Intro
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.

Julie Skolnick (00:50):
Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. I'm Julie Skolnick, founder of With Understanding Comes Calm, a service through which I guide parents of what I call gifted and distractable children. I mentor twice exceptional adults and I train teachers. I'm also the producer of the Let's Talk 2e virtual conferences for parents, educators, and the first ever conference for gifted and twice exceptional adults launching now. I am coming to you from Maryland on the east coast of the United States. I'm delighted that ADDA invited me to be with you today, sharing my story, applying a strengths-based approach to raising and loving my 2e kids, which I hope will inspire you on your neurodiverse journey. It was when I was pregnant with our third child, that it became more and more evident that our two brilliant kids were struggling in school, not academically, but socially and with boredom.

Julie Skolnick (01:56):
Why did teachers and peers not only not celebrate our highly and profoundly gifted kids, but seem annoyed, put off, and challenged by them. One day a teacher approached me in the school hallway, literally catching me off guard and said, just like this, "I think your child needs to be on medication". I thought there was something wrong with my child. What I didn't know was a lot, and I burst into tears, not realizing that it was the environment, not my child, that was the problem. I didn't even know it was an option for it to be someone else's fault besides mine, my husband's, or our child's. For our son, when he was diagnosed, gifted and ADHD, we honed in on ADHD. We didn't realize that we were following along with the trend to focus on deficits rather than working with strengths. Eventually our son referred to himself as ADH H H H H D, and self-defined as the annoying kid. Through participation in gifted conferences, I learned to apply a strength-based approach to our kids in every realm of their lives.

Julie Skolnick (03:01):
We recognized that when they struggled, they were working super hard against their natural tendencies, or that they were repeatedly being asked to work in their challenge areas. I'll never forget the time our son answered a question on a test, by circling words within the question, and drawing an arrow to the answer space. The answer was correct, but he was marked wrong because he didn't write the answer on the blank line. Positively reframing and focusing on strengths, I immediately noted that clever resilience he demonstrated by finding a workaround to his severe dysgraphia. I asked the teacher whether he was testing my son's knowledge or his ability to write on a blank line. He provided me with a quintessential example of deficit-focusing. Showing more resilience of working against the odds in ninth grade, our older child,

advocated to switch schools. This was no small feat. The school they attended was one that included our tight community, and they had been with peers since preschool, but they knew it wasn't the right fit for them.

Julie Skolnick (03:58):
They got involved in clubs at their new school and passion projects. And at any given time, if you enter their bedroom to this day, you'll find several different art and creative projects strewn across the floor in various stages of completion. They even created a whiteboard out of their closet doors to keep their self-organized, to remember what they need to do, like schoolwork assignments, or what they want to do, like a list of every single Marvel movie, and whether they're, they've watched them. In the case of our son, he had a long journey, including a life-changing wilderness program, various schools, and finally settled in on a terrific boarding school that allows him to soar in his passion areas of science, math, music, and soccer. Along the way, with this shift of focus from diagnose and fix, to focus and encourage strengths, I developed With Understanding Comes Calm, because that's what I discovered. When you understand others, and when you feel understood, doors are open, encouragement is appropriately placed, and motivation occurs naturally.

Julie Skolnick (05:00):
I wanted to share this knowledge and understanding, as well as the strategies and advocacy steps that come with it, with parents, 2e Adults, teachers, and clinicians. Over the past seven years through withunderstandingcomescalm.com, I've guided thousands of parents, mentored twice exceptional adults, and trained teachers who educate our 2e students through my consulting services, Let's Talk 2e Conferences and Community, free gifted and distractible newsletter and 2eresources.com, a listing service for the gifted and twice exceptional communities. The triumph comes when parents, adults, and educators share that I've helped them change their perspective and approach, and that they and their family are healing because of it. To learn more about what I do head over to withunderstandingcomescalm.com, letstalk2e.com and 2eresources.com. Now is a fabulous time to connect, because our conference for gifted and 2e adults is launching for free, and at the early bird rate of $127 for a limited time. If you're looking for direct support, please feel free to schedule a free 20-minute phone consultation with me at, julieskolnick.youcanbook.me. Have a strength-based positively reframed day.

Outro (06:32):
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.