



Episode #80:

**13-year-old Asher Answers Listeners'
Questions**

October 24, 2017

Debbie: Are there any areas of your life which you consider private and not open to discussion?

Asher: Not really? That was a easy question!

Debbie: I'm surprised, I consider you to be, while you are very open in sharing a lot, there are certain areas that you are very private about. You're private person while still being.....

Asher: Just embarrassing things that I did when I was younger.

Debbie: Oh, I see. Okay.

Asher: That's pretty much it.

Debbie: We will not discuss those. I give you my word. At least not while you're on the podcast.

Asher: What!?! (laughing)

Debbie: Welcome to the TiLT Parenting Podcast, a podcast featuring interviews and conversations aimed at inspiring, informing, and supporting parents raising differently wired kids. I'm your host, Debbie Reber, and today's episode is another Kids P.O.V Episode or what my 13 year old boy likes to refer to as, the Asher specials. This week Asher is answering listener questions, so we'll be talking about everything from how Asher feels about having ADHD, what helped him get through the difficult transition of moving abroad when he was nine years old, what he thinks are the qualities of a good teacher, how he keeps track of his schoolwork and much more. I hope you enjoy the episode and if you have other things you'd like to hear from Asher about or have ideas for themes you'd like us to devote a full Asher Special episode on. You can always email me at any time with those ideas at Debbie at tiltparenting dot com.

And before I get to the episode, a little reminder that next week I'm releasing a special episode with Dr. Ross Greene, the author of *The Explosive Child* and the person behind the Collaborative and Proactive Solutions Model. I'd love your help spreading the word and helping get that episode listened to by more people.

Also, next week, I'm launching a short After the Show, a video series with the intention of giving listeners a quick, easy way to absorb and apply some key takeaways from my conversations with experts like Dr. Greene. If you want to be sure not to miss next week, special episode or my new after the show video, go to tilt parenting dot com after the show and sign up and I'll deliver the podcast and video right to your inbox. And now here's my conversation with Asher. I hope you enjoy it.

Debbie: Hey Asher, welcome to the podcast! It's been a little while since we've done an episode. I think our last one was the post-space camp. Today we are taking listener questions. I shared something in the newsletter and on the facebook page and I got a bunch of questions for you. So are you up for doing a little Q & A?

Asher: Yeah, I'd love to.

Debbie: Right. I didn't actually put these in any order, so we'll just see how this goes.

Asher: Ask the best ones last.

Debbie: All right, we'll just see how it goes. I think they're all pretty good.

Asher: but I should hope so.

Debbie: OK. Here's the first one. My child really loves listening to your one on one podcast with Asher. His question for Asher is, 'Is it hard having ADHD? He really didn't want to elaborate or be more specific than that, so I realized that he is still trying to understand what it means and how it impacts him in his daily life. He was only recently diagnosed. He really identifies with Asher and it's helped him to see there's another child like him.'

Asher: I don't know. I've never not had ADHD. What's hard? What's hard about it is the other is that other people aren't used to people with ADHD and that it's just harder for them to interact with things designed for non ADHD people.

Debbie: What my understanding is, that from our conversations, is that ADHD is something that you actually credit with being responsible for a lot of your gifts. You want to talk about that a little bit?

Asher: Well, definitely, definitely people with ADHD are more creative. Right? Really though that's just a side effect of thinking differently. You think of things other people wouldn't think of.

In fact, it's not that. It's not the thinking differently makes you more creative. It's that creativity is thinking differently.

Debbie: So you're saying the hardest part about it is that other people expect you to be a certain way. That is that you're not. Right, but other than that, it's not a hard thing to have. OK, cool. All right. Let's change subjects. Here's another listener question, 'We're contemplating a move across the country next year and my 12 year old twice exceptional. Asby is very tense about leaving the family routines and people. What tools,

experiences, philosophies, etc. Did each of you find useful in your big move overseas and what helped ease the anxiety? You both probably felt about such a big change.'

Asher: Well I was really not happy about the most? I think one of the main things that did it for me. I just thought it was so much better in Amsterdam.

Debbie: Yeah, but that took you awhile to realize though, didn't it?

Asher: Yeah, and before that I was miserable.

Debbie: Do you remember any of the things that we did the summer there before we moved? As we started to prepare?

Asher: No, I don't know.

Debbie: It was a while ago now, over four years ago. One of the things that we did that I remember helped us prepare was we actually, you sat down with Julie George who we've had on the show a couple times and she worked at the U W Autism Center and you guys sat down and talked about all the things that you were feeling upset about. Do you remember doing that?

