

LIFE ADVICE: For anyone who is tired & needs some hacks

Ologies Podcast

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Okay, just a quick note up top: this episode is a little weird. If this is the very first episode of *Ologies* you've ever listened to, this isn't what they are normally like, this is probably the most mellow podcast I have ever recorded or ever been on. It's very mellow, it's just me talking, and it's a vibe. But I also explain, later on, why it's such a vibe. It was recorded late at night, quietly, in a guest bedroom, we get into it. Anyway, enjoy the mellow show.

Oh hi, it's your life... just gasping and hobbling day into the next day, begging you for help. Hey, does life feel out of hand? Of course it does. Could we all use some tips on how to grease your wheels, and just slide into comfort, and maybe even increase productivity so that you have more time to enjoy comfort? Yes. And yes. Which is why I asked my friends at [Patreon.com/Ologies](https://www.patreon.com/Ologies) for life tips, hacks, some tricks, some strategies, some smarts. Folks, these are great if you have ADHD, if you think you have ADHD, if you love someone with ADHD, or if you're just a person on planet Earth who is expected to hold their shit together in a very distracting time.

So, this was supposed to come out two weeks ago as a third part to the ADHD episodes and then you may have noticed there was an encore episode about trains, and there was also a *Smologies* episode that came out; and that is because some things have been a little bonkers in my life the last couple of weeks and I'm going to tell you about it in the secret at the end of the episode... and it's not good stuff, just in case you're wondering. It's been really hard... I'll tell you about it later. But anyway, we're making this, we're putting it out, and this will be the button on our ADHD episode, but we made this for people who are neurotypical and neuro-atypical. It's just how to get your life in order with a bunch of great tips.

But before we dive in, thank you to everyone who shares these episodes, and tells friends about them, and who rates and subscribes, and even reviews because, you know, I read all the reviews. For example, this fresh little donut from InstaAshley who wrote in the review:

Pretty sure my unborn baby will recognize Alie's voice before mine.

InstaAshley's baby, I just wanna say, what's up? That was a great, fresh review that your host body wrote. Also, on the topic of fresh, next week we'll just have a fresh, sparkling, new episode. Things will be back on track, back on schedule, so get ready for some carnivorous plants, or it might be sea urchins... It's gonna be one of those.

First, let's polish off the sharp edges and just have a smoother existence with a bunch of advice on how to be healthier, more well-rested, better fed, less distracted, perhaps a little less irritable, and have a smoother and more empathetic relationship perhaps with yourself, and others, and more. I put these into five parts, okay? We cover Part One: Your Hot Bod Needs This; Part Two: Home Is Where the Hard Is, domestic strategies; Part Three: A Wrestling Match With Father Time, about scheduling. Four: Let Your Brain Trick Your Brain, some productivity hacks; and Five: Emo Stuff, just feeling around your feelings. So, life tricks from Ologites, to Ologites. They're good, they're for everyone, they're for you. Here we go.

Alie: All right kiddos, Part One: Your Hot Bod Needs This, for your brain. So, this is not about how you look nude or your bathing suit aspirations. This is about the lump of Jell-O in your bone bowl, moving around in whatever way you can, to help your brain. So I asked patrons, "Give me all of your life hacks."

Jo Alexander said, "I either run, or walk, or get on the elliptical for as little as 6 minutes, just to get my heart rate up a bit. If I don't do it, the day is terrible and I'm mostly nonfunctional." Anne Dullmaier uses an exercise bike at home and says, "It's where I go when I need to think, or focus, or when I need to get things done." Saffron Allebasi said, "The clarity after a quick 10-minute jog around the block is bonkers." And this was echoed by Emily Anderson and Ted Hamilton, who said, "Whatever happens on a long run makes my brain go from badly tuned radio to silent. It's pure bliss to quiet everything for an hour and I've noticed the effects last for a couple days after. It's not for everyone, but it's a necessary part of my life now," Ted says.

And Jeanette-o-saur said, "If you need to move to think, find ways to do it. Have walking meetings or do exercise-y things right before sit-still things." So, you do not have to break your sprinting record, you do not even have to change shoes, you don't have to be a stranger on a Peloton leaderboard, or even sweat. Just whatever way you can move, just move. Your brain will be like, [*whispers*] "My god, finally. Thank you to the meat parts of me, from the brain part."

And another hot tip from patrons: sleep. Why not maybe try sleeping? Kristy Lowrey wrote in and said, "No medication, no therapy, no treatment is going to work if your body is tired, hungry, or thirsty. Protect your sleep as if it is your life, or sanity." Kristy says, "I'm a grown-ass adult with a stricter bedtime routine than any kid out there; turn your phone to silent in the evening, let your crew know that if they contact you after 7:00, they better be dead. Normalize healthy sleep hygiene. Above all, be kind and loving to yourself." Kristy said. And Peter West said, "I have a 9-year-old with ADHD, we changed our lights to ones that automatically gradually dim for the hour before bed and then turn off, and that helps with sleep." Jeanette-o-saur says, "Get fussy AF about your bedtime routine and then wind down." And Hannah Michel says, "My sleep is sacred and needs to be guarded."

