



BEING YOU

Parent Viewing Guide





Dear Parent,

For more than 11 years, Roadtrip Nation Education has been committed to helping students define their own paths in life. Our mission is to show young people how to harness their unique strengths and interests to create academic and career opportunities. We do that with the most powerful of tools—personal stories. The stories we share introduce young people to career possibilities they may never have heard of, and to people who have carved out different paths to fulfillment and success.

We want to inspire and empower all students to create their own success stories. We know that 1 in 5 people in the U.S. have a brain-based learning or attention issue—including issues like dyslexia, dyscalculia, and ADHD—that affects reading, writing, math, attention, and organization. And we know they can thrive in school and in life with the right support.

That's why we've partnered with Understood (Understood.org), the leading online resource for parents of children with learning and attention issues, to bring you this documentary and resource guide. *Being You* features the insights and experiences of young people and industry leaders with learning and attention issues—people who have faced these challenges head-on.

To bring awareness to these stories, we invited three young people with learning and attention issues to join us on the road. Noah, Nicole, and Stephanie explore what it means to be a young adult with these issues. In *Being You*, you'll see the three roadtrippers travel across the United States, meeting with diverse leaders who also have learning and attention issues. Their insightful conversations, shared experiences, and life lessons open the door to new discussions about the challenges of living with learning and attention issues, and ways to help young people reach their potential.

This guide is designed for parents to start a discussion with their child after viewing the documentary. Use the discussion guide to have conversations with your child about their goals and aspirations, and how to achieve them.

See you on the road!



Meet the Roadtrippers



STEPHANIE WHITHAM

Growing up, Stephanie thought she was the only one who learned differently. It wasn't until college—an achievement she was told she'd never reach—that she realized she was part of a much larger cohort of people who experience the world differently, and have harnessed that unique perspective to make significant contributions to the world. She aims to show young people the many faces of learning differences, and help them see that they can accomplish what they put their minds to—not despite, but *because of*, their differences.



NICOLE KORBER

Diagnosed at an early age with learning and attention issues that made reading and writing difficult, Nicole has always had to work harder to do what many consider simple tasks—but she's never let that deter her from reaching her goals. Although she was told she could never go to college, she recently graduated and has gone on to land a respected job. She's proud of her accomplishments, but seeks to find deeper purpose with her work, and hopes meeting people with similar challenges who pursued their dreams will build her confidence so she can do the same.



NOAH COATES

18-year-old Noah isn't sure what's out there in the world or how he fits into it. He wants to pursue a career in the entertainment or video game industry, but he's not sure how to begin making his way—especially with his learning and attention issues. He doesn't want to let ADHD and dyslexia stand in the way of his dream, and hopes to find mentors who prove it's possible to pursue a goal no matter what's thrown at you.

Being You

4,381 Miles



19 Interviews



28 Days



START
San Diego, CA



FINISH
Boston, MA

Talk With Your Child

As a parent of a child with learning and attention issues, you may have some conversations with your child that are different from those that other parents have with their kids. But like all parents, you want your child to thrive and build a successful life.

Your child has his or her own story to tell. Talking with kids about their learning and attention issues can help build their self-confidence so they can tell their own stories and advocate for themselves. Talking together also helps to remove the stigma and misunderstandings that kids may encounter along the way.

After watching the documentary, you can use this discussion guide to start a conversation with your child. The questions will help you use the roadtrippers' experiences as a way to frame your child's thoughts and feelings about learning and attention issues and what the future may hold.

Below are some ways to start a dialogue about how your child can build a life doing something he or she loves.

Learning Differently

Noah, Stephanie, Nicole, and all the people they meet have learning and attention issues. They each learn in a different way and have unique thoughts about it. Explore your child's thoughts about learning differently, and share your thoughts, too. Ask your child the following questions and encourage him or her to open up a dialogue with you or with someone else he or she trusts.

Questions to ask your child:

- The roadtrippers each describe their learning and attention issues and how they are affected by them. How have your learning and attention issues affected you? What's different about your experience?
- Stephanie says she got really stressed out about people knowing she has a learning disability. Do you worry about people knowing about your learning and attention issues?
- John Rodrigues tells the roadtrippers: "You're just as smart as anyone else. You just learn differently." Do you agree? What does learning differently mean to you?
- What are the benefits of viewing the world in a different way?

Questions your child can ask to open up a dialogue with you and others:

- How do you feel about other people knowing about my learning and attention issues? (Or, if you have a learning and attention issue as well, your child might ask: How do you feel about other people knowing about your learning and attention issue?)
- What does learning differently mean to you? How do you learn best?

To read more about working with your child's learning differences and strengths, visit u.org/strengths.

“Me Too” Moments

Realizing you’re not alone can be very powerful for kids and families affected by learning and attention issues. Howie Mandel says the two words that changed his life were “me too.” Use these questions to explore your child’s experience with “me too” moments.

Questions to ask your child:

- Howie Mandel said, “The two words that changed my life were ‘me too.’” Why do you think those words were so powerful to him?
- Can you describe a “me too” moment you’ve had?
- Stephanie started out the trip feeling very alone in having nonverbal learning disabilities. By the end of Being You, she said, “There are so many of us out there and we are this massive, thinking, empathetic power force.” What do you think brought her to this “me too” moment?
- Noah was most affected by meeting with LeDerick Horne. Why do you think this meeting was so powerful for him?