Asher: Yeah, I do a little bit.

Debbie: I actually was cleaning out my office yesterday and I found the original list that Julie wrote. Because after that session she walked in and I mean she said, here you go, here's the list. Here's the information. It was like these are the things that Asher's really upset about and they were all very valid concerns. Concerns about leaving your friends, concerns about the time, difference, concerns about, you know, all kinds of things. The time difference...

Asher: The time difference? Why would that matter?

Debbie: Because you knew that if you wanted to have like a virtual play date with a friend on the West Coast. So that was going to be tricky.

Asher: Ohh ok.

Debbie: So you had all these very valid concerns. I think having to learn another language was one of them. There were about 10 and one of the things that we spent time doing both before the move and then in those first few months after the move was really looking at those and doing Dr. Ross Greene's Collaborative Problem Solving Approach in looking at ok, this is a problem and what can we do to address this problem and try to come up

with solutions ahead of time. Yeah, they didn't all work for sure but at least, but it was really helpful to at least know what your true concerns was.

So getting that all out on the table helped me as a parent be more sensitive and understand where you're coming from because there was a reason for all of it. There was a reason why you were so angry and at least then I understood why and I helped me to be more sensitive to what we needed to really focus on once we got here.

Asher: Yeah.

Debbie: And do you remember anything that helped you adjust or was it just a matter of letting time go by?

Asher: I thought it was really just a matter of time go by. Lots of tiny things accumulated and I slowly realized that them was actually nicer than Seattle.

Debbie: Well, it ended up being better for our family for sure.

Debbie: Ok, thanks for answering that question. It was a long time ago and it was very difficult to answer. Let me ask you one more question before we move on. You know, we don't know what the future holds and you know, say a couple years from now we decide, you know what, when we're going to move back to the States, we found this great opportunity or whatever. Do you think that having now been through such a big transition would make a transition in the future easier?

Asher: Yeah, I do.

Debbie: Yeah. I would think so too. I think for all of us.

Asher: ...and a lot of my friends here have moved back, so I'd get to see them plus my old friends.

Debbie: That's true. The expat life means we say goodbye to people a lot, which is one of the hardest part about it. Ok. Let's move on. Here's another question, 'I know you're homeschooled, but do you have any difficulties keeping track of your school assignments and staying organized and how involved is Mom in the process?'

Asher: She's pretty involved, but we're working on it.

Debbie: You want to say more about that?

- Asher: Yeah, we've. We've got a whole schedule. A mom usually reminds me, oh, you need to do your science homework.
- Debbie: Well, we've started doing something new this year in our morning meetings. Maybe you could talk about that?
- Asher: Yeah, where we a list out everything that I do for the day. Then I just work from that list and eventually our goal is to have me list out everything do from the day and then I'll work from that list.
- Debbie: Yes, that's exactly right. This is new this year. Yeah, so basically this is the first year we've done this, is that in our morning meeting I have, I've created a little form and it has everything. I have Asher's classes listed on it and every day the goal is for him to write down the date and then check in on every class right down very specifically what tasks to be accomplished that day. So in science class, you know?
- Asher: Yeah. I have to go and experiment with pendulum.
- Debbie: Right. So kind of filling that in and that way if you have a bigger assignment do you can keep an eye on it and yeah, the goal is that eventually you'll be tracking all of that by yourself. So I guess we're, we have some scaffolding and we'll be taking that away over time. Oh, and the other thing that we do is we have study hall now and that's a new kind of class.
- Asher: Where I just do homework for things mostly.
- Debbie: Right. And we have that because you're taking a couple of classes virtually and...
- Asher: Yeah, that can decide what I want to do and when I want to do it during study hall.
- Debbie: Exactly.
- Asher: So I know, ok, today I'll tackle the science homework and then tomorrow write that paper for language arts and then...
- Debbie: Yes. So it's not a perfect system yet, but I know, this is one of my personal goals is for you Asher, to be taking more and more responsibility for your schoolwork because you'll need that for sure. You know, in the coming years and his school gets more intense and, or if you go back into a traditional school setting and certainly when you go onto university. So we're doing a little bit at a time, but I feel like we're laying some groundwork this year for your organization. Are you feeling that way too?

Asher: Yeah.

Debbie: Okay, awesome. This listener said they heard your very first interview and they'd like to know 'who have been your best teachers ever? And what traits do you think makes a good teacher?'

