

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.

Anne Marie Nantais: [\(00:50\)](#)

Hi there. And welcome to TADD talks with ADDA. I'm Anne Marie Nantais certified ADHD, coach, and adult with ADHD. When ADDA invited me to share my hero's journey, my first thought was hero questionable, but living with ADHD has certainly not been for the faint of heart and has required much resilience. Journey, well, I'm still very much on it. And I certainly had traveled a long way in the 10 years since my diagnosis, and in true ADHD fashion, I do indeed have tales to tell. I have to say that the most impactful heroic aspect of this chapter of my life has been shifting how I feel about and relate to myself in general. And as a person with ADHD, as the title indicates, I feel like I've journeyed from shame to shine. 10 years ago, I left my doctor's office in tears, carrying a prescription and a new label that I didn't even understand.

Anne Marie Nantais: [\(01:51\)](#)

There was the relief of finally having something that could explain my lifelong history of successes alongside puzzling failures. I was also terrified that this label meant that I was inherently broken and that this was confirmation that I was less than and always would be. I was a teacher at the time, and I loved my time in the classroom with my students, but I was really struggling to keep up with the ever-increasing paperwork of the job. I also noticed that my colleagues and I all felt the crunch during busy seasons, but they seem to bounce back while I continued to feel overwhelmed and always behind. I was just as smart and capable as they were. So why did I find it so hard to sit down and get through my miles long to do list? They were able to why couldn't I, I was working so hard to meet the new demands of my job and just everyday living that I didn't have much time or energy leftover to dive into learning about ADHD.

Anne Marie Nantais: [\(02:50\)](#)

And 10 years ago, we didn't have the proliferation of information that's available now. Well, medication helped, especially with the brain fog. There was, were still times that I would be absolutely paralyzed with indecision and overwhelm. And because I didn't understand what exactly I was dealing with or how ADHD was playing a role in my daily functioning. I felt like my ongoing overwhelm and exhaustion was my fault. If medication couldn't fix all the things I was struggling with, then I figured something must be wrong with me. I didn't know any other adult who had ADHD. And I felt very alone terrified that if anyone found out the label would loom larger in their minds than any of my efforts and

hard work. So, I kept going, kept plugging along a few years later, somehow I found out there was an ADDA conference in Detroit, not far from where I live. That weekend held many moments that were pivotal for me, but one that was instrumental in my shame to shine journey was being in the back of the hotel ballroom when Siri sold and delivered her keynote address on brain shame, I was pretty emotional at the back of the hotel room.

Anne Marie Nantais: ([04:08](#))

Who are we kidding? It was an ugly cry session. And this was elicited both from hearing so many of my own experiences reflected in the words of the successful author, as well as from the recognition of the disparity between our lived experiences. She had experienced so much of what I had as a woman with ADHD was able to speak to it. And instead of it letting those challenges limit her, and instead of using her energy to hide, she was running a therapy practice, developing her ideas, writing books, and giving keynote speeches. What would happen if I gave myself permission to do the same? It wasn't long after that, I began my coach training at ADDCA and deepened my understanding of the neurobiology of ADHD and how that impacts daily functioning. My distorted awareness and focus on my challenges began to be balanced out by an appreciation of my gifts and strengths, allowing both to have a place and a recognition in my life.

Anne Marie Nantais: ([05:15](#))

Volunteering with ADDA and ACO gave me opportunities to be in supportive communities with other adults, with ADHD, hearing the stories of others, including challenges, triumphs, and resilience helped me to see my own in the same positive mindset. Instead of continuing to contort myself into common hacks and strategies, to be more efficient and productive. I looked with curiosity at what might support my success in a given situation based on my ever-increasing self-knowledge. I gave myself permission to give myself what I needed, and this is why self care has become such an ongoing focus for me and with my coaching clients. When we come from a perspective of caring for and about ourselves and our best functioning, whatever that looks like on any given day, all sorts of possibilities, open up. It's like the quote from psychologist, Carl Rogers. The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change about a year ago.

Anne Marie Nantais: ([06:26](#))

I experienced a full circle moment during a brief reprieve from pandemic lockdowns. My husband and I went for lunch at a cafe. There were only two other tables occupied one by a young woman, reading by a window, overlooking the lake and one with a couple seated closer to us. I think we were a little giddy with the excitement of doing something so extraordinarily ordinary. And we struck up a lively conversation with the couple nearby, with no one else in the cafe. It felt like we were excluding the young woman. So before we left, I stopped at her table to say, hello. We exchanged pleasantries about how delightful it was to be out in public and out of the house. And then she surprised me

by blurting out. I noticed you when you first came in, you were full of life and confident. And I thought, I wish I could be like that.

Anne Marie Nantais: ([07:22](#))

And then I heard you say, you have ADHD. I was shocked. I didn't remember saying that at all. My husband later confirmed that I had, when we were talking with the other couple about what we did for work. This woman's eyes welled up a bit and she continued. I was diagnosed with ADHD not too long ago, and I don't know what to make of it. I haven't told anyone about it yet. On one hand, I'm relieved on the other I'm just so scared and tired. You give me hope. We talked for a while longer, and my heart was full. As I took in the poignancy of that moment.

Anne Marie Nantais: ([08:03](#))

Please understand my definition of success is not blurting out to strangers that I have ADHD. It's that I'm comfortable enough with who I am. All the parts of me that ADHD just isn't that big of a deal anymore. People can think what they want about the label, but I know who I am and what matters to me and putting energy into hiding that part of me is just too draining to do anymore. And just being who I am and letting that naturally shine forth gives others permission and encouragement to shine their own lights in this world. I'd received that spark so many years before at the conference. And here I was lighting someone else's. As Sari Solden and Michel Frank ask in their book "A Radical Guide for Women ADHD", what if the goal of treatment is to make it easier to access more of who you really are not to get over who you are?

Anne Marie Nantais: ([09:05](#))

I have to say that the most impactful part of this journey has been shifting how I feel about myself, my worth, and my contributions to this world. It's been a slow, gradual change from the inside out. And I continue to evolve today. I'm grateful to ADDA for this opportunity to reflect on and share some personal moments with you. And I hope this inspires you no matter where you are in your life's journey and no matter what kind of brain wiring you have to consider connecting with others on the journey of living well with ADHD or not. And to continue doing the inner work of accepting all parts of you so that you can shine your light for us. The world needs your light. I'm Anne Marie Nantais, certified ADHD coach and founder of ADHD and beyond if you want more information about me or my groups or individual coaching with adults who have ADHD, find me online at adhdandbeyond.com or you can email me hello@adhdandbeyond.com. Thank you for your time and attention today. I wish you bravery, curiosity self-compassion and plenty of supportive traveling companions on your hero's journey. Bye for now.

Outro: ([10:04](#))

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.