Questions your child can ask to open up a dialogue with you and others:

- Can you describe a “me too” moment you’ve had?
- Do you have friends who have learning or attention issues?

Help your child have more “me too” moments. Explore a collection of stories about famous people with learning and attention issues at u.org/celebrities.

Self-Confidence

Stephanie and Nicole both started the trip unsure of their own abilities. Over the monthlong trip, they gained self-confidence. Use these questions to explore the idea of building self-confidence and to explain to your child how you’ve become more self-confident in your lifetime.

Questions to ask your child:

- Bonnie Kennedy told the roadtrippers, “You create yourself every day. Every action you do, every decision you make, you are creating yourself every day. And when you do that intentionally, you will have confidence.” What do you think it means to create yourself intentionally?
- Nicole explained that one of the things she wanted at the end of the trip was to walk away with courage to be herself. Do you feel courageous in being you?
- What makes you feel confident about yourself?
- How has having a learning or attention issue affected your self-confidence?
- Stephanie also said, “I don’t know what I’m supposed to be doing. I don’t know what to do next, I’m just kind of stuck.” Can you relate to feeling stuck?
- Stephanie said she believes everybody has a purpose and something meaningful that they’re supposed to be doing. What meaningful thing do you want to do?

Questions your child can ask to open up a dialogue with you and others:

- What have you done to create yourself intentionally?
- Do you feel courageous in being you? How did you get there?

- What about me makes you most proud?
- Have you found your purpose?
- What do you do that you find most meaningful?
- How do I figure out what to do next?

Find ways to help your child develop confidence. Visit u.org/self-esteem.

Transitioning From High School and Support Systems

Whether kids are going to college or starting to work, they're leaving behind familiar support systems when they leave high school. It's important for young adults to understand that they can seek support in college and in their careers, too. Use these questions to explore your child's feelings and brainstorm strategies to identify the supports that could help.

Questions to ask your child:

- Noah's mom says he's been talking about college since middle school, but that he's still nervous. Why do you think Noah is nervous about going to college?
- Are you nervous about transitioning out of high school?
- Evelyn Polk Green said, "It was when I got to college and lost my support and scaffolding system that I completely fell apart." Do you worry about that happening?
- Pete Denman said he was ashamed of his learning disability and never told people. Do you see benefits to telling people about your learning issues? How about disadvantages?
- Who or what has helped you succeed in learning and in being you?
- John Rodrigues gave the roadtrippers some great advice about the future. He said, "Instead of thinking about what you're supposed to do, sit and think about what you really want to do. Don't live someone else's life. You need to take your talents and live your life." Do you feel like you're able to do this?

Questions your child can ask to open up a dialogue with you and others:

- Were you nervous when you left high school?
- Does anything make you nervous about me leaving high school?
- What supports are available for me when I go to college or start a job?
- How do you think I should handle talking to people about my learning and attention issue?
- How has your support system helped you succeed?
- Are you doing what you want to do, or what you think you are supposed to do?

Learn about different paths to success after high school. Visit u.org/leaving-high-school.

Acceptance

Accepting and celebrating learning and attention issues isn't always easy. Use these questions to help talk with your child about how people get to a place where they can appreciate being themselves.

Questions to ask your child:

- How have the leaders in *Being You* used their learning and attention issues to create new or exciting careers?
- Howie Mandel told the roadtrippers to be open to everything and "just say yes." What do you think he meant?

- Evelyn Polk Green said, “You do what you can and the rest you just let go. Grab ahold of what you can make a difference with and what you can change.” Do you feel like you’re able to do this?

Questions your child can ask to open up a dialogue with you and others:

- How do you stay focused on the positive things in your life?
- Have there been things you were afraid of that you just said yes to? Was it worth it?
- How do you learn what you can change and what you can let go of?

Sharing Your Story

David Flink told the roadtrippers, “The call to action is: ‘If you have an LD story, tell someone.’ The key is, take that call.” That’s not always easy to do, but it’s something to aspire to. Share these quotes from *Being You* with your child. You can use them as a springboard for talking to your child about the power of sharing his or her story.



John Rodrigues
Professional Ice Sculptor/Content Specialist
U.S. Department of Education

“My life, ever since I looked for another thing to be good at, has been happy. I’ve been happy.”



Evelyn Polk Green
President, National Board of Directors
Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)

“It’s learning to thrive with [your learning and attention issue] and celebrate it and understand how it has as much to do with your successes as it does with any challenges that you have.”



Nicole
Roadtripper
Being You

“[The people we’ve talked to are] all able to see [their learning and attention issues] in a positive light. I think that’s really important—to be able to look at your challenges and not be angry at them, to accept them.”



David Flink
Founder/Chief Empowerment Officer
Eye to Eye

“It’s part of my identity as much as anything else.”



Nicole
Roadtripper
Being You

“I really feel like if I had someone saying, ‘You know, this isn’t weird,’ that would be really good. That’s one reason I’m doing this. I really want to be OK with who I am.”



Stephanie
Roadtripper
Being You

"Everyone has a story. Everyone has something that makes them unique and who they are."



Noah
Roadtripper
Being You

"I want people to understand they're not by themselves."