



Episode #85:

**A Conversation with Executive Functioning
Coach Seth Perler**

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Seth: I don't want the kids I work with to have a mediocre adulthood. I want them to have a remarkable future, so how do we do that and how do we help them have an awesome childhood on the way? I think a lot of times we get so caught up in stuff and kids have so many activities going on and there's just so much bombarding them that they're really struggling through their childhood, through their teen years, and then what do you think the pattern's going to be when they're adults? That's what they've learned, so we want to back up and say what do they need?

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 I'm talking with Seth Perler, who describes himself as a renegade teacher, turned executive function coach slash education coach. Seth helps struggling students navigate a crazy educational landscape and does his part to disrupt and improve education. His specialty is executive function and twice exceptional kids. This was such a fascinating conversation about all things executive functioning and in fact there was just so much more we wanted to cover that we're actually going to be doing a part two of the conversation very soon. If you have a child who has any executive functioning challenges, you will want to listen to this episode and also check out our website at SethPerler.com, which is full of resources for both parents and teachers. I hope you enjoy our conversation and after you've listened to the episode, don't forget to check out my After the show video each week I share one to two minute video where I share my biggest takeaways from my podcast conversations or tips about taking what you've learned and making it work for your family. When you go to my after the show page and you can sign up to get new episodes of the podcast and this new series delivered to your inbox each week. You'll find that at tiltparenting.com/aftertheshow. And now here's my conversation with Seth.

Hey Seth, welcome to the podcast!

Seth: Good morning, Debbie.

Debbie: Good morning. I'm excited. We were just chatting before I hit the record button and we're going to be talking about executive functioning, which is something I know impacts most, if not all, families who are part of the TiLT community. We've only covered one episode so far on this topic and I know there's a lot to talk about and I know it's very personal to you, so perhaps we could start by having you share with us some of your story and how you got involved in this work.

Seth: Sure Awesome. Well, first I want to say thank you for what you do and just how you serve your community but serve the world. You're doing great work and I just really want to put that out there. And so yeah. Thank you.

Debbie: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Seth: And I don't know if you want to do this, but before we started, I'm interested from you because you've done what, 75 or episodes so far what, what is one of the biggest things you've learned? Can you identify like one takeaway? I know I'm putting you on the spot here, but I'm really curious. Like is there one thing that you has been a big takeaway for, for, for you?

Debbie: I have to say that I learn something in every episode and honestly I feel like I've done so much research and I've become an expert in who my child is and what his differences are and I still get so much valuable insight out of everyone I talk to even when I think I already know it all. And I think that that's probably the biggest takeaway. It's not a specific topic or concept, but it's more this idea that the learning really never does end and it makes me feel like the luckiest person that I get to basically talk to amazing people around the world who are specialists in all these things I'm fascinated by and I keep learning. It's really been cool.

Seth: I love it. It's, it's somewhat daunting and overwhelming maybe for parents to know that there are no easy answers. This is, these are complicated human beings we're trying to raise here.

Debbie: Absolutely.

Seth: Thank you so much.

Debbie: Yeah. Good question.

Seth: So, um, my story, do you want to hear my story as a kid or an adult?

Debbie: Well a little but of both, I mean, I'm assuming that they're connected.

Seth: Yeah. I was adopted and I grew up in a with this wonderful family in Columbus, Ohio and I didn't look like a lot of my friends, but that's just because I had this white blonde hair as a boy and I remember feeling a little bit different because of that, but really I started feeling different pretty young, like at five or six I started feeling like I was different somehow I could never put my finger on it. I didn't worry about it. I was a free spirited, creative kid, but something was, was different in that feeling ended up being problematic once I got to middle school and high school. But I started quote struggling in school when I was in first grade. My progress reports literally in first grade started having comments about that, you know, if Seth could just do this, things will be OK.

He's not paying attention, he's daydreaming. I think that was probably for me, the most consistent comment that ever came up was daydreaming, daydreamer, daydreamer, daydreamer. I had a wild imagination and I loved, I loved going there. So, but obviously that caused problems so my grades started to suffer in

middle school and high school really my junior year, my freshman and sophomore year, everything was fine because I could, I could pull it off, I could do well on tests, I might be forgetting my homework or whatever, but how I compensated in my freshman and sophomore year, the compensate the compensatory strategies I subconsciously used to help me do just fine in pull things off at the last minute and, you know, but by the time junior and senior year came, things got hard and my grades really suffered. And then I had very high test scores so I got into college on probation because my grades were so low.

