

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.

Jeff Copper: [\(00:49\)](#)

Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. I'm Jeff Copper, ADHD and attention coach, the owner of D.I.G. Coaching practice, the host of Attention Talk Radio, the host of Attention Talk Video, coming to you from Tampa, Florida. I'm honored ADDA invited me to be with you today to share my story that I think most of you can relate to in your own unique way. Now, let me emphasize this is very difficult for me to articulate, but I'm going to do the best I can. Throughout my life I've had a number of successes where I listened to my gut and swam upstream. When I fought to understand the how and the why and the relationship between the two, my goal is always to get to the root of things in doing so I refuse to accept over generalized emotional definitions, more often than not the world resists me in my quest.

Jeff Copper: [\(01:45\)](#)

In fact, it often criticized and scolds me and my insatiable appetite to get to the root of the things. Intense is a label I've heard time and again. The negativity of others in my quest was intense, overwhelming, and discouraging. Still, at times I found the root of issues, bringing peace, calm, understanding, and answers. One day I discovered life coaching and found a home in the ADHD community among those that were neuro diverse. Surely, I'd be accepted in courage. There was a sense of empathy at first, but quickly, there was resistance to my brain's way of digesting information and the need for a deeper understanding of the how and why. The intense need to get to the root. As I was seeking knowledge and help from other experts, I kept running into a wall: "You don't get it", I found myself arguing back, "No, you don't get it".

Jeff Copper: [\(02:44\)](#)

I constantly felt no one was listening. No one heard what I was saying. No one understood the core of what the root of things were. I was ready to give up, throw in the towel. Then one day I stumbled into Wendy, a part-time writer and stay at home mom. I interviewed her to do some writing for me. And explaining my project and frustration with other experts, I was also explaining how most people don't get it and how obvious solutions don't work if you're paying attention to the wrong thing. I illustrated by using a flat world analogy. If you see the world as flat, you only come up with flat world solutions. If you see the world as round, you can see different solutions like sailing west to go east. After my rant, she paused and said, "here's your issue, Jeff, you can't change people's conceptual understanding of something in six words for eight seconds, you're going to have to use visuals experiences for something to make it more tangible or communicate it". Eureka.

Jeff Copper: [\(03:48\)](#)

That was it. I'm about solving problems by changing people's conceptual understanding of things. It was a euphoric moment. Then reality set in. I get what I do, but how do I get others to get what I do and get the value of what I do when they're really looking for something else? The reality was painful. I'll share one example of that before I go on. People often look at other people and say, "they're unmotivated". When a person's not doing something, that's not what I see. I see whatever they're doing to be motivated. In other words, if a person's not doing their taxes and they're on YouTube, they're motivated to watch YouTube. It's as obvious as obvious could be. Motivation isn't what should do, it's what you actually do. People with ADHD are motivated as anybody else, everything you've ever done in your life, you did it because you were motivated to do it.

Jeff Copper: [\(04:41\)](#)

We'll continue on while this was painful. I kind of continued. And as time got on, I understood that the Eureka, the I get it, the aha, were all the same comprehension that takes place when you look at something differently. In that instance, I had my aha. Aha's are the holy grail of problem solving, but they're intangible. People want tangibility. They want concrete. Ugh, more frustration. How do I make the intangible tangible? Years later, I met Glenda, a graphic artist. We just clicked. In short order, I explained my dilemma. How do you make an aha tangible? With her genius, we gave birth to Aha Bob, my light bulb, my brand. Aha Bob would become the symbol to communicate what I do to help people get it. Years before, I had met an interviewer Dr. Russell Barkley on Attention Talk Radio, multiple times. He was on a quest to redefine ADHD as an impairment of executive functioning.

Jeff Copper: [\(05:41\)](#)

He was swimming upstream in that, if you took a test with ADHD, it wouldn't show up as an impairment. Either he was wrong, or the tests were wrong. There are arguments around why ADHD has to be an executive functioning impairment, or compelling to me, couldn't be disputed. He pointed out the root cause of the problem was a lack of clarity in the definition of an executive function was. He went on to define executive function with specificity in a way that we could use a Swiss army knife to cut and say, clearly, this is and is not an executive function and built a model around it. Oh my God. As I studied the models, its brilliance revealed itself. It explained so much where other models did. I began to understand the individual parts of executive functioning, both individually and collectively, and revolutionized my understanding of ADHD.

Jeff Copper: [\(06:36\)](#)

It was a euphoric feeling. He gets it. I get it. Then reality set in again. I get it but executive functioning isn't tangible. How do I make it tangible? Years went by. Ever so slowly, I got ideas. I realized we all think differently. But the process of thinking was ubiquitous. The goal was to put people in an experience to witness the process of thinking, aha, that's it. As months and years passed by, I was ever so slowly able to use my creativity to find range, to simulate different aspects of executive functioning and what I call attention and exercises. More and more I find myself using attention exercises to help people understand the root causes of ADHD and help

them solve problems. I'll share an exercise with you right now. Emotional self-regulation is an impairment with regard to ADHD. In other words, people have emotional reactions.

Jeff Copper: ([07:35](#))

Working memory is the ability to load information in your mind, manipulate it towards an outcome. Often I will look at people and say, "I want you to do an attention exercise for me. I want you to calculate three to the power of five". "Oh, I don't like math", or "I'll give it a try". Then they think it's very difficult to calculate three times three times three times three and hold that number and keep track of the number of threes. In that moment I say, "you'll notice is that you're having to manipulate sequence those numbers towards a goal." That is working memory. Here's the funny part; notice the, "oh, I'm not very good at math". That's the emotional reaction people have when they have to think inside their head. For people with ADHD, thinking is difficult. All they want to do is escape. It looks like a focus problem, but it's really a thinking problem. Rather than just try harder,

Jeff Copper: ([08:34](#))

one would focus on making, thinking easier, which explains why they need to externalize it. These days, the feedback from my clients around my style of coaching is better than I ever dreamed. My aha's have facilitated their aha's and generated story after story that serves as content in my radio interviews and my YouTube channel and blogs. Today I'm grateful for my brain and have the ability to let go of those who criticize how I think and see the world by simply forgiving them for their ignorance. I practice my gratefulness excavating aha's dailies for those who come to me because they get what I do. For them, I'm grateful.

Outro: ([09:14](#))

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.