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.

Diane Dempster: (00:50)
Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA I'm Diane Dempster co-founder and parent coach at impactparents.com coming to you from my virtual office, which happens to be in Atlanta, Georgia, but I've been virtual and continue to be virtual, Um, for the last 10 years. I'm excited and thrilled that ADDA invited me today to share the story that I'm sure you can relate to. Maybe you can't relate to it because a lot of you are adults with ADHD and true confessions, I am not an adult with ADHD, but I have a lot of adults with ADHD and kids with ADHD in my life. And I thought my story might be helpful for some of you who might be parents or co-parents or partners, or, um, have partners who don't have ADHD who maybe don't understand you quite the way you wish they would. And so that's a little bit about why I want to share my story.

Diane Dempster: (01:36)
And I brought my, my partner in crime, my business partner, not my life partner, Elaine, with me today because one of the structures I need to help me to do a talk like this is to work with someone. I know that about myself. And so, land's going to ask me a few questions to kind of kick me off and get me going in my talk. Thanks for being with me Elaine.

Elaine: I am thrilled to be with you, Diane. And I'm glad you're sharing your story, because I think it's a really essential perspective for people with ADHD, because you are a person without ADHD, surrounded by people with ADHD in your life. So how did you figure that out at the beginning of how to get started?

Diane Dempster: (02:15)
Well, it's really interesting. I was reflecting on like the beginning of the story and, uh, you know, I was just one of those people going about my business, getting it done of like a huge amount of get it done, drive executive function, moving myself through life. And, you know, I set out goals like most everybody else does. I wanted to have a marriage and I want to have kids and I wanted to be working and be successful in business and that sort of thing. And you know, I, what kind of came to pass is when I got married, I tried to this really sweet, creative quirky guy who I thought was a, a lot of fun and, um, sensitive and easy to be with and just really, you know, present in the moment, that sort of thing. Five years later started having kids who were equally quirky and in the moment and creative and all over the place.

Diane Dempster: (03:05)
I was struggling in my marriage quite frankly. And it wasn't until I started having kids, and my

son was diagnosed when he was in second grade with ADHD. And I kind of went on this mission to support him, you know, it was just sort of, okay, I want to help him to be more successful in school. He was struggling to keep up in school, and so I did all this research like everybody does, and I did, uh, you know, all these sorts of things. And one of the things I decided to do was get training for myself. I was going to become a parent-to-parent trainer. I made that decision to be able to teach other parents about ADHD and to help them, because I knew as an adult who didn't have ADHD that understanding my ADD or was an important part of, of helping him.

Diane Dempster: (03:55)
So it kind of culminated in me being at this training in 2010, which coincidentally Elaine was the year that we met as well. So, in that year, what I remember really distinctly, is I went through the training, learned a lot about ADHD and then was sitting through the conference and happened to stumble into, uh, uh, presentation around, um, being in a relationship with someone who had ADHD. And I don't remember for sure at what point I decided my now ex-husband had ADHD, but I remember distinctly going, oh my gosh, that makes so much sense. Oh my gosh, that makes so much sense. And it was just kind of like when my son was diagnosed, kind of all the other people in my world started making sense to me in a very different way. And so in 2010, I'd been married for 16 years and a lot of things had worked well.

Diane Dempster: (04:53)
A lot of things didn't work so well. And what I realized is that, um, I took some of what I learned back into our relationship and, and my ex-husband wasn't at that time, its kind of in a space where he could recognize and acknowledge his ADHD. And so, it, instead of kind of making that a hero, look, I, I made it work and everything's great. I worked really hard to try to make it work. And he, and it just part of it was there was too much damage done because I didn't know how to, you know, hold him accountable, but understanding, respect the way his brain works, because I I'd thought you just get it done. And if he's not getting it done....

Elaine:: (05:30)
Tell me what you mean by too much damage done? Explain that a little bit.

Diane Dempster: (05:47)
Yeah. So, part of what happens in a dynamic when there's an ADD'er and a non-ADD'er, the, the ADD, the non-ADD partner creates a story about it, right? So, he has a list of stuff to go to the store on Saturday, and there's one thing I throw on his list at the last minute. He writes it down, comes home from the store, he's got everything that was on his list, and he comes home without the one thing that I asked him to do. Or I've got there's something to do around the house that I've been asking him to do for months, and it's just not getting done. And so now, as someone who understands ADHD, I understand that's his ADHD, and I've got to help him connect to, or he must connect to his motivation underneath it. He must make sure that it's, he's got a system in place that the priorities are making sense, those sorts of things. But at the time I was feeling like he didn't love me. I was feeling like he didn't care about things that I cared about. He was just kind of neglecting me. And so, I'd get angry and frustrated. Part of my story was I was a yelling mom, I got angry at my kids. I got angry at myself. I got angry at my ex

and spent a lot of times being frustrated for behaviors, which were actually just typical ADD behaviors.

Elaine:: (06:49)
I want to watch our time cause you've got about two and a half minutes. So then what happened?

Diane Dempster: (06:55)
So then what happened was that I got into coaching and that's part of my story as, as to how we started impact parents. But I started changing the way I communicated, and I learned about ADHD. And so, with the understanding of ADHD and the way that the brain works and a change in communication where I'm helping someone be accountable, instead of expecting them to be accountable and partnering with them and fostering their independence and working with my kids, I've been able to create amazing relationships with my kids. You mentioned that, you know, I'm surrounded by ADD'ers. My mom came out to me as being ADD came out to me as being ADHD about the time my son was diagnosed. You, my business partner is an adult with ADHD. I'm now no longer married, but I'm in a relationship, I have been for four years, with another adult with ADHD. I mean, it's just sort of figure it out how to let them be who they are, which is really what I wanted to be in the first place. It's like, how do you let somebody be who they are, but help them to be in relationship with you, so you're not stumbling over one another with different expectations and perspectives and stories that you create about when those expectations aren't met.

Elaine:: (08:07)
What jumps out at me is that you're surrounded by people, there's something about it that that's attractive to you, even though we make you crazy, right. There's something that balances you, that you're looking for in that, in those relationships.

Diane Dempster: (08:22)
Yeah, no, I think that that's the piece of it is that I'm naturally, emotion-based and I'm, and I I'm naturally kind of fun, loving, and, but I don't do it easily without having that energy around me. So kind of the energy of having ADD'ers around me is part of what, you know, throws me into action and helps me to be as creative and fun, loving as I can be.

Elaine:: (08:47)
So in the 45 seconds you have left, how does that, how do you apply that with parents now in your world?

Diane Dempster: (08:54)
So what I do with parents is to support parents of complex kids, whether the parents have ADHD or not to really understand what's going on with their kids and to connect with them in a way that meets them where they are, helps them to become more independent, which is what our kids want and to be more successful and productive in their life, which is what most of us want for our kids. Meet in the middle and have an amazing relationship with your kiddos.

If you want more information about me or my work at Impact Parents. You can go to http://impactparents.com/TADD, and you can get a free gift. Learn a little bit more about the 12 key tips for helping you help your kids. Thanks so much for being here. Bye for now,

Outro:: (09:38)
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.