



Episode 178: How to Thrive in a High-Stress Job When You're Neurodivergent

with Matthew Bellringer

People see and experience the world through different lenses. Sometimes, the majority of us have similar experiences, which become the norm. But many also tend to lean toward the outer edges of the figurative bell curve. This is what we refer to as neurodivergence. In this episode, Matthew Bellringer joins Rachel to talk about neurodivergence and its many layers. We also discuss how neurodivergent people navigate the workplace with their unique X-men mutant powers, so to speak.

In addition, we will talk about recognizing neurodivergence so you can create a healthy path forward for yourself.

If you're looking for ways to make a strength of your neurodivergence, this episode is for you.

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Guest links

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Quote to remember:

'I tend to avoid the word 'superpowers' partly because it's not anything supernatural. I think if we are using a metaphor, it's closer to the kind of X-men mutant powers that they have this huge advantage, but they come with a cost.'

What You Will Learn

There has and will always be what's considered normal. This norm is what the majority of us experience, but it doesn't mean it's the standard. When you often experience something that deviates from what's considered normal, you may be neurodivergent. While it comes with certain advantages, it can also be a double-edged sword, especially in high-stress jobs like the healthcare industry.

This activity will help you recognise these tendencies, habits, and traits in yourself. That way, you can work on yourself and move forward in a healthy way. Doing this self-work can help you learn more about yourself and what works for you.

Further, the activity will help you see how you cope with stress. This will help you see how you deal with things so you can turn them into strengths. Skills related to neurodivergence can often be a double-edged sword. So playing into your strengths can help you turn the disadvantages into advantages.

Last but not least, this activity will help you bridge the gap with your neurodivergent colleagues, and vice versa. You will have the opportunity to talk to them, and them to you, to learn what you need to thrive in the workplace.



Activity: Neurodivergence and Its Layers

Q1. Being neurodivergent means having experiences that deviate from the norm. What experiences in your job would you say you've had that differ from what's considered normal?

Q2. How does being neurodivergent help you thrive in your high-stress job? On the other end of the spectrum, how does it affect you negatively?

Q3. Hyper adaptations often develop in neurodivergent people, and one of those is hyper-empathy. Try the quick test recommended by Matthew. Do you feel sorry for inanimate objects? How so?

Q4. Neurodivergent people often have to cope with some difficulties, which they later on become so skilled at managing. What trait would this be for you?

Q5. How would you describe your coping mechanisms, especially with the stress of your job?



- a) Would you say these coping mechanisms are healthy, so to speak?
- b) How did you come to develop them? Which authority figure would you say you inherited them from, if so?

Q6. What is something you do that would be considered different from the usual? How does this thing play into your strengths?

Q7. Understanding is a big part of bridging the gap with neurodivergent people. Have an honest conversation with a neurodivergent colleague about the help they need to thrive in the workplace, and vice versa.

CPD time claimed:

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