

# THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

---

## Season 2 – Episode 15

### Discussing Neurodivergent Kids with Michelle Foulia

**Ashley:** Welcome back to the Resilient Kid podcast with me, Ashley Costello, psychotherapist of over 25 years. Two things today that we've got to tell you. One, we've got an exciting guest. Wahey! So, I will tell you a little bit more about that. But two, it is raining very heavily here. And some of you who know that we've built our own house and it is of timber structure, it has aluminium metal drain pipes, so you might hear a drip drip drip, and I apologize. I will try and get that out in edit. However, if that's what it is. If you hear it, that is exactly what it is. Okay. It's nothing to do with your headphones or, or what you're listening on to. So, onto our guest. I'm very excited. Excuse me.

This has come all very quickly. Because we were introduced this guest and I by a mutual friend, Sue Frantz. Now Sue, for those who don't know Sue, she is a connecting queen in Cheshire over here near me. And this morning she just happened to put a post on and tagged me and the guest in. And here we are this afternoon on the podcast. How amazing is that? So, thank you to Sue. And I'd like to introduce, I'm going to get Michelle to introduce herself.

So, Michelle Foulia has written a book and we're going to hear all around that in a little moment. But Michelle. Hello, first of all, welcome to the podcast. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about your journey and kind of how you've come to write this book and particularly with emphasis on what we're going to talk to you about today.

**Michelle:** Okay. Hi. Well, it's good to be here. I can't believe how so last minute. And here I am with wet hair at the last minute. My kids are all over the house. So, like you're saying with the rain, mine might be that just anybody could walk in at any moment, asking me where something is, which is a usual question.

Every mom's most common question. Mom,

where is? Blah, blah, blah. So about me, it's well, the first thing to say is kind of how we connected is because I have ADHD and my, all three of my children are also neurodiverse in different ways and in different sort of impacted differently by it and expressing it differently. But it, and it's what led me to write my book but to talk about me, it's quite difficult because I only realized that I have ADHD in the last sort of couple of years and I'm 49 now.

So that's how late it happened. Even though my son, one of my three children, so my middle one, my son got diagnosed about it'll be about 8 or 9 years ago now.

And for some reason I never made the connections until I started writing my book and then it started to kind of really drop in on me that, oh, I do that. Oh, I think like that. Oh, I see things like that. And then it was like, oh, it was so obvious. But I think what's important to say, I mean, now I work as a writer in, and I live in North Wales in a little village called Kygerli, which is under Hope Mountain, but I'm originally from Cyprus.

So, if anybody's wondering about my accent, it's kind of Greek, although it's not traditionally Greek, but I'm from Cyprus. So, I think that one of the reasons, and this actually only occurred to me recently, one of the reasons my diagnosis got missed, apart from the fact that nobody talked about ADHD when I was a child, and definitely not in Cyprus where I grew up.

But the other reason is that I experienced a lot of trauma in my childhood, starting from losing both my parents when I was five. And then going into foster care, living with grandparents being a young carer to my grandmother, and then they passed away, and I've been passed from person to person, kind of throughout my whole childhood, and eventually landed in the UK because my mum was English, so I was sent to live with my...

British grandmother when I was 12. So, I had experienced so much trauma that all the issues I've struggled with throughout my life, I put down to my traumas. And I'm really passionate about this being more talked about now. because I started studying counselling and psychotherapy about four years ago because I wanted to be a therapist.

I wanted to help other people and I wanted to specialize in trauma because I was under there. You know, I know what it's like. I've experienced it. I got diagnosed with complex PTSD years ago. So, I felt, Oh, that's my path. That's what I'm

supposed to do with my life. That's how I'm supposed to use all my experiences to make a difference to others.

And never ever did it occur to me that I could be neurodiverse, or neurodivergent, or whichever term people prefer. Until I started writing the children's book about my family's ADHD journey. And so, I think that what's happening now is I'm in that place of trying to... In some ways separate compartmentalize, which of my struggles and challenges are down to trauma, which are down to ADHD, could there be something else that play like dyslexia and dyscalculia, which are all kind of parts of the wider neurodiverse spectrum, I guess, you know, there's all these different branches that come off a diagnosis or a suspicion of something.

