

S2E15 - DARCI ELLENBERGER

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SPEAKERS

Elle Billing, Darci Ellenberger


D Darci Ellenberger 00:00
Hi, my name is Elle Billing. I am a chronically ill queer femme and I'm tired. I'm here this episode and every episode to dig at the roots of our collective fatigue, explore ways to direct our care and compassionate and sustainable ways, and harness creative expression to heal ourselves and our world. Welcome to Hoorf: Radical care in a late capitalist heck scape.

E Elle Billing 00:46
My guest for this episode is Darci Ellenberger. Darci is the candy fueled copywriter behind Sweet Tooth Creative. Her done-with-you services are the sweet spot for neurodivergent, disabled, and chronically ill small business owners who want to boost brand awareness without burning out. I'm really excited to have Darci on the podcast today. Welcome to Hoorf! Hello, Darci. Welcome to Hoorf

D Darci Ellenberger 01:12
Hello,

E Elle Billing 01:12
it's great to have you here.

D Darci Ellenberger 01:14
Thank you for having me.



E

Elle Billing 01:15

Yeah. So before we started, I noticed that you were working in bed today, which is totally what we're talking about. So --

D

Darci Ellenberger 01:23

yes!

E

Elle Billing 01:24

I tried that. I can't record from bed. Otherwise, I totally would. Most of the time. It's too far away from the internet.

D

Darci Ellenberger 01:32

You gotta get a booster. I have a Wi Fi booster. That's the only reason I can do it in my bedroom.

E

Elle Billing 01:37

I actually just talked to Ricki about that. I'm like, is there any way we can boost the internet upstairs because I'm gonna be recording with Briar this summer. And I really don't want my video with Briar to have the Green Bay Packers office in the back. Which just fine. It's legit, but it's my dad's office. This is not my aesthetic. I would prefer to record upstairs in the neutral gray room. It's a little more calm.

D

Darci Ellenberger 02:01

I was a little surprised. I was like, not what I pictured.

E

Elle Billing 02:05

No, usually when I'm on in the work room with you and with Briar and Marissa and stuff. I'm in my bedroom, which is you know, in bed and my walls are gray and very calm. Well, the paint is calm. There, I painted it a neutral color. So I could hang up all my art work that I've curated from other friends and artists.

D

Darci Ellenberger 02:25

Awesome.

—

E Elle Billing 02:25
And it's a lot more chill. This is my dad's office, which my mom painted. And it's all Green Bay Packers.

D Darci Ellenberger 02:33
It is yeah.

E Elle Billing 02:34
Which is was interesting. This year, my dad actually he was reading on his phone and he's sort of just like, put his phone down and just sort of sighed? and he's like, I think I might be done with football this year. And I was like, Dad, what happened? And he goes, Aaron Rodgers keeps talking.

D Darci Ellenberger 02:50
I love your dad so much.

E Elle Billing 02:55
So do I

D Darci Ellenberger 02:56
His little-- like the stories or when he comes into the work room when we're hanging out? Like oh my god, he's the best.

E Elle Billing 03:02
Yeah, he's like, first it was Brett Farve and the fraud case. He's like, he stole money from poor kids! He's like now? Aaron Rodgers is a conspiracy, antivax guy? he's like, What is with these guys? He's like, can't they just be normal?? And it's just it's really disappointing for him. He's been a Packer fan his whole life.

D Darci Ellenberger 03:25
Yeah, my partner like debates giving up football. Like, as a fan. Frequently, like he's gone whole seasons without watching because he's just like, basically, like, players doing terrible things. And like there being no consequences for it, really kind of gets under his skin, which I appreciate. And he's like, I think that's it. No NFL for me this year. And I'm like, Okay, sounds good.

E

Elle Billing 03:52

Yeah. So, since we talked about working from bed, which is usually where I am, if I'm not painting, and you're there right now, how have you received care this week, Darci? Well, or in the last week? Since we're recording on a Monday?

D

Darci Ellenberger 04:05

Yeah, I'm gonna go back seven days. So one of the best ways that that I receive care, and I'm, I think that we don't talk about this as a privilege enough, but I have the privilege of having a really stable family of origin and parents who are very supportive and my mom especially, because my dad has his own health issues, but my mom is in good health. And she basically, like really gives me the care I need in a way that I can't get anywhere else. I think like, I don't know, moms just do it better. You know. And so last week that looked like, she went, we moved back when I was pregnant with my daughter to our hometown, and I was not really in favor of moving back to our hometown, but it's things like this that made me glad we did, in addition to my daughter being close with her grandparents, obviously that's that was the main driver of the choice, for me, but I was really stretched thin last week and did not know how I was going to make it to pick up my prescription. And I really needed it. And she went and got my prescription and dropped it off at my house and like, left it in between my screen doors and like, doesn't seem like major thing. But it was such a huge help to me. And it's the type of help that I think a lot of people don't have on hand. So that was one of the ways I received care in the last week also, the prescription was my ADHD medicine, which I have not been able to get since October,

E

Elle Billing 05:32

right? Because there's such a shortage of it.

