

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 39

Welcome to Let's Talk Learning Disabilities with Laurie Peterson and Abby 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. So, *let's talk learning disabilities*.

Laurie: Hey everybody. This is Laurie

Abbey: And this is Abbey

Laurie: Welcome to episode 39 of Let's Talk Learning Disabilities. Today we have as usual, a very special guest. We're so excited about our episode today. Abbey tell us who's here.

Abbey: Today we have Stacey Harari who has come to join us in our "Living With" Series. And she has come to talk about living with dyslexia and ADHD and visual processing disorder. Um, Stacey's one of my very good friends and she's also a colleague and, um, uh, professional that works in the field of students with disabilities. So I'm excited to hear more about her story and her experiences. So thank you for being here, Stacey.

Stacey: Thank you for having me.

Laurie: Welcome, we're super excited.

Abbey: We are super excited. So tell us, first of all, um, how old are you?

Stacey: I am 30. No, I'm not 30. I'm 47

Abbey: but you know, you feel you're feeling younger than you are. So when were you first diagnosed with dyslexia?

Stacey: Good question. I was diagnosed with dyslexia when I was in first grade by a teacher who actually came to my parents and said, I'm not supposed to say anything and I could get fired from my job, but want you to know, I think your daughter is struggling. And I think that, um, getting her tested for learning differences would probably be a good thing for her because she's really struggling. Wow. So of course my parents were off without information and researching. Um, I can't remember it was Scottish right. Or, or Shelton that I did the testing, but was diagnosed with severe dyslexia.

Abbey: Where you in a public school or private school at the time?

Stacey: I was in a public school at the time.

Laurie: Do you remember school being hard?

Stacey: Oh my God - It was terrible. So hard, so frustrating, so much anxiety. Um, I actually, one of my first thoughts about, um, school and, and as a child, you know, it was like, uh, I didn't realize that something was wrong, but I felt like it. And so in the desks and the old days you'd have like the little cubby in the middle where you'd stick your folder in or whatever. And so I had this like Manila piece of paper that I would pull out. And the teacher gave everybody like a number or a letter or something like that to identify, um, who the student was. And then she would call out grades for everybody. So I would get my little Manila paper out and try to look around to see who smiled when she said a hundred or whatever, um, to try to see who I thought the smarter ones were or the people who were looking like they were struggling and I'd write down everybody's grade. In first grade I knew there was some sort of, I felt different. I felt something was wrong, something it was. Um, yeah, I remember that vividly.

Abbey: That's crazy.

Stacey: It was like the horrible, deep. Feeling in your stomach, you know, just like, ah, I hate grades. I hate spelling. I hate reading.

Abbey: Were you scared to be called on to read out loud?

Stacey: Oh my gosh. That was my biggest fear. Yeah. I still, to this day, you know, Passover comes around and you're supposed to read with all the family and I'm like, dude, take my spot to the next person. Right. Um, I just, yeah, it's uh, increased a lot of anxiety. Stays within you for a long time, you know?

Laurie: And you remember getting therapy? I don't even know what we had back then.

Stacey: Yeah. So, um, From first grade, uh, got the evaluation. And, um, I went to Shelton from second to seventh grade...

Laurie: Which just FYI, Shelton is a private school here in Dallas that caters to students with learning differences and they actually have a really great dyslexia program.

Stacey: So they do actually that's the program I use with my kiddos.

Laurie: That's awesome.

Stacey: Um, so yeah, so I was, um, remediated, had full remediation, um, and was able to mainstream back to, um, ISD to your public school, public school.

Abbey: So you were at Shelton for several years. You were getting that intensive dyslexia therapy. Did you notice improvements pretty quickly? Or did you start feeling more confident and experiencing more and more successes with reading or was it a slow progression? And how did that make you feel when you were in that therapy program?