Seth: So I then I had to take like a study skills course and two other courses at Ball State for my freshmen summer. So I didn't even have summer break after senior year. Not a good plan people. And I got an A in study skills in two C's. So they let me go on to fall semester and then I failed out fall semester. I failed spring semester, I failed and they said do not come back. So I got into another college and then I failed that they were on quarters. I failed quarter one, failed quarter two, and then I dropped out for the spring and I felt like a failure and I felt like I couldn't do anything right. I've felt like school was useless and I really had these grandiose dreams of owning an island or something when I was an adult. Yet had no capacity to execute on things that would get me my goal, you know?

So I really suffered. I really felt like a failure inside. I hated me. I hated Seth. And I would put on a good show on the outside that I, you know, that things were OK, but I really was suffering very deeply. So eventually things got worse and worse until one day I decided, you know what? I'm gonna, give it everything I have and try to turn my life around and see what happens. And I did it and it was the hardest thing I've ever done. And uh, it worked and somehow I accidentally got a job from the newspaper at the time we used to have these things called newspapers and yeah, and you look through these little ads and I found a job working with kids. It was just a job. I didn't care about it. But after six months of doing that, I was absolutely hooked.

I loved it. I loved complicated kids. I loved kids who struggled. I loved problem solving. I love seeing them change. And I, a devoted my life the rest of my life to being of service to kids. Ended up going back to school, became a teacher, taught for 12 years, got a Masters in gifted and talented. And I'm, I'm sure it's no surprise my favorite kids were the 2e kids that struggled. So I left teaching after 12 years in getting a bit frustrated with the quote system and feeling limited in terms of being able to serve kids. I really wanted to serve as powerfully as I felt I was born to. And I created this little business for the last seven or eight years and here I am and I get now what I do is I get to serve specifically students who struggle with executive function most are 2e and many have diagnoses like Adhd, autism, dyslexia. But I don't really care about any of that. I liked the kids who struggle with executive function. That's the common denominator.

Debbie: Wow. Thank you for sharing this story. It's really powerful. Incredible story. And heartbreaking at the same time. I mean, to hear you say that you hated yourself is I know for so many people listening to, you know, that's our biggest fear is

that our kids are gonna feel so bad about who they are, that they're going to sink to that place. And I'm just curious, you know, I want to hear so much about the work that you're doing, but when you were younger, did you know what was going on with you? I mean, did you have any sort of diagnosis? Did you just feel like you weren't fitting in? In a vacuum, that you didn't have insight to that?

Seth: Now I know that I had inattentive ADD, ADHD, and I, maybe there were other things going on with birth trauma from adoption. I have no idea, honestly. I know I started having anxiety when I was a middle school, but they tested me for learning disabilities in seventh or eighth grade because like I said, my progress reports always said the same thing doesn't apply himself, is the. Or they implied it, lazy, not trying could do so much better. And when they tested me for learning disabilities, they said there are no learning disabilities. In fact, he's got a high IQ, so my parents were really baffled and there is no such thing as inattentive adhd. There was just at the time hyperactivity. But I didn't have that. So it was sort of an.... And I see the same patterns now actually with a lot of kids, whether or not they're diagnosed.

But the message is that you're not motivated, you don't try hard enough, you don't care about school and you're lazy. These what I call the lies - because they don't take into account what's going on with executive function. But I really didn't know, and the first time I had any diagnosis, I was a teenager, I don't remember, 14 or 15 and I was diagnosed as bipolar and I honestly don't know if that, you know, I don't think I would be diagnosed bipolar today by any means. But at the time that's what the testing showed, now was that being 2e? Did it look like bipolar because there's a lot of misdiagnosis, underdiagnosis, over-diagnosis of all kinds of things. So giving a good diagnosis from a good neuropsych is, it's hard to find a lot of times.

Debbie: Yeah. Especially with kids who have multiple things going on. We've had an expert on the show, Devon Maceachron, who we talked about that and she specializes in 2e kids, but there it can get really complicated to really understand what is the result of what and what is influencing. And is this a symptom of ADD or profound giftedness or it all kind of. It doesn't get some essay. And I I won't put you on the spot and ask how old you are, but I imagine that when you were in school, there was just wasn't the awareness that we have today. There's not enough today even, but back 20 years ago or so, there just wasn't a lot of information about I'm certain executive functioning was not on people's radar.

