

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 27

Welcome to Let's Talk Learning Disabilities with Laurie Peterson and Abbey Weinstein. Laurie & Abbey spend their days talking about dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, & ADHD they talk to parents of struggling students and adults who have had a lifetime of academic challenges. They want to share those stories, along with their own insights with you through simple conversation. So, *let's talk learning disabilities.*

Laurie: Hello, this is Laurie, from Let's Talk Learning Disabilities, just a few things before we start today. Welcome to episode number 27.

Laurie: This is the first of a two-part interview with Tracy Otsuka from the hit podcast ADHD for Smart Ass Women. Tracy, with so much fun to interview, and she had so much great information, so we decided we should probably make this a two part-er.

Laurie: The second half of our interview is going to be released next week, which is a week earlier than we normally do. So come back then to hear the second part, but for now, sit back and enjoy the first half of our interview with Tracy and let's talk learning disabilities.

Laurie: Hey, everybody. Welcome to episode number 27 of let's talk learning disabilities. This is Laurie,

Abbey: and this is Abby,

Laurie: and I know we're always excited that you guys are here today, but today we have a really special guest. This is awesome, Tracy Otsuka from the "ADHD for Smart Ass Women" podcast is joining us today. If you have not listened to her podcast, please add it to your list. After you've finished listening today, go find it, download it, listen to it. It's amazing. She has

had some amazing guests. She has some amazing advice for anybody who has ADHD or lives with someone who has ADHD. The information is amazing. So, Tracy, thank you so much for being here today. Say hello!

Tracy: Hello. I'm so happy to be here. Thank you for having me.

Laurie: So Tracy and I, um, I'm going to say, we go back a long ways, but, um, probably, and I'm embarrassed because I'm time blind. Thanks to my ADHD. It's probably been two years since I was first on. She had me as a guest as just an, uh, business owner who has ADHD and a woman, obviously I'm on her podcast. And then we reconnected just this last. Summer, um, late summer, um, in, in regards to her son and some learning challenges he was having. And so after we kind of have gone through the process, which Tracy will share some of that with you, we decided we would love to have her share her story with you guys and let you hear kind of how she ended up hosting this podcast. What led her to it, and then some of the really amazing things that she's doing with it. So, Tracy, tell us a little bit about you and how you landed in a podcast for ADHD women.

Tracy: I know renewal. I mean, it doesn't make any sense. You know, I am a lawyer by background. I was a securities lawyer. I am an entrepreneur. I had a high-end women's wear company. 60% of our business was in Saks women's and Nordstrom. And then when my kids were young, I was a real estate broker. I sold properties for dozens of banks, specifically distressed properties, and I just loved it, but, um, my son was diagnosed with ADHD and, um, it took me about eight months to see myself in my son's symptoms because women generally, um, Uh, their ADHD symptoms are different than men or boys. So I should say girls and women, their symptoms are different than men or boys. And so I just started to do a lot of research. Um, what ended up happening, actually, what prompted the research was my son was diagnosed now. Um, I had a daughter first, who's about three and a half years older than my son, her name's Ataya and she was literally the model child. Everything was easy with her. She talked at, well I'm not sure when she talked, because I don't have those records anymore, my ADHD brain, but, um, she... She was just such an easy kid. You know, she slept through the night, I think at day seven, we could take her everywhere, you know, perfect with her. Thank you's and her pleases and school was just a breeze for her. Um, everything we asked her to do, she did, then we had my son Marcus. He was very high energy. He had a great, he has a great