Stacey: You know, um, I don't remember so much, but I do know with remediation, you are changing the neurological pathways of the brain. So, as you can imagine, it's a slow process. And as a kiddo, second, third, fourth grade, you know, you're concentrating on, do I have a pimple, or who's a cute boy or, you know, things like that. So I don't remember. Um, Feeling like I was, you know, there was something different going on and changing with me.

Laurie: I also wonder too, though, if being at Shelton, being at a school where everybody had a learning difference, you were you the difference between you and your peers was not so drastic, right? So you felt more comfortable exactly what you did then you didn't notice this notice the changes as easily or as frequently.

Stacey: Right. My parents I'll say this to shelter. Awesome at teaching. I'll say my parents for sure about what's going on with their daughter. How can I help? What are the expectations? Um, my parents were awesome. They, um, well, they kept studying with me and they had a lot of expectations, but they weren't unreachable. I didn't feel like you know, it was setting me up for failure. Um, I'm sure I probably thought they were too strict for a lot of times, you know? Um, but they spend a lot of times, a lot of time, my mom was better at, um, the English part of things. And so, uh, proofreading papers and, um, Grammar and vocabulary and, you know, things like that. I mean, to this day I will send her stuff and, and have her look over at spelling. Oh, God spelling. Um, and my dad is a financial planner and so he's good with numbers and kind of what's going on in the world. So the lesson on integers that I did with my dad, It felt like it was weeks, but it was something that was so hard for me to understand. Um, but he didn't give up. Neither of them gave up. Um, my brother, funny enough, a little, little jerk. He's 15 months younger than I am. And I don't know how, but not one trace of learning difference. Yeah.

Abbey: So learning came easy for him.

Stacey: School was easy. Learning was easy. I mean, you know, but he, he's such a sweet guy, very subtle about it. Never once to this day felt. Um, less than, or that's awesome. Yeah, I, yeah, they're my biggest cheerleaders.

Abbey: And did you feel bad about yourself when you found out you had dyslexia? Did you feel like there's something wrong with me and...?

Stacey: Yeah. Yeah. Um, I was, yeah, it is. I think there was partly a relief because it had a name which meant somebody else had identified it and somebody else probably has it. Um, but it also meant this, something was wrong with me, you know? And when the adults would say to me, but you're so smart, I would say. How can you be smart and not know how to spell very well, not know how to read, struggle so much with everything, you know, academic wise. Um, but now of course, that's one thing that I tell my own students is it has nothing to do with IQ. It doesn't, you are very smart.

Laurie: How did you, how did you feel about having to leave your school?

Stacey: Um, I, you know, I don't remember at the time, but my guess is like most kids, he would just feel uncomfortable about something new. Sure. Um, but I'm, I'll tell you how I felt about leaving Shelton. I was scared to death because I was with kids like me and I had teachers that understood me. Um, it was like a little safe Haven to go to. And then. I remember freaking out, I remember my mom telling me in the front yard, we were dealing gardening or something. And she said, I think you're going to mainstream back to, you know, regular school. And I thought, oh my God, I can't.

Laurie: No, I'm not.

Stacey: Yeah, I can't do that. Um, and I did have, um, I think they called it resource so had special classrooms that we don't call 504 program. Um, and so I had a lot of support and my parents were awesome too. And they supported me a lot studied with me. Yeah.

Laurie: So when you went back to your public school, you had that level of support there. So it was an easier transition than you had envisioned it to be.

Stacey: Yes, it was. And, um, had tutors and I had, you know, everything that I needed, not anything that I really wanted because nobody wants to do that.

It's not right. But, um, but it was something that, yeah, my parents had it in line for me to. To get it done.

Laurie: What classes were hardest for you then going through high school, but it always English or history where all the reading was, or...?

Stacey: I would say, well, so like science and history, there's a lot of reading and a lot of things you just sort of have to memorize as far as dates or names or, you know, wars or whatever. Um, I came up with a lot of mnemonic devices. Um, I learned how to. And how to organize with different colors and highlighters and, um, and things like that. One of the, actually one of the ways I studied for my, um, my test in graduate school, I have a master's in counseling would be to get different colors of pens. Um, red was Freud, you know, you had like green and the. Um, theorist and for counseling had different colors. And so if I couldn't remember which theorist had, you know, um, which saying, or yeah, you know, vocabulary, whatever. I could picture it in my head. Oh, it was in green. Ah, yeah. Oh, it's related to this guy.