And I'm in that place of trying to work out, is my hypervigilance because of my trauma or is my hypervigilance because of my ADHD? Is it both? And so, so that's kind of where I'm at. And I think what's happened as well is that everything is unfolding slowly. And it's really hard because when, you know, like you're asking me kind of introduce yourself and I don't really know how, because I feel like I'm rediscovering my path now that I'm starting to understand more about myself and the complexities I've lived and the challenges I've faced and looking at them from a different perspective, because never, ever in all the therapy I've had, and I've had a lot of different therapy from, you know, counselling, psychotherapy, CBT, different Never ever was it brought up that I could be neurodiverse.

It was, the focus was always you've experienced neglect and trauma and loss and abuse. Therefore, your challenge is down to that. But actually, what's happened is that I feel much more hopeful now than I ever did before, because I know that I can learn tools to manage my challenges now more than I ever felt before.

I don't know if that makes sense, but anyway, that's, That's me, .

**Ashley:** Absolutely. And I think that's, you've said two really important points there that I, you know, as a psychotherapist and lovely that you, you know, have, have studied that as well. But as a psychotherapist, what I am noticing is there is lots of kids that come to me and the first thing is that trauma that maybe they've been through and ADHD, the overlap is huge.

So, it's very easy to miss because parents are going, they've been through this. We need to deal with this. And actually, hold on a sec. Let's just, like you say, compartmentalize that. And actually, that's really important. Another thing that it

happens exactly the same as well is if we look at, say, the symptoms on the diagnostic manual for depression and we look at teenage behavior.

They overlap again. So, you know, there's lots of areas in mental health in these kinds of issues that we're talking about that overlap. And so, it's really difficult to sometimes to pull them apart. But actually, there is some that we can absolutely learn the tools to deal with and others that we have to kind of process and get and get through.

So, I love that you've highlighted that, Michelle. And then the other thing that I think is really important is Most of the children that say, come to me for therapy and parents say, you know, I'm not sure what's going on. There's something, it's just not, you know, maybe they're comparing and contrasting to siblings or other people's kids.

And they go, there's just something that they're not quite catching or they're not, I'm not sure. And actually, it might be something like ADHD or different things like that. And then all of a sudden, particularly mums. Start to go. Oh, I do that. Oh, hold on. I behave like that. You know, and actually, I think if we look, most of us have got some traits of something somewhere along the line is how we deal with them.

And, and, and I think the relief sometimes comes from knowing. You know, for sure. And well, you know, okay, so I'm, you don't always, I always say you don't always have to go for a diagnosis if that's not your bag, but actually, now you're aware. Now you can look at how to help, how to view it in a different way.

And I love the way that you talk about that in your book, but we will come on to that in a moment. So, tell us a little bit about, because you mentioned your middle one there, okay. Who had, who has got ADHD and so, but your family is made up of quite neurodivergent kids. And tell us a little bit about kind of the things that you might see in your house.

**Michelle:** So, well, with my oldest, he's 20 now. And he only realized this year that he has ADHD, and that's because he has always been amazing at masking. Probably, I think that's been it. So, we've never had the hyperactivity physically, but he, like me, his hyperactivity is in the mind. Unstoppable chatter, never ending busy mind.

And I think that's one of the reasons ADHD gets missed because there's an assumption that you should be really hyperactive physically. Actually, a lot of it is in your mind. There are hyperactivities in the mind. So, it does look very different to where my oldest son has always been incredibly quick to pick things up.

Like amazing anything from and becoming really excellent at things like whether it was chess or solving a Rubik's Cube or reading profusely. I mean, I remember we went through a phase, so he was in primary school and when he was about 8 years old, there were a lot of very serious bullying issues going on and despite our efforts.