And also, while you're sleeping, ABC; Always Be Charging. How many of you have woken up with a phone that has less energy than you? Waking up in the red with the battery on your phone is just the best way to make your day a nightmare. It has happened to me so many times. Patron Emily Palin said, "I just got a charging station on my nightstand to keep my phone, AirPods, and watch together, that way when I grab one, I see the others and I actually charge them."

Okay, what else is on your nightstands? I wanted to know. Rosa and Miranda Panda both wrote in about sunrise light alarm clocks. And in Rosa's words, "Mornings are made tremendously better when I wake up with light instead of sound." And Miranda said, "I absolutely love feeling like I woke up gradually on my own, rather than being forced awake." So, these are alarm clocks that gradually wake you up with light.

And I gotta say, me personally, some of the happiest weeks of my life have been when I went to bed super early and then got up when it was not quite even dawn yet; because I think some of us are night owls just because we're more productive when everyone else is asleep, so we don't have texts to return and emails popping up. And if you're one of those people, try early mornings instead – I'm going to try and get back into it with you – because you get a jump on things when the world is quiet and then you're ahead of the game when people wake up. And then, you can use your evenings guilt-free, chilling, instead of trying to force yourself to be productive after a long, aggravating day of dodging distractions like an *American Ninja* course.

Also, there's coffee and dawn, and that's the best. So, when the sunrise alarm goes off, open the blinds, let the sun do its thing; it helps your brain wake up, maybe meditate for a couple minutes if you can, make a list of how your day will go, you just beat everyone to the punch.

But, if you're still in bed and you do have ADHD, Mckenzie Faas wrote in, "If you take stimulants and struggle to get out of bed in the morning, take them an hour before you actually

need to get up, and then you'll have no problem waking up when you need to." Derrick Allen chimed in and said, "The Ritalin wake-up call is basically a superpower."

And we mentioned in Part 2 of the ADHD episodes though, if you have ADHD and you take stimulants and have anxiety, you may want to take your meds with protein. And in Adrienne Gregor's words, "Water, breakfast, meds, in that order. Otherwise, I forget to eat." What about... nighttime meds? I wondered. Derrick was like, "Might not be for everyone, but a little nibble of forbidden brownie," which is medically legal in 37 states, "quiets their thoughts and commits them to doing a task."

Which brings us, by the way, to appetite. [*"Let's talk about food for a second."*] Okay, you're a person, right? You need food; you need to eat food, you want to eat food. But just the chore-ness of it has you ordering expensive stale pita from a place you don't even like. We've all been there. So, let's fix your life, with some food tips.

If you want to try to shake off a funk, or maybe turn a corner, or just make a new chapter, just take a quick gander at what's on your plate. Good, fresh, food is, sadly, not accessible to everyone, and that sucks. So, for economic to convenience reasons, I completely get it. But if you can get it, patron Lisa Smith says that clean eating is a biggie just for their mental health, and productivity, and life. They say, "Carbs, dairy, and greasy food make my brain not work right." And Morgan Underwood said they, "cut processed foods and stuff with high sugar content to increase focus and reduce grouchiness."

So, what if you know what to eat though and you're just bored and tired? Mia says that they found, "making sure to incorporate mushrooms into meals will make them more likely to cook and eat because mycology is one of their oldest and most loved special interests." So I guess, just walk around the produce aisle and be like, "What am I connecting with here? What do I actually want to spend some time in the kitchen with?"

Some more kitchen strategies from patrons, Tyler Hudson keeps a bunch of bulk, non-perishable, and frozen food on hand, and always has some fancy meats in the freezer to make "something extravagant" and that helps them get hyped about cooking. And Alexandra wrote in that, "The Instant Pot keeps things warm and unburnt when done," which I can appreciate. That is something that I strive to achieve myself. Stacy Simmons says that they love their convection oven because the one they have cooks like an oven but has a spin timer like a toaster oven and it keeps them from burning down the house.

Sarah Albrecht says that if you're in a slump and, "If meal-planning and prep feels impossible to you, to try a meal kit like Hello Fresh," who also sponsors the show. They say, "This has been a game changer for me and has cut down on the amount of fast food I've been eating because I just simply could not plan meals." And yes, we do have a code if you need one, go to AlieWard.com/Ologies-Sponsors, there's a discount link for you, just saying.

What about leftovers? Silas Clish says flipping over Pyrex glass Tupperware, so they can see their leftovers will "for sure make me polish them off more regularly." And Eliza Hammer Gage advises you to just label that shit, put a date on it, so you know. You're like, "Nnhh... Not this time." Another life hack, they say, is to take your condiments and put them in the crisper drawers, and then take your veggies and put it in the main fridge area so that you can actually see the veggies and you'll want to eat the veggies. And myself, as a person who stares vacantly at mustard, and I have thrown out kale that's become liquid, I support that. I would like to try that as soon as I am at my house and not in my sister's guest bedroom. I think I'm going to try that.