Abbey: That's brilliant. So you came up with your own kind of coping strategies and work arounds.

Stacey: I'll tell you another thing. Um, we were talking earlier, my biggest fear of doing the podcast was that I would not be able to retrieve my words that I know as, as a kiddo, from my file cabinet in my head. And that I would feel, you know, Like I did as a child less than, or something because they couldn't come up with the right word. And then you talk around the word and you say things that are, you know, on a, on a more childish level because you can't retrieve the word you wanna use.

Abbey: Um, so you still, to this day, you said you struggled with retrieval. Tell, tell us a little bit about how you, how you work around that. Try to come up with the word. I think, you know, so two examples for you.

Stacey: One, um, when I was a little one, I don't maybe second grade, something like that. My mom said to me, and she uses this example a lot. She would say, what do you want for breakfast? And of course I'm a pancake girl.

So I, you know, I could not come up with the word. So she would say, okay, describe it to me. And I would say, okay, it's two syllables starts with a P it's around. And you can put syrup on it. She, she would say, is it a pancake? Yay. That's the one, that's the one I want pancakes. Um, and so that's how I would get around it, you know? Um, so have my mom's help.

Abbey: So in your mind you kinda knew all these different words related to the word, but you couldn't retrieve the actual vocabulary.

Stacey: Yeah, it's in there somewhere. I just, you know, people say I can't put my finger on it or I'm tongue tied or it's on the tip of my tongue and that's what it feels like. It's very irritating yes.

Abbey: I hear a lot of adults with dyslexia saying they struggle with word retrieval.

Laurie: I hear that with ADHD, right? Because you have a lot going on in your brain. It's hard to really sit and pinpoint that one word because yeah. And then you get flustered floating up there in your brain and the minute you get flustered, it almost makes it worse for sure.

Stacey: And I think age is no help either. When you, as you get older...

Laurie: I just said that earlier. Yep something to look forward to.

Abbey: Um, so you went on to graduate high school and then you went on to college. How was college, was that a place that your dyslexia impacted you and did you get accommodations in college?

Stacey: I did. I got accommodations. Um, I'm pretty assertive by my person. You know, my personality is pretty assertive. Um, and so, um, I was very good about talking to my professors, introducing myself. Um, Hey, I have severe dyslexia. Um, this'll date me. I am going to bring my tape recorder to class. And that was one of my accommodations. Um, I felt like a big dork, but I was like, you know what? I, I, I'm more so feel like I want to do this because it'll help me. And so I brought the tape recorder to class. Okay. I had extra

time on my tests. Um, and so it was one of the things that we talked to them about. Okay. So how do you want to do this? Do you want me to just hang out after class is over and finish the test, you want me to come back to your office. You know, I wanted to know and be prepared in my mind, you know, how's it going to work? You know, a little control freak too, but...

Abbey: Advocating for yourself too

Stacey: No one else is, you know, so, yeah.

Laurie: So I like to encourage my kiddos to do that too. I wonder as for what you need, because your parents were so up front about. The about your disability, right? And they were so transparent and they really involved you in it, you know, and kept you, you know, you knew about it, you understood it, you understood the help you were getting. And I wonder if all of that is what helped you to become such a good advocate for yourself because even being outspoken and assertive doesn't necessarily mean that you want to ask for help. Right. That'd be hard, but you had no problem. I love that. And that's what we tell kids all the time, too. Like you have to start owning this. It's it's not going away. You're going to have to, you're going to have to get, if you want help...

Stacey: Ask for it, get in there.

Abbey: Yeah. Right. Tell them what you need to be successful. And so then you went on, you graduated college and then what did you do right after you graduated with your bachelor's degree?