D

Darci Ellenberger 05:34

Yes. And that has been, I have not wanted to look at how devastating the shortage has been for me. I haven't wanted to look at too closely it at how much it was impacting me, I was just like, well, it is what it is, we're just gonna keep going. But when I got the text, the automatic text that was like, your prescription is filled. And I haven't seen that since September of last year. I almost started crying. And I was like, oh, maybe this is having more of an impact than I've been willing to admit. So, you know, just the medical system may be working a little bit properly, or the way it should for a second for me was another lovely surprise piece of care that I received. That should be standard, but isn't.

E

Elle Billing 06:26

Yeah, I get that. I went three months without my emergency migraine meds. I had my maintenance drugs, but not my-- they're called they're called abortive meds, which I'm sure people love to hear. But that's, but that's what it's called. When you get a migraine and you're

trying to interrupt a migraine attack, it's called an abortive medication. And I went three months without mine, because Medicaid just decided I needed prior authorization. And my doctor tried like three or four or five times and they said nope, you need this. It doesn't count or this is we're not going to take it and then they finally came back and said actually you need to try triptan I can't take triptans because of other medication that I'm on.

D

Darci Ellenberger 07:04

Because the insurance company knows more than your doctor.

E

Elle Billing 07:07

Right? Well, if the insurance company had looked at the other medications they're paying for, they would have known that I can't take a triptan. Because it's contraindicated by my other prescriptions. So I went like three months without it. And one day, like same as you, I got the automatic text said your prescription has been filled and I was like, I didn't call one in this week. Is it possible that this is my Nurtec? Dare I hope?

D

Darci Ellenberger 07:33

Right.

E

Elle Billing 07:33

And so I went in and I was like, hey I got a text and they're like, Yeah, your Nurtec got filled. And it what it took was the Pharmacy Tech had to get on the phone with like the state of North Dakota's Medicaid prescription people. Apparently she's had to do that a lot since the first of the year for a lot of different medications for people. Just the first of the year, their formulary changed or they got stricter or something changed in--probably the COVID emergency Medicaid extension or whatever it was. But she said yeah, it's she's like, I've spent a lot of time on the phone for people this year. But I got it filled and it was like the most exciting day ever. So I totally get that excitement of getting a text from the pharmacy. It's like, oh, this is my life now.

D

Darci Ellenberger 08:17

Yeah,

E

Elle Billing 08:17

I'm excited to get texts from the pharmacy.

D

Darci Ellenberger 08:20

Yeah,

E

Elle Billing 08:20

they sometimes give me the senior discount if I'm there on senior day. I'm 39.

D

Darci Ellenberger 08:26

That hasn't happened to me yet. But

E

Elle Billing 08:28

but I'm also like, I pick up stuff from my parents too. But I'm there all the time. I'm there all the time, because I can't get 90 Day fills on some of my meds. So I'm there every month for half my medications and they're not, of course, filled at the same time,

D

Darci Ellenberger 08:42

right? You can't sync them, heaven forbid.

E

Elle Billing 08:46

And it's a small town pharmacy. They know everybody and one of the semi retired pharmacists was in my dad's wedding. My my parents' wedding; is a friend of my dad was in my parents' wedding. My dad was best man in his wedding. It was just one of those small town they know everybody things.

D

Darci Ellenberger 09:01

Gotcha. Gotcha. Yeah. Well, the CVS Pharmacy texts are frequently wrong or operating with outdated information. So I was just like, this is this is probably, this is probably not real. Don't get your hopes up, Darci. And then I called and they were like, yeah, it went through. I was like, Oh my God. Yay!

E

Elle Billing 09:22

I had trouble with CVS when I was in Idaho.

D

Darci Ellenberger 09:25

I've never NOT had trouble with CVS.

E Elle Billing 09:27
Yeah, I was like, I don't think I've heard many good stories about CVS.

D Darci Ellenberger 09:30
No I mean,

E Elle Billing 09:30
good stories that I have about CVs are all about individual pharmacists or techs that are not about the not about the actual corporation

D Darci Ellenberger 09:40
100% Yeah, so But bless bless the good pharmacy techs, because and and pharmacists, because they've had a rough, a rough few years,

E Elle Billing 09:50
they really have so so if people haven't picked up on it already, we're both chronically ill, and trying to run businesses at the same same time

D Darci Ellenberger 10:00
YUP

E Elle Billing 10:01
but we have support teams.

D Darci Ellenberger 10:02
Yeah, yeah, I think we found we found our community.