Asher: I think Mom is definitely up there.

Debbie: Cool. Thank you.

Asher: Dad's also quite a good math teacher.

Debbie: Any other teachers from your school days that stood out as being...

Asher: I don't really remember them that well.

Debbie: Ok. What is, what is it then? How would you define a good teacher?

Asher: Someone who teaches you the way you learn, the way they think everyone should learn. Someone who doesn't go "stop fidgeting".

Debbie: Yeah, that makes sense. Someone who understands and appreciates the way that you think and tries to connect with you through that.

Asher: Exactly right.

Debbie: Okay. This listener wants to know 'How has homeschooling with your parents prepared you for higher education? '

Asher: Meaning higher education?

Debbie: Yeah. And that's a kind of a euphemism for college or university.

Asher: Uh, why is it a euphemism? College and university aren't bad...

Debbie: Is a euphemism always bad?

Asher: Generally? Yeah.

I'll look it up in the dictionary. No, you're right. That definition: A mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one. Consider to be too harsh or blind. Oh no, it is when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing.

- Debbie: Okay. So euphemism was the wrong word. Okay. Shall we ask the question again? 'How has homeschooling with your parents prepared you for higher education?'
- Asher: Ah, certainly prepared me better than regular school cause this time I'm learning this stuff.
- Debbie: So you're actually learning the stuff?
- Asher: Yeah, I can do more than I could if I were in regular school.
- Debbie: What do you mean by that?
- Asher: In regular school I wouldn't really understand the stuff because they wouldn't teach it right. Here in homeschool, we can teach it however we want.
- Debbie: That's true. I'm curious what you think university or college would be like. Do you have an idea in your mind to what that would be like compared to traditional?
- Asher: No, not really.
- Debbie: Yeah, that's probably a tough one to answer. This listener wants to know 'how you're enjoying the blend of online lessons. External tutors like your art teacher in your Dutch teacher and then Mama led curriculum at this school year and do you have a preference for one over the other?'
- Asher: No I don't. They're all great. I think a mix is healthy though, right?
- Debbie: Can you say more?
- Asher: Online curriculums are great for stuff Mom doesn't know about. Mom is great at stuff Mom knows about, and tutors are great at stuff the stuff they know about. Well like art and Dutch. You can't really do an online curriculum for art, can you?
- Debbie: Well, you could, but it wouldn't be the same.
- Asher: Exactly.
- Debbie: I'm curious to know about the online curriculum. You know, last year you did one class. This semester you're doing two. What do you think of that? Because that's giving you a chance to interact with other kids in a, in a different teacher, in a live setting.

- Asher: Yeah, it's nice. I can have discussions with other people, most of whom are wrong.
- Debbie: Oh my goodness Asher. What do you mean most of whom are wrong?
- Asher: Especially in philosophy class.
- Debbie: Can you really be wrong in philosophy class?
- Asher: Well, no, you can say something that's absurd...
- Debbie: ... in your opinion.
- Asher: Yeah. And then when you explain why it's absurd? No, basically they say something and um, and then I find a situation where it would seem where it would seem like a bad rule and they go, what's that have to do with my rule? Like lying is bad. What if you lie to save someone's life? Like what does that have to do with my rule? Right?
- Debbie: That's kind of what it's about, right? Philosophy is about talking about these questions and considering different points of view.
- Asher: Yeah but they don't! Yeah. I'm sure that's what everyone thinks that maybe everyone in philosophy class thinks they're the one who was right.
- Debbie: Yeah, you're probably right, and that's not so different from me. The experience that most of us as adults have in our strong beliefs as well. Right?
- Asher: Yeah.
- Debbie: So maybe this is preparing you for being a compassionate human and knowing how to see other points of view.
- Asher: I remember there was the introduction to a Dilbert book was I noticed that whenever I get something wrong, it's because it's because I'm a busy person who doesn't have time to thoroughly research everything. Well and other people get things wrong. It's because they're ignorant moron. I've. I've found that one posting on my blog. Other people think I'm the ignorant morons and they're the ones who haven't thoroughly researched everything. Those ignorant morons keep getting everything backwards. That is so like them.
- Debbie: That's pretty funny. On that note, I'm going to move along. Ok? Someone wants to know 'If you could schedule your perfect school day, what would that look like and why'

