

Hello, welcome to the Neuro Nest.

I am your host, Sarah Shotts.

I am an autistic artist and author and parent, and I am here to hold space and answer questions about neurodivergence, especially as it intersects with creativity.

I am the host of a community.

We're in a testing phase, an experimental phase right now, but I'm feeling good about it.

It's a community over on Discord where we can support each other, talk about neurodivergent supports and experience, and also art as a self-regulation tool.

So members of the community can submit questions, and then I will answer them in podcast form.

I have a new mic coming on the way that I can upgrade my little car podcast studio, just a titch.

The audio quality should improve.

And I was going to wait until it comes in.

But then I decided that wasn't really in the spirit of this.

This is show up with what you have, with the capacity you have, with the tools that you have, that you don't have to wait until things are perfect to show up.



And so I'm doing the thing.

My partner and my kid are asleep and I'm sitting in the car and recording a podcast because night is the time that I have reclaimed for my creative reset time because I need sleep, but I also need creativity, creative output.

And so I'm experimenting with podcast as a form that I weave into my creative ecosystem.

So those are all things that we can talk about later.

But the question that we are here for tonight is about managing energetic capacity.

So the question is, how do you manage your energetic capacity?

And this is specifically within the lens of neurodivergence.

Obviously, every human has an energetic capacity, but as neurodivergence, as autistic, or someone with sensory processing, ADHD, there are all different types of neurodivergence. we are often encouraged to push, push, push past our actual capacity to meet neurotypical expectations, to exist in the neurotypical world, the neuronormative environment and culture that we live in.

And so often, especially if you're late diagnosed or not diagnosed, I didn't learn that I was autistic until I think it will be 10 years ago.

I think I'm coming up to my big 10 year, one decade diagnosed anniversary.



So that's something to think about next month, actually.

So yeah, it takes some time to wrap your head around when you think that something was your character flaw, you try to push and overcome.

And then you learn, no, this is just how my brain works. like I'm actually legitimately experiencing the world in a different way than most other people, it requires a totally different approach.

So I've been spending the last 10 years learning how to manage my energetic capacity.

And the first few years of that, I didn't do a great job.

So just like in a little bit of a nutshell, the approach that I had before I was a parent is that I would push so far past my capacity that I would essentially crash and then have a pretty long reset time like what to me feels now impossible because I have like another tiny human to keep alive.

I can't I kind of can't push myself as hard as I used to do.

So for example, I would go to a conference and I'm introverted and I would force myself to do that networking thing where you're talking to people, but it's not in like a natural way.

It's in a very, it wasn't natural to me.

I was pushing when I was trying to do these interactions and do the small talk and do the, you know, the business network-y thing.



And I would be so proud of myself for overcoming my quote shyness.

I didn't know, I didn't really know I was autistic when I first started doing this.

But even once I had the diagnosis, I had a tendency to keep like pushing that particular thing was something I could just overcome.

And also those kind of events are overstimulating, like it's energetically draining in a lot of ways.

Not all autistics are introverted, I am.

But anytime you're trying to pretend to be something that you're not when you're masking, that's draining.

So if you're an introvert that's trying to project more outgoing personality, that's draining.

Or if you're an extrovert that's trying to keep yourself smaller and not be too overwhelming, that's draining too.

If you're in environments that are overstimulating, if there's not really a plan, you're kind of out of your routine, like these are the kind of things that are energetically draining for me.

It's different for every person.

So I would push and push and push.



And I also didn't know I have chronic illness.

I've had it all my life, but I didn't know that at the time either.

And then I would come back and I would just crash and there would be no choice in it.

Luckily, I worked from home.

I had a very flexible teach from home, teach online university courses.

And so I would get my work done, but I didn't have to wake up and be somewhere at a certain time of day.

It was just me.

So I didn't have to take care of another human like I do now.

And so I would push and then I would basically like sleep for a week, like I would be at least a week just completely, totally depleted and just reset lots and lots of natural, whatever.

I didn't really have to think about what I needed to do because I just did it because I had the freedom to do that.

And I think sometimes we have this idea that certain people are quote, high functioning or low functioning.

And that's just not true.



It depends on what your, there's so many different factors that can affect what you're able to do, what you're able to push yourself to do.

