Adaora Ayoade: Hello Mary, are you ready for today's session?

Mary:

Excited, very ready. Thank you, Adaora.

Adaora Ayoade:

Super. All right, so Mary, we are going to have about 25 minutes together and I'm really curious to dive into what it is you want to focus on today. But before we do that, I just want to make sure that you're comfortable, you're in a good place, and you're relaxed.

Mary:

Yes, I am. Thank you for asking.

Adaora Ayoade:

Awesome. And I'd just like to just reiterate the aspect of confidentiality, just to let you know that this conversation is being recorded, but of course your identity is obviously secure and just to check with you that you are fine that it's being recorded today.

Mary:

That's fine with me. Thank you.

Adaora Ayoade:

Fantastic. So Mary, what would you like us to focus on in the time we have together, the 25 minutes?

Mary:

I'd like to talk about my issues with organization. I feel like I'm all over the place in everything I'm doing with my family, with the job, with my studies, and I'm struggling in that area.

Adaora Ayoade:

When you say all over the place, Mary, what are you referring to?

Mary:

I feel like there isn't really a structure that is in place and I need to have a structure in place so that I can be more successful in each of these areas of my life. Planning, I know, is super important. Having a routine is super important, and I can't help thinking about a saying that I heard a couple of years ago that if you fail to plan then you plan to fail. And so I just need some assistance with being more intentional and planning ahead of time so that I can be more successful in these areas.

Adaora Ayoade:

So Mary, you talked about broadly, you said organization, but you mentioned a few things. You mentioned family, you mentioned work, and then of course you mentioned structure, that quote that you said if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. So as you bring all these pieces together, what's most important about all of this? Would it be focusing on how to plan a work, plan on the personal front, developing a routine, having a plan, what specifically is it that you are looking at?

Mary:

I think once I get organized in one area, it will spill over into other areas. So I need to focus on the organization piece. I think if I'm organized at home, that will spill over into the organization at work and at school. I think focusing on organization at home might be a good place to start.

Adaora Ayoade:

Organization at home?

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

All right. And then when you started, you said issues with organization, can you just talk a little bit about those issues with organization at home now, you said?

Mary:

Yes, at home, because I don't have a proper structure in place, I'm not very organized with things around with the kids, organized with the paperwork, new paperwork that comes from their school, with the food situation. Just organization all around, I'm sorry, I'm probably being not as specific as I ought to be, but those are some key issues. Trying to be more structured in the way I do things. I think if I have a plan in place with what to do with the kids' paperwork from school, what to do with the organization of the food situation and the meals, that will make a difference if I'm a little bit more organized in those areas.

Adaora Ayoade:

Well Mary, thank you so much. I could feel there's almost like a tension in your voice as you were sharing this with me. What was coming up for you there?

Mary:

Because I feel like there's so many flying, there's so many pieces and competing priorities and I probably just need to focus on one thing first. I think if I nail one thing down, I won't feel as overwhelmed and then I can move to the next thing. I'm probably feeling a little overwhelmed because I'm thinking of solving all the problems at the same time and I know that isn't realistic, so I need to take a step back and allow you to help me get one thing straight. Once that is done and checked off, I can move to the next thing.

Adaora Ayoade:

Is that feeling of overwhelm?

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

And Mary, what makes this really important for you at this time that you've brought this forward now?

Mary:

This is super important because it's the beginning of the year and I'm committed to having a successful year. The way I see things right now is if I can get this straight now, it will spill over to the rest of the year and produce the results that I need to see. It's really important to me because it can have detrimental consequences if I don't get this under control and I don't get organized.

Adaora Ayoade:

It sounds like it will have an impact on how you perform for the rest of the year, like you said, and the impact it'll have.

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

So considering the time we have together, what would you like to walk away with at the end of the 25 minutes, Mary?

Mary:

At the end of the 25 minutes, I would like to walk away with a doable plan that I can execute and be excited to come back and share with you at some point on the difference it has made.

Adaora Ayoade:

Okay. And Mary, it's interesting hearing you say you want to walk away with this plan that you can execute because I know that you're very successful professional in career and obviously you've gotten this far because of the priorities you put in place. And so what's actually getting in the way, what are these issues that are getting in the way of you having this plan at the moment?

