

UNMASKED

# The Late Diagnosis Letter

*on grief, what changes, and what doesn't.*

Dear Letter,

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The Late Diagnosis Letter. I am you  
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KNOWLEDGE | VALIDATION | EMPOWERMENT

## A LETTER

# If you're grieving the version of you who didn't know

There is a moment, somewhere after the recognition, when something quieter arrives. Not relief, exactly. Not closure. Something more like grief.

It is the grief of looking back at the version of you who didn't know. The teenager who was told she was lazy. The mother who couldn't understand why she was so exhausted. The professional who burned out and was told she wasn't resilient enough. The friend who was "too much." The daughter who felt like she was failing on a level no one could quite name.

If you find yourself in that grief, you are not being dramatic. You are doing the work that has to be done. You are mourning the version of you that could have had more support, more understanding, less self-blame. That mourning is valid and it is important. It is also temporary.

## WHAT CHANGES

You stop fighting yourself. The internal monologue that has been running for thirty years — *why can't you just* — softens, eventually, into something more like *oh, that's what was happening*. Tasks don't get easier overnight, but the moral weight you've been adding to every dropped ball starts to lift. You begin to design your life around how your brain actually works rather than how you wish it did.

## WHAT DOESN'T CHANGE

You will still have hard days. Diagnosis is not a cure. Medication, where it helps, is a tool — not a transformation. The people in your life who were impatient before may still be impatient after. Some relationships shift; some don't. The toolkit you're holding is part of how you build the structures that support you. The people who love you well will rise to meet that. The ones who don't will reveal themselves.

## WHAT TO HOLD ON TO

You have been navigating a brain difference no one named for you, for a very long time, with no map. The fact that you are still here, still curious, still looking for tools, still capable of love and work and connection, says everything about who you are at the core.

The diagnosis is not who you are. It is information about how you work. With that information, you can finally stop blaming yourself for being something you were never given the tools to understand.

### WHAT'S NEXT

If you'd like to stay close to this work, there are more articles, tools, and future resources at **adhdinwomen.uk**. You can also reply to any email I send you — I read everything, and your story matters to this work continuing.

— *ADHD in Women*

adhdinwomen.uk