

Intro: [\(00:00\)](#)

Having an ADHD brain is a mixed bag. Sometimes it's good news. And sometimes, well, it's not. Even ADHD professionals have trouble with their ADHD. They try harder and harder and harder to overcome the chaos that's ADHD. And finally, they overcome the barriers of ADHD and they become what we call at ADDA, ADHD heroes. And that's what TADD Talks are all about this year. Your favorite ADHD professionals sharing their ADHD stories. So, join us here at ADDA, the Attention Deficit Disorder Association every single day of October, because it's ADHD Awareness Month. Here's the next inspiring story.

Aron Croft: [\(00:49\)](#)

Hello and welcome to TADD talks with ADDA. I'm Aron Croft, CEO of Hidden ADHD, and this is my story entitled What's Wrong With Me. If you told me seven years ago that I would be giving this talk today, I would never have believed you. That's because seven years ago, I was 33 years old, newly divorced, broke, and earning minimum wage. I was moving into a house, not a whole house, a room in a house. I would be sharing with four other acquaintances. So, there I was, upstairs, unpacking my post-divorce suitcase, when I was startled by Billy flopping down on my king-size bed. Billy, a 26-year-old tech support agent from Vietnam didn't seem to think it was weird. And that's when it hit me. He hadn't flopped down on my king-size bed but rather had flopped down on his half of our king-size bed because renting half a bed was all I could afford at that point in my life.

Aron Croft: [\(02:16\)](#)

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself. Let me tell you a bit about how we got here. It's the story of having gone over 30 years with undiagnosed ADHD. Elementary, middle school and high school started out pretty well. I was a naturally good test taker, and I had a strong social structure supporting me. Still, I struggled throughout school with legendary levels of procrastination and last-minute saves. And never completed a book from cover to cover earning me the nickname, (hope this isn't a copyright violation) of "Cliff's Notes Aron". What's wrong with me? What's wrong with me? The question played like a broken record in my head. My mom was quick to supply the answer. "Aron's just arrogant. He thinks he doesn't have to do the work", she said. This answer confused me though because I wanted to do the work. And even more than that, I hated the minor heart attack I experienced every time before a deadline.

Aron Croft: [\(03:36\)](#)

Sure. It would get me into action, but it left me drained physically and psychologically. Despite all this, I managed to graduate number one in my high school class and... sound the trumpets... get into Harvard. Harvard was supposed to be the beginning of my successful life. Instead, it marked the start of 15 years of failure. I hated college. I dropped out twice, once running away to a tiny, tiny island in New Zealand, but that's another story. I used alcohol, pot, and cigarettes at varying times to drown out my despair. But I managed to graduate by the skin of my teeth. All this turmoil and failure at college further eroded my weak sense of self. But I had a Harvard degree going into the job market and things finally got better. No, no, no, I'm just kidding. I lasted six months at my first job out of college. I similarly failed at my first seven jobs and

businesses.

Aron Croft: ([04:59](#))

When I was working, I had to use nights and weekends to keep up with the work because of my undiagnosed ADHD. And that began to affect my marriage. What's wrong with me? That stinking question popped up again. Finally, in my early thirties, I did what anyone with their career in shambles considers doing. I went to graduate school. There, I got a master's degree in coaching psychology. I told my mom and everyone else that I was going because I wanted to be a life coach, which was true, but really deep down I just wanted to figure out how to help myself.

Aron Croft: ([05:51](#))

And in many ways, the degree did help. I got support from peer coaches and I started applying the science of motivation, habit formation and change to my life. I even began to fantasize about how I would use my newfound knowledge and skills to get out of my minimum wage job and finally fulfill my potential. And then the bombshell weekend happened. In one weekend, my wife tells me she's unhappy and has been having an affair. So, all of this brings us back to the shared house and the room with Billy, broke, divorced and earning minimum wage. Now with the minor heart attack from the Billy experience, my brain kicked into action, and I managed to find a higher paying job. Then after seven months in that role, I switched companies for an even better job. My life was finally starting to work. And then history freaking repeated itself. While still under new hire probation, three months into my new job, I was told that my work was not up to par and I would have to stay late and redo all of it.

