

Linda Roggli:

It's October 2020, and even in the midst of a crazy year, it's still ADHD awareness month. And we're still here with TADD Talks from ADDA, the Attention Deficit Disorder Association, nine minutes short, pithy soundbites on living with adult ADHD. Stay tuned, here it comes.

Nikki Kinzer:

Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. I'm Nikki Kinzer and I'm here with Pete Wright and we are the hosts of *Taking Control: The ADHD Podcast*.

Pete Wright:

We are those hosts and we are really excited to spend a little time today talking about this topic that we'll be presenting at the 2020 annual international conference on ADHD.

Nikki Kinzer:

That's correct, "How to Create Joy in Your Life When You are Spiraling with ADHD."

Pete Wright:

This is a message we believe is more important than ever. The world we live in is much more complex. There are incoming signals that are hard to manage and finding joy when you're in a spiral is critical. But let's be realistic. It's pretty hard to cultivate joy after you're having a rough day.

Nikki Kinzer:

It's so true. If you're running late, you can't find your keys, maybe you forgot your lunch on the counter. Or maybe that project you've been working on is just taking so much longer than you expected. So the only joy you're feeling right now is that the day is almost over.

Pete Wright:

With ADHD, cultivating joy can feel very difficult, impossible. When you're looking at your executive functions, it's not easy to shift your focus when you're having a bad day. Context switching is terrible. It's not easy to remember what to do when you need to feel better.

Nikki Kinzer:

Right, and your emotions are running very high and very deep. And in working with clients, there's a common experience that stops them from feeling joy, and that is shame. Unfortunately, we don't see ADHD as the issue. There's very little acceptance or grace in this situation.

Pete Wright:

And when you're in the middle of a spiral, it can feel impossible to get out of. ADHD is messy and complicated. But one thing we do know is that the spirals eventually will slow down and pass.

Nikki Kinzer:

That's right. So our mission is to decrease the recovery time it takes from being in an ADHD spiral to finding calm and joy in your life. And the great news is you don't have to look far to find it.

Pete Wright:

It's easy to think that joy and happiness are the same thing. They're both emotions. However, for our purposes, we're going to refer to happiness as a measure of how good we feel over time. While joy is a measure of the body's experience in a given moment.

Nikki Kinzer:

Pete, what do you like to call these sudden bursts of joy?

Pete Wright:

We call them joy triggers, Nikki. Joy triggers. These are things that are instantaneous. They're quick to deliver. They - surprising to you. They cause you to have a natural sense of surprise. They tend to be generous. Generosity is a key component to experiencing joy. Watching your generosity have a joyful impact on others and most important, they are diversionary. They distract you from whatever spiral you're in the middle of at the same time. So, they're instant, surprising, generous, and distractionary.

Nikki Kinzer:

That's right. And to give you a few examples, it could be your pets greeting you at the front door. It could be that first sip of coffee in the morning. Maybe it's your favorite music or watching a funny video, TV or movie. It could be connecting with a dear friend or hearing your children laugh or just hearing your children get along is also [Pete Wright laughs] a moment of joy, right? [Pete Wright: That'd be a start!] Yeah. Especially right now when everybody's home, it's a nice thing [Pete Wright: oh, it's delightful] when everybody gets along. But it could also be trying something new, working on a hobby, anything that puts a smile on your face.

Pete Wright:

If you want to decrease your recovery time from a bad day, you're having a rough go of it, you have to remember to pay attention to what brings you joy. Right? You have to seed your life and your surroundings with joyous activity.

Nikki Kinzer:

That's right, because choosing joy is a choice, but only if you remember to do it. You have to remember to do it.

Pete Wright:

(Laughing) Remembering for ADHD is hard.

Nikki Kinzer:

It is. It is.