And then people don't always see the effects, the after effects of that. um so I say I say that uh even just after knowing that I was autistic and that certain things were perhaps harder for me I didn't always use accommodations ask for accommodations or use sensory supports or even take into account the fact I would just plow through so that's where I'm coming from.

I think a lot of us, especially if we haven't, if we've kind of grown up not knowing this about ourselves, that we may not even know how it feels to not be over capacity, or anxious or overstimulated just because that has become like our normal experience in life.

So sometime time over the last 10 years, I think the kind of turning point for me was, you know, a lot of us just push until we can't anymore.

So we might not even consider that there's another option until we hit complete burnout.

And for me, that happened when I was a new parent, because I couldn't, you know, before that, I thought I could do anything.

I mean, I could do anything, but I would pay the price.

And so I suddenly didn't have the bandwidth.

I didn't have the white space, the capacity, like the first year of parenthood for me also overlapped with COVID.



So we didn't even have really, even if we wanted to have more of a support system, We really didn't.

I knew I was chronically ill at that point.

I was high risk.

So we had a very, very tight, masked circle.

And we didn't kind of go out.

I couldn't like, you know, right before COVID, my mom would sometimes watch the baby and I would go to the library and try to write.

And then that stopped very quickly.

But also I didn't really like part of me needed to write to process what was going on around me, but I also wasn't getting enough.

I needed way, way more reset than what I was getting, like not enough sleep, not enough quiet time, not enough creative time.

And I was trying my best.

I knew I needed all those things, but there were actual finite limits to what was possible with our resources and our particular, you know, environment, family, work, you know, situation, COVID, all that stuff.



So yeah, I suddenly realized I couldn't just do anything.

I couldn't just push through and not pay.

You know, my mental health completely spiraled.

I had like a true, true breakdown.

I tried many different kinds of therapy and really like The therapy did more harm than good because the therapist didn't understand autism very well.

They would be looking for other problems.

The problem for me was purely that I was so far beyond my capacity.

I was so overstimulated that I wasn't having enough sensory reset time.

I wasn't having enough regulation.

I wasn't having enough sleep.

All of those things were really important to me personally.

So I would say that the first step in managing your energetic capacity is giving yourself the permission to accept that you have a capacity, that you have like a limit to your capacity.



Because until I believed that I had a limit, I was always over extending myself.

I remember I actually had a mental health breakdown, burnout situation a couple of years before I had a kid.

And I had just taken on too much that even though I had a lot of flexibility and I had a really, like I said, I had this work from home flexible job, but I was also trying to do wedding cinematography.

I was blogging.

I was trying to, I recorded a new podcast every week.

I was, I was, I was, I had so many projects going on simultaneously and I was in some different groups.

And when I would share like everything that was going on, which to me felt completely normal.

And still I have a lot of projects.

It's part of like that nurse spicy brain that I have.

I thrive on projects, but sometimes if the projects are on rigid timelines, or if you're not very aware of managing your capacity while you are doing multiple projects and they're not in alignment in your creative ecosystem, that's where it can get dicey.

So I still have a lot of projects, but I try to be a lot more careful with managing them now, which I guess is what this episode is all about.



So step one, permission to have a finite capacity.

So permission to, there's no point in checking in with yourself to see how you're feeling.

If you're always going to tell yourself, well, no, just dig deeper, push through it.

And I think for those of us who have lived for many decades, um, doing that, that is not a switch that will flip overnight.

And for a lot of us, we have to kind of like hit a wall, hit the end of our rope, like however you want to put it.

Usually something big has to happen before we can accept that we're human and that we do have, we do have limits and there is an end to the rope.

There is an end to our capacity.

And I've, as I've been thinking about this question and how I wanted to talk about it over the last week.

Something that I keep circling back to is this idea.

And it's so foreign to me, because as I've said, like, this is how this is how I've lived.

I remember being like six years old, and it was like pushing me so far beyond my capacity to live through school, a single school day, it was more than my little six year old, autistic brain and body could handle.



And so when you're pushed so far before you're even an adult, like when you're just always, always doing that, it's unfathomable to me that not everyone feels that way.

That not everyone is in survival mode as a six-year-old to just get through school.

And so when people say, when most people imagine their capacity of what they're capable of doing, they aren't imagining what's putting them in pain, extreme anxiety.

What's pushing them to the point of suffering?

And a lot of us, suffering has become our status quo.

And so, of course, you're like, of course I could.

Yeah, that's within my capacity.