Skylar Ward, no relation to me, not my sister, not their guest room, beat us all and just wrote that their fridge is a whiteboard, it's a menu [*hushed voice*] and a grocery list. You can whiteboard your fridge! None of us knew that except for them.

Also, let's clean up your life. How about some domestic strategies to save some time and some brain efforts for everyone? Here we go, Part 2: Home Is Where the Hard Is.

Corinna Bruce wrote in and said, "My big tip for cleaning is to do it often and badly. I do half jobs of everything and eventually everything gets done." Thank you, Corinna; I will live by that. Aubrey Nelson used my favorite cleaning hack and said, "Having company is a big motivator. I'll kick into gear to clean for company and then benefit from that as well." So, cut bangs, text your crush, fold your laundry; it's all connected.

Also, here's a secret fix for your laundry problems, you ready? So, patron Sarah Hordern says, "Have multiple laundry baskets and hampers, put them in different rooms." Okay! NanoNaturalist sorts their laundry by type and not by color. They say, "All my pants are in one load and then there's no sorting afterwards." And they pin their socks together when they throw them in the laundry, so they never have to hunt for pairs again.

But Starr? Starr wrote in and was like, let's lower the bar people. Starr says, "I do not spend time folding or matching socks and underwear. Just throw them into their own drawers. It's small, but it takes the dread out for me," they said. And Maria agrees, they say, "I simply no longer fold my items. Mediocrity is freedom." Mediocrity *is* freedom y'all! Let's just lower the bar. No one's looking in your underwear drawer. And if they are, that's *their* problem.

Now, you could also just ease your stress by outsourcing all your shit to a robot. So, Cassandra Grafstrom says, "This is absolutely coming from a place of privilege but autopay any-and-all bills and get a robot vacuum. Take things off everyone's plate so that you're all less likely to get overwhelmed." And Sarah Albrecht agrees, saying, "If you can swing it, invest in things to make life easier for you; like a robot vacuum, a quality dishwasher, an automatic litter box, et cetera." And Sarah says, "My floors are clean now, my dishes don't pile up as often, and the litter box doesn't get so stinky."

So, now that you have some tips for your home, let's engage in a wrestling match. Let's grapple with Father Time, let's get some of your life back from him. Okay first, you need a dump location. You need to give yourself the gift of a trip to Ross or T.J. Maxx and say, "What basket speaks to me?" I don't know, go to a flea market and look for a cool bowl because patrons Julia McDonald, Taylor Bedard, Christy LaForce were all like, "Basket. By door. Put important stuff into it." And in Kristen Rosenblum's words, "Make sure everything in the house has a place, otherwise, piles of stuff will just happen."

As your own Grandpod Mom, Fancy Nancy, always used to say, "A place for everything, and everything in its place." Which sounds so peaceful, doesn't it? My keys have hung on a hook by the door for decades because in college I locked myself out of my dorm room 17 times in the first six weeks. The RA kept track. Oops! This whole time I've been like, "I don't have a problem losing my keys." And I realize, it's just because I have a hook by the door. So, location, location, location.

So, what's another way to grease up and pin down Father Time? Reminders, Professor Koshka, Jeanette-o-saur, and Kasey Carrick wrote in, they all say they use the computer in your pocket, or the eavesdropping music robot in your house, to set so many reminders. Set 'em when you need 'em. Patron Kaffeine had this extra hack, "If you use a reminder app on mobile electronic devices, write the reason you have to do the thing rather than just 'do the thing'. Example: instead of scheduling a reminder that says, 'use inhaler', try setting one that

says, ‘OMG LUNG DAMAGE IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH, JUST TAKE YOUR DAMN ASTHMA MEDICINE, WOMAN.’” And include many emojis, if bright colors help you. So, reminders.

Use a clock when you need to kick your own ass, gently, and with fun. So many patrons wrote in with this and Caitlin M. said, “I recently discovered the Time Timer which is basically just a visual timer,” but they absolutely love it and they said it’s really good for visualizing how much time you have left for a particular task. And Jo Alexander also loves a Time Timer. They’re kind of like an egg timer but more visually and socially friendly. And they were invented by this cool lady in Cincinnati and I got to interview her for my CBS show *Innovation Nation*... and I love her.

Now, if you don’t have a Time Timer, you can also use the laundry as one, this is a cool hack. See if you can get certain things done before the washing cycle is up, recommended Olivia Schafer. And Miranda Buckley keeps it light and fun and wrote in, “On good days, I keep a timer and I race myself to see how quickly I can get all my boring chores done.” While Dawn Zwart creates a dystopian prison chamber saying, “When I clean, I set a timer for 10 minutes and I don’t let myself leave the room until the timer goes off.” I can see how that would be effective also. No judgment.

So many people Pomodoro, which is when you work, typically, 25 minutes and then take a 5-minute break, and then after three cycles you take a longer, 30-to-60-minute break. So many Pomodoros out there, so many of you wrote in. Francesco Cirillo is the person who invented this in the 1980s because he had a tomato-shaped kitchen timer. And I personally hate tomatoes. I hate them so much. I hate the name Pomodoro, I hate the idea of a tomato-shaped object on my desk, I hate it all. So, I’m like, “Pomodoro, you’re not for me,” and then I tried it and was like, “This does work.”