So, this would 12 years now. So, he was eight at the time. And so, we tried to do all the things that you do with the school, you know, the policies and the, the different ways to deal with it. And it wasn't getting dealt with, it wasn't getting addressed, and it was becoming worse. And his personality really changed to the point where I was, I remember feeling I have handed this child that I've nurtured and loved and protected for five, six years to trusting the adults to take care of him and educate him. And they've completely destroyed him. You know, he wouldn't go out, he wouldn't go anywhere near where there were other children or to the park, not to swimming. He became so worried about his looks, his image. He didn't want to eat because he thought he was too fat.

And he was ugly. He was just eight, you know, and, and he absolutely broke my heart. And the thing is that before him, I'd had miscarriages and almost miscarried him. There was this sense for me that All we've been through to have this child and, you know, raised him to respect people, to have an opinion, to have a voice, to be sociable, blah, blah, blah.

And then I'm getting this wreck coming back every day and meltdowns and things. So eventually it led to us taking him out and beginning to home educate him. thinking it was going to be a temporary thing because we, I had, I'd struggled in school and I don't remember anything from school. So, I thought, well, I don't have the skills to educate my child.

So, we'll do temporarily till we find somewhere else, but he thrived so much. And one of the things that was really noticeable was that when I used to go to the parent meetings, his behavior was always excellent. There was never an issue with that again. Which is how ADHD gets missed, but he's so well behaved.

He's not disturbing other people. He's not talking to anybody. He's not hyperactive right And so you miss, you miss the other signs because you're looking for the obvious symptoms. And I used to go to the parent meetings and I would talk about his handwriting. He's left-handed and it's so you need, he needs to work.

Oh, he's so brilliant at this. And he's so good at that. And he's lovely. And he's so friendly. So, so polite and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But he needs to work on his handwriting and he's reading. I was thinking that's really bizarre because at home he loves books, but I, you know, I trusted the system and I didn't question it and I said, okay, when we eventually took him out and started home educating, he couldn't get enough books.

It was like an addiction. We, we had borrowed all the children's book at our local library. All the books from our friends bought lots of books ourselves and he still was just like getting through them. He was like an obsession. And I thought how ironic that that was the thing they were, you know, commenting on.

And actually, that is such a strength of his. But then he went off that, you know, in that typical ADHD thing where it's a hyper focus and one thing you do it to death and then it's like, okay, I'm done with this. Now what's the next thing? And then he became chess and then he became wrestling. And then he became.

Yeah, so he was determined to work out how to solve the Rubik's Cube, then moved on to something else. And he's just done that all throughout his life. And so, with him, what is most challenging, I would guess, in the home for him is, is more the mental health. stuff, the anxiety, the hyperactive mind, not being able to sleep properly, not being able to rest when you sleep.

Those are his challenges and, and the stimulation in the environment, too many people, too many crowds, that kind of thing. With our youngest son, who's 15 now.

**Ashley:** Michelle, can I just pick up on something that you've said that because I think it's, I think it's really important. It's one of the things that I say, like, all the time.

I feel like I'm saying it all the time that actually, I think doctors and educational professionals, if they are not If they've not got a special interest, shall we put it that way, in ADHD or neurodiversity, then research is so behind, right? Unless you

research, you know, like in my job, I have to research because I have got a kid that, you know, one day is like this and the next day is like this.

So, we, you know, we're constant. But if you're, you know, if you're in education setting or a medical setting, and you've not really got a special interest in ADHD, I almost feel like the kids have to turn up with a fidget spinner for them to be taken seriously now, you know, it feels like if they are not bouncing around on their chair or rocking back and forth or playing with something in their hand that they go, oh no, they can't possibly be.

And I'm like, what, you know, and, and so the other thing that I wanted to say as well, just picking up on you talking about your son and this might resonate. So, I was talking to a young person with ADHD and they said it is like having planes taking off all the time Taking off all the time and then when they're calm and they're happy and they're okay and everything is sorted those planes just hover around one at a time, but he said Most of the time, especially if they're stressed, those planes are taking off at runways all the time.