E Elle Billing 10:06
So you want to tell me a little bit about running your business as somebody who is chronically ill and dynamically disabled? Because yours, you ebb and flow a lot?

D

Darci Ellenberger 10:15

Yes. Yeah.

E

Elle Billing 10:16

So what does that ebb and flow kind of look like?

D

Darci Ellenberger 10:19

Well, I mean, one thing to clarify, like when we say we have support teams, I don't like I don't actually have employees or contractors that I go to, I do my support team looks like a co working community, a business support unity, the Catalysts, which is, of course, where I met you. And, honestly, the Catalyst is the reason I don't have to hire a contractor. Because it's amazing. And the support there is fantastic and you get so much. And the best part is, it's so flexible, because when things ebb and flow the way they do with me, and it is so unpredictable, it makes it really hard to commit to a contractor and commit to, you know, an employee, something like that, when I'm like, I don't know what I'm going to be able to do this month. So something like the Catalyst is set up where you know, it's self serve to a certain extent, like you have to show up and ask for what you need. But then it's unlimited support when you need it. It's just a dream come true. So such a game changer for my business. As far as like being there for clients and dealing with fluctuations in my ability to show up. That has been an ongoing question in my business. And, you know, I've gone through periods of burnout when I have misjudged how much I can do, when flares hit me out of the blue, but I did, I pivoted to done-with-you services. I mean, some of it, you just learn over time, like what works and what doesn't, you try different things to see what feels good. But for me, being in the Catalyst and experiencing done-with-you support, and then reciprocating with my own copywriting support for fellow Catalyst members made me see that done-with-you copywriting works, which, prior to that, I never would have thought to try it. Because the idea of like, having a client be right there virtually with me, as I'm like, drafting their copy was terrifying. The horror of being seen, yeah. Having your rough draft seen, it's like no, no, you get to see the final one, the one that I decide is like, good enough, right? I don't know about letting you see the horrible, first 100 drafts. Because writing is messy, which, you know, plenty of writers know. But non writers don't know, a lot of people just think, oh, you're a copywriter, the first thing you write is great. And I'm like, I really, really wish that were the case. It's absolutely not. So but kind of taking the pressure off and having it be getting to try it out in the Catalyst and just, you know, being in their co working and someone's like, Oh, I'm really stuck on this piece of copy. And I'm like, Oh, well, you could do this. And even the first couple of times, I was like, nervous letting people see that it's messy at first. And then I discovered that actually, it was really good for both of us, for them to see that it was messy because people appreciated it more. By the time you got it to the part that's to the form that's like, I'm willing to have the public. They were like, oh, like, instead of realizing that perfect words don't fall out of my mouth, instead of that undermining my authority. It was it was to quote my math teacher, like, it showed my work. And they were like, Oh, this is why it's hard. And oh, this is it made them value what I did, because I can't tell you how many times when I was like first testing this out. People were like, from where you where it was to where you got it to like I couldn't have gotten it there. So they valued the work because they saw it fully. But then on top of that, it also did kind of destigmatize it for them, it

became they're not bad writers because they were holding themselves to this standard of well, if I was a good writer, the first thing I wrote would be good. And then they're like, I know Darci is a good writer. The first thing she writes is not good.

E

Elle Billing 14:50

Right? It's that permission to be messy.

D

Darci Ellenberger 14:52

Yes, exactly. And they're like oh, the people who are great at this are also messy. So me being messy doesn't actually mean anything, so, and I love giving that to people, like I really love, if you if you can watch me be messy, and it can make you feel better, or give yourself permission to be messy. I'm all for it. Like, that's the best thing that can come out of me being a hot mess. You know?

E

Elle Billing 15:19

Yeah

D

Darci Ellenberger 15:19

That's what I want. I just want everyone else to feel better and not be as hard on themselves.

E

Elle Billing 15:23

I kind of feel that way about going slow and resting. Like if I, if my life can inspire people to think about rest and working rest into their routine, then we're good.

D

Darci Ellenberger 15:35

Yeah, and the reason the reason I value that is because I benefit so much from it, exactly like what you just described. I need people to model resting for me. I need as many people demonstrating, hey, this is what it looks like to actually be human. To counteract all of the inhuman messaging we get. Because that's the default in my brain, unfortunately, no matter how much I try and unlearn,

E

Elle Billing 16:00

right, I mean, we grow up with that. That's, you know, the ocean that we the fish are swimming in. And it's hard, right? You're not aware of it when you're swimming in it, because it's just how you live.

D Darci Ellenberger 16:09
Yeah, but even once you become aware of it, it's still all around you.

E Elle Billing 16:13
Yep.

D Darci Ellenberger 16:13
There's no getting away from it.