Stacey: Um, so actually after I have a general business degree, I went to Steven F Austin, small school, small classes, you know, you can go and talk to your teachers. Um, I sat at the front. I mean, I knew what I needed to do and I did it.

Abbey: Um, had mom read your, proofread your papers.

Stacey: I found a fax machine somewhere back in the day. They didn't have fax machines all over, so I'd find a fax machine and have my mama, um, proofread. Um, yeah. And so after undergraduate, Um, funny enough, my brother who's 15 months younger graduated the same. I think it was within a week of me because he was able to, I think they called it clep out. Maybe does that even sound familiar? Okay. Of, um, you know, a semester of classes. And then there was me who need, who needed an extra semester. So we ended up graduating, I think, within a week of each other. But, um, then I went to graduate school. I decided that I wanted to do counseling and, um, I busted my butt and worked hard and made it happen.

Laurie: Where did you go to grad school?

Stacey: it was called Amberton.

Laurie: Amberton, Okay.

Stacey: And it was wonderful, it's also small. Um, and you know, Was what I needed.

Laurie: Um, so, okay then, then I need to know then how you landed doing what you do now. Cause that, I mean, obviously counseling, I think can trans send across lots of fields, but for sure, but tell me then did you start by being a counselor?

Stacey: I did. I did counseling for, oh my gosh. Maybe like 10 years or so never in private practice. Um, and I, I got my feet wet in so many areas that I, I was just so passionate about it. I worked at a psychiatric hospital. Uh, did adilecent drugs and alcohol marriage and family abuse, um, sexual abuse, um, Uh, what else? Uh, suicide and crisis, eating disorders. Yeah. And I, um, I, I learned a lot, you know, and, and I saw a lot, then I learned how to...

Abbey: So you wanted to help people. So I, I wonder if that comes partially from your background. Being a struggling learner needing help getting the help you need, you were determined to help others feel good and be successful.

Stacey: I think so. Yeah. I do like to help if I can. Yeah.

Abbey: Yeah. I love that. And then how, so then after you, you got tired of counseling or you decided you wanted to pivot to something else. So tell us a little bit about what you do now and how you got to that place.

Stacey: Good question. So, um, yes, from, from counseling, I actually was at my friend Laurie's house who we both know, um, she is a language therapist and, um, it was over during the summer, she had a client, a child who came in and she went into the other room and did therapy with the child reading therapy. And I thought that is so cool. And that is right up my alley because I have myself had language therapy and have ADHD and dyslexia. And I, um, I want to give this a shot. So, um, I did, I went to Shelton and I got my certification through them and, um, that's what I'm doing now and I love it. It's awesome.

Laurie: Before we start getting into exactly what you do. Can you explain to everybody why a dyslexia therapist is called a language therapist?

Stacey: No. Um... I'm curious of that, you know, everybody asks, so how many languages do you speak English? Um, it is language-based right. So we're talking about academics were reading, spelling. Um, written expression, you know, getting whatever thoughts you have in your head onto the page, um, which is actually a really big task. Um, so I'm thinking because the background is language and working, it makes sense. Yeah.

Abbey: And dyslexia is a language based disorder.

Stacey: Absolutely.

Laurie: It's just confusing, right? It's a little bit confusing and obviously I know that an academic language therapist is a dyslexia therapist, but. People who aren't don't do this every day. It sounds like you're going to get like speech therapy almost.

Stacey: That's exactly what I was going to say is everybody looks at me. I say, oh, I'm a language therapist. And they go, oh, speech. Yeah, my cousin does that. I'm like, no, actually. And then I go into, it's more it's it is academic based. And I work with kids like with dyslexia and then like, oh, okay. That makes sense.

Abbey: And part of the language based therapy programs that you do. You're also teaching some of the underlying rules of the English language. So maybe that's partially also where the academic language therapy comes from or that certification as an academic language therapist. Because you're teaching individuals that struggle with reading, writing, spelling, how to read, and part of that is understanding the, the, the rules of the English language and why certain letters make certain sounds and combinations.