sense of humor. He was very irreverent and there was always this joy about him. And I remember his kindergarten teacher saying I have never met a child with so much joy for learning. So we just thought we were on easy street and everything seemed to go along the same path. And I would look at these parents with children that struggled. And of course I would look down my nose and think, oh my God, you parents get it together. What's wrong with you? So, you know, as these things happen, um, I got my comeuppance and great. He started to having started having problems in math and it wasn't that he struggled to do the problem. Um, it was that suddenly he went to a Catholic school and suddenly he was not only asked to do 10 problems a night, but 30 problems. And it just became a battle, but he still had no social problems. The teachers still loved him, but I would constantly hear from them. Could a child that is so bright be so unmotivated. It was consistently inconsistent. So he would get A's and C's sometimes in the same subject in the same week yet, if there was something he was really interested in, like things baseball or World War II, he would know every detail. So he didn't know the baseball players just that were playing, you know, When he was interested in baseball, he knew that baseball players that literally started the game, knew all their stats, knew everything about their backgrounds. So I knew how bright he was and this just didn't make any sense to me. So we started years of all kinds of stuff, meaning, you know, educational testing, occupational therapy, visual therapy. And he was finally diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 12. And I was so shocked about that, because I didn't know what ADHD was. And so my husband and I met with the psychologist and the whole idea was this psychologist was going to explain to us what does, what is ADHD mean? Because I thought it meant that you're not very smart and I knew how smart he was.

Laurie: Right!

Tracy: And so she sat us down and she said to us, your job as his parents is to reduce his expectations so he won't be disappointed.

Abbey: No way!

Tracy: Yeah! And I knew instinctively she was wrong. And I just thought, how can anybody tell any child that I don't care what their aptitude is? Right? So that is what got me on this quest to learn everything I could about ADHD. And then as I was learning about it, lo and behold, I discovered that, oh my gosh,

he got it from me. I just had different symptoms. Right? I had to work harder than everyone else, but when I really thought about it. I just thought I wasn't as smart as my, you know, my classmates. And so that was why I had to work harder, but I got through college, I got through law school, I got through graduate law school. I practiced five years with the SCC. And then I started on this entrepreneurial path and I personally believe that all entrepreneurs are somewhere on that ADHD spectrum. You know, it's just the kinds of skills that you get from having an ADHD brain are perfect for an entrepreneur. So I had a high-end women's wear company, as I told you. And then, you know, I worked in real estate while the kids were little. So I had done a lot. I knew I was different, but I, I just never would've guessed it was ADHD because again, I didn't know what it was, but there were two things that convinced me that, you know, what...Maybe you better go get yourself tested. And those two things were when I found out that drivenness is a form of hyperactivity and I am nothing, if not driven, especially around anything related, honestly, anything that I'm interested in, but it really shows up a lot in, in work, you know, pursuits. I am one of those people that could work 24-7 if I'm doing what I love, you know, it's pleasure for me. Um, and then the second thing was interpersonal intuition, that learning that, that can be part of ADHD. And I was always one of these people that, um, I still am. I can walk into a room. I don't know anybody, but I can read the room. I know what's going on. And it makes sense, you know, that we would develop that because the panel was relying on our brain. Right?

Abbey: Right.

Tracy: So we start to develop these other skills around our intuition. So anyway, as I was doing all this research, I knew, I noticed that. A lot of doom and gloom from ADHD experts around ADHD.

Laurie: Well I mean, you got the doom and gloom from your psychologist.

Tracy: Exactly. But even then in my research, I could see right where she got it from because we're supposedly not supposed to be able to get through school. We won't be able to hold a job. We're probably going to become addicted to drugs and alcohol, and we're going to die early, probably in an ADHD related car crash. But there were a few bright lights, you know, people like doctors, Ned Hallowell and John Rady and Dale Archer, and Roberto

Olivardia, and some women Ellen Littman, Kathleen Nadeau. And there were these, so they were these brilliant minds who they also had ADHD and some of them actually taught at places like Harvard. And so I kept the. What if my parents listened to that psychologist, right? That, well, thankfully she didn't tell Marcus. She told us. He wasn't in that meeting that, you know, we had to reduce his expectations, but what if my parents had listened to that psychologist and decided to do that? So I wouldn't be disappointed in life. Like, what would I have not accomplished? And so it really dawned on me that we'd got this whole ADHD thing wrong. And so I wanted to learn more, but I wanted more than that. Right? I instinctively understood the value of community. I wanted to know more about other women's experiences. And so that's when I started the Facebook group, ADHD for Smart Ass Women, we're over 50,000 members now. And then right after that, I started. The podcast of the same name, which is now ranked in the top 1% of all podcasts in the world on any subject. So it's really great. So the whole reason for the podcast, and I know this was a really long-winded answer was to build accountability around my learning because, I know that we learn best when we can teach what we've learned. Right. And then I also wanted to find my people because I knew that the only way that that would happen is if I was willing to get visible and stand out, instead of trying to fit in, which is what a lot of ADHD women do. Right? They just try to fit in and just try to get by. So I needed to become visible so that my people would know that I was their people. And that's frankly, exactly what happened. It kind of blew up and in truth, I don't really know how it happened. Passion right?