Mary:

Possibly being complacent in some areas. Also, as more competing priorities are thrown at me, I am struggling to get things under control. So I think the tendency for me to forget some of the things that I've worked in the past is starting to creep up and I just need possibly a reminder of some of the things that you know will help me be successful in getting more organized.

Adaora Ayoade:

So you're saying what's getting in your way are priorities being thrown at you? And you mentioned the word complacent.

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

What's causing that?

Mary:

Complacent in taking for granted that if I'm going to keep up with having things under control, I have to do the things that I know worked previously. And so not being consistent with doing what worked in the past and forgetting them is causing significant issues for me now. That's why I want to pause and refocus so that I can get back on track again.

Adaora Ayoade:

It sounds like you were on track before because you said things had worked for you in the past.

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

Okay. And Mary, what happens to you when you get into this place that it sounds like you're in now, that you talked about?

Mary:

When I get into this place and you're referring to where I am right now, right?

Adaora Ayoade:

In terms of how you're feeling, how you're being at the moment.

Mary:

When I get into where I am right now, I am not in a positive place at all. There's a lot of anxiety, some panic attacks, and I'm basically not the best version of myself, especially for those that I love that are around me, I don't want to be this version of myself. I want to be a better version of myself so that people can appreciate being around me versus not want to be around me.

Adaora Ayoade:

And this better version of yourself, what has helped you in the past to be that? Because it sounds like, you said just really pause, refocus, and get back on track. So what has helped you in the past to be this better version of yourself?

Mary:

In the past, I've made an effort to go to bed on time. I have made lists of things that are super important and things that can wait even though they are also important and I've made time for myself.

Adaora Ayoade:

And maybe as you say that now, that you've made time for yourself, how does that make you feel?

Mary:

When I made time for myself, it felt super valuable and important because I knew that I was doing it for those that I care about.

Adaora Ayoade:

So caring about yourself impacts those that you care about?

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

And what would caring for yourself, what else would this entail? But you've mentioned a few things. What else would caring for yourself involve so that you can show up better for those that you care about?

Mary:

Getting everything out of the way so that I can get to bed on time because I've noticed when I don't go to bed on time, I'm super grouchy the next day, I have limited focus, I eat like I'm crazy, I just do everything wrong the next day. So if I can get myself organized and get as many things on the to-do list done before a certain time, then I can jump in bed and get some rest and function better the next day.

Adaora Ayoade:

So when you talk about getting all these things done and then you bring the other piece that you spoke about, which is getting priorities thrown at you, how would you be able to manage this?

Mary:

As I think about it, I think a good first step for me as I get all these things thrown at me is to remember that it's okay to say no to some of the things. It's okay to ask for extensions, for deadlines. It's okay to remember that I only have 24 hours in the day and some of those hours are sleeping hours for me, so I'm going to have to scale back on how much I take on.

Adaora Ayoade:

It's okay to say no to some of these things. Let me just check in with you, Mary, because you wanted to walk away with a doable plan.

Mary:

Yes.

Adaora Ayoade:

That you can execute and you've shared quite a few things that have helped you in the past and what you feel can help you manage this aspect of priorities being thrown at you versus you being focused and not having this anxiety and panic attacks. Just curious to know, what are you figuring out now? What's coming up for you, just to check in with you, with regards to what you want to walk away with?

Mary:

It's funny, as I hear myself talking, I feel different hearing myself say that it's okay to say no. I feel like say to myself, "Well, you should have known this before," but I feel better. It's okay to say no and there's nothing wrong with it. And either saying no or asking for more time will allow me to show up better and will make a difference.

Adaora Ayoade:

How are you feeling now as you're saying this?

Mary:

I'm feeling better. I'm definitely feeling better. I'm feeling, I guess, the word would probably be empowered. I can do this.

Adaora Ayoade:

Okay. So let's have a look at some of the things that you can do when you say, "I can do this," because you did say you want to walk away with this plan. Can you just, if you were to come up with some of the things that you almost like reemphasizing some of the things you'd shared earlier and just bringing it all together, what's that looking like now? Because you've said a few things, so let's just see what they look like if you bring it all together.

Mary:

So I work better with things in groups of three. For me, the three things for me would be one, going back to the drawing board of what is super important for me and that is being able to get more sleep because I feel like that area impacts every area of my life significantly. Being able to say no or being able to not feel bad if I put certain things on hold since again, I only have 24 hours in the day, I cannot do everything in those 24 hours. And then the third thing would be following what I said I was going to do, which is saying no or scaling back and getting my sleep.

