



Molotov Hearts: Turning the Page on Rage

Riley Karbon ([00:00](#)):

Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. I'm Riley Karbon, I'm a professionally certified ADHD coach on the leadership team at the Center for Living Well with ADHD. You're hearing my voice as I record this from Minnesota. And today I'm here to talk about emotional dysregulation and rage. So we know that emotional dysregulation is a big part of ADHD and what that can look like is that folks with ADHD can have often like this big outsized response to a request or interruption that may not be a big deal to other people around us, but to us it feels like a really big deal. We can feel it in our bodies that this is a big deal. So today I'm here to share with you one of my rageful experiences talk about how I identified it and how I handled it and worked through it.

Riley Karbon ([01:02](#)):

So this is a story that I like to tell my clients. As I talked about, I live in Minnesota and we get a lot of snow here. And so a familiar scenario for me and my partner is it'll be like 9:00 PM at night. And I am sitting on the couch and I am either engrossed in Netflix or I am scrolling on my phone, or maybe I'm in the middle of a puzzle and my partner will come up and he will say, Hey, we got to go outside and shovel, like it's snowed out. And in that moment, I want to murder him for asking me. I am so mad I immediately like, go ice cold because I don't want to say the things that are in my head out loud, but in my head I'm like, this was not in my plans for the evening. I had such a hard day at work.

Riley Karbon ([01:55](#)):

Like, why wouldn't you just let me relax? You know, getting outside is exercising too close to bed, like you're trying to mess up my sleep. I do everything else in the house, you know, why can't you just do this one thing without me? You don't get to tell me what to do. All of these things are happening. And then of course, eventually, like the rage kind of turns in on myself. I'm like, oh my God. Riley he's just asking you for help. Like, this is the thing you want good communication. Why can't you just like, get up off your butt and go help him shovel snow, like you're so lazy. Get off your phone. Why can't you just stop this? Is this really more, you know, important than your relationship? This is, you know, what it means to be an adult. Like you got to take care of your house. And I'm just swirling, absolutely swirling. Maybe I should give a little context here at my house, we've got a really long blacktop driveway. And so if you leave the snow until the next day, which normally I would like to do the laptop warms up, melts the snow, and then all of a sudden your driveway is just a

Riley Karbon ([02:58](#)):



Sheet of ice. And I learned that once because I was stubborn and having this fight with my partner. So we left it overnight, and then I was out there the next day like with a hatchet, like hacking away at our driveway to try to get all this ice off. So anyway, so he comes ask me for help. I am so rageful, I want to murder him. He of course goes outside. I'm left with myself and I am feeling so embarrassed that I have gotten so upset. And so I get sort of in this swirling pattern of like again in my head, yelling at him, yelling at myself, and also being like, Riley, it's not a big deal. Just go outside. And yet I'm noticing I'm not actually moving off the couch. So after a while, you know, we've been living together for a couple years.

Riley Karbon ([03:47](#)):

I know this is, this is a pattern. Every time he comes to ask me for help when shoveling late at night, again, I want to murder him. And so I noticed that this is just, this is one of my triggers. And so what does that feel like when I am getting triggered, when I'm feeling that emotional dysregulation for me, my jaw gets really tight. My face gets hot for me, I often shut down because I'm like holding all the mean things in, I don't want to say that to my partner. So all of a sudden I just kind of ice him. Again, these, these negative thoughts creep in about myself. And then eventually I am having a ton of guilt for not helping him. Again, he asked me for help. I do want to say yes, and yet I'm so mad that he asked in the first place.

Riley Karbon ([04:38](#)):

So let's give a little context for why this is happening. Again. As I said, 9:00 PM at night, I'm in the middle of Netflix or my phone or a puzzle or something, and I've got ADHD. And our ADHD brains are always searching for dopamine. And so we get dopamine from lots of different things things that are exciting, new, novel stimulating, and what is the opposite of that? Something like snow shoveling, which is boring and tedious. So my partner in that moment is asking me to go from this dopamine producing activity to stop doing that and go do something that's boring and tedious. Like, no way do I want to do that. Maybe you've experienced this in the response, if you've ever seen kids try to transition from playing video games and being asked to go do their homework, and maybe the big emotional response that they have to being asked to shut off their video game and go do homework. So my brain is raging against this. And again, I'm having this automatic response to being really mad at him, being really judgy of myself and just, you know, nobody's happy in this situation. So here's what I noticed is if

Riley Karbon ([05:56](#)):

I stayed inside, my partner went outside, if I stayed in, maybe after about 15 or 20 minutes, the rage would dissipate. Even in the moment, if I'm feeling like I will feel that upset for forever, it just isn't true. Just isn't true. And so if I sat in it, I eventually would calm down and like nine times out of 10, I would go out and help him. So where I'm at now is that I know that being asked to snow shovel late at night just is one of my triggers. So I know that it's going to happen. And so when it does show up, it's doesn't have this big hold on me anymore because it's familiar. It's kind of like this like old angry friend that's showing up and I can just say like, oh, here you are again. Yep, I see that you're here. But I don't necessarily need to believe everything that this angry friend is saying or sharing with me.



Riley Karbon ([06:52](#)):

And this is happening. This is an ADHD symptom showing up again. I'm, I'm having a hard time transitioning from this dopamine producing activity to this really boring activity and I'm having a big response. So I've really worked on myself to not judge myself, remind myself in the moment, okay, yep, here we go. I know this happens. This is a normal thing that happens for me, but now I just don't believe it. And instead just have faith that yep, I'm just going to sit with this and eventually it will pass. And funnily enough, when I started to do that, I noticed that the less I fought it, the less I tried to make myself not feel that anymore. And instead I was just like, okay, it's here. I know it'll pass eventually and I'll just kind of wait until it does actually the faster I got out of it.

Riley Karbon ([07:40](#)):

So what I'd encourage people to listening to this is first notice when you are dysregulated. Know how it feels when you're having that big emotional response. And then take another step back to say, okay, what was the situation? Why did I have this big response in the first place? And really notice what are your different triggering scenarios? And often I notice for me and for my clients, it's about interruptions. You're in the middle of something and then your spouse your coworker or your kids are interrupting you. And then you can have this big response where you are just so mad that they are interrupting. And really start to notice these patterns of when these things show up for you and instead of getting mad at yourself or your partner or whatever, instead to really just say like, Hey, this is a normal response that I'm having. This is familiar, but I don't need to believe everything that my brain is telling me in this moment. So I just wanted to thank you so much for joining me to talk about rage. I'm Riley Karbon again. I'm professionally certified ADHD coach. For more about my work with adults with ADHD, you can visit the centerforlivingwellwithadhd.org or reach me directly at Riley, R-I-L-E-Y, at [ADHD coach.life](http://ADHDcoach.life). (riley@adhdcoach.life) Thanks for listening.