- Asher: Ok, well on our schedule Thursday, but the best day.
- Debbie: Why?
- Asher: Because we have a special class where I do fun things.
- Debbie: Is that the big project class?
- Asher: Yeah, right now making a font.
- Debbie: As of yet unnamed font, although I've given you some ideas but you haven't liked any of them.
- Asher: Well they weren't very good idea! But it's only gonna be like 20 bucks. Buy it now!
- Debbie: Okay. We're not advertising on the podcast so okay. So it'd be a Thursday because you have the big project and yeah. Anything else about Thursdays?
- Asher: Not really. But I have baked something for breakfast the day before.
- Debbie: But it wouldn't be a day with no classes?
- Asher: No it wouldn't.. And then when I finish school I'd read and play puzzle games.
- Debbie: Ok, that sounds pretty nice. Thank you. Ok, let's move on. 'Would you consider online education in the future to accelerate your academic preparedness, music online education right now? So do you think you'll be doing much more of that?'
- Asher: Yeah, I think so.
- Debbie: Should we get into stuff that even mom, mom doesn't know about? I think, I think we're in that stage right now.
- Asher: What are you talking about?
- Debbie: Well, I actually really love learning along with you, especially in our history class that we're doing right now. That's been really awesome.
- Asher: Yeah. We're reading this big long book about history, like world history.
- Debbie: Yeah. We're reading the *People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn and it is so good. We're just really enjoying it. You're enjoying it too, right?

Asher: Uh, yeah. Yeah, it's great.

Debbie: Okay. I'm going to move on this listener wants to know what the 'benefits and or drawbacks are of being educated while living the Netherlands.' Do you think living here has anything to do with our schooling?

Asher: I don't think so. I don't. I mean I do have to learn Dutch.

Debbie: Is that a benefit or a drawback?

Asher: It's more work.

Debbie: Why is that more work?

Asher: But it's better, but it's also good to learn more languages and I probably would be learning if I were in the U.S. to. Yeah, I remember I was learning Spanish.

Debbie: I would say. Just to jump in that for me, there have been benefits and drawbacks. The benefits are that we have a lot of freedom and flexibility and we have access to so much here in Europe that has helped us bring a lot of our curriculum alive and being able to visit places.

Asher: Yeah, it's always been cool when we read about some history and then we go somewhere.

Debbie: Exactly. And that's for me been one of the biggest benefits. And then one of the biggest drawbacks has been that there isn't a huge homeschooling community here and there aren't a lot of kids that we've connected with, Asher's age, who are homeschooled. There aren't really co-op homeschool co-ops like there are in the us and a lot of other countries, so we're kind of kind of on our own a lot of the time and that is one of the, one of the tougher parts of it, in my opinion, is just not having that infrastructure and that support that many people have. Ok. Few more questions around then wrap up?

Asher: Yeah, I hope their good questions.

Debbie: I think they're good. They're very thoughtful. Here's one, 'Are there any areas of your life which you consider private and not open to discussion?'

Asher: Not really. Yeah, that was easy.

Debbie: Yeah. I'm surprised I, I consider you to be, while you are very open in sharing a lot, there are certain areas that you are very private about. You're a private person while still being...

Asher: That's just just embarrassing things that I did when I was younger.

Debbe: Oh, I see. Okay.

Asher: Yeah. So that's pretty much it.

Debbie: We will not discuss those. I give you my word at least not while you're on the podcast.

Asher: What!?

Debbie: Just joking! I do not share any. I don't share embarrassing Asher stories on the podcast. I give you my word. And for me I'll answer that question too. Um, we're pretty much an open book. I'm sure listeners will know that by this point. So we try to share things that we think would be helpful with our listeners and that are honest in a way that hopefully sparks conversation and helping people feel less alone in their experience. So that's kind of why we do this. Ok. 'What issues do you feel are most at this time?' Kind of like...

Asher: What do you mean? Like world issues?

Debbie: Yeah, I think so. I think kind of what do you think are kind of the big issues right now in the world?

Asher: There are lots of them, but most of them are very divisive issues, annoyingly.

Debbie: So do you want to share any of the issues that you think are kind of the things we need to be paying attention to right now?

Asher: Global Warming, of course, because the last time the atmosphere changed, it caused a mass extinction and we don't want to cause a mass extinction.

Debbie: That would not be good. Okay, so Global Warming.

Asher: Yeah, the oxygen catastrophe. The first plants change the atmosphere from carbon dioxide, oxygen and killed everything that breathes carbon dioxide.

Debbie: Hmm.

Asher: Yeah. And I think critical thinking is an issue.

Debbie: Can you say more about that?

Asher: They don't teach critical thinking skills in schools.