Seth: No really, I mean there was no such thing as inattentive ADD or anything like that. They had no idea. And what you're referring to with like the 2e kids I call that super asynchronous, like the, if you were to say that there was even a spectrum within the 2e kids of have more 2e or less 2e kids, the kids who are super 2e are super asynchronous there, their scores are so all over the place and the behaviors are so all over the place. It's really difficult to identify things, but that also does bring you back to why it's such a good thing to go from the executive function frame because it helps you to get... so we can diagnose all day

long. But if you can get to what needs to happen to help the student launch a great future, what needs to happen is they have to have executive function skills. They have to be able to execute tasks, whether it's cleaning the bedroom, filling out a college application, a job application, writing a paper, or doing a project, checking their grades, self advocacy. Anything that they have to do that's good for their future requires executive function. So it's nice that you can have... and parents get very concerned about the diagnosis. But to really focus on, great, this is all great, but now what do we do about it?

Debbie: Exactly. Yeah. I mean, I think the first time I really heard the term was when we had done a second round of assessments for my son. He's now 13, but when he was eight we did a second round of assessments and he got autism spectrum disorder was one of his diagnoses along with ADD and some other goodies. He also has a very high IQ, but I remember very clearly the woman who was giving us this information said, you know, the key to him living independently and having the life that he wants is going to be executive functioning. Getting him those, the support to develop those skills now, starting now. And I was like, OK, we'll do whatever whatever we need to do will do, but even within that it's really complicated to figure out what to do and that's where you come in, you know. But before we even get into how to support that, could you give us an overview of what executive functioning is, how you define it in your work?

Seth: Sure. First I'll mention that you you can look up executive function on the Internet and look up the first two or three or four definitions and what you're going to find is a bunch of mumbo jumbo psychobabble. And I don't mean to say that in a bad way. The experts who have written these definitions are, they're articulating it perfectly, but it is not in layman's terms and parents and teachers cannot access what the heck they're talking about. So to me, when I talk about executive function, I like to break it down into simple terms and in simplest terms, executive function is the ability to get things done. Now, executive function is a problem when students have to get things done that they don't feel like getting done. Obviously if they were going to do something that's of high interests like video games, hobbies, social things, they execute just fine so they can learn to execute in areas where they've practiced a lot and have high interest.

But when it's other things, like I was mentioning before, cleaning a bedroom, writing a paper or doing a project, managing a planner, things like that, then being able to execute those tasks is very difficult. So to define executive function further, executive function involves the front part of the brain and the front part of the brain helps you to execute these tasks. In order to execute any task, you have to do many things. You have to be able to realistically plan what you are doing. And as we well know, a lot of the students that we work with do not perceive time realistically, nor do they perceive the amount of energy that is required to do something realistically. For example, getting out out of the door in the morning or doing homework, they'll say, oh, will take five minutes and it takes an hour and a half.

Seth: So being able to plan effectively and understand the chunks or the pieces, the bite sized pieces, that are required to accomplish a complicated task that's part of executive function. Time management is part of executive functioning. Organizing your time, organizing your space, your materials, your school materials, organizing your thoughts. That's part of executive function. Prioritizing is part of executive function. Some people prioritize really well and say, oh, I got to get my homework done. Get it out of the way. That way I can feel like I'm free to enjoy my night. Well, kids with executive functioning struggles do not prioritize that way. They want to put the not fun things off as long as possible and get to the fun things but prioritization and inhibition is part of executive function, which means being able to hold back appropriately like your emotions or your thoughts or your actions, and I'm not saying to hold back your emotions in a negative way, but there's a time and a place for things.

So being able to inhibit yourself and that has a lot to do with regulation. In fact, all of this does, being able to focus, pay attention, concentrate. That's part of executive function. Being able to do what's called task initiation, so to be able to self start being able to not procrastinate. A lot of people think of this as motivation, but I have a problem with the word motivation. Maybe I'll talk about that today, maybe not, but task initiation means how do we get started and that is such a huge problem because if they never start executing, they never finished executing they have a lot of missing and incomplete assignments. Their grades don't reflect their ability. Task persistence just means follow through a working memory means being able to juggle lots of things. A lot of these kids think they have great such exceptional working memory that they can remember all their homework and not need a planner and we know that that's not true.