E Elle Billing 16:15
Yeah,

D Darci Ellenberger 16:16
so you're still in the ocean. So you just gotta be, start talking to yourself and be like, it's normal to be wet. It is normal. That's probably bad. Okay, well,

E Elle Billing 16:30
Ricki, if you want...

D Darci Ellenberger 16:34
I'm fine leaving it in, although I'm a little worried about like it being on the internet at large. My voice just, you know, edit it down to a snippet. I'm like, oh,

E Elle Billing 16:44
yeah, Ricki always picks like the best out of context, one liner and puts it at the very end as a stinger. So like after I do that, thanks for listening to Hoarf podcast, if you could leave us a review, that'd be really great. And all that should be Oh, and then there's like a little pause. And then there's like a stinger of like, the one weird thing. Well, there's always a weird thing. But like, so it'll be Darci going. It's normal to be wet.

D Darci Ellenberger 17:09
That's fine with me

that's me with me.

E Elle Billing 17:11

The episode that just came out today. It's I had interviewed Ricki's kid, my step, my step kid. And it's one of the longer stingers because it's us going back and forth about my cat, which lives with them. And I'm like, she just wants to create mayhem

D Darci Ellenberger 17:27

That's a good one. That's excellent.

E Elle Billing 17:28

Yeah, it was pretty good. So yeah, so I don't know if you're like me, I think you are. I mean, we're a lot alike. But as far as landing in the Catalyst, before I got there, I had tried a lot of stuff. Different places.

D Darci Ellenberger 17:42

Yeah.

E Elle Billing 17:43

And a lot of business things. So you, you do copywriting. I'm an artist. And I don't know how many times I've said this, I want I want to wanted to be an artist, I never wanted to be a small business owner. Yeah. But if you don't sell your paintings, they pile up pretty fast. So I gotta get them out of the house somehow. And you can't do that unless you're like marketing them. And so the business side of things has always been a little tricky for me, but kind of the art side too, because I'm, I used to say self taught, but I'm not self taught. I'm community taught artist, and even a lot of the art stuff and art business stuff. And like plain business stuff is really formulaic. But that's available for people who are like self taught or looking for online communities and resources is kind of formulaic. One size fits all, do this, and you will get seven figure income.

D Darci Ellenberger 18:42

Yep.

E Elle Billing 18:42

And if you're not, then it's your fault. Or it's inaccessible to people who are neuro sparkly or neuro spicy or neurodivergent. However you choose to identify, or otherwise disabled, or it's just exhausting.

D Darci Ellenberger 18:56
Yeah,

E Elle Billing 18:57
because we know

D Darci Ellenberger 18:57
or under resourced like yeah, anyone who's not, you know, privileged with a ton of resources in any department

E Elle Billing 19:04
time, money, energy, wellness.

D Darci Ellenberger 19:06
Yeah,

E Elle Billing 19:07
especially like, because like our disease and pain management is already a full time job.

D Darci Ellenberger 19:12
Yes.

E Elle Billing 19:13
Like, when I was on medical leave from my teaching job before I ultimately left, I was tracking how many hours a day I was spending on pain management, and was like, this is a full time job. Like just my PT and OT to try and get the feeling and use back into my, like, I could use my fingers. I just didn't have any feeling in the tips of my fingers and like my arms, they'd pinched nerves and like the fibro was so bad. Like, I couldn't hold my arms up for extended periods of time. I was doing like two to four hours of PT and OT a day. Like how was I supposed to work? There was no way, plus all the napping. I was trying to recover. That's a full time job. And then we're trying to run businesses on the side. So like what? Just out of all the things we've tried.

I'm like, I'm trying to think of all the different places that I landed before I got into the catalyst. Like what is it? Like? What were some of the places or things that you tried that weren't a good fit before you found what worked for you?

D Darci Ellenberger 20:11

I mean, most of the things I tried prior--

E Elle Billing 20:14

not to not I don't want to throw anybody under the bus.

D Darci Ellenberger 20:16

No, I'm not gonna name names.

E Elle Billing 20:18

But like, I also think it's important to talk about

D Darci Ellenberger 20:20

Yeah,

E Elle Billing 20:21

what didn't work,

D Darci Ellenberger 20:21

I'll say, like, I, shortly before joining the catalyst, I had made a large investment by my standards, on a business support membership. That over promised and under delivered, and I think, probably worked for a small portion of the people that bought into it, but probably not the majority. And that taught me a lot. It was a good lesson to learn. But it really, that one stung a lot. Everything else I, I knew myself well enough, thankfully, because I started my business, you know, 10 or 12 years into my chronic illness and disability. So I was aware that like traditional solutions, typically don't work for me already and had built kind of like finding what works for me and to my process and all things already. But as you said, like the things that are available at a certain price point or at a certain level of knowledge, you know, tend to be cookie cutter and just often don't work out the way you want them to. So I would say like I honestly, I probably wouldn't have joined the Catalyst if I didn't know Marissa, beforehand. Thankfully, I knew Marissa I knew how giving she is with her knowledge. And also, I was one of the first members. So I'm sure it was a ridiculous steal, because she was kind of like, just

figuring out what it was going to be. And I got to really be there from the very beginning and see it develop into what it is now. Which is just the most incredible community. But even now, when I like tell people about it. I don't always feel like I'm coming. I'm like, I'm not I don't, I never want to like proselytize anyone, and I never want people to think that I'm like, over promising,

