

Looking at old videos on my phone, I saw my daughter. The daughter I remember. The video showed her with her younger brother, simply reviewing and inspecting the toys she had gotten as presents for her birthday. The girl in the video laughed. She smiled. She was entertaining, and she made me smile too. As she laughed with her brother, she modeled and instructed him on how to behave on camera. This was my daughter. My daughter who would one day be diagnosed with ADHD.

Though many children are diagnosed younger, my daughter wasn't diagnosed with ADHD until she was thirteen years old, which is often a confusing enough time for teenagers. When we started our journey, it felt incredibly lonely because I didn't know where to find the answers to all my questions. With experience as a teacher, I knew that there had to be resources out there that could help my daughter—and help me—understand what was happening in our lives.

Since my daughter's diagnosis, I've worked in the classroom with many students affected by their ADHD diagnosis, and I came to learn how prevalent these problems are in children today. Throughout my journey with my daughter (and in the classroom), I developed a support system that led to my daughter's ultimate success, despite her ADHD diagnosis.

The hardest part about her having late-onset ADHD was that every day became such a struggle, both for her and me, and I forgot who my daughter truly was. I forgot that she was funny. I forgot that she loved her brother. I forgot that she had empathy and concern for others. All I saw was an angry person, an anxious person. A girl who could not control her emotions. A girl who could not communicate without spewing negativity. I knew that I made her, that there was good inside her, but I could not remember who she really was at her core. ADHD took that away. It took away her personality.

All I had left to remember the girl I raised was the video that played in front of me as I wondered where she went. Was she still in there somewhere? I had to find out.