Executive function has to do with attention to detail. Being reflective or meta-cognitive or introspective. Being able to look back and say, how did that work for me? What can I change? Kids with weak executive function don't do that. Now kids with strong executive function and really learn quote, learn from their mistakes. These kids generally are not self aware or conscious or mindful of things, at least not things that are going to help change their behavior. And then emotional regulation is one of the biggest ones and that's where a lot of avoidance and resistance comes from. They don't know how to regulate their stress and their anxiety and they they become overwhelmed and avoid and resist.

Debbie: So that was a great list. I actually wrote them all down just because it helps me organize what you're saying, but as I was writing them down and some of them I don't think I realized where executive functions, like, you know, the time management, the planning, the organizing, the task initiation are ones I'm familiar with, but when you talk about the emotional regulation that to me, and many of these actually, it seems like there's so much overlap with other neurodifferences and so could you talk a little bit about that? Is it possible to have executive function challenges and not have another neurodifference? Do executive function challenges always correspond, you know, if, if you, for

example, do you have an autism diagnosis? Are you going to have executive functioning deficits?

Seth: A good question. Yeah, the, the list that I just gave you my list. So you'll have different experts who will... some people will say there are five aspects. Some people will say there are 10 people, break them into different things. The way that I have chosen to break them down is I always go back to the practical and I'm looking at how do these things... I want to put it in in words that describe how do these things affect students on a day to day basis in their real life and how do they help or interfere with being able to use the metaphor of launch, launch a great future after high school or college. So as far as executive function with autism, it's going to present differently, but everybody has executive function at just it's part of the brain. We all execute. It's like having a nervous system or circulatory system or skeletal system. It just, it's like everybody's skeletal system is different and these aspects of executive function, if you were to put all of these aspects on a chart and have a measurement for each of them, everybody would have different measurements in these different areas. So somebody with, for example, ADHD would have much more with inhibition, with holding back with quote, controlling yourself as somebody who. Somebody with autism for example, may have a much easier time executing when they're clear on what the task is and just especially if it's a routine or habit that they've already gotten.

Debbie: That makes sense. I mean, I understand that. I think I asked that question because this is something so many of us grapple with. I just interviewed for the podcast, Carol Kranowitz who wrote the Out of Sync Child and it's a question I asked her to, that overlap between sensory processing challenges and these other diagnoses. Sometimes it's just hard to understand, you know, where our focus should be, where our energy should be in terms of supporting our kids, but from what you've said and what I know, executive functioning really is at the top of the list regardless of the diagnosis.

Seth: Yeah, and when you're looking at the aspects of it and maybe... would it be helpful if I made sort of a little assessment for those aspects for your audience?

Debbie: Yeah, that would be great.

Seth: I'll do that and I'll make it with some sort of chart that they can self assess and fill in so they can visually see, but, when I'm looking at it as a student that I'm working with, I work with Middle, High School and college usually. And when I'm looking at them, I'm not, I'm obviously, I've been doing this a long time so my brain filters this stuff very fast and there's so much overlap. But what I'm really looking for, if I, if I were to slow down my brain and tell you what I'm really looking for is of the aspects of executive function that they struggle with... Which ones should we attack that are going to make the most difference because it has a domino effect when you start working with certain routines, habits, um, or approaches to navigating school in life that will help make other aspects of executive function easier. So I'm really looking for what are those sort

of golden nuggets that are going to get me the most bang for the buck in terms of helping them have a better quality of life.

Debbie: That's great. That makes perfect sense. So in the notes that you sent me ahead of this conversation, because again, there's so much we could talk about and listeners, just so you know, Seth and I have already discussed doing a part two, so if you're left wanting more, send me questions that you want me to, to approach Seth the, then we'll cover them in another episode. But one of the things that you said that jumped out at me is that it's important to revisit the purpose of education before talking about how to really help kids. And you said that you're big on zooming out. So can you talk about that a little bit?

