ntro: (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.

David Giwerc: (00:50)
Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. My name is David Giwerc and I'm founder and president of the ADD Coach Academy and a master certified ADHD coach. I'm really excited to be here with you today. ADDA has invited me to share with you my story, my experience, that hopefully will empower you to do what my focus of is on today, which is, Embracing Your Unique Brain Wiring and the Strengths That Are Concealed. So here goes. You know, when I was finally diagnosed with ADHD at age 38, I thought back to my childhood and saw that the signs were there all along, only there was no name for it back then. It being my limitless energy, my exceptional strengths in certain areas, and unfortunately, my significant challenges of attention, interest, inhibition, executive functions, and many other things. My mother would tell you, if you were to talk to her, I was very active child from birth.

David Giwerc: (01:57)
And I would say it's really an understatement. As a toddler, my energy never, never slowed down and it, and when it did it didn't allow me to get enough sleep. I was so hyperactive that I would wake up in the middle of the night, get on my tricycle and peddle it to the kitchen where I'd pull out, open the fridge, and drink the prepared glass of milk waiting for me on the lowest shelf. My excess energizer bunny-like energy was a good thing on the playground, but once I reached school age, that excess of energy, that abundant, physical energy and my propensity to get bored easily became a constant challenge. I found it difficult to sustain my focus and attention in the classroom, especially when I had a boring teacher lecturing. It would, I would get disruptive as I tried any means, anyway, to stimulate my brain so that it could focus on whatever the teacher was presenting in class.

David Giwerc: (02:58)
My hyperactive energy had nowhere to go. I would get restless. I would squirm. I'd be an unable to sit still in my classroom chair. I'd blurt things out or shoot my hand into the air at inappropriate times to answer a question I didn't know the answer for, or fidget around loudly in my seat. I literally could not sit still. I often ended up in the principal's office more times than I could count. And eventually my parents were called in until they had to take me out of whatever school I was in permanently. By the time I was six, I had been kicked out of two nursery schools in the kindergarten. Doesn't make you feel good about yourself. Then there was my unique manner of watching television, that threat threatened my parents' ability to have a functioning sofa in the living room. I had so much energy that in order to sustain focus while I was watching our black and white television in the early 1960s, I would rock back and forth on that living room couch with such violent force, that by the time I was seven years old, I had broken yes, not one but two couches.

David Giwerc: (04:07)
So to prevent any destruction of any future family sofas, my grandmother decided to buy me a very expensive and sturdy rocking chair. She believed that the rocking chair would provide me with that essential movement to calm me down so that I would be able to sustain focus on whatever I was sitting on without busting it. And that idea worked. In fact, I still have that same rocking chair in one of our bedrooms at home. And whenever I need to think out or process issues, or I'm overwhelmed

with lots of ideas or important things coming up, I retreat to that rocking chair. And 15 minutes of rocking on it will usually give me the clarity I need. So, I knew there was something different about me. I didn't do things in a very traditional or conventional way, and whatever I did do, I kept hidden because I knew that if I shared those things with others, intuitively I knew they would judge me and eventually stick that weird label on me. But learning about my unique brain wiring and the way I did things, it did lead me to a place of necessity.

David Giwerc: (05:25)
And that was figuring out a way to learn how I learn so that I could get through the daily grind and boredom of school. Learning in class and studying at home were extremely difficult and challenging for me. However, I knew that in order to stay on track with everyone in class, I had to figure out a way to stay focused with my reading and my homework and all the different subjects, I was, subjects I was required to learn in that one size fits all environment of public school. So, after some self-exploration and observation with no help from coaches or teachers or anyone, I devised a way of studying that worked with my kinesthetic way of movement and physical learning style of having to move around when I was bored in order to sustain my attention. What I did was, I would use that rocking chair my grandmother got for me, and the rocking was the movement I needed to stimulate my brain, especially when I was bored with reading material or class notes or whatever I needed to learn.

David Giwerc: (06:18)
It was also very helpful with slowing down the speed of that cognitive hyperactivity I would often have, that many ideas that bombarded my brain, as well as maintaining the excessive physical energy, that had nowhere to go. Rocking on my chair, always calmed me down so that I could pause to pay attention and process my current assignments or tasks. Although the rocking chair was soothing and it sustained me and helped me naturally focus, I knew, I just knew that there was something else I needed to do in order to understand what I was reading or focusing on in any particular moment. I always knew that I liked singing or humming when I was rocking.

