



# **Differently Wired: Raising an Exceptional Child in a Conventional World**

*Deborah Reber*

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Today millions of kids are stuck in a world that doesn't respect, support, or embrace who they really are—these are what Deborah Reber is calling the “differently wired” kids, the one in five children with ADHD, dyslexia, Asperger’s, giftedness, anxiety, sensory processing disorder, and other neurodifferences. Their challenges are many. But for the parents who love them, the challenges are just as hard—struggling to find the right school, the right therapist, the right parenting group while feeling isolated and harboring endless internal doubts about what’s normal, what’s not, and how to handle it all.

But now there’s hope. Written by Deborah Reber, a bestselling author and mother in the midst of an eye-opening journey with her son who is twice exceptional (he has ADHD, Asperger’s, and is highly gifted), *Differently Wired* is a how-to, a manifesto, a book of wise advice, and the best kind of been-there, done-that companion.

On the one hand it’s a book of saying NO, and how it’s time to say *no* to trying to fit your round-peg kid into society’s square holes, *no* to educational and social systems that don’t respect your child, *no* to the anxiety and fear that keep parents stuck. And then it’s a book of YES. By offering 18 paradigm shifts—what she calls “tilts”—Reber shows how to change everything. How to “Get Out of Isolation and Connect.” “Stop Fighting Who Your Child Is and Lean In.” “Let Go of What Others Think.” “Create a World Where Your Child Can Feel Secure.” “Find Your People (and Ditch the Rest).” “Help Your Kids Embrace Self-Discovery.” And through these alternative ways of being, discover how to stay open, pay attention, and become an exceptional parent to your exceptional child.

## **Differently Wired: Raising an Exceptional Child in a Conventional World Details**

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# From Reader Review *Differently Wired: Raising an Exceptional Child in a Conventional World* for online ebook

## Kate Taelman says

I found this book incredible. Although the book briefly describes what Autism, Add/ADHD, giftedness, and other ways people are "wired different", the book is more about the next step(s). It includes advice in how to advocate for your child, how to approach parenting and advocating from a place other than fear as well as tips for self care.

What I really liked about this book is that it was written from a place of honesty and openness with the author's own experiences throughout the entire book. I really liked that she was able to both validate feelings but also have ways to move on.

I found a lot of the book relatable for parenting in general, so much solid advice. I read the book out of curiosity and got a decent amount out of it.

I would definitely recommend this book for parents of children who are wired different, especially if they are in the early stages of understanding what is going on with their child. I also think teachers could benefit from reading this.

\*I was able to read/review an advanced copy through Netgalley

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## Jennifer Tam says

This is a revolutionary book not just for parents of kids who are "differently wired" but for all parents - actually I think it's an important book for every single person to read - it is steeped in knowledge and personal examples of how we can help ALL our kids thrive - I have been following Debbie Reber for over a year and never miss her weekly podcasts! She has helped me so much with our "differently wired" kid with anxiety and this book is just the whip cream on top of what she has already done with her work

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## Pamela says

Deborah Reber has launched a movement with *Differently Wired*. Her hopes include revamping of the educational systems of the planet, (especially in the US), destroying judgments associated with labels on children with neurological differences, clearer communication, greater openness, united community with others who care about the happiness and productivity and good growth of all children. Her means are resource-sharing, honest and direct memoir — lessons learned, admissions of her frailties — and humanity, generosity, and invention. Her book contains history, advice, advocacy, and exercises for furthering self-understanding and usefulness to the differently wired. Reber has supreme organizational skills and can see the ways to bring people together to greater knowledge, thus empowering families, friends, and educators. This book is for everyone, not just parents of the differently wired. Reber's style is warm and conversational. Reading her is like sitting with her in a Dutch café sipping hot drinks. My wish is that all teachers would read this too, and spread it around. I found it inspiring for myself, writing quotes in my notebook. Kudos,

Deborah Reber. If you haven't looked at her TILT website, (<http://www.tiltparenting.com/>) or listen to her TILT podcast, go there now.

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### **Elaine says**

I've already recommended this to three parents. Such a cool and different way of looking at how to parent kids who don't thrive in "normal" educational or social environments.

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### **Bookworm Between the Sheets says**

I highlighted so many quotes and passages from this book! DIFFERENTLY WIRED is a valuable resource for any parent that has a strong-willed child that you are on the fence of a diagnosis or have that medical neurological diagnosis. I enjoyed the author's insight of her personal struggle with finding the right fit to educate her child along with her trial and errors.

Deborah Reber provides real life examples coupled with stats, medical professional expertise, and recounts of published articles and books to help you on your parenting journey with your 'Differently Wired' child. I found so many of her suggestions easy to use and add in with my personal parenting struggles. One quote that resonated with me as I deal with a child of high energy and lack of focus that in the end becomes very accident prone is asking my child "What were you trying to do?" instead of getting angry and saying something demeaning.