So, my ears are open for some new names. Maybe, Katie Courtright, Rebecca Wancelotti, Jasmine Kwasa, and Peta Luck, who all swear by this tomato technique; please come up with a new name, thank you. And Mercedes Maitland wrote in and said, “I doubted Pomodoros at first, but it’s done wonders.” So, use it when you’re in hyperfocus too and your bladder will thank you,” Mercedes said.

So, if you’re like me, if you hate tomatoes but you love bears... and you have \$1.99 burning a hole in your pocket, there’s an app called Bear Focus Timer and it starts the work interval as soon as you put your phone facedown, [*hushed tone*] so you can’t look at your phone. And it plays white noise to remind you: it’s worky time, it’s worky time now. It also has very cool bear art. So, 12 out of 10, Ward-approved, Bear Focus Timer, I think you’re cool.

Now, when it comes to a strict 25 minutes working and 5 minutes off, patron Michelle is like, “Meh, not so much.” She likes the hyperfocus and uses something called the Flowtime Technique which is where you start a task and you stop when you’re tired or when you’re just like, “I’m done here, I’m reaching my limit.” And she uses the 20% of break time to 80% of work time kind of ratio there.

But there’s also this thing called the Eisenhower Matrix. And I was like, “Eisenhower Matrix, is this like a post-war history fact I don’t know?” But SalmonLikeTheFish and Chelsea Farris both use it and the Eisenhower Matrix helps you wrangle priorities. It’s like four quadrants; there’s a Do, do it now; there’s a Decide, which means schedule it; there’s Delegate, see if you can outsource that, maybe to a vacuum robot; and then there’s a Delete quadrant, which is like, just forget about it, pretend you don’t have to do it. So, where are you going to write that down though? How about in a planner?

If you listened to ADHD Part 2, René Brooks is like, “Do not talk to me about a notebook. Don’t talk to me about it.” But other people do find variations of a notebook helpful. Rebecca Lynn Weiselberg and Breanna Snodgrass, Robin Stumbo, and Faith Stein all said that bullet journals have you covered in the flexibility area. And Faith said, “I can make it as fancy or as minimal as I’m feeling in that moment.”

And Caitlin M. also a BuJo or Bullet journaler, agreed, but warned, “A caveat though, don’t get all bogged down looking at the crazy Instagram pages of people who spend more time making their journal pretty than actually using it. It’s meant to increase productivity, not drain away all your energy thinking up a monthly theme and drawing out intricately illustrated layouts.” Caitlin says, “I wasted 2 years trying to make pretty layouts with my journal and ended up not touching it for months at a time. Now, I found a nice balance of functionality, with just enough creativity to make it interesting without becoming just another task that I can’t finish.”

Team Pretty Stuff also includes Katie Courtright who says, “I keep a very cute planner and I will only consistently use a planner that I find visually appealing.” And Chanelle Zap, AKA your favorite Maritime Archaeology, shipwreck expert says, “Color-coordinated pens and fountain pens allow her to derive a little bit of joy from something that I need to do.” There’s also Hero’s Journal which has spots to identify your “Daily Quests” rather than “To-Dos.” And there’s Notion Planners which has lines for gratitude to get you out of a funk, those also got shoutouts and I’m going to toss in my own Dadly advice here.

In a Patreon livestream I did last week, I showed my daily planner which is just a small, mini binder; it has three rings and it holds sheets that are half-letter size. You can just go to an office supply or a print shop, buy a ream of paper, ask them to cut it in half, you now have 1,000 sheets of paper. And you know those black three-hole punch... the ones you steal from your office job? They have a place to slide the holes, and you can adjust where the holes punch, and you can punch three holes in a half sheet that fit right in your mini binder. And you can also print templates at half size and then just cut the paper in half.

I have sections for my big yearly goals like brushing my hair every day, my calendars, and my daily to-do lists. Then I have sections where I take notes, or I write down ideas. And I like it better than a bound journal because I can edit out what I don’t want, and I can just thin it out from time to time and throw away the junk. And I draw little pictures on some days if I’m feeling fancy.

And I too, love a nice pen. Can I just say that colored pencils that turn to watercolor when wet are just... the best. They never dry out like pens, you can use them like dry ass pencils, or you can make them come alive and you can blend them with just a drop of water and a paintbrush. I have the same set of watercolor colored pencils that I got in high school, which was almost 5 years ago now, and on my best days, I take little breaks to draw tiny pictures of my activities like a little nice mug of tea, or maybe I saw a frog or something. And I need you to know that I googled the brand of colored pencil to figure out what they were and I was looking it up for a few minutes until I realized that the colored pencils were in my backpack, four inches away from me... the whole time. And they’re the Staedtler kind, just so you know, they’re great.