They're like thoughts in the head just running off. And I thought, wow, that's such an amazing analogy for especially the mental activity of an ADHD brain, you know, for sure. So that's, you know, that's kind of, I thought, wow, I really like that. That makes so much sense. But the other thing is just before we move on to your 15-year-old is for those who don't know, for the listeners of the podcast, who don't know what masking is, could you just describe that?

**Michelle:** So it's, it's the best way I can describe it is pretending everything is fine, is, is putting on a mask, putting on this other face of what you think society is expecting you to be like, you know, hiding, hiding your struggles because you're going to be judged, or because you're going to be rejected, or you're going to be, which of course he did experience, he actually did experience being rejected because he wasn't sharing the same interests as the other kids in school, or I don't know.

Whatever other reasons it was, you know, with bullying, it's always the silliest thing. Like I would send Greek food in his lunchbox and they would mock him for those silly things. But masking is that pretending, you know, laughing with, with the bully, for example, or if it were for even an older child or an adult, because we continue masking.

I don't, I know I do still in certain situations, especially with work. It's that pretending everything is okay. I've got this and I'm going to present you, what I think you need to see or want to see because you couldn't cope with what I'm actually dealing with and if I showed you what I'm dealing with or expressed it, you may never want to speak to me again, or you might reject me, or you might judge me.

And with ADHD, there is something called self-Rejection sensitive dysphoria. Not everybody has it, but it's quite common, which is that sensitivity to any hint of rejection, any hint of their whispering, they must be talking about me, or that person didn't include me in this. That means they don't like me.

This, this terrifying fear of being rejected. So, we mask and pretend. So that we're included and accepted. And so that's the best way I can describe it is this, you're putting on a mask, you're hiding who you are because you need to be included and accepted and loved and affirmed. .

**Ashley:** Absolutely.

And I think some of this stuff that you've just said that is so, so prevalent in a lot of, you know, children that I see that have got ADHD and actually the masking that sometimes holds and all day in school, all day and then they get home and they kind of explode or they, you know, implode and parents are just like, I've got no clue what's happening and they go in school and they go, but they're perfect here, like they're really well behaved.

They're really well mannered. You know, they get on with the work. They're really clever. They can't possibly be anything wrong. And it's like, yeah, we've held it together so long that actually they can't physically and mentally hold it together any longer. So, yeah, thank you for that.

**Michelle:** And then what happens is they come home.

in their safe space and have a meltdown, which the teachers don't see because they've seen the masking child. And then you get that. And then they don't believe you because they're like, but he's so good here. It must be something going on in the home. And then of course, then you're judged again. And. The loop continues,

**Ashley:** continues.



Absolutely. Absolutely. So, before we move on to this amazing book, and I really kind of want us to talk about Poppy's Miracle tell us about your 15-year-old, like give us a look.

**Michelle:** I'll quickly talk about the other two then. So, the 15-year-old, my son with him, it was the hyperactivity was much, which is why he was the only one that got diagnosed because it was there.

You know, fidgeting there, moving constantly, wouldn't sleep through the night till he was almost three. You know, if you'd said to him, don't touch that, he'd touch it. Don't put your hands in the plug. It put them in that constantly fearing for his safety all the time. And also, it was yeah, I mean, that was the most noticeable with him.

Also, he has dyspraxia, so we noticed that he was struggling with, with fine motor. and bumping into things and falling over things all the time. And there were all these little signs like that, but mostly it was that sort of hyperactivity and refusing to just listen and, and focus on an instruction or, and actually keeping himself safe.

But with him, we, we had. Naturally followed because with our oldest we were homeschooling, so we just continued because it worked so well. We continued with him, but we went to Greece for two years when Vangelis, my middle son, was seven. And while we were in Greece, they had to attend school because homeschooling wasn't legal there.