Abbey: Right, right. I love it. What year just out of curiosity, what year was it that you started your podcast Tracy?

Tracy: 2019.

Abbey: Okay.

Laurie: That's it?

Tracy: Yeah. It's not even three years old. I mean, things happened pretty quickly. And I think COVID helped it along because there were a lot of women that were now trapped in their homes with children, all on zoom and they

started to, you know, their symptoms started to get worse and worse in their like. Oh my gosh. Okay. I need to do something about this.

Laurie: You know, I think too that the, the. Community of women with ADHD have such the struggles. I mean, obviously even between us, we have different struggles, but, but our struggles are so much different than men and boys. And I feel like we definitely carry a lot more of the emotional pieces of it. You know, a lot more women are pleasers or want to be pleasers and find that anxiety and depression from their inability to please, or from letting other people down.

Abbey: Or letting themselves down.

Laurie: Or letting themselves down. Exactly. And so I feel like the emotional piece of ADHD with women looks very different. Not that boys and men don't get depressed and anxious, but I feel like we carry it very differently. And have you seen that through your, you know, podcasting and research?

Tracy: Oh my gosh. Absolutely. Well, we tend to internalize our symptoms, so we'd go inward and we'd beat ourselves up right? Versus boys and men tend to externalize and that's why a lot of girls don't get diagnosed because you know, their symptoms may be that they're chatty. Or they're inattentive and they're daydreamy, and they're not bothering anybody. You know, they're not in school climbing, you know, climbing the walls, creating problems. And so they're just kind of, their symptoms are ignored or there, it's not even known that they have those symptoms. And then I think as we get older, we get more and more responsibilities. And unfortunately in our society, it's still the women who are the moms, right. Who are expected to keep the home, make sure dinner's on the table. Um, make sure that the, you know, the kids get everything they need, raise the kids. I mean, it's changing, thankfully. But what I have noticed is, so men don't have that. Right? And so men don't feel guilty about the fact that they may not be great at keeping the home or, you know, making sure that all their kids' paperwork is in school. They don't care. It's like, or that the house isn't clean.

Laurie: Right.

Tracy: And so I think that's what happens. The more responsibilities we get, it gets worse and worse, and then we're beating ourselves up about it. And let's say, we are just, you know, we're excellent neurologists. I mean, I have so many women in our community that are, you know, doctors and lawyers and have advanced degrees and are running, you know, not only, you know, well million-dollar companies. I have one woman who manages budgets in the billions, so they don't even see, all they can see are their weaknesses. They don't even see how brilliant they are. Not that, you know, that one thing that they're so interested in. And so they're still beating themselves up. They're still in their heads about everything they can't do, rather than focusing on what they can do.

Abbey: So true, that negative self-talk and it's hard for us to recognize our strengths and reward ourselves for the things that we've been able to accomplish and persist through our challenges.

Laurie: We're so busy beating ourselves up. We, you know, when you were talking about that, I, I was just talking to a family the other day about an elementary school girl, who we diagnosed and who was one of those girls that always looked like she was listening, but was a million miles away. So the teachers never, but the teachers had never said anything. You know, she's adorable and all her teachers love her. So when she doesn't turn her work in, or when she forgets something, they're like, oh baby, it's okay. Like they just let her off the hook because she so cute and sweet and they love her. So nobody ever notices it as a problem.

Tracy: Right. Absolutely.

Laurie: The expectations are so different.

Tracy: And for hyperactive or combined type, which is more likely, um, we're usually really chatty and that's sort of charming in little girls right?

Laurie: Social, we're just social butterflies right?

