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My Intangible Orb of Dreams: An ADHD Introspection

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Lewis, Audre. "My Intangible Orb of Dreams: An ADHD Introspection" (2021). *Audre Lorde Writing Prize*.
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Audre Lewis

My Intangible Orb of Dreams: An ADHD Introspection

Fall 2021

I'm a big hot mess who forgets things and jumbles her words and gets exhausted easily. I have a hard time forming new habits, I can't ever get to work on time and I've eaten basically just breakfast food for the last 36 hrs. The world seems big and hard because I find the future you tell me to dream of boring. I will fall down rabbit holes of my brain sitting and listening to Lorde and tell you about my daydreams. When I'm still and take in everything around me, I shed a few tears of joy and bliss. My kitchen cupboards may be a mess but I will sit in my big chair and put words together until I feel like I can breathe again. I can't tell you what job I will have when I graduate but I dream about the book I will write. I want to do so many things. Soak up so much knowledge and go to so many places and learn how to make a life for myself. I want to create and heal and move my body with strength and grace and enjoy the peace and sun and music of this existence. My Intangible Orb of Dreams fills me with such a strong fire, I promise. I'm just a bit misunderstood and can't do what you say I have to. Putting sentences together out loud is hard but I will write you many poems. The everyday-ness gets repetitive and hard to keep up when connection and creation and simple joys are the only things filling me up. I wish I could sit here and listen to music and be encapsulated by the world and my own thought forever. My mind is an endless generator of creative thinking and problem solving, but the "shoulds" of our conditioning feel like a giant wall standing between me and wholeness.

I've spent so long figuring out how to trust, honor, forgive myself; be slow, be still, create, love and be loved: this has been my foundation and I thought it was so solid. I was diagnosed with ADHD in June, and my cycle of healing started all over again. As I move through life with this added layer, the authenticity I had grown to be so rooted in, has suddenly been doused in misconceptions and stigma and shame. At 19, my self-worth was suddenly entrenched in internalized ableism and capitalist ideals. I miss telling you about how the sun only drips with pure bliss and the realm dense green is my source of safety and stillness, but I am exhausted from playing the productivity catch-up game.

My worth is not what I can do for you, for your money. My true being is something the world doesn't get to see, hidden behind the tall walls of institutionalism. Everything I'm told to dream of seems so rigid and unfulfilling and I can't imagine exactly how my true purpose will bring me a life of stability

and joy. But I trust myself enough to know that eventually it will, so in the meantime I envision a state of being. Let me tell you about her: she is truly herself. Her authenticity and neurodiversity are her power, and she is so rooted in this. She is able to explore her many interests, create, run with fiery lungs and quick feet that ground her deep into the earth. She knows how to say “no” and isn’t swarmed with guilt when she rests. She decorates her body and her space in color and art and beautiful shiny things. She finds immense peace in a deep breath, nourishing her body, sharing wisdom with those who are curious enough to listen, she listens back. She has the time and energy to eat delicious things and feel divine in nature, existing in a state of neutrality and acceptance. She will not accept feeling like she’s not enough because she understands that shame and guilt are merely reflections and projections of the environment we inhabit. Don’t you dare tell her that she is not whole, partial or incomplete. She just refuses to be your little worker bee.

My late diagnosis has caused quite the identity crisis. How do I embrace my neurodiversity when I’m congratulated for spreading myself so thin, to the point of complete exhaustion, just so that I can feel like enough? How do I embrace my neurodiversity when my professors assume I’m careless and lazy? What do I do with this new piece of my identity when my needs will only be acknowledged when they’re expressed in a doctor’s note? What do I do when the doctor takes weeks to write it but my grades are already slipping and I don’t have the energy to schedule another meeting? What do I do when my insurance suddenly decides to stop covering my medication, but I’ve run out two days early and I can’t afford another layer of brain fog? What do I do when I pick up a new project then drop it when the novelty wears off? Did I disappoint already? What do I do when you ask how my to-do list is going before you ask about me? What do I do when consistency is not on the list of Audre brain things, but I’m told it’s the only key to success. What do I do when I forget what I was saying-- mid sentence? Now you’re staring at me but words do not exist anymore and suddenly my chest is tight and my fingers are numb. How about when burnout, fueled by my avoidant tendencies leave me glued to my bed? Everything I want and need to do floats around me but I can’t move. What about when I rarely pursue my hobbies, because otherwise I will fall down into a deep rabbit hole and pursue them tunnel vision style--

the dishes are piled up in the sink and have 3 assignments due tomorrow. I can't see anything else until I pull myself out. How do I embrace my neurodiversity when I've been told it is- and therefore my entire existence is just not worthy of space here?

My foundation of self-trust will slowly return when I learn to exist in this world, loudly, without shrinking myself to fit this funny little mold that makes absolutely no sense at all. I get a bit closer to my intangible orb of dreams when I embody the Audre who uses her true authenticity as her grounding power. I accept that the process of rooting every part of me is slow and slightly grueling. I envision what I wear, my personal transformation when I put on my jewelry, how I feel when I know I've made someone feel a little more seen than they did before. My stability comes from being deeply devoted to the things I truly care about, when I'm given the space. I am rooted when I'm allowed to feel intense emotions, even when it makes you uncomfortable. I get frustrated or impatient easily but I am also so quick to love and fill with excitement. Give me more opportunities to connect and create and explore what I'm truly passionate about. Save me your judgmental perceptions of the way I function; I woke up with four spoons today but you still have all ten. I wish I had more days to spend in the sun, more moments to be deeply content with unpacking my mind in stillness. I wish I had more days to surpass small talk, to understand and appreciate the wonderful minds I am surrounded by. I wish I had more time to sing and scream and consume art. I want more time to rest and dream. But the scatterbrained worker bee is always looming. I am reminding myself, and you, that I am not dysfunctional at all, I'm simply wired to spend energy on things that truly fulfill my purpose here. It might not be right or enough, but at least it's true. I've come to realize that my neurodivergence is not separate from my being that I have already learned to love. Everything that I am, lover of all things, writer, procrastinator, a deeply curious soul, and a scatterbrained hot mess are all wonderful products of my hard wiring. The strength that comes in authentic identity, mirror each other and plant seeds as little opportunities for deep, true knowing. Where it's right, wonderful pieces of our existence will grow and transform when they are needed. And this gives me hope. Hope that we will learn to be so true that we naturally start deconstructing old paradigms that tell us we are not worthy. My forgetful, disorganized, but playfully

curious existence gives me hope we will mold our world to match our needs and true dreams, serving us,
not them.