And that's where he's all his symptoms exacerbated because then he had to be still, he couldn't talk to anybody. And what I'd noticed is he was coming home. He'd never done this before, but he was chewing his nails. But like, you know, write down because it was, because he was so wanting to be good and not wanting to disturb anybody and not wanting to talk to anyone that he would just sit and chew his hands and his clothing.

And so, he'd come home and then have a meltdown. And again, like you said, the teacher would be, but he's so lovely. He's, you know, if I tell him Vangelis, don't talk to the person next to you, let them finish their work. He'd then offer to help them finish their work. . He was just so kind and sweet and she was saying, you know, you should have something going on at home and I'm like Listen to me.

I'm a mom. I, I know my kids, but we don't, we don't get listened to because there's this perception that we're overprotective or micromanaging or, you know, the helicopter parenting or whatever. And so, they wouldn't hear it. So, they actually left and came back to the UK because I could see both the boy's mental health was really deteriorating.

And for us, it was always. Our family first, you know, I've had nine pregnancies and I have three living children. So for me that was always the most important thing there are things I can do with my life when they grow up and leave the nest. But while they're small I'm responsible for their mental and physical health.

And emotional health, and so for us, it was a no brainer was like, okay, this isn't going to work. Let's go. So, we came back and return to homeschooling, and they've been fine because of the way we do it. And then with my daughter. You know, with her being a girl completely, I completely missed it completely.

Nothing, none of the symptoms that we know, none of the things we talked about already with the other two. With her, it was noise sensitivity and it was, it was becoming more and more prevalent that she was so highly sensitive to noise. And it was even as a baby, I, we couldn't have her sleep in our room because any slight movement in our bed would wake her. And people would, would be saying to me, oh, you've got to make noise around the babies. You've got to get them used to sleeping through the noise. And I, again, I would feel so not lit and be like, I, I hear you, but it's not working. And, and I need to sleep and the baby needs to sleep.

And then we'll say, well, you're training her to be like that. It's you, you know, you're training her to be sensitive to noise because you won't make noise when she sleeps. And so, I was so alone in it, so alone. But we noticed that and then as she got older, I was noticing other things like the way she doesn't understand certain mathematical concepts or other concepts that would maybe seem logical.

And I thought, oh, that's, that's a very neurodiverse way of thinking about that or looking at that. And then the forgetfulness and, you know, little things that. Probably I would not have noticed had it not been the sensitivity to noise, lights, and people, you know, lots of people. So then, I started to then make an effort to notice more and then I realized that, oh yeah, she has it too, the whole family.

But everyone has it in different ways. So, we just continue. You know, she's tried school twice as well and just could, could not, could not deal with it, could not

cope. And so, it's fine. We've made it work our way and it's okay. It's not perfect, but it's It works for our family.

**Ashley:** And I think, you know, what I'm hearing out of what you've just said, and it is so true, you know, it's why a lot of mums now are recognizing some of the traits because, you know, young boys or their kids are being You know, diagnosed because as parents, as, as women, we often mask, but equally, and I only had this discussion with a very good friend of mine yesterday is as moms, we are hot housed to multitask.

So therefore, is it any wonder? that we probably have many ADHD traits because we're actually encouraged to multitask men, not so much, but we are and, and do as a society multitask because, you know, we're juggling many, many things. But I think the most important thing that you've just highlighted there is that, you know, you weren't heard by teachers and, and different people that were trying to give you advice.

And I am a massive believer. So, you know, all my years of experience, thousands and thousands of kids I've seen. But actually, the first thing I say to parents is you are the expert with your child. You tell me, you tell me what you're seeing. I can help you in my experience, but you know, your child, the best.

And that I think is massive. You know, that we sometimes our confidence is undermined in how we know our own children, for sure. And so, thank you for that, because I think that's really, you know, your children alone are like a real smorgasbord of how to do this. But also, the completely different how you can, how it can really display itself in very, very different ways.