Like, it's completely normal for me to not be able to sleep.

And my brain is spiraling because I'm trying to think of everything I need to do.

And, you know, I'm almost like I can feel it coming up in my body right now, just remembering times where I've had so much on me.

And I just feel in that, that not everyone is living in fight or flight, because they've been living beyond capacity for decades, that some people can have an ease in their day.



And maybe they have a stress that spikes with a certain project or a certain life situation.

But some of us have had this underlying challenge on interacting with environments and social situations and, you know, tactile, like the clothes we're wearing, like so many extra things draining on our capacity, not to even mention the chronic illness side of things for me, that it's unfathomable for me to, like, I know I'm kind of still pushing beyond my capacity, but I'm pushing so much less hard than I used to do.

And it's really easy to get into that mindset of, you know, giving it all you've got.

And just the, like I said, the last week, trying to think about what it must be like to live without, without that, without that feeling.

Um, it's just food for thought when, uh, when, when, like my words are just kind of failing me at the concept of, at the concept of this.

So Step one, allow yourself to recognize that all humans, including you, you are human.

You're an imperfect human and no one is perfect.

And the striving for perfection is an impossible benchmark.

That you have a limited capacity, a limited bandwidth for what you can achieve.

And that's not a flaw.

That's what it means to be human.



And you don't have to push yourself so hard to be superhuman that you can allow yourself to have a limit.

So that's step one.

And it's very hard.

And it's not something you can just decide.

But it is a framework that you can continue to.

To.

What's the word for that?

Like this.

I could judge myself for not having the perfect word in the moment, but you know, verbal communication is not, not really my, why am I podcasting?

Because, because it's nice to have imperfect human connection like this is.

Um, so yeah, you can see it, you can watch it in real time.

This is happening here.

Um, we have to allow ourselves to be human.



We have to allow ourselves to have a limited capacity.

And right now I'm having a limited capacity for verbalizing.

So I'm going to consult my notes.

Yes, this is something I wrote down to say that so many of us wait until we're in burnout and we have no choice because when you've been pushing past your capacity for your whole life, where is the line?

I still don't know the answer to that, but it's something that I'm exploring and I'm trying to figure out.

So the step one is recognizing that you have a limit, you have a finite capacity and that your capacity is not how far you can go when you are in distress.

Your capacity is how far you can go and remain in well-being.

I'm still working on that.

So I have been teaching university for the last 10 years and I like online like the online classes I was mentioning.

I stopped those in January for health reasons.

And I had no idea how much that teaching job was pushing me beyond my capacity, because I had been doing it for so long.



I was teaching about 75 students a semester.

There was just, there's, you know, the grading and the emails and AI, they were starting to submit assignments in AI and the stress and the paperwork and, you know, filling out these academic integrity forms.

And, you know, it felt like, oh, this is flexible.

I can do this whenever.

Like I can just make it happen.

But all of the work was expanding to fill the time that I needed to be using to self-regulate and to rest and to use art for self-regulation.

I was like grading papers that were maybe or maybe not even written by a human.

So when I stopped that, I realized that that was more than I could, like, that it wasn't healthy, that I was, I was doing it, but that it was not something that I had the capacity to do that wasn't pushing me into a place of suffering.

But I didn't know I was suffering because I had been suffering for so long.

So when I stopped teaching, I have to be really careful.

When I end projects, I want to fill the space with something else.



And I definitely had that tendency where I was trying to fill that work with other work.

And I have to be really careful.

I have so many ideas.

I'm constantly trying to assess what's too much.

But when I pared back and actually allowed space for just being, for sitting outside in the rain, for pulling grass out of the garden, or reading books for fun, and hopping on Wheel of Time live streams for hours on end, just hanging out with my friends, that I wasn't always using my free time for a project, then those things could become more tools for self-regulation.

And I have since January, it's now September I feel like I'm finally at a place of like equilibrium like there are things that are pushing my capacity that are a little bit like there are family things going on there are seasonal health things going on that and I have to be careful I have lots of projects going on but on a daily basis I'm not pushing myself so hard that I'm not taking time to just like earlier today I played a video game what's that um and like you know just enjoying reading books with my kid and not feeling constantly like running all my checklists in the background like I've I've definitely like um I don't know much about driving manual uh cars but the gear that I'm in like I you know sometimes you're in the cars and they're like when you're at a when you're at a, um, like there's just arriving and there's so much energy in them.

