



Episode 11 - Clearing out the Clutter in your Head

Welcome to the managing your smart mind podcast with me, Else Kramer, a.k.a. Coach Kramer.

This week I'm inspired by a wonderful conversation I had with the fabulous Maisie Hill about what it's like to be autistic. Do check it out on her podcast, it's [Episode 73](#), I'll leave a link in the show notes so you can find it.

On the podcast, we talk about how one of the reasons we thrive is that we both have designed a life that works with our smart, neurodivergent minds.

Instead of making ourselves and our specific needs wrong, we have (and still are) turning things around. We are designing our life experience to work WITH us, rather than against us.

So this week I want to talk a little bit more about how you can do that too.

Because, trust me, it's so much easier - not to mention sustainable - to design a life that works with your beautiful mind, instead of trying to make it work in situations where it simply doesn't 'fit'.

But to do that, you first need to be aware of all the clutter in your brain - all the voices that make you wrong for being where you are.

So let's take a step back and look at where this 'trying to fit in' originates.

When you have a smarter than average mind, your brain often operates in non-average ways.

People tend to think those ways are wrong - and will try and correct you.

Sometimes because they mean well - they love you and think you can't be happy if you're different (which reminds me of the brilliant autobiography by Jeanette Winterson, one of my favourite authors: *Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?* - seriously, go read that book).

Sometimes they don't mean well - they're bullies, or just scared to be around anyone who deviates from the norm.

Whatever their motivation is, they will, over the course of your life, inundate you with messaging that tells you to 'stop being so damn different and start being normal'.

When left unchecked, this can result in an intense internalised ableism, where you are constantly berating yourself for all the ways in which you experience the world differently. Sometimes even for your basic needs, like needing alone time, away from your loved ones.

To help you unearth yours, here are some examples of unsolicited 'advice' I've received and internalised over the course of my life, followed by my own current take on things:

- Don't be such a wuss (loud sounds simply scare and startle me)

- You have the attention span of a squirrel (there are so many more interesting things to think about than what's currently happening on the blackboard)
- You can't keep doing one new thing after another (my brain needs to keep learning to not start misbehaving)
- Life isn't supposed to be fun (I love that I experience intense joy when I'm in my zone of genius)
- You shouldn't stay in your room alone, it's not healthy (I love my own company and need alone time to recharge)
- Stop being such a smartass (I like sharing my knowledge with the world)
- You're incredibly lazy (I'm just very bored by what you're teaching)
- You're emotionally underdeveloped (I'm simply not interested in the games some people play)

What about you?

What have people told you over the years?

Do you need to be more sociable?

Get executive tasks done faster?

Stop asking difficult questions?

If you're not sure, start watching your inner chatter. It tends to echo the voices you have internalised.

Pay special attention to thoughts like:

'I'm so selfish for not wanting to go to that party.'

'I'm such an idiot for not reading the room.'

'I can't believe this is taking me so long.'

'I've made such a mess of my life.'

'I'm such a spoilt brat, why can't I just play nice?'

'I just need to be more courageous.'

'I shouldn't be so tired after such a simple thing.'

Self-deprecating thoughts are usually borrowed from parents, teachers, and other authority figures.

Which means they are totally optional - even if it doesn't seem that way.

For a long time, I thought I needed to stop being scared, focus harder, stick to one thing, create a schedule and stick to it, socialize and make friends, be more disciplined, and learn to like people and things it simply wasn't in my nature to be interested in.

I thought there were so many things wrong with me, and I was working incredibly hard to fix them.

It didn't work.

This is how I'm wired.

Trying to change who I was not only didn't work, it was also very painful.

So, instead of trying to change ME, I changed my life instead.

I slowly started to create a life in which I, with my smart mind, could thrive.

Surprisingly, the biggest hurdle wasn't so much imagining how I wanted to live, and then realising it.

It was to give myself permission to DESIRE it.

At first, I felt I was just being difficult. A bit of a diva.

Again, all those internalised voices telling me that I should just try harder to be normal.

Well, that is simply not going to happen.
I can't be 'normal'.

But I CAN be me.

And make my life, my work, my relationships work for my authentic self.

So what does that currently look like?

I have my own, very spacious studio where I think and play and create.

Where I coach and teach.

Where I nap when I need to.

I have work that is constantly challenging, changing, fascinating.

That allows me to grow and learn new things - every single day.

I can own being smart - and even revel in it.

I can dance and jump around when I'm incredibly happy or excited.

I can network and socialise in a way that works for me - with amazing other smart humans, mostly online.

I can spend a lot of time looking at art - which inspires my creativity and nourishes my entire being.

I can also spend a lot of time looking out the window or pacing around my office - because that is what helps me think.

I have a family who love me as I am and know when I need some space - sometimes before I do myself.

I know what I need to thrive - and am able to make requests without shame or guilt.

This didn't happen overnight.

I needed to learn so many things to create this.

Getting back in touch with what I really wanted and needed, after years of conditioning that had taught me differently.

Learning to make requests and set boundaries.

To feel and process very uncomfortable emotions.

To no longer hide my gifts.

And learning to make a living in a way that lets my talents shine and energises me.

So can you.

The first step is to find your own voice and to weed out all the others that keep telling you all the ways in which you are wrong.

This week, become an observer of your inner chatter.

What are you saying to yourself on a daily basis?

And do you even believe any of them? Or are they borrowed thoughts from your past?

If it's the latter, release them so you can make room for what YOU want and need.

And then get to work designing and creating a life that suits your authentic self.

This is part of the work I do with my clients - building a life that plays to the strengths of their beautiful minds.

If that is something you're interested in, reach out to me via my website, coachkramer.org, or send me a message on LinkedIn for a free first consult.

Thank you for listening to this week's episode! I love that you found this podcast, and I also know that there are millions of gifted minds out there that need better

management. So if you like the podcast I would love it if you could share it with your smart coworkers, friends and family, so they can find it too.

Also: if there is a specific topic you'd love to see covered on this podcast, or someone you'd love to see interviewed, please let me know on:
podcast@elsekramer.com.

Don't forget to subscribe - and if you liked this episode I'd love for you to leave a review so more people can find the podcast and learn to manage their smart mind.