And you know what else is great? Giving away money. And this week, let’s toss some in two different directions, why don’t we? I’m currently at my sister’s; I’m recording this in my nephew’s bed. But I’m helping out with some family health stuff, which is why this is up a week late... and sorry about that. But March happens to be the awareness month for multiple sclerosis which is a neurodegenerative autoimmune disease, which my mom, the

fanciest of Nancys has. And March is also the awareness month for multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that my dad has.

So, donations went to the National MS Society which connects patients and their families to resources and information, support groups, and funds for accelerated research. And shoutout to my mom's MS group. There's more information about groups at NationalMSSociety.org. And another donation went to the International Myeloma Foundation, IMF, which is the first and the largest organization focusing specifically on multiple myeloma, and you can learn more about them at Myeloma.org. You can also check out the Hematology episode with Dr. Brian Durie for more about blood, and also multiple myeloma. So, my visit to see and help them out is made possible by you listeners understanding when I'm a few days late, and donations were made possible by sponsors of *Ologies*.

[Ad break]

Okay, more of your advice. We're still wrestling with Father Time, listener to listener. Let's talk apps. So apps, you got 'em. Several of you love Habitica, which is a role player game that gamifies habit-building; they have to-lists and daily lists. And Peta Luck says, "I get a reward every single time I mark something as done, it's life-changing." Tyler Hudson and Jellybean Green second and third Habitica. I had never heard of it before; it sounds delightful.

Chelle uses a free app called Owaves and they say, "Owaves..." – I think it's 'ow waves' – "helps manage my cognitive chaos and has changed my life y'all. My time management skills are typically that of a disoriented pigeon, but this app helps me divide each day into productive slots with visual cues, and color-coding, and gentle notifications. Highly recommend." So, that was Owaves. And Emilie says, "I've been using Finch, which combines health and goal-setting." Cheese says that instead of an app they made their own Discord server to save links and pictures, and to write lists, and save ideas and notes for later. And Cheese says, "It's very multifunctional and I never forget it, because I also use Discord for friends and such," unlike most organizing apps that Cheese tends to download and forget.

And also, Miranda Panda told me that you can categorize your Google tabs into groups. And as long as we're just giving some Google tips, side note from me, I found out from Hollywood writer and producer Shadi Petosky that in Gmail you can add a task list. It's tiny, it's hard to find, it looks like a circle with a checkmark through it; but if you select an email and then click that checky little circle, it'll add it to a taskbar on the right-hand side of your Gmail so that you can respond to it later, since I know even the most well-intentioned starred emails just fall to the bottom of your inbox like a vape pen in a bucket purse. But if you use the task list in Gmail it's, like, right there in your face. I have returned so many emails I would have forgotten about... It's so good.

And so yes, we all live and die by a to-do list, but what about a to-done list? [*surprised whisper*] What? This is a thing. And it can help your brain like a tiny little treat. So, Fi Cameron says, "If a to-do list is too overwhelming, start writing a done list to see what you've already done. Or write stuff in your to-do list that you've already done so you can tick them off straight away." Like, Brush my Teeth. Tick, did it! And Ami DuCre says that they write a postmortem at the end of the day to see where hiccups happened and figure out what strategies they could use to streamline it for next time. And Miranda uses Trello boards for work and for their personal life. And says, "I love that you can move things from your to-do to your done list, or archive tasks rather than totally deleting them."

And in keeping with the captain's log vibe, Cat Baklarz also says, "I track what I did and when on Google Calendar." So not just, 'Oh, I had class and I studied,' but they change it afterward.

Did class end early? Did they skip? Did they study for a full hour after? Did they scroll half the time? And they say, "Ideally, that would keep me accountable." And the final piece of advice in kicking Father Time's ass comes from patron Charlotte Fjelkegård, who reminds us all that, "Being kind and considerate of your future self is a life-saving skill." So, think of you in the future and do things for them.

Speaking of the future, let's just march straight into Part 4, which is: Let Your Brain Trick Your Brain, to learn some little ways you can help your noggin. So, you know how you feel like you are dragged in a bunch of directions by distractions, right? Things you want to look up, things that you should do now or maybe later. What is the solution? "A parking lot," says Lora B. who continues, "Basically you have a designated notepad and if you have a thought or something you remember you need to do, you write it down and you just revisit it later."

And Sarah Simpson does this too and calls this a 'later list'. And Sarah wrote, "When you start to go down a rabbit hole, write it on your later list. When you're done with the task at hand, you can go back and decide if you still want to do those things or not. Most recently, Sarah wrote, while working on a project, their 9-year-old kiddo included things like, "play Pokémon, learn braille, and insult my sister." And Sarah writes, "She decided she was cool not learning braille by the time her assignment was done, but everything else was important."

And side note, I have been doing this parking lot method, the later list, and it *does* help. And later, when I have clarity, I realize that no, I didn't need to urgently search perfumes from the 1990s; or how the woman who played Andy in *The Goonies* is doing career-wise, I love her; or how to build a house out of old windows. Yes, those things could wait while I filed my overdue expense reports.