Tracy: Exactly. And so it's not, you know, we're not causing problems in the classroom, so nobody's gonna. Well, unfortunately, most teachers don't even

know what ADHD looks like because you know, even doctors get what, 30 minutes of training and their whole, their whole, you know, um, what am I trying to say? Their education, right?

Laurie: It's one of a billion things they're learning.

Tracy: Yep.

Laurie: So you've been doing this podcast for a while. I can't remember what episode you're on, but it's, you're well into like, are you into the 300's yet? Or is it 200?

Tracy: No, I'm, I'm around 150. Because I only record once a week.

Laurie: Okay. Well you have a lot. So my question is, I know you have probably had some amazing guests and have been given some great advice and some amazing tips. Is there anything, two or three things that kind of stand out over the years that you've picked up and you have taken with you and you are that that's the piece of advice you'd pass along to everybody?

Tracy: Um, yes. Probably the most important thing is I have never met an ADHD woman that wasn't truly brilliant at something. And I mean, not one of them.

Laurie: I love that.

Tracy: Um, and you know, I had. Dr. Ned Hallowell on my podcast at the beginning of the year. And then we did some stuff together. And I remember asking him because I always thought, well, am I imagining things? Could that really be true? And you know, granted, I mean, I have worked with thousands of women, but you know, Ned Hallowell has been doing this for 40 plus years and he's a medical doctor, you know, taught at Harvard blah-blah-blah, he's got 22 books. I think most of them are related to ADHD. So it really meant something coming from him. And so I asked him, do you think that's true? Have you ever met someone that you didn't think was brilliant at something, you know, that has ADHD and he agreed with me and he said, no. So I know that that is a truth.

Abbey: I love that too.

Tracy: The problem is that they usually don't know what, that, that brilliant part is you know, they get so bound up and all the things that they couldn't do starting with it, they struggled with school. You know, if they had an ADHD, you know, it has so many comorbidities, so it may not even be the ADHD. The problems in school, or it may be just a little part of what's causing the problems in school. So I would say that number one. Um, and then the second thing which leads right into that is all we hear about ADHD is everything that we're supposed to suck at. And in truth, for every weakness, there is an opposing strength. Are you distracted or are you creative? Are you hyperactive or are you energetic? Right? So if we can focus on our strengths. That is when, um, we're, we'll really, we'll start to feel better, both from a mental health standpoint, but also, you know, from a success standpoint, you know, as I mentioned before, I can't tell you how many brilliant women I meet, who beat themselves up because they can't keep a house or they don't have dinner on the table. And they lose sight of the fact that, oh my God, that you were just in, you know, doing whatever work it is that you do, where people are clamoring to get your attention because you're so good at what you do. And then the third thing, which has really hit home with me, especially since we last worked together with my son, Marcus, is that you are the best expert on. Um, and that means that you do not delegate your health care or the responsibilities around your health care to anyone but yourself. I don't care who it is. The reality of it is, you know, doctors, may...they get, they have a lot of, you know, patients, um, therapists have a lot of clients. But they don't know you, they don't know that rudder inside of you, so they can only give you advice based on you know, what they've seen in the past. That doesn't mean that it's going to apply to you. And, um, I think that if you're a parent, that also holds true. You need to trust your gut. What we discovered together. Well, I know you know this, but I, I mean, I really hit home was about my son, Marcus, and you know, my son Marcus was diagnosed with ADHD at 12, since he was, I think nine, maybe even younger, maybe even seven, we have all, no, it was probably nine because that's when the teachers started to make us aware of, you know, there's something else going on with him. We have consistently asked about dyslexia and we'd been constantly poo-pooed Marcus had three neuro psych tests or neuro neuro, what what'd they call them? Psychoeducational tests? Three of them. And you all did the last one, the third one, and every single time after the first two, I would ask, did you test for dyslexia? Are you sure? You know,

