



I Didn't Set Out to Build a Brand. I Built What I Needed to Survive

Rosie never planned to build a startup, she planned to build a career that would be fulfilling and happy.

Academically exceptional, she graduated with near-perfect results and entered the corporate world determined to succeed. In 2017, at 25, she was diagnosed as autistic. Months later she began working in banking, stepping into an environment built around pace, ambiguity and relentless social performance.

On paper, she was thriving. In reality, she was surviving.

She was not sleeping properly. She was barely eating. She was self harming while maintaining professional composure. Meetings demanded constant interpretation of unspoken cues. Open-plan offices meant sensory strain from morning to night. Feedback was indirect. Expectations were implied.

The corporate world was not built for how her brain processed information.

In early 2018, her body forced the issue. She began losing the ability to walk and was later diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder, a stress-related neurological condition triggered by prolonged overload. The message was clear. High performance without structural support is not sustainable.

The experience did not end her ambition. It redirected it.

When survival becomes strategy

Over the following years, Rosie began speaking publicly about autistic adulthood and the hidden cost of masking in professional life. She wrote candidly about burnout, appeared on podcasts and spoke at events. Her content resonated quickly and widely.

In December alone, more than four million people engaged with her work on neurodivergent overload during peak corporate pressure. The response was not abstract. It was urgent. Professionals were asking how to manage meetings, medical appointments and relationship strain without collapsing afterwards.

During this period, she published *My Autistic Fight Song*, a first-hand account of navigating autism and mental illness while pursuing corporate ambition. Available in print, eBook and audiobook formats across Amazon stores, the book solidified her position as both lived expert and emerging voice within the neurodivergent space.

The more the platform grew, the more obvious the gap became. Awareness was expanding. Practical infrastructure was not.

Then, in April 2025, a medical emergency sharpened the insight.

In severe pain from kidney stones and struggling to process instructions, Rosie was told to get herself to hospital or not be helped. She phoned her father, who stayed with her until she was safe. Afterwards, she kept returning to the same thought: she had someone to call. Many autistic adults do not.

That realisation turned a conversation into a company.

Hyperfocus as entrepreneurial fuel

Autistic hyperfocus is often misunderstood as obsession. In the context of building a startup, it can become disciplined intensity.

Once Rosie identified the structural gap between diagnosis and daily survival, she could not step away from it. She began mapping the predictable stress points in autistic adult life: high-pressure meetings, sensory overload in open offices, healthcare environments that demand rapid processing, the emotional fallout of masking at work and then returning home depleted.

The concept for AntiPocket developed from that analysis.

Within months of sharing the idea publicly, hundreds joined a waiting list. In October 2025, the company secured £15,000 in early investment to greenlight the first build. Incorporation followed. Development began.

Institutional engagement came quickly. The National Autistic Society entered discussions around supporting awareness of the structural gap AntiPocket addresses for autistic adults. Autism Assessment Hub provided clinical guidance. The University of the West of England's Launch Space programme supported early stage business development.

This was no longer a personal project. It was infrastructure in formation.

Infrastructure for high functioning teams

AntiPocket launches publicly on 1 April with a clear positioning. It is not a lifestyle app. It is a support system designed to stabilise performance.

Built as a daily digital companion for neurodivergent adults navigating work, healthcare and relationships, the platform focuses on preparation before cognitively demanding situations, regulation during overload and structured recovery afterwards. Crucially, it is designed to be embedded into corporate diversity and inclusion strategies as a non-disclosing, swiftly implemented solution.

The commercial case is increasingly recognised across sectors. Public figures such Richard Branson have spoken openly about how neurodivergent cognition shapes leadership. Companies including Microsoft and SAP have invested in neurodiversity initiatives after identifying measurable productivity gains.

Yet many neurodivergent professionals continue to leave roles not because they lack ability, but because the environment extracts too much invisible labour.

AutiPocket is built to reduce that extraction.

When cognitive load is managed proactively, output becomes more consistent. When burnout decreases, retention improves. When neurodivergent talent is sustained rather than exhausted, organisations protect both innovation and commercial growth.

The ambition

Rosie is clear that AutiPocket is not intended to sit on the margins of workplace wellbeing. The ambition is cultural normalisation.

Just as mental health platforms are now routinely embedded into corporate ecosystems, neurodivergent infrastructure should sit alongside them as standard practice rather than optional enhancement.

Building the company has required stepping into spaces that once drained her. She now speaks regularly at events, writes extensively and records podcasts about neurodivergence in business. Visibility has become part of the work.

She did not set out to build a brand.

She built what she needed to survive.

The scale of engagement suggests she was never building it for herself alone.

Editor's note

Rosie is an autistic founder, speaker and author of *My Autistic Fight Song*. Her social platforms reach millions each month and she regularly speaks and appears on podcasts about autism, ambition and relationships. AutiPocket, her support app for neurodivergent adults, launches publicly on 1 April and is available for discussion during Autism Acceptance Month.