

ROADMAP FOR PARENTING A DIFFERENTLY WIRED CHILD





1: PROCESSING

Discovering a child is differently wired can bring up all kinds of feelings — confusion, fear, overwhelm, sadness. What makes these feelings more heightened is that we may find ourselves holding onto a vision for what we thought our child's life would look like that doesn't mesh with who they are. Where do you experience sadness about the way your child is wired? What vision did you have about what life for your child would look like that now feels off course? What dreams for the way their life would unfold do you want to acknowledge and ultimately release so you can make room for new possibilities? It's important that we allow ourselves time and space for guilt-free PROCESSING as we reconcile the image we had of what our life would be like in contrast with how it actually is. And we want to be prepared for associated sadness to pop up as new situations arise.

Slow down. Take a pause. Honor your emotions. Take care of you.

BOOKSHELF

[Differently Wired: Raising an Atypical Child with Confidence and Hope](#) (Deborah Reber)

[Insight Into a Bright Mind: A Neuroscientist's Personal Stories of Unique Thinking](#) (Dr. Nicole Tetreault)

[Not What I Expected: Help and Hope for Parents of Atypical Children](#) (Dr. Rita Eichenstein)

[Bright Not Broken: Gifted Kids, ADHD, and Autism](#) (Diane M. Kennedy)

[Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults: ADHD, Bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, Depression, and Other Disorders](#) by F. Richard Olenchak, et al



PODCAST PLAYLIST

[Margaret Webb on Finding Peace in Parenting the Child You Didn't Expect](#)

[Understanding and Combatting Negative Stigmas with Ann Douglas](#)

[Allison Carmen in Finding Peace in Uncertainty and Embracing the Word "Maybe"](#)

[Dr. Devon MacEachron Talks About "What's Next" After a Diagnosis](#)

[Dr. Rita Eichenstein Offers Help and Hope for Parents of Atypical Children](#)

[Processing When a Child is Newly Diagnosed, with Dr. Lynyetta Willis](#)

[12-Year-Old Asher Talks About Diagnoses, Labels, and Stigmas](#)

[A Deep Dive Into Assessments, Diagnoses, and Labels, with Dr. Melissa Neff](#)



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I don't remember who said this, but there really are places in the heart you don't even know exist until you love a child. — Anne Lamott

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2: CONNECTING

Parenting a differently wired child can be incredibly isolating. Intellectually, we know we're not alone, but when we're in the midst of the really hard stuff, it can feel that way. Yet parents like us exist in every community. We're not outliers, nor are our kids. So it's critical that we get out of isolation and genuinely connect. Where would you benefit from specific support in your parenting life? Do you have one or two people you can reach out to when you need mental, emotional, moral, or physical support? Consider where and how you can get the help you need — a parenting coach, a therapist, a friend, a couples counselor, and/or online communities dedicated to supporting parents like you. Your support circle doesn't need to be extensive — one to a handful of people you can safely share with and who know how to be there for you is all it takes. Because we can't do this alone.

Find community. Get the help you need. Lift up others on this journey.

BOOKSHELF

[Differently Wired: Raising an Extraordinary Child in a Conventional World](#) (Deborah Reber)

[Normal Sucks: How to Live, Learn, and Thrive, Outside the Lines](#)
Jonathan Mooney)

[A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children Paperback](#) (Dr. James T. Webb)

[Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and the Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults](#) (Susan Daniels)

[The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children](#) (Dr. Shefali Tsabary)



PODCAST PLAYLIST

[Self-Compassion Researcher Kristin Neff on the Proven Power of Self-Compassion](#)

[Debbie and Her Husband Derin Talk About Their Parenting Journey Part 1](#)

[Debbie and Her Husband Derin Talk About Their Parenting Journey Part 2](#)

[Getting Aligned Through Parenting & Marriage Challenges with Cathy and Todd Adams](#)

[Dr. Christine Koh on Vulnerability, Overwhelm, and Mental / Emotional Well-Being](#)

[Jonathan Fields on How to Live a Good Life](#)

[Advocate and Author Jonathan Mooney on Why Normal Sucks](#)

[A Guide to Getting Grounded with Sheryl Stoller](#)



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“Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued — when they can give and receive without judgment. — Brené Brown

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3: GATHERING

There is no shortage of parenting experts, authors, coaches, therapists, and other professionals with their own philosophies, perspectives, and strategies centered around helping parents raising differently wired children. The challenge? Filtering out the noise and honing in on those that closely align with our values and truly address the specific areas where we need the most help. And because there are plenty of resources that use a deficits-based approach or don't respect who our kids inherently are, we want to identify sources of support that focus on our kids' strengths and foster in us a sense of possibility and confidence. Just as we connected with community for support in Step 2 of this roadmap, we can design an "advisory board" (our own personal Jedi High Council if you will) composed of trusted sources of knowledge to learn from and turn to.

Find experts who focus on strengths. Trust your gut. Build your "advisory board."