Stacey: Right, suffixes, prefixes, root words.

Laurie: So I'm going to, I have a, I have a great question because I just did this yesterday with, with a parent, I have kind of a spiel on how I explained dyslexia. I think I'm right. I'm maybe wrong, but it sounds really good. But what I'd like for you to do is explain to me, um, so basically what I say is, is that, you know, we kind of teach phonics in kindergarten through second and really generically across the country, we basically teach it the same way. The methods are basically the same, but for somebody with dyslexia, it's like learning it in German. It makes no sense. So through a dyslexia therapy, they're learning those same exact skills, but in a way their brain understands it. So it's like, oh, finally, you're speaking my language now I get it. But what is, so what is that difference? What is different about the way you do it versus the way the regular first grade is doing it in the classroom?

Stacey: That's a great question. So there are different remediation programs, um, and so you can have different kind of techniques and styles. In the, we'll say regular typical classroom, you have a classroom of students and the teacher goes as fast as, you know, the sort of medium child can go, I guess, or, or the fastest child or so you're going at a speed that may not be workable for you. You know, you may not have caught on or process information yet. Um, and so with language therapy, um, Sometimes it's done in a, in a small group setting, maybe five kids, seven kids, four kids. Um, I do one-on-

one um, and so I can, um, kind of gauge if the child is, um, understanding and utilizing what I am teaching and how I'm teaching it. Does it make sense? That's my question all the time is, does it make sense? Does that make sense to you? And if it doesn't okay, let's try a different way. But the, the directive teaching and, um, multi-sensory, I like to use a lot of multisensory, um, might be different from the typical school. Also, we're learning how to segment and, um, pull apart words and put them back together again, um, in an oral form, you know, verbal form and also in written form. And so it's. The steps are more tedious and then intense for the most part. Um, a lot of it is repetitive. You know, when you are teaching a child or an adult for that matter, um, that repetition, uh, no for my brain anyway, uh, I need that repetition to get it into that long-term. You know, once you learn something it's in short-term memory for a little while and it may not get to long-term memory, you know? Um, and so that repetition, like we talk about mass facts. Um, man, it took me forever to get my math facts down. Um, But one of the ways I like to teach some of the kids, if, if you can't memorize something, I mean, let's make sense of it. You know? And my dad taught me that when I was young, it was okay. Let's make sense out of it. Let's talk about it and make sense out of it. And so the way I like to show them is, um, written forms so they can see it. Um, I use color and we have our math tricks, you know, so with 12. Um, 12 is hard to multiply, you know, cause it's a big number, but if we can pull 12 apart into 10 and 2, we got 10 and we got 2, so we can multiply that and then add them back together again. And the kids are like, oh... and you move from putting all of that on paper to putting a little bit on paper, to doing some of it in your head to doing it all in your head. And then because you have said you know, 6 times 6 is 36, the entire thing, not just 36, you have that repetition, you have the visual of it. You have the written form of it. If you write it on a marker board or something, and then you have also the auditory of it, of yourself saying the entire thing. And then it just becomes, you know, when you memorize a song, you just know that yeah. You know, the next word cause you've, you know, oh.

Laurie: And you're also reinforcing that the numbers, the number concepts of 12 is a 10 and a 2, right? Like, yeah. And it place value. And I mean, there's so many other aspects that you're reinforcing. But you're teaching multiplication.

Abbey: Again, those underlying principles, underlying principle, which dyslexic brains they tend to, from what I've read and learned and experienced, they tend to like to know the why behind everything. Yeah, it sounds like you can also not only teach the why, but you can do it at a slower pace than the typical classroom with a lot of repetition in a very systematic multi-sensory way.

Satcy: Direct teaching. Yeah, absolutely. Good, good summary.

Laurie: Multisensory with, um, phonics, right? Cause that's, you're basically reteaching phonics. I have manipulatives for math is easy, right? Like I can come up with a million different manipulators, but for fun it's to understand how, why the "ah," why the A says "ah" in this word and says, "Ay" in this word, like what kind of, how do you do that multisensory? Like, what are their manipulatives? Are you getting the kids, are they getting their physical body involved? Are they getting, is it more verbal repetition?