And I think that's important because it is not turn up with a fidget spinner. Yes, I've got some. I've got ADHD. So, for sure, that's brilliant. So, Michelle, tell us about Poppy's Miracle. This is Michelle's book. I am, because I've only met Michelle today, I have not got my hands on Poppy. I have been flicking through her website and stuff.

And I just love the idea of it. Now this is 10-year-old Alex, the story, 10-year-old Alex goes on a trip to Greece. You, you kind of tell us a little bit more from there.

**Michelle:** Okay, so I took the real story of what happened with our ADHD journey, and also what happened, just to explain, because this is just so we can have a bit of, kind of context of the cover.

The reason it's about Poppy it's because when we went to Greece for those couple of years, Vangelis had just been diagnosed with ADHD and then we went to Greece. So, we were just freshly diagnosed, let's say, and, and dealing with it. We, when we, when we lived in Greece, we were doing a lot of non-profit work, a lot of charity work, and we connected with a children's home as well.

So, we ended up fostering two children at the same time. as having my three kids that we took with us to Greece. It was crazy house. And through all the craziness and the chaos, we ended up rescuing this dog called Poppy, who's here with me. Poppy, you want to come say hi? She'll come in a sec. And we, we'd found her abandoned on a beach and we rescued her and adopted her into our family.

And I was very resistant because I knew that at the time, I was dealing with so much with five children, all with different needs because my foster children were older. So, they had a lot of needs themselves. And it was just crazy. So, I was saying, we cannot have a dog. We can't have a puppy. If we get a dog, she has to be from a shelter, it has to be from a shelter, already vaccinated, already neutered, already assessed to be suitable for a family, already trained to not chew, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And my kids were like, there is no such dog that does not exist, mommy. We're never going to get a dog. And I was like, well, you know, that's, that's what I can cope with. And so, we, we, we eventually rescued Poppy and she is that dog. She was none of the things I was asking for because she was a puppy, abandoned.

We had to get her vaccinated and neutered and all of those things, but she was the perfect family dog. And through our experience with her. I started to see my son's personality and character away from the disorder because ADHD is attention hyperactivity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. See, this is me struggling and I hate that word disorder because it's such a big plonking label, isn't it?

But I do know I understand also the reason for it. And I felt that at the time we were so focused on the disorder. That we were completely missing out on all his beautiful personality and character. And through the rescue of Poppy, I began to actually see those things, those traits in him, those gifts in him.

And so, when we came back to the UK, I wrote the book. And so, what I did is I created it as I created it as a fictional story to relate to children who would read it now. So, it's a family going on holiday to Greece. Alex is based on my son. They find an injured puppy and they want to, and he wants to bring it back to England with him.

But the family are like, we're on holiday. We don't have money to do that. We can't just take a dog back to England. And it's, it weaves in the ADHD and Alex's struggles and his mom's struggles with it. And how it all kind of unfolds and all the different things that happened in the story are real. It's, it's based on exactly what happened with, with us.

So, it, it is very much based on a true story. What I did with this though, it's a little bit different as a children's book. It starts with a letter from me to the reader explaining how basically as a child, the only, the only person in my entire childhood until I became an adult, the only person that ever saw something positive and good in me was my teacher, ironically, because she loved my writing.

She loved me because she knew that was the only thing, I could focus on in school was to write. So, she would get me right. In her lessons. Didn't do anything. Didn't participate. She would just give me pen and paper and she'd just say, Write me a story, Michelle. And that is all I did in her lessons. So, when I left primary school, and she said goodbye to me, she made me promise I would write.

And she said to me, I was 11, She said to me, Michelle, I don't know where you're going to go from here. She knew my past, she knew all the trauma I've endured because we were in a little village in Cyprus, everybody knew each other. She said, I don't know where you're going to go from here, I don't know if I'll ever see you again, but I want to tell you something, and that is that you have a gift to write and tell stories and help people.

Because I was 11, I was like, what? And then she said, and I want you to promise me that you will write and that one day you're going to write your story and you're going to help those people that are going to read your story. And I said, okay, thank you. And I didn't do it. I didn't write until seven years ago.