he doesn't have dyslexia. Um, and in fact, when, so what happened with Marcus, he went to, um, he goes to NYU and he's, he. Just started his sophomore year. So he was finishing up his freshman year and he was switching majors to economics. And so, because he was switching majors, he had to go and he had to take a calculus class in order to be able to take, you know, his major classes, it was a prerequisite and he stayed for the summer or half of the summer and he worked his rear end off. And he did really poorly in the class and that was all he was doing. And Marcus doesn't have the typical, um, executive function challenges that a lot of kids and adults with ADHD have like me. Um, he does not struggle at all with time. I don't understand time, anytime time, you know, You know, it can be three hours and I look up and, oh my gosh. He is never late. In fact, he's usually five minutes early. He's highly organized. You know, he's got, you know, whiteboards in his, um, in his apartment, you know, he, you know, goes to all the classes. He never misses anything. So that's why he was always like, yeah, there's some ADHD, but mostly it's the head stuff, you know? I don't, you know, I don't have these problems, it's something else. And so he started to do research on his own, by the way, he diagnosed himself at nine with ADHD and we just sort of ignored him until he finally was diagnosed.

Abbey: That's incredible!

Tracy: So he went and looked on the internet and did a bunch of research and he came back and he said, I think I've got a visual processing disorder. I think that's what it is. And, you know it created alarm bells in my brain. And I was like, wait a minute, you went through all these visual, all this visual therapy when you were nine or 10. And so we went back and we looked at it and that's when I called Laurie, I called you. Right. And I'm like, there's something going on. We need to get him tested. Where do I get that done? And you were recommending all these things and places. And so we got him a tested in San Francisco, you know, a company that came highly, highly regarded, like one of the head guys, doctors who specializes in this, I guess it's called visual optometry. You know, he, it was his company. It happened to be the company that we did the visual therapy when he was nine. So we went. We went back there, we had them all tested. Um, and there were two little tests that they did for dyslexia and it just, it didn't make sense. And so I was reading them. And so again, you know, dyslexia comes up and I went back to the tester and I asked her, I said, don't you think we should get him tested for

dyslexia? Because what they had said is, oh, he needs more visual therapy. So I'm thinking we need to get him tested for dyslexia. This is ridiculous. And she said, and so I said to her, she, you know, she was like, well, yeah, I guess you could do that first. And I'm like, yeah, I think before we do any more visual therapy, let's get them tested. And I asked her, can you recommend someone? And she couldn't. And I thought, oh my gosh, this makes no sense to me. How can you not, this is what you do. And so that's when I went back to you, Laurie. And I was like, do you know anybody? And you, and you were like, yeah, let me go, you know, in your area. Cause you're in Texas. You're like, I have a list. Let me go, you know, see what I can do. And I, and I think I said, I wish you could do it for me. And you came back and said, well, I can. And I'm like, really? I don't know what I was thinking, but I just thought down in California, which makes no sense, because my son is in New York. Right? So in any case you tested him and we discovered lo and behold, he has dyslexia. And I, you know, again, I didn't really know what dyslexia looked like. I didn't really know what dyslexia was, but it made so much sense. And so I guess, so he was diagnosed with dyslexia and for him, that was the big piece, because the thing is that, as I said, there are so many comorbidities with ADHD, right? Um, and dyslexia is a huge one, I think. And you stop me if I'm wrong, but I think it's 40% of kids who have ADHD also are dyslexic.

Abbey: I think that's about right.

Tracy: What I discovered is when we're talking about trusting your gut and your instinct, smart kids fall through the cracks. And in Marcus's case, he wasn't oppositional again. Right? He was funny. He was irreverent, but he was not oppositional. The teachers loved him, his grades weren't great in a lot of subjects like math, but, and, you know, he hated to read. That was the same thing. My daughter, all she did was read. And I remember one time. I gave him a Harry Potter book, or maybe I got it out of my daughter's room because she had read them all and I gave it to Marcus and he was in his bedroom for probably, oh, I don't know, six hours. And he came out and he said, I read it. And I remember thinking. How did you read that? Did you really read that really? But I all along, I believed, oh, he must have read it because he told me he read it and I'm sure he thought he read it, but he couldn't tell me a thing about right. And he's always, he's, he's definitely a lifelong learner. The kid is researching everything, but he's always on the internet. He really likes you too. And what he told us after he was diagnosed, as he's like. There

were thousands of pages of reading for that first year at NYU. And he did really well in school. I didn't read a thing. If there was a subject I needed to know about, I would go do research on the internet. I would find someone on YouTube who could explain the concept to me, you know? He never read. So you have these kids who they figured out different strategies that worked for him, but the schools don't really care. They don't care that the grades aren't great. Right. They just want to get them through. They're like either fine. So nobody really cared that he wasn't living to his full potential.