Debbie: How would you define critical thinking?

Asher: Questioning stuff, science.

Debbie: That is something you in particular are very passionate about, huh?

Asher: Yeah. Annoys me when people are wrong. In your opinion right now they're wrong or at least some of the time.

Debbie: Ok. So critical thinking, global warming. Anything else before we move on?

Asher: I think those are the biggest issues.

Debbie: All right, so we are going to get to the last question. This listener wants you to look into the future and is curious...

Asher: Don't we have any easy questions?

Debbie: We can do a little lightning round of questions at the end if you want. Now like what's your favorite color will do that.

Asher: Okay.

Debbie: So here's the last question. Where do you think you will be five years from now?

Asher: Jeez, I'd, I'd probably be in college probably. Definitely. Hopefully a good one.

Debbie: What do you think you'll be studying or working towards?

Asher: I don't know. Engineering. Probably. It's always fun and it's apparently the most practical thing you can get a degree in. Also convenient.

Debbie: Yeah, I didn't know that. Ok, so five years from now you think it will be studying engineering in it and hopefully a good college somewhere?

Asher: Well, definitely a good college because I want the best one I could get. Yeah.

- Debbie: Well thank you for answering those questions. You're welcome. And let's do a quick little lightning round. Ok?
- Asher: Okay.
- Debbie: All right. So I have four super short questions for you, things that are curious about and you can answer them quickly and then we'll wrap up. So the first one is what is your favorite video game right now?
- Asher: Currently? The Talos Principle. It is a puzzle game. It's super good.
- Debbie: Ok. What is your favorite class that you're taking or your favorite subject?
- Asher: I don't really have a favorite subject. They're all really good. Maybe the Big Project.
- Debbie: Nice. Okay. What's your favorite place that you've traveled since moving abroad?
- Asher: Again, I don't really have a favorite. They've all been super nice. Most recent places we've gone those Portugal and it was really nice. So we went to the beach and ate steak. They have really good steak in Portugal.
- Debbie: Yes, that was a selling point for you.
- Debbie: And lastly, what do you miss most about living in the United States?
- Asher: My friends, that's about it. And ice cream sandwiches, friends then ice cream sandwiches.
- Debbie: Surprisingly, ice cream sandwiches are tricky to find.
- Asher: Surprisingly Yeah, there no ice cream sandwiches to. We found at least not the proper kind. Definitely not in the Netherlands. We found them in a few other places. We've traveled, but it's always exciting when we spot them, but we do have these tasty caramel things. What are they? Which ones with chocolate, you know, tasty. Carmel. Things with chocolate magnums
- Debbie: Magnums everywhere now, but we can appreciate them.
- Debbie: Anyway. All right, well that covers the listener questions for today. Is there anything else you want to share before we say goodbye?

Asher: I'm not really, but you really should get my font is going to be awesome. The to be named font? Yeah, buy it now!

Debbie: Speaking of which, I have some new ideas for a name for it for you

Asher: Uhhh. Not "He Who Smelt It Dealt it" that the worst name for anything. (Laughing)

Debbie: (Laughing) We're gonna say goodbye now. Thanks for the conversation. Asher.

Asher: You're welcome.

Debbie: You've been listening to the TiLT Parenting Podcast for the show notes for this episode, including links to the different episodes and resources Asher and I discussed at tiltparenting.com/session80 and don't forget to tune in next week for my special interview with Dr. Ross Greene. To be sure not to miss that or my new After the Show video series, which also launches next week sign up a tiltparenting.com/after-the-show. If you like what we're doing here at the podcast, please consider helping us cover some of the production costs associated with making this weekly show. It's fast, easy, and pain free, I promise. And for as little as \$2 a month, you can make a positive impact here at TiLT central and help cover those costs. To support us visit Patreon.com/tiltparenting. And lastly, if you liked what you heard on today's episode and you haven't already done so, please consider subscribing to our podcast on itunes or leaving us a review. Both of those things help our podcast get more visibility. Thanks again for listening. For more information on TiLT Parenting visit www.tiltparenting.com.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- [The University of Washington Autism Center](#)
- [Dr. Greene's Collaborative and Proactive Solutions Model](#) (Lives in the Balance website)
- [The People's History of the United States](#) by Howard Zinn
- [Gifted Homeschooler's Forum](#) (online classes)
- [Athena Advanced Academy](#) (online classes)
- [Julie George on Executive Functioning](#) (podcast)
- [Julie George Talks About Girls on the Autism Spectrum](#) (podcast)