And then sometimes you're in a car and it's just like chill and it's ready to go when it's time to move, but it's not like kind of vibrating.

Um, I don't, I don't drive manual cars, so I don't know what the name for that is, but it is a thing I felt when riding with other people.



Um, that, that, so I've been asked how I've achieved this, I guess.

Like what, how, how do you manage your energy levels?

And like so much of it before you can even get into the nitty gritty of like how to do it is giving yourself permission to have human limits and to let things go.

I only got here by quitting my job.

And we, the thing is we were in, we are in a financial situation where that's possible.

It wasn't even possible.

Like I couldn't have just done that, um, 10 years ago.

We needed it.

We needed the income from that.

Um, but it just so happened that in the last year when my health issues started to really come to a head, um, that my husband also got a raise that was for the exact amount that I was making from my job.

And so it really kind of shone a light on why am I doing this?

You know, like, we're okay, if we need we need this much money, we're okay.



We're not like rolling in it, but we have enough money to live.

We don't necessarily need more.

You know, we live in capitalism, everyone tells us we need more.

So I'm like, I'm going through this extra stress and distress and like constantly overworked for a little bit more money in the bank.

So, but still it's hard.

It's hard when you went and you had degrees and like you got them to do this job and to let the job go.

And it's a job a lot of people would love to have.

And suddenly like you're not financially contributing to the family.

Like I, I, I can't say that those things haven't been difficult and I'm processing them, but from a purely like wellbeing point of view, it was definitely the right choice.

And so, you know, as you know, I have my books, I'm experimenting with this neurodivergent club thing.

I have some, what do you call them?

Areas of revenue or what revenue streams.



But right now, everything just breaks even, like, full transparency.

It would be nice if that I would not feel worried, like, what if something happened to Nathan?

Would we be okay?

Like, what would happen?

But we're okay right now.

And I, you know, so I'm just saying that part of getting to this can sometimes be making hard choices about letting things go and really questioning your preconceived notions and of, you know, what's necessary and what you need and what's more important, values, all that stuff.

But we're going to get more into the specifics.

But before we got to that, I just felt like the philosophy of it was really like way more important and like really, really the root of the problem.

And then once you allow that, you can start to see possibilities of saying no to things, saying not just not now.

When I very first started, when I had my very first kind of burnout, the thing that I did is I wrote a blog post and I said, I'm having a yes hiatus.

I couldn't even say no.



And so when people would ask me to do something or for an opportunity, because at the time I was like really kind of buzzing in a local blogger group, really, really active.

And so people would be like, hey, do you want to be featured on this or you want to do that?

And so instead of saying yes, which is what I would normally do, absolutely, of course, what do you need?

I'll do it the day before you want it, whatever.

I would say I am on a yes hiatus.

I'll get back to you in a month.

You know, I can't do it right now because I'm on a yes hiatus.

And 100% of the people that I told that to were like, that's amazing.

I need to practice doing that.

I'm so proud of you for saying that.

I love seeing this in you.

And then also those opportunities, it wasn't like you have to do it now or it evaporates.



Very often, like almost every time, even to this day, when I say I can't do it right now, there's almost always flexibility, even when people have said there's not flexibility.

So this is my, this is my number one tip is that, um, life is way more flexible than you think.

Uh, especially if you have like autistic rigidity.

So like, I, I have grown up taking deadlines, like as they are written in stone and like instructions as written in stone and other people I've noticed have a more flexible outside of the box approach.

And I have sometimes marveled and been disgruntled at watching other people sail past deadlines with no repercussions, etc.

But what I've learned since not pushing myself beyond capacity is that when you ask, there's usually some flexibility there, especially if you know, if you're really human, you're like, Hey, I just don't have capacity for this right now.

It can come back and the other person might say, cool, let me know what you do.

Or what about next month?

Or what about next season next year?

Um, just this year, I applied for an art show the day after the deadline.

That is something I never would have done in the past.



Um, but the form was still open.

And so I just sent it and I was accepted.

I had like five, every single work I submitted was accepted and I won an award at the art show.

Now, if I'd seen the, you know, the, this is the deadline, you absolutely must do this by the deadline.

Um, I wouldn't have even submitted that.

So just to say that when, when something comes to you and you think, oh, I must do this right, right now, because the deadline says this, or I'm so honored, I don't want them to be offended.