E Elle Billing 22:19
right

D Darci Ellenberger 22:20
--because the way I describe it sounds too good to be true. And I certainly think that it might not be right, for everybody, like competing access needs are a thing. If you are not someone who is ever going to be able to work up the nerve to pop into the room and be a little vulnerable at first until you get comfortable, then, yeah, I would say don't join, you know, like, and that's okay. If you're shy, nothing wrong with being shy, like know yourself and know what you can do and can't do within reason. And maybe there's a different solution out there. That is a better fit.

E Elle Billing 23:03
That's That's what was difficult for me at first was, I could just start talking,

D Darci Ellenberger 23:09
right?

E Elle Billing 23:09
I just say, hey, I need help. Like I couldn't believe like that's, that's all it is like, it's that easy. But that's also really hard.

D Darci Ellenberger 23:17
Right.

E Elle Billing 23:18
When you've been trained not to ask for help.



D Darci Ellenberger 23:20
Yeah, not to need anything, right train not to need any

E Elle Billing 23:23
thank God for the chatbox. Because like, that's where I started. I was like, How do I ask for help? And they're like, Oh, you just ask. I was like, like, do I make an appointment? And they're like, No, you just start talking. And out. I was like, okay, like, I just turn my mic on and I ask? like, now I get there and I'm like, and everyone's like, hey, Elle!, and I'm like, hey guys!!

D Darci Ellenberger 23:51
right?

E Elle Billing 23:51
It was hard. At first, it was hard. At first, there was just a lot of me lurking and listening to everybody else. Which is also a thing I love about it, because I didn't even know what kind of questions I should be asking. Like, that's how unbusiness-y I am. But listening to other people build things. I was like, Oh, I could be doing that. Oh, that's the thing that I haven't done very well. I could fix that. It's like, Oh, I'm gonna ask for help on that next week.

D Darci Ellenberger 24:22
Like, exactly. I can't tell you like, it almost for me swings too far in that direction. Where I'm like, I really like that idea. Just like the general or I'm like, oh, yeah, I do need to do that too. But I don't have time. Yeah, you're gonna make a note and come back to it later. Don't get distracted by the sparkly things other people are doing

E Elle Billing 24:44
well and the things that you make, Darci, are so sparkly. That actually--that was there was the one time when you were sharing like your content planning. It was like the the spider graph or whatever.

D Darci Ellenberger 24:56
Yeah, yeah.

E Elle Billing 24:57
The bubble graph And in my head, I was like, I'm supposed to have a content plan?? I was like, Well, I don't want to start from scratch. I'll just ask Darci if I can have hers.

D Darci Ellenberger 25:09
Oh, yeah,

E Elle Billing 25:09
I'll just add my own stuff to it. And I asked, and you did?

D Darci Ellenberger 25:14
Oh, good. I was like,

E Elle Billing 25:15
yeah, no, you shared with

D Darci Ellenberger 25:16
you like, you were like you said you would share it, but never did.

E Elle Billing 25:20
You did like that day. I was like, Oh, thank you so much!

D Darci Ellenberger 25:24
Oh, my favorite thing is to be like, Hey, guys, look at this thing I did in Canva.

E Elle Billing 25:29
Look at this pretty thing I made in Canva. I was like, can you share that with Me? I'll just put my words on it.

D Darci Ellenberger 25:35
Yes, always. Yeah, always. So obviously, copywriting is my main thing and whatever. But of course, you know, being neuro sparkly, like, I like all the things. And so you know, it creeps out. And I'm like, I love design. And I love the brainstorming, and the planning, and the strategy and all that. And so then I want all of that to be pretty too, because I'm just like, why why not make

it pretty if it can be pretty. And so I love kind of that, you know, in my own done-with-you membership, Candy Club, it's advertised as being about copy, and you 100% can come in and get copy help. But also, I have members that come in, and they're like, I have no idea what to design for Instagram. And I'm like, oh, okay, and we open up a file, and I just start and I'm like, What about something like this? What about something? And so I get to, like, play graphic design. Even though that's not what I do. So I mean, efficiently,

E Elle Billing 26:34
like adjacent skills?

D Darci Ellenberger 26:35
Yeah, yeah. So I mean, hey, if they're, they're happy asking me for it. I'm happy to give it so.