BOOKSHELF

- [Brain-Body Parenting: How to Stop Managing Behavior and Start Raising Joyful, Resilient Kids](#) (Dr. Mona Delahooke)
- [The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children](#) (Dr. Ross Greene)
- [The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder](#) (Carol Kranowitz)
- [ADHD 2.0: New Science and Essential Strategies for Thriving with Distraction](#) (Dr. Ned Hallowell)
- [Raising Twice-Exceptional Children: A Handbook for Parents of Neurodivergent Gifted Kids](#) (Emily Kircher-Morris)



PODCAST PLAYLIST

- [A Conversation with Autism and Neurodiversity Support Specialist Kristy Forbes](#)
- [Ned Hallowell on How Parents Can Best Support Their Children with ADHD](#)
- [Parenting Scripts for Stressed Out Moments with Kids, with Dr. Adele LaFrance](#)
- [Sensory Processing Disorder in Children, with Carol Kranowitz \(The Out-of-Sync Child\)](#)
- [Dr. Barry Prizant on His Book Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism](#)
- [An Interview with Dr. Dan Siegel on Developing a "Yes" Brain](#)
- [How to Parent Angry and Explosive Children, with Dr. Ross Greene](#)
- [The Self-Driven Child with Dr. William Stixrud and Ned Johnson](#)



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I am naturally creative, resourceful and whole. If I consult my invisible compass, I'll know what to do. — Seth Godin

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4: PRIORITIZING

Because differently wired kids often need extra help in building skills and developing their strengths, and because the demands on parents to advocate for, intervene, and “manage” our kids’ experience in other environments can be so intense, it’s not uncommon to feel overwhelmed, especially since these things are also accompanied by a sense of urgency. Yet ... there is only one of us. And our kids can only work on a limited number of things at once. The key is to prioritize where to focus our energy and resources. Where are you personally struggling the most right now and how can you positively address those struggles (self-care, self-compassion, mindfulness, connection, therapy)? What is the underlying source of distress, anxiety, or frustration for your child in this moment and how can you take action to support that one area? What things can you let go of for now while you prioritize?

Focus on the most pressing issues. Save energy for yourself. Remember there is time.

BOOKSHELF

- [Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children’s Behavioral Challenges](#) (Dr. Mona Delahooke)
- [The Power of Showing Up: How Parental Presence Shapes Who Our Kids Become and How Their Brains Get Wired](#) (Dr. Dan Siegel & Dr. Tina Payne Bryson)
- [One in Five: How We're Fighting for Our Dyslexic Kids in a System That's Failing Them](#) (Micki Boas)
- [Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason](#) (Alfie Kohn)
- [The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives](#) (William Stixrud & Ned Johnson)



PODCAST PLAYLIST

- [Cultural Changemaker Jess Weiner on Becoming a Successful Advocate](#)
- [Understanding and Navigating the Parent-Teacher Relationship](#)
- [Wendy Besmann on Navigating Health, Education, Insurance Systems](#)
- [Dr. Tina Payne Bryson on the Power of Showing Up](#)
- [When School Isn't a Fit: What to Expect and How to Handle It](#)
- [Educational Advocate Micki Boas on Advocating for Dyslexic Students](#)
- [Dr. Ann-Lousie Lockhart on Breaking Harmful Generational Cycles](#)
- [Alfie Kohn On Practicing Unconditional Parenting](#)



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We need to love ourselves if we want our kids to love themselves. We don't necessarily have to love them more; we have to love ourselves more. — Glennon Doyle

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5: ACCEPTING

Fighting with reality about who our children are is undeniably one of the biggest hurdles parents raising atypical kids face. The problem? When we refuse to accept our child's neurodivergence, we can't implicitly support them. We may minimize their needs, get frustrated by their dysregulation, try to "fix" challenging behavior rather than understand its underlying cause. But when we surrender to who our child is, everything starts to get easier. Our child gets to be who they are without receiving the message that they're "bad" or "broken." Over time, they'll be more available for social, emotional, and developmental growth. To be clear, acceptance is not "happily ever after" or achieving a state where our child never frustrates or triggers us. Rather, it's recognizing areas where we're stuck trying to "fix" our kids' innate wiring, and doing the work every day to show up for who our child is.

Lean in. Find comfort in discomfort. Show yourself grace. Embrace a growth mindset.

BOOKSHELF

[Differently Wired: Raising an Atypical Child with Confidence and Hope](#) (Deborah Reber)

[Uniquely Human: Updated and Expanded: A Different Way of Seeing Autism](#) (Dr. Barry Prizant)

[Parenting Without Power Struggles: Raising Joyful, Resilient Kids While Staying Cool, Calm, and Connected](#) (Susan Stiffelman)

[The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed](#) (Jessica Lahey)

[Insight Into a Bright Mind: A Neuroscientist's Personal Stories of Unique Thinking](#) (Dr. Nicole Tetreault)



PODCAST PLAYLIST

[Psychologist Dr. Dan Peters on Parenting with Intention and Purpose](#)

[Emily Kircher-Morris on Stigma, Labels, and Neurodiversity Affirming Parenting](#)

[Zach Morris on Whole Person Learning and Neurodivergent Students](#)

[Mindfulness and Raising Good Humans with Hunter Clarke-Fields](#)

[Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman on Redefining Giftedness and Intelligence](#)

[Susan Stiffelman on Parenting Without Power Struggles](#)

[Jessica Lahey Talks About the Gifts of Failure for Our Kids](#)

[Neuroscientist Nicole Tetreault on Life as a Gifted and 2e Human](#)



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You will learn a lot about yourself if you stretch in the direction of goodness, of bigness, of kindness, of forgiveness, of emotional bravery. Be a warrior for love. — Cheryl Strayed

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