Now, if you ever look things up on YouTube, by the way, and then emerge from a fugue state hours later because of that right hand column that keeps suggesting you videos, I just learned yesterday that the browser Chrome has an ad block extension that solves this entirely. So, you get ad block and when you download it, it'll ask for a donation, I gave 10 bucks on a lark, and it turns out it's been worth it so far. So essentially, you go to, say YouTube, and you right click on the suggested videos column and a little window will pop up asking if you want to hide that using ad block and you say, "Fuck yes," and then, instead of a bunch of delicious, irresistible videos you watch for hours, you just have a big blank white space there instead so you don't have to keep writing, "Watch another *Say Yes to the Dress* suggested video," on your notepad later list.

By the way, if you don't have a paper list, Donya Malmquist, all caps, vouches for, "DRY ERASE BOARDS" for this saying, "I can write faster, it's easier to edit, pleasing colors, and just fun." And I guess as long as we're talking about whiteboards, let's use them for your brains. So, Hayley Aronson, is also a whiteboard fan and Mercurie offered the life advice that, "If you can afford it, it's okay to spend a little money to make your life easier. Buy a fancy whiteboard if it helps you remember. Buy cloud storage and upload important documents directly to it." And Kate Zirpolo agrees and engages in what they call, "The magic of multiples. If you have a lip balm in your bag, on your desk, on your dresser, in your car, you haven't ever forgotten or misplaced it," Kate says.

But let's talk cash, what if you don't have it? How can we save a little more? Okay, this life hack was written in by Stacy Simmons who says to, "Try splitting up your direct deposit, if you get it, to a savings at a different financial institution than you do your normal banking. Out of sight, out of mind can really work in your favor with a bit of pre-planning." Stacy says, "I started this with a transfer of five dollars per paycheck over seven years ago and slowly increased over the years, and I still struggle with impulsive spending, but I was also able to save up a down payment for a house and my first off-the-lot new car, all using funds from my out-of-sight account." Thank you, Stacy, good tip.

You know what else you can spend that money on? Library fines. But if you want to avoid them, L. Wink says that they started using dollar bills as bookmarks. “Strange? Yes. But effective,” they said. “If I lost a book after putting a one-dollar bill inside it, I would switch to a five, to a ten, and then a twenty. Having an economic incentive,” they write, “helped activate a different part of my memory and made remembering where I left the books a lot easier.” So if you do that, perhaps you can show your face at the library again, especially if that’s where you do your working.

But if you are forced to work in an open office, patron Caitlin M. wanted to offer some advice. They said, “This is not so much a tip as a reminder to myself: no open offices, ever. Bring it up to HR as a disability accommodation if you need to. I didn’t do this in previous jobs, and I really wish I had.” Now, if you don’t have that option, so many Ologites said three magic words. And those people were, a very good painter Heather Horton Whedon, Layla Green Touchet, Ann-Marie Benz, and Jo Alexander. Those three words: noise-canceling headphones. I personally got some, like, hundred-dollar, Skullcandy Venue active noise-canceling headphones at the start of the pandemic... Can’t imagine life without them. Well, I can imagine life without them, and it would not be good. It would be very loud.

But what should you listen to? So, Brenda Cornett says when they work, they listen to FocusAtWill.com which has a rain sounds channel, there’s a Zen piano channel, they have cinematic channels. But Jo Alexander uses a brown noise generating app and there’s something called Noise Gen It and it does white, pink, and blue noise too, but Jo says, “I like brown best when I have to focus on work.” And I was like, “Come again? What now?”

Of course, I had to look into it for this and I just learned, okay, so white noise [*white noise plays, like clean static*] is all kinds of frequencies mixed up, and pink noise [*pink noise, like static with lower pitch*] is frequencies within human hearing and it sounds bassier than the static of white noise. But blue noise [*blue noise, static but higher pitch*] is higher frequency than white noise. And then brown noise [*brown noise, less static, smoother*] has more of a low, bassy roar.

And according to an article on *Live Science* it was named after some guy with the last name Brown and, “Brown noise has nothing to do with the mythical brown note, a hypothetical low-frequency sound said to cause people to lose control of their bowels.” So, brown noise is just bassy stuff to listen to; it’s just a bad name for a good thing. Unlike Shakshouka, which is a beautiful name for a disgusting thing. No offense, Shakshouka, just please see my feelings about tomatoes earlier in this episode of *Ologies*, which is a podcast.

Also, many of you said “Hi, hello. I listen to podcasts while I work to stay entertained,” which makes sense, given that you were writing in to me, someone who hosts a podcast. I’m looking at you, Anne Dullmaier, Emily Anderson, Adam Weaver, Wren Beach, Rosa, Vincentosaurus, and Psara. And speaking of speaking, another brain tricking your own brain tip, Gary Staab says, “When I’m reading, I pretend that I’m reading in front of a 6th-grade class because it helps me stay focused.” And Logan M. uses the spoken content aid in the accessibility portion of the settings on an iPhone if there’s no audiobook version of something, or when they want to listen to something rather than read it, or listen as they read. And Katrina Weibel was like, “Heck yes, screen reader.” But Katrina increases the playback speed to 1.5 to 2x speed, and then follows along reading with their eyes, and Katrina says, “I get through everything so much faster, and my brain doesn’t wander at all.”