People get it.

You know, especially if you, you know, you don't have to explain, it kind of depends on your relationship with the person and the context you can, you know, no is a complete sentence, you do not have to explain.

But you can also say like, hey, you know, we had a death in the family last month.

Like, that's actually what's happening to us right now.

And I've had to turn things down and say like, hey, can, can somebody else take this over?



You know, we're kind of like coming back, coming through it and we're getting back onto our regular, like trying to get back to our, our rhythm, our daily rhythm.

But for a while, like I didn't design a zine last month.

I said that was like a, this is an example of capacity.

So like normally I ideate a brand new idea for zine.

I have like five in the works, but I have to like articulate.

And I wasn't in a space where I could articulate, you know, when we were in the depths of processing that last month, I was not ready to take this idea and make it into words.

And so I asked my newsletter subscribers, hey, can you help me send me art I'll put everybody's art into a zine well like a zine about hope and so I had the capacity to put the pictures in order I also skipped a month of mailing it out and then right now now that I'm back working I'm mailing two at once but I was able to just put other people's pictures and words into the zine but what I didn't have capacity for at that moment was articulating and ideating and like communicating.

The visual thing, it felt very soothing to kind of like actually got a lot of work done on my, um, there are certain types of work that I couldn't do and certain types of work that were very regulating.

Um, and so I got a lot of work done on the visual design for the Ember Art Journal for Mothers during that time where I was processing because I was just moving around images and I was looking at things and it almost becomes like a form of meditation for me.



So there are different kinds of capacity.

There's your physical and I kind of get into this in my book, Discover Your Creative Ecosystems, the first book I wrote when I was kind of processing this as a new parent.

So there's your physical capacity.

There's your mental capacity, like your cognitive.

That's what I was struggling with last month.

Because my cognitive was just like, out of body, while I was processing this kind of emotional stuff and like logistical stuff as well.

Then you know, there's your emotional capacity, like your spiritual capacity, your creative, like ideating, you know, there are all these different forms of capacity.

There's your physical, like how much you can bear to be touched, like your time management, how can we plan our meals, you know, that goes out the window, you order pizza.

They're all different ways that you can move the dials on these various capacities.

And so So the first thing is you can, what I guess I've been talking about is moving the dial down.

So quitting my job, saying no, ordering pizza, um, moving the deadline.



Like on the zine, I said, I'm not going to finish it this month.

And everybody completely understood.

I actually had one person be like, Hey, you don't have to send it at all.

You could just say you're not getting one this month.

But I, I really wanted to do that collaborative zine.

I enjoyed doing that.

And then asking for help, which can look all different ways.

So that's one thing.

That's reducing the things that are draining you.

And then, but it's not all about reduction.

And sometimes I think this, sometimes that's the message.

It's like, whoa, you're doing too much.

And that's kind of what I felt like the message was when I had a baby.

I was like, whoa, don't do more.



But I, sometimes I need to do more, to feel better.

And that's the neurodivergent thing as well.

So certain types of things are regulating to your nervous system, and they can help us come back into balance.

And I find those things are often like hand mind.

So when your hand is doing something, when your hand is being like your mind, so like when you're drawing or painting or weeding or weaving or sewing or cutting or baking or cooking or building Lego, you know, there are any number of things, um, free write journaling, uh, when your hand is just going and doing the thing and your mind can either like, like sometimes it feels like meditation and I'm not thinking at all because I'm just looking at the visuals.

There are certain types of artwork that are more like that for me.

And I tend to come to them when I need them.

Like I intuitively know that that's what I need to do.

Over time I figured this out.

Like weaving.

Certain types of painting.



When I'm kind of like exploring and letting the medium do the thing.

And I'm not like doing a lot of like planning.

And then other types of creativity for me are more working things out, like mentally processing.

So like writing is very analytical for me.

That's my brain on, not my brain kind of meditating and thoughts coming and going.

And it's more like concentrating.