So, I write that as a letter to the reader to encourage them to say, you know, it might just be the one person I ever said something positive, but that's a seed. And that seed will grow. It doesn't matter how many years it'll take. And then I go on to

the story. And then after the story. What I've done is I've added some journaling prompts because I wanted to enable the reader or the parent with the reader or the grandparent with the reader or the teacher with the reader.

So, I've done kind of, I don't know if you can see, but I've done prompts. And I've left space to either journal, draw, or just discuss verbally. They don't have to write it. And it's things like, how did the story make you feel? Who was your favourite character? Why? This is to help them process. Because with ADHD we need to process what we've just taken in.

Because we have so many questions. So, I wanted them to... to have ownership of it. If you could rewrite the story, what would you do differently? And then I've gone on to explain a few things about ADHD and how we also have gifts. You know, we're more creative, we're, we're more spontaneous, we can be more fun because of our spontaneity.

And so, I've included those little things, for example, I'm trying to find where the camera is, you know, a box for them to identify their gifts. And, and then it just goes on like that. There's, there's little different tools, how to manage anger, how to manage spontaneity in class. And, and then it's gone on to tell the real story with pictures of when we rescued Poppy and I've got to like some photographs there. So that's the day I found her It was pouring with rain again. Ironically how it is today. It was pouring with rain and that's sort of Me with her and the day I picked her up and then that's my kids with her. So, I put some pictures so that the reader can connect to that.

And then I left it with, you know, opening it up if a child wants to write me an email with their parent's permission to tell me their story, to again, to express their journey. So, it's part story, it's part journal, it's very much a therapeutic book. I've had therapists work with their clients with it, including the parents and the child.

I've had a teacher in a school with autistic and ADHD kids work through a whole term with it as a reader book by using it for reading those really important messages across obviously parents, grandparents. The other thing about it is I did it in dyslexia friendly font so that if children have dyslexia or parents can read it.

I was really It was really funny because, well it's not funny, it was really interesting. I got a message a few weeks ago by a retired GP in her late 60s who

said it's the first time in my life I've been able to read a book cover to cover. and do it in one sitting. It was so, she was dyslexic and she's a retired GP.

And I was just, I was blown away by that. And then the last thing to mention about it, which is important is about the style. It's very simple. It doesn't, you know, you look at children's books and they're like really colourful, lots of pictures, lots of illustrations. I find that overstimulating and with my children, they used to find them overstimulating.

So, we deliberately went with very old, traditional, hand done illustrations by a local artist, Amanda Meaden. who is also a mom of an autistic and ADHD child. And we connected so much and became really good friends. I know our kids are really good friends. And so, she did the illustrations for the book, and we kept it really...

easy on the eyes and really simple. Yeah. So that's the book. That's, that's kind of all about the book really.

**Ashley:** Yeah. I love it. I love it. So, we kind of just coming out of time now and I usually ask for tips, but I feel like you've given loads today. So, we really, you know, we don't need them. And also, just as a for any of you who don't know, we do this video, audio and transcript because it's really important that everybody gets access to the podcast and stuff.

So, Michelle, I'm going to say a big thank you to you. First of all, I am. Got I'm going to get off Michelle links to the book links to her website. So, we'll put them in the show notes So don't worry about that. And the last thing that I kind of want to finish off and is this is in the words off From Michelle that says a gift waiting to be unwrapped and that is ADHD and how lovely is that to finish off So thank you very much for joining us, Michelle. It's been absolutely Fascinating. And I think such a helpful conversation between two moms. That's how we started it. Conversation between two moms, but that will be so, so, so useful to parents out there who go, but they don't fit the usual. They don't do that. They're not doing this. They're not doing that.

And actually, they don't always fit you know, a general. So, thank you very much for your time today. Really, really appreciate it.

## Transcript

**Michelle:** Thank you. I'm so happy for the connection too. Thank you so much, Ashley.