Seth: Yeah. A lot of times we, meaning adults get really caught up in planning for college and test scores and grades and missing assignments. And well you didn't finish this and we get, we get really focused on these details that may be important, but we lose sight of what are we doing here in the first place. I'm a very big picture person, so every person I work with, I'm always zooming out to what the heck are we doing here because it's a balance. But if you always have that in the background, then that can drive your decision making and they can drive the way you approach having conversations with your child and the way you approach advocating for your child in school or the way you communicate with teachers. So to me, the purpose of education is the launch and the launch as I was mentioning before is is how do we take this...

We have an infant, right? We have this little beautiful baby and how are we going to take them and give them what they need so that they can have an independent awesome future where they're able to go for their dreams and their goals and their hopes. And I'm not trying to sound woowoo. I'm being very real. Like how are we going to help these people have a remarkable life? I don't want the kids I work with to have a mediocre adulthood. I want them to have a remarkable future. So how do we do that and how do we help them have an awesome childhood on the way? I think a lot of times we get so caught up in stuff and kids have so many activities going on and there's just so much bombarding them that they're really struggling through their childhood, through their teen years, and then what do you think the pattern is going to be when they're adults? That's what they've learned.

So we want to back up and say what do they need and what they need is they need to be able to execute, sometimes things that they don't want to do. They need to be able to advocate when things are too much. They need to learn and this is a skill. It takes time. They need to be able to learn to say, you know what, teacher, this is not working for me like I want to show you that I'm learning, but I just spent three hours on this last night. I need to have a life. This is not OK. You know, and that takes time and that's parental support. But they need to have the skills to execute and to self regulate and to be metacognitive, to be able to check in with themselves. These are all related, of course, in order to be able to launch, whether they do gap years, whether they go into career after high

school, whether they go to college, whether they do any number of things they need to be able to execute in order to accomplish any future goals.

Seth: And kids will always say, well, not always, but a lot of kids will say, well, why don't I don't. Especially teenagers will, I don't know what I want to be when I grow up. I don't, you know, they're so consumed with the short term and whatever their hobbies are and stuff like that, they're like, I really don't know. And I'm like, I get it. But you do know that you want to be happy and successful, whatever that means. So, and that's the number one thing I've heard from parents over 20 years of working with kids is I just want my kids to be happy, healthy, and successful. So my question has always been, what the heck does that mean a happy and successful? And I'll wrap up with this. So I've broken that down into four areas. Again, my brain is very big picture, but what is a happy human being?

So my brain is come up with like these four circles that overlap and there are four areas of life and the more they overlap and the healthier each circle is, the more quote happiness they have. This is just my own little paradigm, but those four areas are cognitive or you could consider that mental. Are they mentally stimulated, involved, engaged in things that interest them, that are meaningful to them. Physical: sleep, nutrition, exercise and self-care, are they physically healthy? Emotional. Are they emotionally healthy and know how to regulate emotion, know how to deal with difficult emotions? Not perfectly, but do they have tools for that? And socially, do they know how to create new relationships and unhealthy relationships, maintain healthy relationships and you know, be a part of a community, have a sense of belonging, have this social. So social, emotional, cognitive and physical. And when those four things are, there's a lot of wellness and those, then you have a quote, for lack of a better term, happy person.

So the reason I I like that is because again, it helps zoom out and be like, what the heck are we doing here? How is this affecting them emotionally? If they're super dysregulated with something that's going on with school, like let's say kid has conflict with a teacher, a lot of times they have students where, you probably see this a lot too, where there's a teacher that just doesn't get these kids. They're very highly organized person. They think they're doing the kids a favor by saying, I'm just holding them accountable and just trying to teach them responsibility. Yet the kid does not have anywhere near the skills that are necessary to do what the teacher's asking and the kid ends up just feeling resentful and punished. So there's an emotional regulation problem. It helps you to zoom out and be like, OK, they're emotionally dysregulated by even thinking about this teacher. Let's attack that. How do we deal with that? So sorry for going on a bit of a rant with that, but it's so important to zoom out and be and be very clear on what you're doing before you make a decision. About how to make an intervention for a child.