Maybe you’re listening to this on noise-canceling headphones. Well L. Wink says, “If you put something down, say out loud where you put it down specifically. Like, ‘I put my headphones on the side table next to the green lamp.’” Amanda Spinosa does this too and says it feels very helpful.

Speaking of feeling, let's wrap up with the chapter; Emo Stuff, feeling around your feelings. Are you having a tough time? Do you want to get your scrambled brain together, ADHD or not? I feel ya. So does Rosalotalita, who said, "I have practiced that positive self-talk can fight and ride out the very intense feelings when they come."

And another hot tip, said many of you, maybe therapy. Miranda says, "Get a therapist if you have the means," and so does Jamie Kishimoto, "Get a therapist," they say, "even if you think you're not 'depressed enough' for one." Kasey Carrick and Lee T. both agree. And Shannon and Marlaina both wrote in to recommend Dialectical Behavioral Therapy for some people for developing skills around emotional regulation and distress tolerance. And if you do have ADHD, perhaps gather a good support group if you can.

Breanna Snodgrass says, "Friends! Get you some friends who have ADHD. Once I realized I likely have it, I then came to realize that most of the people I'm closest to also have it. We just get each other, are able to communicate really easily, and give each other grace for being late and forgetting things, et cetera." Laure l'or says, "I have a little group that I work with on Zoom three times a week and it's been great for my productivity and my mental health." And Gaelicpearl and Lizzie also say, "Gather your people and maybe work together."

Literally, it's called body doubling. Jeanette-o-saur says, "Doing things in the presence of a solidarity human is amazing." Jeanette-o-saur says, "I started hosting coworking sessions in my coaching group and they're the best decision I've made in the past year or so." And Miranda Buckley and Katie Courtright are like, "Yes, this. Yes." And Lisa wrote in to say, "Married to a lovely man with ADHD and what helps him is scaffolding, setting up a routine, and body doubling."

So...relationships, let's talk about them. So, we're going to cover some ADHD stuff but good practices nonetheless from y'all. Derrick says, "I try to check in regularly with whomever I'm talking with. I say, 'Do you have any thoughts, concerns, or feelings at this time?' very frequently. It helps keep me from dominating a conversation accidentally. I'm also time blind," they say, "So, I end up saying, 'How we doing for time?' pretty regularly too. The third phrase I say a lot, is asking my cat why she is so baby." Derrick Allen, thank you for that.

Now, if you accidentally interrupt people Adam Weaver, Mercedes Maitland, and Annalise De Young all recommend holding up a finger instead, or touching your nose to indicate, "I have a thing, I want to say that I'm holding in." So, finger nosers, unite.

Does your partner have ADHD? You're not alone. So many Ologites wrote in and Serena Brontide offered the advice, "When your partner has ADHD and you're struggling to get their attention, create a code word. Something weird that catches their attention, even if they forget." And Serena wrote, "My partner and I, both ADHD, use the code, 'Ow, my butt hole,' because who could ignore that? But it saved a lot of arguments."

And Kate Timms says that they refer to their ADHD girlfriend's long pauses mid-sentence as glitches and wrote, "We make it all into a computer metaphor. For her, it takes the feeling of being a burden away, because she definitely isn't, and I can say, 'Hey baby, you're glitching,' and she snaps out of it without being made to feel guilty about it, because glitching is just fine with me," Kate writes.

And on that note, for people whose partners have ADHD, Stephanie Broertjes says, "My main tip to those like me is purposely remember to be kind." And Brooke Elizabeth says, "Just meet them where they are for a while. Listen to the actual struggle that they have and work to find a solution together. Loving your person means doing your best to understand them and why they do what they do. Once you get better at that, the ability to problem solve becomes much more simple." Erin Gill added, "Also, have a sense of humor. He is my sweet

squirrel and his dopamine chasing lead to me.” And Lisa wrote in, “Married to a lovely man with ADHD and the best advice, give him grace if or when he fails at something, everyone has bad days.”

But while focus is hard, burnout is real, and ADHD is becoming more commonly diagnosed, let’s end on some of the goods, shall we? Let’s good it up. Are you ready? [*“I’m ready”*] Okay. Sara Nelson wrote in and said, “I just wanted to comment that many designers and artists use the ability to see different kinds of relationships between things as a way to extract nonlinear information, and nonlinear thinking is essential for creative activity,” so there’s a bonus. And Bimbobookshelf said, “My son is almost 12 and he’s also aware that this is a gift and he’s able to focus on his art and video games for hours. And remember, it’s a totally livable thing if you just find how your brain and body work and you listen to yourself.”