Aron Croft: ([07:16](#))

What's wrong with me? The question kept popping up. Terrified I would lose yet another job, I pressured a friend to lend me some Adderall to get me through a week of late nights at the office. So, there I am at the office, and I take the Adderall, which is the first time in my life I've ever done it. And I fell. I fell and I fell, and I fell down a rabbit hole. I entered a parallel universe where I could direct my attention on command. I could do work that wasn't fun just because I should do it. Ohhhhhh! This is what people meant when they offhandedly implored me, "Aaron, just sit down and work on your assignment", assuming my brain could do that at will.

Aron Croft: ([08:22](#))

It was like for me as if I were a blind person, suddenly getting to experience sight, and I was thinking to myself, ohhhhh! This is what people mean when they've been saying purple. I saw a psychiatrist immediately. And I got diagnosed with ADHD, inattentive presentation. And overnight I went from being an underachiever to an average achiever and then an above average achiever. In the subsequent seven years, I completely rebuilt my life. I got remarried. I got promoted four times. I worked my way up to a senior manager position at an \$8 billion dollar fortune 500 company. Doot-da-doo! (That's my trumpet impression). While getting diagnosed was life-changing, that summary glosses over what the real path was like. In my first two years, post-diagnosis I thought that holding down a job was the peak of my potential. So, I patted myself on the back after going to work every day.

Aron Croft: ([09:34](#))

And then I smoked weed, ate sweet tarts and played video games every night. But after two years, I realized that maybe the peak of my potential wasn't just lasting more than 12 months in a job. I realized that the expression was true, that pills don't teach skills. And if I wanted to do more with my life, I needed to do more than medicate away my symptoms for a few hours. And that's when I fell down a different rabbit hole, studying how our ADHD brains process things differently, the neurotypicals. Once I understood this, I understood why the popular productivity systems had always failed for me. Understanding the ADHD differences, I mixed and matched and modified leading productivity approaches to develop a simplified system that only relied on focusing for 8% of the day. And that opened the flood gates of productivity for me. To give you an example, last year as a side hustle, while working my full-time fortune 500 job, I published over 25 articles, read over seventy-five books, filmed over 50 YouTube videos, worked out five days a week, and ultimately grew my social media following to what it presently is, over a hundred thousand people.

Aron Croft: ([11:02](#))

And despite working fewer hours, I was also able to perform better at my corporate job. All of this productivity explosion enabled me to quit my corporate job a few months ago and launch my successful, Hidden ADHD coaching business.

Aron Croft: ([11:22](#))

But on this journey, the most important thing was that I discovered something unexpected. I discovered that there was something wrong with my systems, and there was something wrong with my strategies. But the greatest discovery of all, was that in the end, there was nothing wrong with me. Thank you for joining me for today's ADDA TADD talk. I want to take this opportunity to tell you that if you resonated with my story, there is likely something wrong with your systems, and there is likely something wrong with your strategies. But there isn't and let me be the first person to tell you, no questions asked, there isn't something wrong with you.

Aron Croft: ([12:19](#))

I'm Aron Croft, CEO of Hidden ADHD Coaching in Chicago. If you want to learn more ADHD strategies, Google Hidden ADHD. I've got a free five-day email crash course, I've also got a free guide on 10 productivities, mistakes, um, and the free email crash courses on ADHD101, uh, it's Hidden ADHD is what you Google. Hidden just because for me and so many other people, it goes under the radar. Thank you again for joining me for this ADDA TADD talk. On your personal hero's journey, you will make some wrong turns, but just remember that there's nothing wrong with you. Thank you.

Outro: ([13:00](#))

Thanks so much for joining us for TADD talks this year. I'm sure you enjoyed these inspiring stories and there's so much more. In fact, why don't you join us for the 2021 virtual ADHD International Conference November 4th through the 6th. And you might want to consider joining ADDA as well. It's a great investment for a small amount of money as little as \$5 a

month. And remember, when you feel like hope is gone, look inside you and be strong and you'll finally see the truth, that a hero lies in you.