David Giwerc: (07:13)
So instinctively. I decided to read my class notes to a random song like She's Coming Around the Mountain while I was learning the Gettysburg Address. So, you know, I would start out with four score and seven years ago, four score and seven years ago, you know, I would just start singing it. And, um, that's the way I learned rocking on a rocking chair, singing my notes to a tune I knew. But doing that, I found I could study for longer periods of time, and the information started to sink in. I linked it, I associated with it, I could remember it, and learn it. But later as I became a coach and, uh, started the academy and coaching people, I later realized that that rocking and singing combined three modes of processing. The kinesthetic movement on the chair allowed me to sustain my focus, and hearing it while I was singing the auditory, allowed me to understand it.

David Giwerc: (08:11)
And the visual, I would put pictures in my head as all three of these processing modalities were working for me. And I used the same process to get through high school and college. I knew that it would take me longer. In fact, frequently it took me three to five times longer, but I didn't care because I knew I could succeed this way. And I learned everything that I needed to do, and I made all my assignments to get through four years at Syracuse University and earned my Bachelor of Science degree there. It was really a huge accomplishment, but I couldn't have done it without understanding my unique brain wiring. But unfortunately, I was also often my worst enemy. Even though I excelled in certain areas of my life, especially sports, I spent way more time dwelling on stories of my failures, struggles, and challenges, than ever pausing to celebrate and savor the strengths whenever they showed up, that just they were relegated to second place.

David Giwerc: (09:15)
So these self-recriminations plagued me throughout my childhood and young adulthood all through my life until I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 38. It was not until I had that diagnosis that I realized I wasn't inferior. I wasn't broken. I just had a unique brain wiring. It was the world around me that had reinforced this pervasive belief that I needed to focus on my weaknesses to meet the standards of performance by school and work, and even at home. I had focused on a dominant story that my best opportunity for success in life and advancement up the corporate ladder, the educational ladder, the friend ladder, was to identify what I did not do well and somehow develop a plan to focus on strengthening those weaknesses. It didn't work, but it became so consuming for me that I started focusing on trying to make those weaknesses stronger at the expense of all what I already did well.

David Giwerc: (10:19)
It was a bad decision. It only served to exacerbate the challenges, my ADHD by focusing constantly on what I did not do well. I was very rarely able to ignite the parts of my brain that could automatically stimulate my ability to pay attention and get the energy to get things done. I procrastinated way more than I was proactive. The harder I tried to perform in my perceived area of weakness, the more my brain shut down. In some cases, I became totally immobilized, trying to activate anything in my brain to get any kind of forward momentum on anything at all, at work at home, in my personal life. But that was all changed with my ADHD diagnosis. Once I put a name to the problems of my inattention, boredom, hyperactivity, it freed me to explore new ways of living and being in the world that supported this unique brain wiring, that uncovered the one that I'm sharing with you today.

David Giwerc: (11:26)
I eventually decided I would become an educated expert. I would work to make sense of the invisible challenges of my own ADHD. Not only make them visible for myself but make them visible for all the people around me that were suffering needlessly with the invisible challenges of ADHD. Back then, even as recently as 1990s, there was a poor perception, and a weak understanding of what ADHD was. In fact, they wouldn't even diagnose me because they said I couldn't have it, I was an adult with ADHD. There were just too few facts available and little science showing what ADHD really is and was, and how the disorder can impair a person's quality of life. It quickly became very clear to me, and countless people around me, that had, that had ADHD that were diagnosed and undiagnosed, how much they were suffering with the invisible challenges of ADHD, and they couldn't explain it.

David Giwerc: (12:27)
Well, after going through my own journey of discovery, and eventually really getting a good grasp and understanding of my own ADHD, I was inspired and passionate. I wanted to share my discoveries with everyone and anyone who would listen. Today, through ADDCA (the ADD Coach Academy) I founded in 1999 with my wife, Marla, and our outstanding staff and amazing instructors, leaders in the coaching profession, we have supported thousands of people as they discover their unique brand of ADHD and take responsibility for transforming their lives from despair to hope and give them permission to proceed in creating a life of passion, purpose, and possibility. I know that all of you who've had ADHD can experience the same amount of fulfillment and passion that I have. And I thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to share my own story, my own experience. Again, this is David Giwerc, I'm founder and president of the ADD Coach Academy. And if you want to learn more about the ADHD accredited ADHD coach training programs we have, and the outstanding educational courses that you can take, please visit us at www.addca.com. Have a great one, embrace your own unique brain wiring and go out there and live the life that you deserve.

Outro: (14:04)
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, so 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.