

Power to my kiddo, not his ADHD

Excerpt from *Boy Without Instructions: Surviving the Learning Curve of Parenting a Child with ADHD*, by Penny Williams

Positive thinking truly offers a lot of power. Thinking good thoughts will make one feel better, happier, and maybe even help shape their future reality. In contrast, negative thinking can hold the same power, perhaps even greater. Negative thoughts propagate in our minds and seep and slither into every portion of our being. They can really take over our psyche if we grant them the influence.

The way I viewed ADHD, as a positive or a negative or even with indifference, greatly affected my son Ricochet's life, and our family. I once used the term "ADHD Monster" freely, but I stopped. Using this phrase opened the door to negativity. Debating ADHD's influence, especially in front of Ricochet, gave it legs and a life of its own. It would become part of how he saw himself and then how everyone else saw him, too. When I met with his second grade teacher, Ms. Glinda, before school started his second grade year, my agenda was to say, "Ricochet has ADHD, and this is how to manage it and his behavior in your classroom." By doing so, I inadvertently set him up to be seen as ADHD first and Ricochet second. What a colossal mistake! Ms. Glinda couldn't help but approach his ADHD in every aspect of his classroom experience because I brought it to the forefront.

Self-examination lead me to realize I couldn't continue to give ADHD this sort of power over our lives. Talking about its negative attributes in front of Ricochet taught him to use ADHD as an excuse, a crutch. Instead, I needed to frequently talk about what he did well. Even further, I needed to recognize his talents and gifts and nurture them.

Sure, it's my job to help him find ways to compensate for his ADHD, to help him learn organizational skills, social skills, and how to be in control of his body, but not in the context of ADHD. It had to be approached purely as though I were teaching him everyday life skills. After all, I was teaching him life skills, just differently than I'd teach them to my neurotypical kid.

It was up to me to offer my child with ADHD an ordinary childhood to prepare him to create an extraordinary life for himself. Negativity had no place in it.