

Shining with ADHD by The Childhood Collective

Episode #179: An Episode for the Whole Family: Finding the Positive

Katie: Did you know that focusing on the good stuff that happens in your day can actually make you feel happier and stronger? It's true. It's kind of like a superpower for your brain.

Hi there. We are The Childhood Collective, and we have helped thousands of overwhelmed parents find joy and confidence in raising their child with ADHD. I'm Katie, a speech language pathologist.

Lori: And I'm Lori.

Mallory: And I'm Mallory. And we're both child psychologists.

Lori: As busy mamas ourselves, we are on a mission to support ADHD parents on this beautiful and chaotic parenting journey.

Mallory: If you are looking for honest ADHD parenting stories, a dose of empathy with a side of humor and practical tools, you are in the right place.

Katie: Let's help your family shine with ADHD. Welcome to a very special episode of Shining with ADHD.

Mallory: Yep. So, we spend so much time talking to grownups, we decided that we just wanted to talk to the kids for a little while.

Lori: With the holidays just around the corner, we wanted to make an episode that the entire family could listen to.

Katie: And since we know that everyone is so busy, we are going to keep this chat short and sweet. So, I want all of you to start by thinking about the time that you were the grumpiest. Not really like scared or sad, but seriously, a time you were grumpy.

Mallory: Yeah. So, you know one of those days when you're just kind of stuck in a bad mood and it seems like nothing is ever going to cheer you up. What does it feel like in your body when you're in a bad mood?

Katie: So, for me it actually, when I'm in a really bad mood, my stomach actually starts to hurt and I feel a little bit sick.

Mallory: I feel like for me it's just, it's like it takes a lot of work to smile. Like, yeah, I don't want to smile.

Lori: I feel like I start to scrunch up my eyebrows and my body just feels tight and my hands feel tight and I notice that just everything I think about seems to be really negative. Like all I can think about and see in my brain is like all the bad things that are going on. It honestly just doesn't feel good in our bodies or our brains when we get in a bad mood and it's so easy for that to happen. Especially if you have ADHD.

Mallory: Yeah. And sometimes when you have ADHD, your mind can feel stuck on things that didn't go so well. So maybe you lost at your game or maybe you got in trouble at school. That can be frustrating, right?

Katie: Yes. But did you know that focusing on the good stuff that happens in your day can actually make you feel happier and stronger? It's true. It's kind of like a superpower for your brain.

Lori: Yes. And even on days when things are really hard, there are always good things that you can see too. And finding them can help your brain feel a little bit more positive. I know sometimes when my daughter's having a really bad day and she's just feeling really grumpy, it almost feels impossible for her to see the good things that happen during the day. Even though for me, it can be really easy to see and for her to overlook those things that were awesome and she did awesome at.

Mallory: So sometimes parents can see those, but when you're in the moment, when you're in the bad mood, when you're feeling grumpy, it's really hard to see those things. But you can find those good things. And you can think of your day kind of like a treasure hunt if you look for the gold. So those are like the fun moments, the people who did something kind to you, the things that made you smile. When you start looking for those gold moments, your brain actually starts to notice those more and more. And when you notice those gold moments, it helps your brain stay calm and feel happier.

Katie: Yeah, in my family we call this filling up our buckets.

Lori: So why is this so important? Well, when you find the good things, you can actually train your brain to focus on what's going right instead of what's just hard. And it's super easy to build a positive mindset. It's like training your brain to be your biggest cheerleader. And let me tell you, my 10-year-old has been a cheerleader this year and she really gets hyped up and excited. She is smiling, she is dancing, so think about that. Like, visualize a cheerleader in your brain rooting you on for all the positive things that are going on.

Mallory: I love that. So, here's a fun idea, at the end of every day, think of three good things that happened. It could be something as simple as, you know, your grownup bought you your favorite snack. Maybe you laughed with your friend about a silly joke. Maybe you learned how to do something new. Find three good things that happened.

Katie: Yeah. And we want you to tell them to your family. And parents, you can do this too and kids can do it too. And as we go into the holiday season, it might feel even easier to find the good things, right? Because there's just a lot happening. There's lights, and maybe you decorate cookies or have festive music. And you're getting to spend some time with your family. So, finding those little pieces of gold, those little treasures throughout the day, and then you can tell them to your family at night.

Lori: And remember, the more you do it, the more you practice it, the stronger your brain gets at seeing the good in your day. And that helps you to feel more awesome throughout your day, even when life can feel hard and difficult.

Katie: Yeah, I think we need to practice. So, let's do it. So, I'll go first. Something really good that happened to me today is that I got to talk to my friend on the phone. She lives in Colorado, so I don't really get to see her very often. And it just made me so happy to spend a few minutes talking with her.

Mallory: I love that! Friends always make me feel better. Something good that happened to me today, now, this might seem small, but it made me feel really good, is my favorite sweatshirt was clean. You know in the morning, it's chilly out, it's time to get dressed, and you look in your closet, and your favorite sweatshirt is clean. That was my gold for the day.

Lori: That's great. And the best thing that happened to me today was actually getting outside and going for a walk with my dog, Chip. He's a little mini golden doodle, and he is so cute. And I love Friday mornings because we go on long walks together. It's beautiful outside. I get my favorite drink at my coffee shop, and then we go play in the backyard. And he has so much fun running around, and it just makes me so happy and brings me so much joy.

Katie: I love this. So, it really is like a treasure hunt, finding the good things that happen. So, last question. How does it feel in your body when you focus on the good things?

Mallory: Well, it's definitely a lot easier to smile. It just comes natural, you don't have to force it, you know?

Katie: Yeah, totally. For me, I start to relax a lot more, and I don't feel as, like, stressed out.

Lori: Yeah. And there's kind of like a warm feeling. I feel like that goes through your body, that you just feel kind of happy, comfortable, sometimes excited like you want to dance. Those are all feelings when you're happy. So, are you ready to start finding the good things in your day?

Mallory: If you need help, absolutely talk to your parents. They can help you practice finding the good things. You got this!

Katie: Thanks for listening to Shining with ADHD by your hosts, Lori, Katie, and Mallory of The Childhood Collective.

Mallory: If you enjoyed this episode, please leave us a review and hit subscribe so you can be the first to know when a new episode airs.

Lori: If you are looking for links and resources mentioned in this episode, you can always find those in the show notes. See you next time!