As a previous educator (of only a couple years) I feel that the insight as a teacher to read this book would help especially a new education on how to not force that 'Differently Wired' to conform to the 'normal' classroom and utilize that child's gifts. And as the author suggests we MUST be the advocate for our child and this community to bring about change to include rather than exclude these children!

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### **Lorilin says**

When I saw this quote at the very beginning of *Differently Wired*:

*Normality is a paved road: It's comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it.*

--Vincent van Gogh

I thought, "Ok yes, I'm going to love this book."

But I'm surprised to say that I didn't. I like the underlying idea of it. As the mother of a very smart and highly sensitive 8-year old boy, I'm all for the advice to celebrate uniqueness, ignore the standard of "normal," and try to parent from a place of acceptance and love, not guilt and fear. But I also want more.

Author Deborah Reber talks a lot about her tough experiences with her oldest son. She talks about being frustrated with his schools, his teacher's general lack of training and awareness, and even with herself for never seeming to quite get it "right." Yes, yes, and yes! I agree, I'm there! So now what? Well, she solves her

family's issues by homeschooling her son. Which is fine for her, but not an option for us, so...next?

Unfortunately, there aren't many other options in this book. Instead, Reber focuses on TILTs, which are basically ways to shift your perspective as a parent with a gifted child. Many of these TILTs are repetitive, but essentially they boil down to:

- Stop trying to be "normal." Your child isn't and probably won't ever be.
- Connect with other parents who know what you're going through.
- Learn your child's language. Learn what certain actions or words mean to him.
- Create a safe, calm, relaxing environment for your child.
- Practice self-care.
- Advocate for your child, loudly if necessary. Then create the resources you wish you had.

Most of this advice is comforting but also obvious. (And some of it is downright unrealistic, borderline unhealthy. For example, the section on "leaning in to your child" where a mother supports her son by allowing him to control the family schedule for the entire summer. Uh, no.)

In fact, a lot of time is spent 1) complaining about how things are so hard, 2) fighting the system a little, and then 3) eventually withdrawing or giving up, and then 4) comforting yourself with the knowledge that you aren't alone. Which is a problem. I mean, it's always good to hear you're not the only one having trouble dealing with a bright and complicated kid, but then give me something concrete to work with. I want to move beyond whiny commiseration and hear success stories. Give me resources, classes, scripts for talking with school administrators, etc. Because at the end of the day, I don't want to homeschool my kid. I want his teacher to understand that he's way beyond what she's teaching him and that he's going to continue to act out in class until his brain is actually occupied and challenged. How do I do *that*?

In other words, I want to change the system, not whine about it and then try to comfort myself when I abandon it. I was hoping this book would help me stand in the place where I live, so to speak, but no such luck.

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## **Sarai Henderson says**

I have read so many books about Autism and ADHD that I could throw up medical jargon for a year. I find them all to be the same, depressing and full of selfish parents. This book was a refreshing take on the world of parents of "Differently Wired" kids.

There was hope among the chaos. I felt like I could connect to this mother and I knew all the struggles she was going through, because I had been there too. I don't think the mother asked once, "Why was this happening to me..." but gave the reader a sense that there is an end to all the tough times, you just have to support your child and learn what they need.

I loved this book and would recommend it to any parent of a newly diagnosed differently wired child, or even to those who have been down that path, but need to know that they are not alone.

Received an advance reader copy in exchange for a fair review.

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## Heather says

Even though one in 5 children fits into a category of neurodiversity (gifted, ADHD, Asperger's, dyslexia, etc.) most schools, summer camps, sports teams, parenting advice and kids activities aren't equipped to deal with "differently wired" kids. This can leave those kids and their parents frustrated and isolated, often facing a lot of stigma and shame.

This book aims to help parents overcome that, to become better parents to the kids they have. It's an inspiring, deeply positive book. By breaking down parenting into different "tilts", new ways of looking at the challenges these kids face, and working with them, rather than trying to fix them, this book imagines a world where differently wired kids feel loved, accepted and able to meet their full potential. The advice about dealing with the day to day intensity that many differently wired kids have is especially good.

This book is probably more helpful for the parents of kids who have been recently diagnosed or who are beginning to suspect that their kid is differently wired. Hopefully most parents who have been dealing with these issues for a while have already reached many of these conclusions themselves. It provides some of good exercises for reflecting on ways to support a differently wired child. Although grounded in good practical advice, some of the examples are beyond the reach of what many parent are able to do (Move to Amsterdam and homeschool! Sell your house and move to the country to help your anxious child! Start a community for autistic young adults!) While these are meant to be inspiring, most parents' solutions are going to be far more modest.

I also think she briefly adds to the stigma around ADHD medication (No - i don't give my kids medication just so they can behave in school)

I also wish she had touched on the fact that many parents of differently wired kids are differently wired themselves, although they may only be realizing it with their child's diagnosis.

Overalls, this book is useful for anyone with differently wired kids in their lives.