And LRae Nerad said, “My tip is to be patient and kind with yourself. I also remind myself that ADHD gives me a unique perspective and that perspective is extremely valuable.” Rosa said, “I try not to be too hard on myself when I make mistakes or I have trouble succeeding at something. This is just how my brain works and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Another pro tip is, figure out what you’re passionate about. And Miriam Hoeflok wrote in and said, “Find your passion and run at it with full speed. And finally, never, ever, ever think of yourself as someone with a damaged or dysfunctional brain. We all think, process, and comprehend differently and you have the ability to see things in ways most other people don’t. So, find your bliss and obsess about it and change the paradigm.” Or as Jeanette-o-saur said, “Find the perks and celebrate the shit out of them. ADHD also comes with superpowers, not just flaws.” While Natalie Parsons made the point, “The only unhappy ADHD people I know are those who feel abnormal and rejected. Don’t you think the problem is society, not us?”

And the last piece of advice, applicable to everyone from patron Patrick Foye said, “Most of all, give yourself a break. Life is hard and bullying yourself accomplishes nothing, while loving yourself, no matter what, accomplishes what is most important: accepting yourself.” Which is really sweet and is making me cry.

So, there you go folks, now you know; what your hot bod needs is you. You know home is where the hard is, but it doesn’t have to be that hard, you do not have to match your socks. And that you can win a grappling match with Father Time and it’s good to let your brain trick your brain. And that emo stuff is normal, and okay, and you deserve some help and some solidarity to get through it. So, we did it, a whole bunch of life advice to round out the ADHD episode, hopefully helpful for plenty of neurotypical folks as well.

Thanks for receiving this a little late. This was supposed to go up two weeks ago, but thanks for giving me some grace while I spend some time with my folks. Once again, donations went to multiple places, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Multiple Myeloma’s IMF at myeloma.org.

So, to become a patron and submit questions for future episodes, you can join at Patreon.com/Ologies. I’ll be adding some cool stuff in April on Patreon, by the way, I’m going to kind of reconfigure some things and I’m kind of excited about that. I read everyone’s advice who submitted something for this, even if I couldn’t fit it all in, but the whole thread is up at Patreon.com/Ologies too. And more links will be up at AlieWard.com/LifeAdvice, which will have links to the ADHD episodes as well.

Thank you, Erin Talbert, for adminning the *Ologies* Podcast Facebook group, Shannon and Boni for helping out, Noel Dilworth for scheduling, Susan Hale for handling merch and so many behind-the-scenes things. Zeke Rodrigues Thomas heads up *Smologies* the short, classroom-friendly versions of *Ologies* classics. Stephen Ray Morris helps with that. Emily White of The Wordary makes transcripts. Caleb Patton bleeps episodes and those are up for free at AlieWard.com/Ologies-Extras along with the transcripts. Kelly Dwyer makes the website and can make yours too.

And big thanks to lead editor and road trip buddy, also professional husband Jarrett Sleeper of Mindjam Media for helping get these out the door even on the hardest, hardest weeks. Thanks Jarrett. [Jarrett: "You got it."] He's sitting on my nephew's futon right now. Nick Thorburn made the theme music.

And if you stick around 'til the end, I tell you a secret and this week's... Okay so... Hm, what's going on Ward? It's been a pretty rough couple of weeks. We've had some emergency family health stuff that's come up with my dad's cancer and it's been really, really tough. And the good news/bad news is that I'm taking a leave of absence from my TV job for the rest of the season just to be able to be with my folks more. My TV job, I've been doing *Innovation Nation* on CBS for Season 9, but I'll be honest, they sped up production to double last season and we were going at three to four times the normal speed this season, so I was on the road a lot. I love the show, but the pace was more than I could physically handle and then when some stuff came up with my pop a couple weeks ago, I unfortunately just couldn't be there for all of it. So, really weird for me to take a leave of absence from something; not something I wanted to do, but I just have to survive and I really need to be here for my folks.

That was a tough decision to make. I feel really, really lucky just to have the option to be able to say, "I have to leave for now." So, thank you to *Ologies* listeners for just letting me make this show and be able to make decisions like that because I have this job. So, thank you to everyone who listens for making that possible, to make this from my sister's guest bedroom at 1:26 in the morning, [laughs] it's a privilege to be able to do that.

And thankfully, two days ago we got some good news about a cancer immunotherapy option, so this is my giant, big, "Thank you" to anyone who is sending us good vibes from the cosmos and to everyone who is working in that field. Whew, I need to do an episode on that, I have so many questions.

I've said before that I feel like a hollow mannequin filled with bees sometimes, but the last two weeks have been really, really, really hard, some of the hardest moments and I have felt very much like a hollow mannequin filled with bees. This week, there were hard moments where I just kept thinking, "Just smoke the bees, just smoke the bees." Because when honeybees get scared, they emit pheromones to communicate with each other. And the reason beekeepers use smoke to calm them, is to prevent the smell of alarm. So, in times of high anxiety lately, I've just pictured like, smokin' my bees and just... calmin' 'em down and just getting through whatever shit is coming my way.

So, just onward and yeah. So, next week, a normal, new episode. We'll get back on track. But thanks for the last couple weeks of everyone being patient. All right worker bees, remember to rest, be nice to yourself. Berbye.

Transcribed by Aveline Malek at TheWordary.com