tuning in to the Recharged Biomedical Podcast. If today's episode got you thinking, you'll love my book, Exosomes, Songs of Healing. It's packed with cool analogies, full color illustrations, and all the science you need to understand how exosome are changing the game in aging and regenerative medicine.

You can grab it in paperback, ebook, or audiobook, whatever works for you. Now head over to www.rechargedbiomedical.com to check it out. And don't forget to like and subscribe so you never miss another episode.

See you next time.