



Episode #86:

**Dr. Michael Postma of SENG on the Plight of
Gifted and 2e Kids**

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Dr. Postma: You know, the one thing I always emphasize is empathy. I've always said when I hired teachers in the past and said, I can teach you all the skills, but I can't teach you empathy, and if you don't have the empathy, it's very difficult to teach one of these children.

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 Dr Michael Postma, a writer, consultant and presenter specializing in education and well-being of twice exceptional and intellectually gifted students and their families. Dr Postma is the executive director of SENG which stands for supporting the emotional needs of the gifted, an organization whose mission it is to empower families and communities to guide gifted and talented individuals to reach their goals intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. He's also the author of the new book, *The Inconvenient Student: Critical Issues in the Identification and Education of Twice Exceptional Students*. Dr Postma and I had an honest and personal conversation about the challenges facing gifted and 2e students and this is one of those episodes that just might leave you feeling pensive, concerned, and ignited all at the same time, and if you're raising a gifted or 2e kid, I encourage you to check out all the resources and places for further information that Dr Postma shares, especially those related to SENG.

Before our conversation, I wanted to invite you to sign up for my TiLT Parenting newsletter. Every Thursday I send out a short email, including a quick note for me, a link to that week's podcast and bonus After the show video and links to five must read articles from the news that week that are relevant to parents of differently wired kids. To sign up, just visit tiltparenting.com and fill out the form that says join the TiLT revolution. I also wanted to give a shout out to Susan Windsor Jones. Susan is the newest supporter of the podcast and her generous donation is helping me cover the production costs associated with making a weekly podcast. So thank you Susan, and if you would like to join, Susan, please consider supporting the podcast through Patreon. Patreon is a simple membership platform that allows people to make a small monthly contribution as little as \$2 a month to fund our show. If you want to help visit patreon.com/tiltparenting. Thanks so much. And now here's my conversation with Dr Michael Postma.

Debbie: Welcome to the podcast, Michael.

Dr. Postma: Thanks for having me.

Debbie: Well, I'm really looking forward to having you on the show. A lot of the listeners of the TiLT Parenting podcasts have gifted children and I know that you're the

new executive director of SENG so I'm thrilled to be able to bring you onto the show and we have a lot to talk about today, so I would love to actually start by hearing about just your background. Tell us a little bit about who you are, what you do, and I'm always curious to know people's personal why for the work that they do in the world.

Dr. Postma: Okay. I'll give you the condensed version of this because it's a long story. But I grew up in Canada and back in the day we didn't have a lot of programming for gifted or for twice exceptional students and I grew up with ADD and some Asperger's and got through school. No problem. Because as you know gifted kids can camouflage quite easily, but part of the issue was the social emotional development wasn't there and that is asynchronous piece that really affected me, um, to a point where I struggled with depression for quite some time even up through my adulthood. And it was then that when I started discovering exactly who I was, that I moved into the realm of gifted education because there was a lot being done at that time, but not a lot in terms of those that were a little bit different that we're not your typical gifted achieving type student. And so that kind of motivated me to go into the industry and get my master's degree in it and eventually did my doctoral work in leadership and in critical pedagogy as it related to gifted education. But that's kind of the background as to where I'm coming from and then having my own children and realizing that they were not your typical GT children to themselves really opened my eyes and really pushed me into that direction of writing and speaking and saying as a personal aspect in that it's, that really hits that social emotional foundation, which I think is actually the key to academic growth and a academic achieving that potential. We often ignore that piece in our schools and it is detrimental that we only teach to the academic we have to teach to the whole person. So that's a little bit of background. Obviously it's much more complicated than that, but that is where we are right now.

Debbie: I'm curious, before we kind of move into your work today and your book, which I want to talk about. When you were growing up, I'm sure the term twice exceptional didn't exist. I mean, there probably wasn't much understanding about ADHD or Asperger's at the time. I'm just curious how you navigated that and how your own discovery about what was going on with you?

Dr. Postma: That's actually a good questions and your right those weren't really available conditions when we were growing up. I went to school in the 70's and high school in the 80's and we just adapted we coped. One, one of the things that saved me and I talked about in the book, having parachutes, having connections and had some, a couple of good friends that kind of stuck by me, but the other thing which is fairly rare with 2e children is that I was extremely athletic and that seemed to help me kind of navigate the social networking. I was never good at it. I'm not saying that, but it helped me be accepted and at school, I was really, really strong in some areas. I, you know, I didn't, I really didn't have to do much homework, didn't have to study much, you know, just come. So I managed to get through school, but I'm, the one area I really struggled with, especially with the

ADD and with typical, with twice exceptional kids in general is that slower processing speed, meaning taking time to really recall all that information that's in the brain.