E Elle Billing 26:41
Well, that's like, so I run Spoonie Studio.

D Darci Ellenberger 26:44
Yeah,

E Elle Billing 26:44
and which is a, like a virtual art studio space for disabled and chronically ill creatives of any discipline. And it's technically two-hour space, time and space for working on whatever creative projects we have going on. But the conversation has never been limited to just art stuff. There's one member of Spoonie Studio who is a filmmaker, but is learning to paint with acrylics. And so she was like, Can I ask a stupid question? Can I ask a stupid question? I'm like there's no stupid questions. We're all here to make stuff. And so she's asking a lot of like, acrylic painting 101 questions, which I love helping people learn that because that was me before. I had to learn that somewhere. But then we get into conversations about productivity and internalized ableism because we're all, you know, exhausted and in pain. And we're like, well, we didn't feel like we did very much this week. I'm like, Yeah, but like, you're here, like you did something. And like, pain management is a thing. Like you can count pain management as a task you accomplished.

D Darci Ellenberger 27:50
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 27:51

E Elle Billing 27:51

For me, showering is a task that I accomplished. Before we recorded today. I showered and then I had to like, wait for my core temperature to go back down. So I could, you know, come and record.

D Darci Ellenberger 28:03

I considered showering prior to coming here and then was like, I don't have the energy for that. Yeah.

E Elle Billing 28:08

Oh, yeah. No, I was just too gross. I don't think I could have focused if I hadn't showered. But I'm like ice water. Now.

D Darci Ellenberger 28:14

I'm right. I'm right on the middle where I'm like, my, I'm like, I want to wash my hair. But it's not to the point where I'm like, This is all I can think about. So I was like, Yeah, we're gonna save the energy. So I'm not too foggy for our conversation.

E Elle Billing 28:27

Right nope, I get it. The type of thing we have to plan for

D Darci Ellenberger 28:31

Yeah.

E Elle Billing 28:31

And that's the kind of thing we talk about in Spoonie Studio is like, our agendas, our planners, our task lists inherently look different. And it's okay that they don't live up to or match or are completely incompatible and incomparable to an abled or Well, or healthy person's to do list.

D Darci Ellenberger 28:53

We really have to give ourselves credit for the fact that I mean, at least for me, this shit is not predictable. No! it's not like I -- Yes, I can overdo it and know that I'm asking for trouble. But there's plenty of times when I either had no way of knowing that I was going to be overtaxed, like very recently, and as has happened 10 times already this year, when my seven year old started throwing up on Thursday evening and as just like, great, great. Amazing. There goes my weekend, like, obviously, I'm happy to take care of her. And I wouldn't want to be anywhere

else when she's sick anyway. But it's just like, there's no accounting for that. There's no saving up energy for that. I have the energy I have, you know, and if I get into a deficit, I'm into a deficit and there's no gaining effects. So you just kind of I don't know how I'm gonna feel from one day to the next. And that's not my fault. It's not within my control. But it doesn't mean that I shouldn't be able to do what I love, that I can't help people with their copy, that I can't help businesses that are trying to make the world better, like get their message out there, you know, or, or other chronically ill and disabled, small business owners like feel more confident in their copy and in their messaging, I just had to find a way to deliver it that, you know, worked with my body. So thankfully done with you is that because for copywriting, the standard project is, you know, you meet and hire a copywriter to create a specific thing, your website copy, or launch emails or email, welcome sequence or whatever. And that's the thing and like for website for complete website, copy timeline could be anywhere from a month to three months, more if you have to wait to start because they the copywriter's booked. And not only was that not sustainable for me, that custom project template like does not work well. I don't even think the clients who can easily afford it and easily manage it. Like it's a lot of waiting. And even though the end result is great, that waiting time always seem to kind of have the client feeling anxious no matter how much I could build in to be like this, what's going on. And this is totally normal, it being back behind the curtain, just made them worry that they had invested all this money, and it wasn't going to be good. So until we had like done one project together and gone to the next that always seem to have them stressed. And I don't want my clients to be stressed when they're working with me. But then on top of that it just isn't super accessible to people like me, like part of why I don't hire contractors. For custom projects. Would I have loved to have a custom designed website? Yes. Fabulous saves me the time of doing it. But can I manage the project management tasks and getting the designer what they need? And all of that and the upfront costs? And all like, No, it's too much on top of what I'm already managing. So I built my own with the help of Marissa and the Catalyst, thank God. And because of that I have a website I really love. But I mean, that was not without putting a lot of my own sweat equity into it. So all that being said, like chronically ill disabled neurodivergent custom projects just don't feel like a great fit. And the other thing is like about custom projects, sorry, being ADD right now, like, oh, wait, I forgot one thing!-- is that it's focused on one thing, your business needs so many words, and what feels super important right now in the early years of your business can change. By the time you're halfway through that website, you're like, Oh, I've decided, I mean, I've had more established brands be like we've decided to pivot. And I'm like, That's awesome. But I wrote this copy based on that. I mean, we can pivot. But if I'm starting the work from scratch, you're paying me again.