Stacey: I think a lot of it is verbal repetition and identifying, um, the method that I use for remediation doesn't really involve coding. That's more of an AP alphabet phonics base. I like to include the coding. So when you're sitting across from me and you're struggling with cat, And you're calling it "Kate" because you're not sure if it's a long vowel or a short vowel, if I can reach across and put a brief half circle over the a, and that helps you identify the sound, then, you know, to me, it's just, uh, that's how I help a child, uh, Read and understand.

Laurie: So it's very visual. Yes. Just like your color coding. Right?

Abbey: So yeah, visual some symbols. And they're saying it while they're writing it at the same time, I've seen it and yeah, involving those multiple senses, sometimes I've seen therapists work with kids where they also have them trace the letters and the sounds on like a rough surface, like a wall or sandpaper so they're getting that tactile input.

Laurie: So, okay. So I know at the very beginning we talked about Stacey having dyslexia for sheet and visual processing disorder. So we answer the

question because this comes up all the time for us is that we're having all these visual cues, right? Yeah. And you like to visualize. But you have visual processing issues. And so for a lot of people that makes no sense, like how does visual help you when visual is a weakness, but it's, they're very different.

Stacey: It is.

Laurie: So talk to us about what are your, what is the, where is your visual processing set? What is your...?

Stacey: Good question? So with my visual processing, so we have eye teaming. Um, eye focusing, and eye tracking. That's the other one. I have issues with all of those. And over the years I've learned how to sort of compensate. Um, so if I've got a book that I'm reading, when I get to the end of the line, you know, you come back around to the next line, which was on the opposite side of the page. And, and I believe that's the tracking part of it. Um, a lot of times I'll reread the line and just read. Um, or it, it takes time. It takes more time. It's probably milliseconds or whatever, but it takes more time, which is difficult for comprehension. If you're focused on getting from one line to the next, I mean, it just sort of builds on each other and that, that, uh, You know, holding your place where you are. If I look away for a second copying from the board, good Lord. That was, um, that was like a tearful moment. And the teacher saying, okay, let's put this on, you know, paper copy of this on your paper. And I mean that, no.

Laurie: So do you feel like you kind of lose your, you lose your place? Like you go to the board, you finally figure out where you are and then you come back to your paper. You're like, well, wait, where did I leave off?

Stacey: Right. When the thing is, they may be writing. Right. I may be writing in print. Their letters are going to be bigger. Cause they're on a board with kids. Look, you know, bunch of kids, uh, or a number of people looking at it. So it's going to be a bigger size-wise than what I'm writing. So we've got a size, we've got a place for it. I'm tracking what she's doing. What's sorry, what's going on on the board. And then my eyes are going back to my page and

I'm listening, trying to listen at the same time. Right. And so it's just, it's a lot, right. Just the visual part of it is can be a lot.

Laurie: So how did, did they, when you went and had that evaluated and diagnosed, how did that, w w how did they help? So I, um, I. Um, I get lost everywhere. Anybody who knows me knows I'm always lost. Um, and I have a spatial issue. So when I'm walking down the hall, I will probably bump into something. If I'm not completely alert.

Abbey: Yes. Poor visual spatial skills. Um, And you can use to talk about how you had bruises all over your body. He didn't know where they'd come from.

Stacey: Yes, I would run into things and I'd have a bruise. And, um, so I kind of, you know, doing what I do, I sort of was, you know, kind of learned to myself to the fact that I think I might have that what's going on here. And so I went in and, um, went to a, is it a neuro.

Laurie: Visual associates. Dr. S

Stacey: No, I went to advancements optometrist, I guess like a developmental optometrist.

Abbey: Dr. Barry, She specializes in learning related vision issues.