Abbey: Unless they're failing.

Laurie: But once he got diagnosed with ADHD, they just chalked it all up to that. Oh it was just the ADHD. And that just makes me crazy.

Tracy: And that is exactly right. So if you have a really smart kid, who's not living to their potential, especially a kid who's ADHD or dyslexia. Cause that's what I know. And you can tell they're really ambitious. They're really engaged. They're curious. They're interested, but. They're not living to their full potential. I am telling you not living to their full potential. It tugs on them every day. And over time it affects their self-esteem, their passions that they do have, their mental health. And in my experience exactly what you just said, that. Learning challenges are not approached from an integrative standpoint. And I saw this. So, you know, you have people who know ADHD, you have people who know dyslexia. You know, you have people who, you know, like the tester who tested him for visual processing. She knows her one area, but she doesn't know anything else. She doesn't know any other of the potential learning challenges. Right?

Laurie: It's crazy, but yes.

Tracy: And we've been asking about dyslexia for how long. So even that first, um, that first, um, she was a psychologist who tested Marcus, you know, we didn't know what it was. Um, and in her defense because I had, um, I just told you about this fantastic, um, she's, uh, education advocate, Marcy Lipset. She's, um, she's not a lawyer, but honestly she knows more about special education in the law than anybody I've ever known. And, you know, we were just talking to her about, okay, hold on one second. Now I forgot where I was

going. Let me remember what we were talking to her about. Um, ok hold on one second, I forgot where I was going with what we were talking to her about.

Laurie: The integrative...

Abbey: The first testing. With Marcus maybe.

Tracy: Well, let's see here, you see my ADHD at work, I can't remember what I was talking about, but, but anyway...

Laurie: Each person only has their own one little bucket, but nobody, getting someone to look at everything.

Tracy: Yeah. I can't remember where I was going. And in my brain, I was thinking, write this down. You're going to forget it. But I kept going because that's what I do. Anyway, so because there are so many comorbidities, you need to figure out which one leads. And I will tell you, Laurie, you finally discovering the dyslexia. Oh, she was the one who looked at your, your testing and said, that is brilliant testing. Um, you know, she got it because the problem is your son is so bright, that it took until he was, you know, taking calculus, a class he really struggles with, probably because of the numbers and the letters. Right? What I should say is that started with algebra, you know? So if you look at his testing, he's really pretty gifted in math. Yeah. He's one of these kids. That's a human calculator. But, when it came to algebra, you started to mix the letters in there, that is when he started to have problems. So, um, it is just so important that you are working with someone who understands the gamut of learning challenges. Because now, Marcus, I mean, you changed his life. Now he's like, I always knew I wasn't leading with the ADHD. Yes, I am ADHD, but I'm probably inattentive. I am not, you know, when he was little, he was crazy hyperactive, but now it's pretty much inattentive. And so because of that, I always knew that, okay. I don't struggle with these. Like he had an ADHD coach and he literally went to her. I'm not sure that I really need you because all of the things that you're teaching are stuff I already know. Right? Versus dyslexia. He totally, he gets it, but this is the downfall. He is now 19. And what I've learned about dyslexia since he's been diagnosed, stop me if I'm wrong, is this is all about neuroplasticity. And so if, as a child, he had been diagnosed with dyslexia. Guess what? He would have been in dyslexia therapy and you have to do dyslexia

therapy every day. He's now 19. Well, you don't have to, but that's when it works best and neuroplasticity in, you know, when you're a child, your brain is so much more plastic than as you get older. Now it's not too late. It's never too late. I firmly believe that, but he's now 19. He studying economics. He doesn't have a whole lot of time, you know, he's already doing, you know, um, well he was doing ADHD coaching. I'm not sure if he's going to continue with that, you know, and you know, he makes a point of meeting with all the tutors and meeting with all the TAs and, you know, he's in every class. I mean, he really cares about his education. So the problem is, he doesn't really have the time now to do all this dyslexia therapy. So that is why I think it is so important. I sound like an ad for you guys, but I believe this so intensely, you need to work with someone who has that integrative approach to testing.