E

Elle Billing 33:16

Yeah, it's like pay me,

D

Darci Ellenberger 33:18

you know, like, it's well within your rights to want to pivot and your business. But I can't just scratch the work I just did. Whereas with done with you, I can like done with you. Someone comes into Candy Club Mini and says, you know, I really need to fix my homepage. Okay, fine. We work on fixing their homepage, they feel better about it, they go away. They can come back to the next meeting, which they're two weeks apart and be like, I have a different ideal client. Now, I want to make the homepage copy specific to that. I'm like, that's fine. I haven't been

working on it all that time. Like we do what we do in the room together. And then it's done. It's not like I did all this work that then I have to throw in the trash. Like, it's your website. If you want to change it, let's go change it so that we change it again, like that really suits me too. Because I do think like, especially in the earlier years, your brand is going to evolve, your messaging needs to evolve, your copy will evolve, like none of it is carved in stone. It's you know, a beautiful painting that you hang in a museum and it's there forever. Like, no no! beauty of the internet is that you can change it, like no whiteout necessary. So if there's a way to make it better, let's go make it better right now. So you can do all of that was done with you. People can come in and be like, I really have no idea where to even start. And if you have no idea where to even start, how are you going to hire a copywriter? like, people are gonna think they're not ready, but they need copy from like day one. So they get stuck and their business isn't growing because the copy is confusing, but they can't pay a custom project copywriter the money that they're not making because like it's just an endless loop. So anyway, so yeah, I love done-with-you. It's super flexible. You can get what you need when you need it. And I also can show up, and I give you what I've got that day, and I haven't promised anything. In the future, it's just a lot less taxing for me to be able to be like, you have full access to all my copy knowledge for the next two hours go. And instead of being like, I'm going to make this thing and work on it over the next three weeks for you.

E Elle Billing 35:33

Yeah, I totally get it. When I got sick, and the migraines started to get really bad, I felt so flaky and unreliable, even though like it wasn't, it felt like a character flaw, even though it had nothing to do with my character, right? Or I felt like other people perceived it that way. And I think being able to offer things on a done-with-you basis. And like for you. And then for me, like limiting the number of commitments that I agree to on a day or a week. The way I have my calendar set up is I can only do like a certain number of things a week helps me stay in integrity with my commitments, because I do like to overcommit myself, because I want to do all the things. I want to do everything people asked me to do. I like to be involved. But my body and my brain tells me No, you gotta rest.

D Darci Ellenberger 36:28

Yeah.

E Elle Billing 36:28

And then I feel flaky. And then there's that internalized judgment, that judgment of like, oh, I had to cancel. I can't I had to bail. I had to reschedule. I can't be there, which is honestly rescheduling is fine. Like there's nothing wrong inherently wrong with canceling or rescheduling. People do it all the time. Most deadlines are arbitrary. I mean, the number of times that I email when people and I, when I email back and forth with people, I'm like, I'm not here to create urgency. Like, there's no, you know, all the deadlines I have for the podcast are completely self imposed. Like none of them are like the IRS. And even the IRS, you can file an extension. Like there are no deadlines. They're all fake. But I also want to be like, able to follow through on my commitments, right? So it's just this weird balance of like, How can I do that with a body that's fickle. And that's to limit my commitments to just a couple a week,

D Darci Ellenberger 37:22

I used to say that deadlines make me want to die. And I was it's not hyperbole. But like, but now I say deadlines are dead to me, because I've basically eliminated them in my business with, thanks to done with you. And I do think that deadlines, like with the the custom copy model, the deadlines are necessary, as much as it pains me to say,

E Elle Billing 37:47

right

D Darci Ellenberger 37:47

because without them, when projects would get off track, I would have committed to working on something and then not being able to do it because the client didn't get what me what I needed, that would push things out. And when you can only take on so many clients at a time, and you've blocked out that time and then it doesn't get used. It really it cuts into your income and made it so like my business could not one one project going wrong, threaten my whole business.

E Elle Billing 38:16

Right.