Stacey: Right. And since we're not talking about, um, acuity acuity, right. I already have contacts. Um, but so I went and spoke with her and she did a couple of tests. Um, and she said, yeah, sure enough, you have visual processing disorder. Um, so some of the treatments are, you know, you can wear, um, what we call prism glasses. Um, for a certain amount of time and those worked differently than regular glasses, because regular glasses, when you want to see something, you know, you put on your glasses and it works. And if you know, and then you take off your glasses and you can see. Um, but with these glasses, they sorta sort of like reading therapy, does it neurologically opens up some of the pathways in the brain so that it's almost like a cure I say with quoted fingers, you know, air quotes. And so it's kind of a fixed after a certain amount of months, um...

Laurie: It's like wearing braces.

Stacey: Yeah, it is. Um, and then there's eye therapy that you can do, um, in house.

Laurie: So have you noticed a difference?

Stacey: I have you noticed a difference? And I actually sent Dr. Barry Monday and she said, you're doing so much better. You can kind of start to ween yourself off.

Laurie: Yeah.

Abbey: Yay, so graduating.

Stacey: And I don't have as many bruises!

Laurie: I love that. Okay. So can we go back now to what you do? So you work, do you work with kids and adults?

Stacey: I, I have in the past, usually, you know, my caseload, right now is just kiddos anywhere from pre-K kindergarten to, um, I think the oldest kiddo I have right now is in 11th grade.

Laurie: Ok, that's almost an adult.

Stacey: Yeah. And I like to do language therapy. I do math. I do organization skills, study skills, things like that. So it's sort of whatever whatever's needed, whatever the struggle.

Abbey: So, did you start primarily with focusing on students with dyslexia and then you expanded, or did you just say, I want to work with students and help students struggling, struggling.

Stacey: I started with language therapy, um, cause that's what my certification wasn't and then I realized I can also do math. You know, it's a challenge when you're doing 11th grade math. Um, but uh, I like the challenge and, you know, I like to be able to sit across from a student who, you know, kind of thinks like I do and, and their brains like mine um, has a dyslexia or ADHD or, or maybe auditory processing disorder. I don't have that, but I work with kids with, you know, on that. And it's just amazing to me, the first thing I want to know about the first, but one of the things I tell parents when I talk to them for the first time and students is, you know what? I have dyslexia and it's pretty severe. So here's, what's going to happen. You know, you and I are going to be reading. I may be reading to you. I will look at the word saw and I'll probably call it was, and you can say to me, miss Stacey that says, saw, you know, um, and you can gently correct me and I'll do the same for you. Then we can just giggle and move on because I've learned that, you know, it just can't be that big of a deal.

Laurie: I bet kids love that.

Abbey: Yeah.

Stacey: Yeah. And so we, you know, turn to page 32, wait, no 23, you know, and it's like, eh, and you know, of course dyslexia is not only about flipping numbers and letters, you know, Um, for the most part, that's where, you know, the kiddos catch me and I say, see, there's my dyslexia showing up, you know, or, or whatever it makes sense.

Abbey: And you feel good to know that you became a successful adult and you're smart and you got. You work with other kids and you have dyslexia and ADHD, and visual processing.

Stacey: They say that a lot, Stacey, you have all these certificates on your wall. How did you do all that? If you were dyslexic, how can you teach me if you have ADHD and you know, and I say, cause you know what, honestly, I worked my butt off and hard work is okay. Yeah. Yeah, that's what I can't do it. Yeah. It's there. And you're going to miss some parties. I'm going to be honest with you, you know, and college or some time or whatever, but this is, you know, you've got other wonderful things on your list. This is just one.

That's going to be hard and a struggle for you. And it doesn't go away. I'm sorry, bud. You know, right here. Here's what it is.

Laurie: And it can get easier.

Abbey: And you worked very hard and you've got really far, and you used all the resources that were available to you and the supports.

Laurie: And there's so many more resources now. Yeah, just with technology.

Abbey: Yes. Yes.

Stacey: So many schools that are...

Abbey: Speech to text software, text to speech. They didn't have that when we were in school.