Debbie: I think that's great. I appreciate you sharing your ideas around what it takes to be happy. It's a nice reminder to have and also the zooming out on education as

you were talking about that I was thinking a lot of us in the TiLT community are homeschooling our kids. Not because that was what we wanted to do, but because we felt maybe at some point that we didn't have a choice or for whatever reason it seems like the best option for our kids and I think for parents who are homeschooling, we have a lot more freedom and flexibility within that model to support a child's executive functioning development in a way that feels good for them and not like a punishment. And I'm just wondering if you have thoughts for parents who are in the school system, you know, whose kids are going through a traditional educational model and more so today than ever there's just such an expectation of the amount of work and the homework and the group projects and you know, there's so much pressure on these kids. How can parents within that model advocate for their kids and kind of keep that big picture that zoomed out picture in mind? I'm sure you work with a lot of families like this.

Seth: Yes. That's a great question. So there's a lot of different ways to approach answering that question. One practical way, when kids get in the middle, when kids get in high school and college and they start being able to pick their schedules. One practical thing that I recommend over and over and over is less stuff on the schedule and parents argument or the student's argument is, but I need that class so that it looks good on a college transcript. Well personally, I don't care. I care about your well-being now. Like people get so obsessed with these things at the expense of their child's well-being or the child themselves at the expense of their own well-being, their packing on so... any given class, if you have a school year or 180 days, any given class is going to be at least a hundred and eighty more hours of mental attention demanded in your life.

Now that doesn't even include homework, so let's say you have an hour of homework in that class each night, that's 360 additional hours in a school year that your mind has to be consumed with that class realistically, and these kids are not realistic. They need time for self care, they need time for family, they need time for fun, they need time for friends, and so one of the practical things I say is, you know, if you can cut a course off of next year or take an easier course, but it won't look good on my transcript. Well look, if your life is balanced, I'm not going to be having this conversation with you, but if it's not in your struggling in life, I'm going to really say let's look at what we can remove because removing one class again can be like 360 hours that you can use for, you know, working on higher quality work for other classes or self care, et cetera.

So that's one thing. Number two, this is just a sidebar I want to mention, I am cynical about our education system, but do not get me wrong. I love teachers and appreciate teachers. They are in a system that is outdated and that needs improvement and needs changes, so it may sometimes, so I'm like, I'm cynical about teachers. Most teachers are awesome human beings who are invested in your child's life. A few of them really need to go and then there's a few in the gray area in between, but the vast majority are extraordinary people who are

dedicated to your kid and they need. You need to give them a break and you're on the same team. So most teachers get that.

Debbie: Yes, the system. I mean I appreciate you saying that. It's the system that needs to be changed more than anything.

Seth: We need great teachers. They, they keep all of this up. They're the ones who, you know, if you have a great teacher, your child comes home or even years after the teacher, they're like, yeah, I remember Miss Smith. She really helped me and made me feel good about myself. They may not remember anything from the class, but feeling empowered is everything. So the other thing I would say to parents who are in this, in this situation is I think that there is a lot of systemic dysfunction that manipulates people and I don't think people like there's like some, you know, hidden society that's arranging all this, but one of the things that I see is that there's a lot of parental shame and guilt. And one of the shaming messages parents hear is helicopter parent and nobody wants to be labeled a helicopter parent. And I think that in a dysfunctional way, what that does is that holds people back from saying their truth.

So if a parent comes in and they say, you know what, I need to advocate for my kid. We need to work on this. And they feel shamed somehow. There is a lot of times there's something going on. A lot of times you go in there and teachers are like, cool, what's up? How can I help? And a lot of times people are like, this is how we do it, you know, comply, comply, comply, and keep your mouth shut. So my thing is, advocate, advocate, advocate, listen to your gut over your head parents. Like if your head is telling you, you know, I don't want to be a helicopter parent, I don't want to overstep my bounds. Whatever that school is there to serve your child. That's who the service is for. OK? And sometimes we forget that. So your child is being served so advocate, advocate, be the squeaky wheel, be the squeaky wheel, be the squeaky wheel. Do not back down. OK? If you, if you're like, wow, I feel like I'm crazy. Am I the only one who sees this? No, you're not. How do I know that? Probably like Debbie, because I hear stories behind the scenes all the time, the same stories over and over. You're not the only one. You are not crazy. Listen to your gut. And sometimes if you need to, you can get, you know, a professional advocate.

Debbie: That is such a great reminder. As you're talking. I was thinking of two books that I really love and Jessica Lahey's book, the Gift of Failure, which I talk a lot about on the show and then Julie Lythcott-Haims book, How to Raise an Adult and I think this is something I struggle with and I'm sure many parents do, is this idea that we agree in theory, right, with all of these concepts we do when our kids to be independent and to be remembering their own homework and we don't... We want to help them kind of quote unquote fail in safe way so they can learn from it, but it's that reminder that our kids need more scaffolding and I just appreciate you saying that and kind of giving permission for us to know that it's OK to advocate for what our kids need in a system that just isn't set up right now to support who they are.