Adaora Ayoade:

You had talked about making a list of what's super important and things that can wait. How does that sit in all of this and how important is that?

Mary:

Well, that would be the second thing because after making my list, I would look at what can wait and what has to be absolutely done right now. And that will guide my saying yes or no to what is thrown at me, whether at home or at the job, but starting at home.

Adaora Ayoade:

So Mary, this group of three, where are you at now with that group of three? How does this sit?

Mary:

It sits well. I feel like I can do this, make my list, determine which ones can stay or go so that I can get my sleep and sticking to it. I know there's seven days in a week, if I can stick to it, at least let me start with four days and then I can go up to five, then six, then seven. I feel like if I can start with four days, I will feel better and then I can keep on increasing the number of days until I'm a perfect seven.

Adaora Ayoade:

Okay. Well, thank you for being so kind to yourself and sort of sharing very honestly what you feel you can manage, which is four days a week. And when you said if, you used the word if, if you can stick to it. So what will get in the way of you sticking to it, Mary?

Mary:

Nobody but myself. I know I probably shouldn't say that. I will get to it because I want to share positive feedback when next we meet. So thank you for reminding me that if doesn't sound very positive and sure. So when I get to four and I will get to four, thank you for pushing me.

Adaora Ayoade:

You came up with this Mary, and so what would support you to be able to stay committed to this?

Mary:

Visuals are important to me and helpful to me. I will make post-it notes signs and put them around me, around my bed, the fridge, just places that will remind me how important this is, how much better I will feel achieving this, and just looking forward to being in a different space when next we talk.

Adaora Ayoade:

Wow. Okay. I really just want to acknowledge you and the energy that I can almost feel from your voice as you're saying this. When we started you said, "Look, I really want to address any issues with organization and I want to walk away with this doable plan that I can execute." And you said you wanted really to look at how this structure can work on the home front. So what are you walking away with now, Mary?

Mary:

I have my plan. I'll make my lists. I will cross off the things that can't be done, get the things that can be done, done, get my sleep, and show up better the next day and be a better version of myself for everyone around me. Kind of like the reminder on the plane, put on your mask before you put on other people's masks. So I want to be able to put on my mask first so that I can help others around me put on their mask.

Adaora Ayoade:

Interesting analogy. Pretty good metaphor there. So as you're talking about putting on your mask before helping others put on their mask, what else have you learned about yourself today, Mary?

Mary:

I can do this and I don't need to beat up myself. Just take it one day at a time. I'll do my four days and I'll get to seven days one day.

Adaora Ayoade:

How do you feel as you say that?

Mary:

I feel good. I feel much better. Thank you.

Adaora Ayoade:

How are you going to utilize this learning about yourself, that you can do this and that you're going to face it as you say, how are you going to use it in other parts of your life now that you know this about

yourself that, "Yes, Mary is able to do this and I have my group of three items." How is this going to impact other parts of your life?

Mary:

I like to journal, so I'll write notes at each stage. I'll try to make notes about how I'm feeling so that I can refer back to this and just keep reminding myself how I'll feel when I attain these goals. So I'll write it down and I think I learned best when I go back and refer to the notes that I've made.

Adaora Ayoade:

Fantastic. Wow. Well, we are almost out of time. We have just one minute left, Mary. And so when you talk about you're going to journal and you're going to write how you feel, and I think back to what you said at the start about feeling anxious and getting panic attacks. Now with you doing all of this, what actually happens to you when you're in this space that you've described?

Mary:

I feel good. I can't wait to go home and find pictures of my successful self and put them around me and post-it notes and just reminders everywhere. Remember, Mary, where you're going to be, when you get to seven days, you're going to be in a completely different space mentally and emotionally. And I just keep reminding myself, keep working and believing in myself.

Adaora Ayoade:

All right. Well Mary, thank you so much for the time that you've spent having this conversation. I really just want to check in with you if I have your permission for us to end the session now and if we're complete for today?

Mary:

Yes, please. Thank you.

Adaora Ayoade:

Wonderful. Thank you so much and I wish you every success as you go forward.

Mary:

Thank you. I appreciate you.

Adaora Ayoade:

You're most welcome.