So those are both regulating tools, but they do different jobs. um I have a whole scene planned about this which is what I wanted to do last month and I didn't have the capacity for so I will be circling back um I don't need to go on a whole tangent on that but my point for this is when you're managing your energetic capacity you have to accept you have a limit you have to start to say no to pull things back whatever it is keeping your house perfect um worrying about your appearance um all the projects all the things all the self-imposed deadlines other people's deadlines um they're just something has to go whatever that thing is um cooking scratch meals you know you don't have to let things go forever uh but there are ways that we can cut ourselves some slack and whatever and what all what we each need will be different um so yeah saying no lowering like taking things down pulling pulling removing or lowering things that drain our capacity and then looking for things that refill or regulate us and I mentioned a lot about art because that's one of my biggest tools but it's not just art.

It could be going for a walk, reading a book, watching a movie, playing video games, a bath or a shower or swimming or sports.



I hear some people like sports.

I would have no idea.

I mean, I used to like gymnastics, but my body didn't necessarily like that too much. cooking, baking, like they're all, all different kinds of things that you might find regulating.

But often for really busy minds, like if your mind is as noisy as mine, and like, if you sit still, it starts coming up with ideas that actually just sitting still might not be very restful.

So you might need to pull out the crochet needles or the paints or read a book so that you're living in somebody else's world for a while.

Or watch a TV show.

Like, let's not judge between different types of mediums.

A story is a story is a story.

And whatever is accessible to you.

Audiobooks are great.

So I think that was pretty much everything.

Yeah, the last note I have is just, like, take baby steps, you know. little wavering steps.



You might stumble, you might fall down, but it takes time and practice to build the muscle of setting boundaries for things that are beyond your capacity and noticing.

Like you just have to observe how you feel before and after doing certain things.

And it might be seasonal.

That's something we haven't talked about that I could do a whole podcast on, but I have no energy in the summer.

The heat, because of my chronic illnesses and my sensory issues, completely zaps it out of me.

And so I've kind of like really crashed over the summer.

And now that it's just starting to cool, and I can feel like the promise of autumn, my energetic capacity is starting to rise.

And then when most people, when the kind of I don't know what the word is, but there's a lot of influencers out there that are like, match your energy, the seasons.

And like, you're supposed to be kind of like sleeping and hibernating in winter, but like, I need to sleep and hibernate in summer.

I'm a reverse.

And of course I am like, that's the whole autism thing is like, so many of my experiences are just inverted from what is expected so that like mass advice never fits right or it's like the exact what I need but the opposite.



So I have more energy like I can do more in the winter and then you know there's the holidays and the social drain of all of that which is its own thing.

But purely like weather-wise summer is a huge drain for me.

Autumn is like my season, which is why I have a new project coming out right now.

So yeah, consider your seasons, your time of day, like what, how, you know, we all have this like, culture expects you to like, wake up early and do the thing.

And a lot of, a lot of, you know, if you have kids in school or if you go to a nine-to-five job, like you have to adhere or maybe not, you know, maybe there's more flexibility, especially in work now than there used to be, but especially for parents of kids in public school, like to some extent, you may not have the flexibility there, but look at, look at what you do have control over and how you feel at different times of day and different times of year.

So I tend to plan out, I knew I was not going to pushing myself hard over the summer.

And now I'm just kind of ramping up.

I'm finishing up some projects.

I'm maybe launching something new with this little NeuraNest club thing.

And yeah, I'm feeling pretty good and excited about it, but not in an overstimulating kind of way.



So let me just check if there was something else in my notes that I'm forgetting.

Yep, I already said that.

Hand mind.

We talked about that.

Sensory joy, you know, fidgets, putty, spinners, those kind of things can be self-regulating as well.

Weighted blankets, like all of those sensory tools that sometimes if you're, uh, oh yeah.

And I have this whole, how long have I been talking?

Oh my goodness.

This is a long episode.

Okay.

One more thing that's really important.

Um, especially, especially for parents is, um, so like I was saying in the beginning, when I had a new baby and I did not have enough support system or enough white space, um, sometimes you, sometimes you don't have the support that you need and you don't have the time and the space that you need.



And so what the only tool available to me at that time was co-regulation.

So if you need to self-regulate with another tiny human, it could be a grown-up too, but it's a little bit easier with an adult to be like, hey, I need some time and space.

But if it's like a baby or a toddler, you know, the older your kids are, you can kind of talk to them like, hey, you know, it's been amazing since my kid has the language to understand.

Mama has a migraine, we have to keep the lights off and keep the sound quiet, you know, having some understanding for that.

But it can be a really powerful tool to co-regulate with someone else.