- Seth: No, it's set up for people in the middle of the bell curve and a differently wired kids are by their very nature, outliers.
- Debbie: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So Seth, I, Gosh, I feel like we're just scratching the surface and what I really want to get into, and I'm going to ask you while I'm recording you, if you'll come back and do this, but I would love to, to end the conversation now, but bring you back on to get kind of strategic. I really want to learn about how you work with people, how you work with kids, the services that you offer, and also share with parents some tips about what things they can be doing at home to support their kids executive functioning. So now that I've put you on the spot, that's something you're up for doing?
- Seth: Yeah. And can I mention one thing related to that? So there's a lot. And so we didn't get to the most important thing, which is the solutions. How do we do this? So to put it in one word philosophically, so there are a lot of details that I'll come back on and I'll explain the details of how I do this. But philosophically what you want to be thinking today is what the word I call it Frankenstudy. So what Frankenstudy means is a lot of times when we're trying to help kids learn how to navigate this stuff, we're using traditional ideas, traditional ways, things like three ring binders and tutors and we're just so... We're not really thinking, we're just kind of doing what we were taught or what works for us, especially if we're an organized adult that's doesn't work for disorganized kids. So the idea of Frankenstudies, I want you to kind of forget everything you think you know about what your kid needs in terms of systems for school and really think what works for them, what systems do work for them, and if it's not what they've been taught by their teacher or by you start to modify that and Frankenstudy and change it to customize it and personalize it for them.
- So that's kind of all of the things that I do have to do with how do we tailor it to you. Not how do I have the whole class have a three-ring binder system and every single person does the same standardized thing. But how do we customize it for your brain? So that if you can at least have that concept in the back of your head, maybe you can question your own thinking and the systems and you can look at things through that lens so you can say, Oh yeah, well that actually works for my child when I, when we do this at home, when it comes to getting teeth brushed, so why don't we apply a similar system for homework or something like that.
- Debbie: That's great! And that's I think, enough to help get people started. It's something I advocate a lot and I talk a lot about in my book that's coming out next year is this idea that you need to question everything you thought you knew about parenting and this is another place where we need to apply that. Seth, first of all, Wow. I'm just so excited. I'm excited to talk with you and continue this conversation. This has been so helpful. And listeners, Seth's website is fantastic. It's SethPerler.com. I will include links in the show notes for how to get in touch with Seth. He has a lot of resources on his website and I encourage you to check

that out and learn more about how Seth works and then I will just say thank you and to be continued.

Seth: Thank you, Debbie. This has been so much fun. Thanks for what you're doing.

Debbie: You've been listening to the TiLT Parenting Podcast, for the show notes for this episode, including links to Seth's website and all the resources we discussed. Visit tiltparenting.com/session85, and don't forget to check out my after the show short video, where I share my top takeaways from my conversation with Seth. You'll find a link on the show notes page, or you can go straight to tiltparenting.com/aftertheshow and a quick invitation to try out our free Differently Wired Seven Day Challenge. When you sign up, I'll email you a short inspirational video each day for one week with a tip you can incorporate into your life right away. You'll also be invited to join a private facebook group for people who've gone through or are currently doing the challenge. More than 800 people have gone through the challenge so far. It's free, it's ongoing, and it's designed to help you find more peace and confidence in your parenting journey today. To Join, visit tiltparenting.com/sevenday. If you like what you heard on today's episode, consider subscribing or leaving a review on itunes. Things help our podcast get noticed in the crowded podcast space. Thanks again for listening. For more information on TiLT Parenting, visit www.tiltparenting.com

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- [Seth Perler's website](#)
- [Seth's Executive Functioning Assessment](#)
- [Dr. Devon MacEachron on Supporting 2e Learners](#) (podcast episode)
- [*The Gift of Failure*](#) by Jessica Lahey
- [*How to Raise an Adult*](#) by Julie Lythcott-Haims
- [*Differently Wired: Raising an Exceptional Child in a Conventional World*](#)
(Debbie's upcoming book)