Laurie: Book on tape. Yeah. So if you, if we had a parent that just got a diagnosis, their child just got diagnosed with dyslexia or, or ADHD or visual processing, what kind of advice would you give that parent through all of your struggles? I mean, I feel like you've, you've had, you had great experience with your parents. What advice would you share with that parent?

Stacey: So, uh, you know, sometimes parents call me and they are frazzled, they're overwhelmed and they're anxious. And so, um, the one thing I don't want them to do is just transfer that onto their kiddos, you know, cause kids can feel that even maybe a subconscious thing. But, um, so sometimes I say, let's just, let's have a session to just us first so we can understand what it means and how to work with your child, because what they need from you is encouragement, to be their biggest cheerleader, and to understand that it's difficult without, you know, there's a fine line between, um, knowing that your child is struggling and wanting to do everything you can for them and doing everything for them and basically teaching them that you can't do it, so I'll do it for you. There's a message there, you know, that kids receive. Um, so let's find out where your child is. Let's understand what's going on with them, what the diagnosis means and. And let me help you help your child, you

know, um, if you can, um, give them, you know, two things to do, you go upstairs and grab your laundry basket instead of five things, you know...

Laurie: And then getting mad at them when they can't remember them.

Stacey: Yeah. So let's, um, let's expect things that are fair and that they can do. Based on, you know, their diagnosis or whatever. But of course, Um, don't give up ever, ever ever.

Abbey: I love that you want them to understand that diagnosis and you encourage them to have high expectations too, to say that just because your child has dyslexia doesn't mean they're incapable, they're very capable.

Laurie: Right.

Abbey: And so absolutely that's something I know you encourage them to keep their expectations.

Stacey: Yeah. And I think that's where I, you know, you model behavior right, in any relationship. And I think my parents modeled that for me as a kiddo, because. I don't know in my head, there's nothing I can't do. You know, it may, it may be really hard, you know, but I'm willing to take the challenge.

Abbey: That's awesome.

Laurie: Right! So if people want to find you or have questions for you, what's the best way for them to find you?

Stacey: Um, my website is a good place at StaceyHarari.com

Laurie: And we'll have that, we'll have that in the show notes. And so they can reach out with questions.

Stacey: Absolutely.

Laurie: Do you do any virtual work? Or do you do everything in person?

Stacey: I do, I like zoom. You can do the screen share. So that's easy for math or language. Um, one of my favorite things is just, uh, consultation, working with parents, um, and to help them understand what's going on, what they can do, and here's what we're doing with your child. That seems to make sense. So let's use that. When you've got spelling words in the classroom, here's what we're doing in, in my office. So let's transfer that to home. Let's use some of the same vocabulary so we can be consistent. That's really, so I love to do that with parents too.

Laurie: Okay. Thank you so much for being here. We appreciate your sharing, your story, and you know, we don't hear a lot of stories like yours and that you it's all very positive and you had such great support from day one, right? I mean, we see so many people that get to your age and have depression, anxiety, because of all their struggles. I feel like you're like the polar opposite, right? Like you're like, whatever I got this and we love it.

Abbey: Yeah. She's got, you know, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, several certifications and a very successful thriving, private practice. How long have you been in private practice now?

Stacey: Oh, I'm going to say about 12 years. Give or take. Yeah. Yeah. Something like that.

Laurie: That's a great story. It is a great story. And encouraging, thanks for sharing. We will have all of Stacey's information in our show notes. Um, if you guys have any questions for us or want to recommend a topic for us to discuss letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com and we are super excited because our podcast website is, it's gotta be days before, I mean we're so close.

Abbey: It's gonna be any day now it's almost ready to be released so stay tuned.

Laurie: We'll keep you in the loop on that. Watch for information about that as well. So. All right. Well, you guys have a great day. Thanks so much for being here and come back to your next episode for our next, uh, interesting "Living with" series, we'll keep you posted on that as well.

Abbey: Take care!

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.

Length of episode 41:49