And so like, for me, when a lot of the tools that I used when I was kind of like, you know, in the weeds of that early, early parenting thing was like blowing bubbles together, um, or putty or clay, um, gardening, drawing, painting, cozy video games, uh, reading books together.

And so you could also do, so sometimes you can do the same thing side by side, or you could do different things.

So I have one memory in particular being really overwhelmed beyond capacity and I just needed to keep my toddler busy so that I could just like reset and so I poured out a bunch of water with like colored they had make these little bath tablets that color water and so there'd be like one vial of yellow and red and blue and so there was just all this water and then it could be poured in mixed colors and David was just old enough that he could do it he knew how to do it we'd done it together enough times that he would I knew he would just do this forever for like what felt like a really long time for a toddler attention span and I listened to a podcast and I colored with crayons and so like we weren't doing the same thing but we were both doing creative things side by side together and we call that parallel play.



So that is a really, a really useful tool if you're trying to manage your capacity, but you also can't just like peace out and go for a walk by yourself or like disappear into the bath for two or three hours.

And, you know, I have a couple of other notes here at the bottom about sleep because neurodivergent people don't sleep well.

We're super sensitive.

We have, there are lots of different reasons, but it's like scientifically studied that we sleep less well than other humans.

So it may be that the normal like eight hours of sleep is not quite adequate. so if you can squeak in more sleep for yourself when I started doing that when I started sleeping how long my body actually needed instead of like well wake up early and go for a walk and be productive and do your morning pages and wake up for your kid not your alone time and I inverted it and now I stay up and I have my alone time at night and then I sleep a bit in the morning longer than I used to we don't do public school so we don't have to like wake up and brush teeth and like hurry and, you know, sit in a line at school.

So there are things that are harder and easier about home educating, but being able to set our own schedule is one thing that we really, really love.

However, you can get yourself some more rest.

So whether it's going to bed early or sleeping in a little bit later or a nap, naps are great, rest.

But also I say this and it's o'clock at night and I'm sitting in my car recording a podcast.



So, you know, we need both things.

You need self-expression.

We need connection.

We need sleep.

If you have made it this far, it's been nearly an hour, 48 minutes.

You might be interested in joining the NeuroNest.

I will link to it below.

As of this moment, it's still in beta.

Like we're in a testing mode.

This be cognizant of my capacity because I do have a tendency to want to do all the things.

And so I am the shape of the project is malleable at the moment.

I'm seeing what I can do and how I can make it fit my capacity instead of pushing and making a shape and contorting myself to it.



But at the moment, it is in a testing phase.

So just send me an email if you're interested in joining while we're still doing the test.

But we have a Discord, which if you haven't heard of that, is like this quiet, cozy little nest on the internet, away from algorithms.

You can download the app and you can change the notifications however you like.

It has a bunch of different channels.

So topics like an old school forum.

So there's a channel for sensory and time, like all different neurodivergent experiences.

And then we have other channels for interest, art, writing.

What we've been trying so far is doing a weekly check-in.

So I'll just kind of tag at everyone and do a little reminder for you to let us know what you're working on.

You can set some gentle intentions for the week if you want.

And something that's really important for me is that it is a self-regulatory space for your nervous system.



So there's no news, no trigger warning type subjects.

Politics and advocacy is really important, but we also need places to reset our nervous systems.

And so this is a politics news-free zone for us to connect over creativity and neurodivergence and our humanity.

And I feel like those spaces are becoming more and more rare.

And there are plenty of other places on the internet where you can advocate about causes that are important to you.

But even when like, let's say autism is in the news, we are not talking about that in the NeuroNest.

We are talking about our lives and things we can do to support each other and validate each other.

And so this is part of it, this podcast, which I haven't decided how often will come out because I'm leaving some flexibility to align this with my capacity.

And also once a month, I am posting an artistic prompt.

So something creative that you can do to regulate your nervous system.

And so far, I am loving having this little cozy space to hang out.



And all of the people that are testing it with me, we're having some great like questions and conversations and sharing creative projects.

And I, this is like, I, if you followed me a long time, I have tried to host, I have hosted creative communities for a decade, maybe longer, on and off.

And there are different things that have worked about different communities in different times and on different platforms.

And this feels like taking the best of all of them and also having the clarity that it is a neurodivergent space.

Links to everything will be in the podcast show notes if you want to join the NeuroNest.

And otherwise, have a lovely day.

Bye.