D Darci Ellenberger 38:16

And to some extent, that was an issue with me not charging enough. But that also is just true for that model of copywriting. And so like I don't, I don't and I don't blame clients for needing me to stick to deadlines for the same reason. And all of that like, as much as I understand that. I'm also like, I can't prioritize that over my health

E Elle Billing 38:39

exactly

D Darci Ellenberger 38:40

or my clients health. If my client is having a health issue, like I'm, I'm going to push it, and whatever. So I really had to find a way to just get away from deadlines altogether, because I couldn't find a way to stay profitable, and be in integrity with how I feel about them. And the type of latitude I want to extend to my clients, I want them to be able to be fully human and get sick. We are in a pandemic, like I need to be able to allow for that. But the capitalist model is

like no, no machines only like, right, you know, so done with you was really, that was the ultimate goal was getting me away from deadlines, so that I didn't have to enforce them. And I didn't have to meet them. But my clients still got what they needed. And I got to do what I love to do. Yeah.

E Elle Billing 39:32

And I think that is a good place to sort of wrap up and say that that's the beauty of the place where we both finally landed, is that we get to make the rules for our own business. We don't have to follow anybody else's models.

D Darci Ellenberger 39:44

Yeah. And you get to learn from so many different businesses, which is the best part. I mean, like I love so much that when I started realizing that like done with you copy writing worked. Marissa was like, you should make this a thing, like you should create a membership for your business with it. And I'm like, I can't do that. That'd be like the Catalyst. I'd be copying you. And she's like, that's, that's, we don't do that here. Do it.

E Elle Billing 40:09

There's enough for everybody.

D Darci Ellenberger 40:11

Yes, exactly. And so I, I mean, certainly how I already feel about things, but it's just lovely that, you know, it's modeled so well, in the Catalyst. And they have been cheering me on the entire time. I've built Candy Club Mini. And my business would look so different. And I wouldn't know you if I hadn't joined the catalyst. So that was great. Yep.

E Elle Billing 40:36

So if people want to join Candy Club or Candy Club Mini, how do they find you?

D Darci Ellenberger 40:41

you can go to my website, sweettoothcreative.com Candy Club, the higher tier which is 40 hours a month of done with you co working co writing support is currently closed. But enrollment is probably going to open up again this summer. But you know, hey, deadlines, and life. Yeah, Candy Club minis open year round, anyone can come in anytime. And join. And we meet twice a month for two hours each time. And you can get my eyes and my brain on looking at whatever you want. Whether that's copy content, design strategy, whatever. And then since it's a podcast, I also have my own podcast launching soon called Brand Jam.

E Elle Billing 40:43
Great. Brand Jam?

D Darci Ellenberger 41:29
Brand Jam.

E Elle Billing 41:30
yummy, delicious.

D Darci Ellenberger 41:31
Yes.

E Elle Billing 41:33
More sugar!

D Darci Ellenberger 41:36
We my co hosts I was like, Brand Jam-- when I suggested Brand Jam as the name was like, you know, and that could mean like just like fun hanging out talking whatever. Or we could lean into the food aspect of it. But that might be to like much my brand and not your brand because like obviously I leaned into the sweets really hard and I didn't want to take over. Cuz I'm I wanted to make sure she didn't feel like I was dominating anything. And she's like, No, all the bread puns, please, like more. So it's great.

E Elle Billing 42:09
YES,

D Darci Ellenberger 42:09
fully leaned into it. And it makes me very happy.

E Elle Billing 42:11
Let's get that bread.

D

Darci Ellenberger 42:13

She made the cutest little illustrations and stuff for the logo on the website. I I can't wait for us to get our act together and actually publish it. But season one's done and recorded and edited. And we just have to get it out there. So should be soon.

E

Elle Billing 42:30

Well, that sounds great.

D

Darci Ellenberger 42:32

Yeah, and you can find us on socials at Brand jam pod.com Or No sorry, not.com for the socials at Brand jam pod, or the website, which is not published yet, but hopefully will be by the time this airs, brandjampod.com

E

Elle Billing 42:49

Great. Thank you so much for being here.

D

Darci Ellenberger 42:51

Thank you for having me.

E

Elle Billing 42:56

Thank you for joining us on this episode of Hoorf. To view the complete show notes and all the links mentioned in today's episode, or to get a full transcript of the episode, visit Hoorf podcast.com that's H O O R F podcast.com. Before you go make sure you subscribe to the podcast so you can receive new episodes right when they're released. And if you're enjoying our podcast, I'd love to have you leave us a review and Apple podcasts. Reviews are one of the major ways that Apple ranks their podcasts. So even though it only takes you a few seconds, it really does make a difference for us. Become a patron for \$3 a month you can support the creation of this podcast, pay my editor and join a community of fellow caregivers out here just doing our best. Thank you again for joining me Elle Billing in this episode of Hoorf. Until next time, be excellent to each other. Hoorf is hosted by Elle Billing @elleandwink , audio editing by Ricki Cummings @rickiep00h music composed by Ricki Cummings, Hoorf is a production of Ellen wink art studio all rights reserved. Hoorf podcast can be found on social media channels @hoorfpodcast at H O O R F podcast. Yeah, Ricki always picks like the best out of context one liner and puts it at the very end