Pete Wright: Yeah

Nikki Kinzer:

So, we have a few ways for you to remember to bring joy into your life. And, and the first one... it's not going to sound very joyful because it's going to have to do with some planning. Sometimes you just need to schedule your joy. But what this does is it brings your intention into action. So if connection with other people - something that is important to you and you want to make sure that that happens, you have to decide on a date, a time and put it on the calendar, make the reservations, do whatever you need to do. 'Cause it's too easy to let these kinds of opportunities pass us by.

Pete Wright:

The second one is an artifact, something you can add to your home. And that is the joy Mason jar - it's "ma" joy jar. All we're asking you to do here is pick up a big old Mason jar, one of the giant ones, get a [Nikki Kinzer: that's right] gallon size Mason jar, right? And we want you to decorate it however you see

fit. Maybe you're the kind of person who likes to glue, you know, stickers [Nikki Kinzer: Ribbons . . .] to it . . . put stickers on it [Nikki Kinzer: whatever]

Pete Wright: Ribbons

Nikki Kinzer: Yeah

Pete Wright:

Yeah. Maybe you just want to papier-mâché it and stain it. So it looks like, you know, old wood, whatever the case, make it your own thing. And then in a little basket right next to it, you tear up a bunch of little pieces of paper and all you need to do, when you're feeling low, you pull out a piece of paper, you write your joy ideas on 'em and put 'em in the jar, right? Put 'em in the jar, fill the jar with joy ideas. And then when you're feeling low, you come up, you pull a piece of paper randomly out of the jar and maybe you do it. Maybe it's an action. Maybe it's just something to think about to reflect on. Maybe it's a quote of somebody who said something nice about your work one day. Something that reminds you of your resonant value in the world. That's what we want to do with the joy jar. You know what else you can do? You can invite anybody in your house, anybody who comes through your space, to write their joys on the jar, right?

Nikki Kinzer: Absolutely.

Pete Wright:

Write their joys in there, you can feel joy about other people's joys. [Nikki Kinzer: That's right.] The Mason jar - it's a great trick.

Nikki Kinzer:

The third idea we have here is a joy vision board. So vision boards are great reminders for the goals that we have in our life, but they can also be great reminders of the things that bring you joy. So you can put your favorite quotes, photos, maybe you decorate it with your favorite colors, whatever it is. If you don't want to do a traditional like bulletin board type of thing, consider surrounding yourself with items that bring you joy in your home. Think about how you decorate, what colors you paint, what kind of art or photos you have on the walls. This is also a great way to remind you of the joy in your life.

Pete Wright:

There are all kinds of wonderful benefits that come into your life when you're able to cultivate joy and use joy as a tool to help navigate your ADHD.

Nikki Kinzer:

Studies show that positive emotions decrease stress hormones and build emotional strength, promotes a healthier lifestyle that leads us to living longer and happier lives. But it also boosts resilience. It gives you that confidence that you know what? Things are going to be okay. It can re-energize you. And as Pete said earlier, it can be a really helpful distraction from problems that you have or challenges that you're going through at that time.

Pete Wright:

We want to leave you with this lovely quote from Brené Brown. "Joy is not a constant. It comes to us in moments - often ordinary moments. Sometimes we miss out on the bursts of joy because we're too busy chasing down the extraordinary moments. Other times we're so afraid of the dark we don't dare to let ourselves enjoy the light. A joyful life is not a floodlight of joy. That would eventually become unbearable. I

believe a joyful life is made up of joyful moments, gracefully strung together by trust, gratitude and inspiration.”

Nikki Kinzer:

And that's today's TADD Talk about “How to Create More Joy in Your Life.”

Pete Wright:

On behalf of Nikki Kinzer, I'm Pete Wright. You can find out more about our podcast on takecontrolADHD.com.

Nikki Kinzer:

Thank you for your time and attention.

Linda Roggli:

Okay, that's today's ADHD wisdom. Much more to come. And why not join us for the virtual 2020 international ADHD conference coming up in November? Details at add.org. And while you're at it, why not join ADDA? It's a great investment in your ADHD life.