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## whitney says

(I read an eARC of this book). This book is FANTASTIC! Debbie Reber has done an amazing job of putting together this book focused on "tilts", or reframing/rethinking devices, aimed at supporting parents of differently wired children. My own child is differently wired, and because I'm part of the TiLT community that Reber started and have shared my experiences with her, some of my experiences and thoughts are in this book. Reber has captured the particular challenges that we face, and the ways in which we are embedded in, and therefore need to work to question and dismantle, a system that is not designed to support neurodiverse individuals. And while I think this book will be especially helpful to other parents of neurodiverse children, I also want parents of neurotypical children to read it; if we want to create a more inclusive world, it can't be neurodiverse people and their parents doing ALL of the work!

The opening chapters, in which Reber details their early struggles with their 2e son, hit home so hard for me - I felt as though I could've written them (we, too, have had our child kicked out of schools and camps, and dealt with all of the confusion and self-doubt and judgement and what felt like gaslighting, when people tried to tell us what we were experiencing was normal, while also shaming us for our daughter's behavior). But really, this whole book did. Thank you, thank you, Debbie Reber!

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## **Candis Joyce says**

I picked up the advanced reading copy of this book that was sent to the Bangor Public Library. I found the book fascinating and quite illuminating.

Deborah Reber, the founder of Tilt Parenting, has presented a very honest portrayal of her family's struggle with providing her 2e (twice exceptional) son with the support HE needs to meet the challenges he will encounter throughout his life, not the necessarily conventional wisdom and pathways of the world we live in. Although the main exceptionality presented is autism, the discussion provides insight in supporting people with various challenges and the families that love them.

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## **Karen Felder says**

I have read SO MANY books on parenting and teaching differently wired kids. This is, hands down, my favorite. I want to give copies to everyone I know and say, "Read this! This will help you understand my world and why our family has made some unconventional choices." This book is insightful, honest, and filled with hope and inspiration for a world that accepts people for who they are.

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## **Melissa Stuart Barnett says**

Some good nuggets here.

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## **Laurel says**

Differently Wired is a radical book. It is also a deeply humane and practical resource for parents raising twice exceptional kids. An outgrowth of Debbie Reber's TiLT Parenting community, this book distills her vision for a world in which "differently wired" children can be accepted and celebrated for their unique qualities. I received an advance reader's copy of the book and found that the warm and smart voice Debbie conveys in her podcasts translates beautifully to the page. What so appeals to me about Reber's vision is that it completely rejects the conventional wisdom that bright kids with learning or developmental challenges (such as ADHD, SPD, and autism) must somehow be "fixed" so that they can conform to existing norms and institutional structures (e.g., mainstream schools). Instead, Reber invites us to imagine how we could "fix" the world and our thinking so that our bright, creative, and quirky kids can thrive in it and contribute their amazing gifts to it. These shifts in perspective and practice are the eighteen "tilts" (some practical, some more philosophical) that Reber proposes in this groundbreaking, funny, and inspiring book. It's a great read that will have many parents breathing a sigh of relief.

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## **Samantha says**



I got an advanced copy of this book from Netgalley, and here's my honest review.

I read the first few chapters of this book on a slow Saturday at work. I came away with two things that day: I could have written this, and I am not alone.

Then it gets even better by offering me an honest account of the author's experiences raising a differently wired child and strategies I can use to improve life with my own differently wired child.

People like me are probably the best audience for this book. My child is young, and my partner and I are just now beginning to come to terms with the fact that our child is differently wired and that we're going to have to throw out the traditional parenting book and find another way. This book reached me at the exact moment I needed it.

If you're farther along in your parenting journey, you've already gotten diagnoses, your child is a teen and you've already worked out strategies that work best for you, I'd still recommend giving this book a glance over. It may not give you any new information on dealing with your child's specific wiring, but it may inspire you to take a look at yourself as a parent.

Now I'm off to read some of the books referenced in this one. Because for me, this is the beginning of my journey, and now I have hope that it doesn't have to be an awful one.

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## **Jess Macallan says**

This is an important read for any parent/caregiver raising a neurodiverse child. The author does a great job walking readers through a lot of thoughtful and necessary questions to clarify their approach to raising their child, and ways to improve communication with their children, partners, family, and teachers. This book offers a nonjudgmental approach to raising neurodiverse children and highlights ideas for parents to better support their child's formative years. As a parent of neurodiverse children, I can honestly say nothing about this parenting journey is easy, but it helps to know there are plenty of families sharing the experience who can also offer new and creative solutions.

I was disappointed the author didn't address the unique challenge of raising multiple children, both neurotypical and neurodiverse. It's important to discuss how neurotypical children can sometimes take a backseat to a neurodiverse sibling who needs a significant amount of time, energy, and financial resources, and how parents might find a better balance to fully support all of their children. And while I agree with the author's encouragement of self-care practices and finding a support network, it's not always easy or accessible for people who might live in smaller or rural communities, parents with financial constraints, or parents with caregiver burnout and/or no family support.

The bottom line is that those of us sharing this experience can benefit our children and families by offering meaningful support, honesty, and advocating for necessary change.

I received an e-copy via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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