Laurie: Well, and I think, you know, like you were saying, Marcus, doesn't have time now to go back and learn "a, apple, ah." Like that ship has sailed for him, but it doesn't mean that there still aren't strategies and things he can work on now, but it does. It's unfortunate that you spent so much time and because he's so bright, you know, Even just your average ability, kids will hit a wall and second for a second grade with reading and phonics and those kinds of things, but the brighter, the student, the longer they can compensate for. And we've had, we have had lots of, not lots of, but several, um, students come in that are in college and we don't find it until they're in college and it's been there all along. You know, it doesn't just, you don't wake up one day dyslexic, but they've been able to compensate, or in Marcus' case. He also had something else that they could blame his struggle on. So it masked it a little bit, which is super frustrating. So you just have to, yeah, it really is about looking at the whole picture. Um, and I love, I love his story and, um, we had actually asked Tracy earlier if Marcus might be willing to come in and do an interview with us. Cause I think his story is so fascinating. I'd love to hear it. And w but with his feelings about the whole thing. Um, so, okay, so let's switch gears a little bit.

Tracy: Can I say one more thing. I really want to hit on this because I think it is so incredibly important. So if you know that you have this bright child who loves to learn, but they are so frustrated in school, like Marcus, that, you know, he went to three high schools in four years. His second high school, you know, they promised them all kinds of things we're going to teach to your

interest. And ultimately what ended up happening is he was, you know, basically put in a box and he was so frustrated because he could not learn the way they wanted him to learn.

Laurie: Right.

Tracy: And so, you know, and he had gotten himself into trouble before that school again, because he was so frustrated. He just felt like maybe they're right. Maybe I'm not that smart. But he never really, actually I want to take that back. I think what he thought more is school is a waste of time. They're not going to be able to teach me anything. I'm not, he wasn't planning on going to college. He wasn't planning on anything. And I remember he sat down with the administrator of the school, sorry, I just dropped my, um, what's it called? Remarkable pencil from my remarkable ad. And, um, he wasn't planning on going to college and I remember. The director of the school. The second one, he went to, the high school basically said to him in so many words, but specifically to me, some kids are just not college material. And, and the college counselor gave him a flyer on how to be an HVAC technician. And I remember he came home and there was nothing wrong with being an HVAC technician. Right?

Abbey: But he was driven to go to college and to get, yeah.

Tracy: But he'd given up, he had basically said nope college isn't for me, because he thought he would just be an extension of high school. And I remember he came home with this pamphlet and he was. Obviously, they don't know a thing about me. They don't know I hate bugs. There was no way it was going to be crawling around, you know, underneath crawlspaces.

Abbey: I love that.

Laurie: Oh my god, I love that.

Tracy: I just, if anybody's listening and that's their child. Uh, they just need to get more tests because there's something else going on. And if Marcus had the dyslexia diagnosis in high school, I just think he would have been taken much more seriously.

Abbey: I agree.

Laurie: Well that, that causes all the issues. I mean, that, that just, that is like, that covers it all. So we don't have to look at anything else.

Abbey: Right. Go with your gut instinct.

Laurie: Hey, this is Laurie, again, I hope you enjoyed the first half of our interview with Tracy Otsuka. Don't forget to come back for the rest of our conversation with Tracy next week, where she's going to share more about her own personal journey with ADHD, as well as all about what she's doing today.

Thank you so much for joining us today. In our show notes you can find information about today's talk, as well as links to the resources and other episodes. If you have questions about today's talk, have ideas for future episodes or just want to stay connected, you can contact us through Diagnostic Learning Services on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. So, Let's Keep Talking Learning Disabilities. This podcast is sponsored by E Diagnostic Learning. You can find more information at www.ediagnosticlearning.com.

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