Dr. Postma: And so I struggled with areas like math. I just couldn't quite get through math and having compensation skills. I was managed to get through, but I'm still not very strong with math today because of that. But there wasn't really much in terms of accommodation or adaptation in terms of the school. You kind of were lumped in with the rest and you got through and know that they might have recognized some differences here and there and had some great teachers that helped along the way that, you know, really catered. I especially remember a geography teacher in high school, his name was Mr Meester and he did a wonderful job of just adapting to who I was as a learner and I thrived in that class. I love that class and still remember it today and that, that helps you get through the day when you have at least a couple of high points. But again, you're right, we don't, we didn't have any available labels at the time and there were many, many kids struggle through and, and, I'm assuming, I know many that didn't quite make it through those times. So the fact that we have more research, have more understanding, we have more available tools is a good thing. Now we the, the issues we have to use them and we have to use them in a proper manner. So..

Debbie: On your website you use the term holistic development, could you just explain that in terms of how that relates to twice exceptional or a typical learners? What do you mean by that?

Dr. Postma: What I mean by that is you wanna develop everything about the child meaning with, especially with twice exceptional students that come with a different brain development pattern. And what I mean by that is generally with 2e children that have high sensory input bands and high frontal lobe cortex development, but they have delayed limbic response. So the, the system and the automated system, that system that is used to control executive functioning, to control emotions is delayed and hence you get the asynchronous pattern of development. So you have this, this child that has a highly advanced brain but no means to control that brain from an emotional standpoint. So when I talked about holistic development, I'm talking about also, and this I don't think this is primarily reserved for gifted, or twice exceptional kids. I think all our kids can use more social emotional development in terms of learning, those executive functioning skills, learning how to manage themselves emotionally, learning how, you know, how to organize themselves, how to respond to different situations, how to communicate well, how to, you know, build good habits of mind.

Those should be embedded within our, you know, our curriculum. We, we tend to teach to the brain and we tend to teach the head and we forget about the rest of the body. So things like the arts programs and the, you know, things like phys-ed are so important in terms of a holistic approach. And yet we continue to

defund those areas in emphasizing sciences a mess. And there's nothing wrong with sciences and maths. I'm not saying that at all, but what I am saying is we have to look at the entire functionality of a person. Meaning we have to look at who they are, what they're good at, what they're not good at, and really challenge them in those areas of strength and help them understand their weaknesses. And for 2e kids especially, they're really that asynchronous piece. Can be pretty stark and we see a lot of emotional and meltdowns and classes because these kids are not, they're not developed in that area and we have teachers that don't understand that this is not a behavioral thing. This is a brain function and brain reaction to a certain event or pattern. So I can go into that in much more detail. But there's a chapter in the book on the brain and how it develops that is much more detailed and really explains that piece. But again, the reason I'm working with SEN and have worked with saying in the past or supported them in the past is the fact that they emphasize that social emotional piece as one of the foundations for academic and intellectual potential.

Debbie: Yeah. My son, I have a son who just turned 13 and he's twice exceptional, ADHD, Asperger's and profoundly gifted and I homeschool him now. But my experience in both the public and private school that cater to gifted kids was a real broad, you know, there were a couple of great teachers who got it, but broadly there wasn't a lot of understanding of asynchronous development and this wasn't so long ago and I found that really perplexing because it seems to be a hallmark even not just of 2e kids, but gifted kids in general. A bit of that disconnect, especially with the processing speed, you know, that seems to be pretty typical. I'm curious to know your thoughts on that and, or do you see that as something that we're making progress and in terms of helping people understand more that this is a fundamental part of who these kids are?

Dr. Postma: I think we're making some progress in terms of gifted in general. I don't think we're making a lot of progress in twice exceptionality. And the reason for that is number one, if you could go back to the root when, when someone gets a degree in teaching. So you go through a certain number of courses, you know, psychology, child development, all these different things know teaching and learning. They rarely touch gifted education. In fact, when I went through, now, this is a while ago, but I'm hearing from some, you know, recent graduates that it's fairly typical that they received maybe one course in gifted education or maybe one hour I received the one hour in my entire years of teachers college and that did not hardly touch any of the, you know, the main factors of it. Now some states are moving towards, for instance, Ohio is now recording 60 hours of gifted training in further pre-service teachers and beyond as they move into the field.

But that's pretty rare and it behoves a teacher to actually get in and start to understanding because you will have these in your classroom, these kids will be there. You have to work with him, you have to accommodate them. You need to understand them and if you don't understand them, you're not going to reach them. And then with the twice exceptional, I, I just don't see a lot of educational

literature. I mean that's the wrong word. Educational programming that is required for teachers to understand these who these kids are, where they're coming from, how they learn, you know, what to do, what not to do, those types of things. I just don't see that. I don't even see a identification tools that are being used in an, in many cases, identification tools that actually work Aka those that are done by licensed psychologists in the field of gifted or having, having gifted backgrounds or not being accepted by school districts. In favor of their own internal testing where usually you have assessments done by folks that don't understand who the child is and how they operate. And again, you know, school districts can't afford intellectual assessments and that's where you really have to go because you have to understand that these kids will score and a discrepant manner they'll have highs lows. Then you have to look in and examine those highs and lows and in correlation and see what does it comprise of? Where do I need to go with this when I'm seeing such a low versus such a high? That's what is required in, for a school to be able to handle a child like that. They need to further investigate into who these children are and what they represent. I can go on and on about this, but if teachers are not given the opportunity to learn, if they're not given the opportunity to go out and really participate in workshops and trainings and really teach them who the children are and how to reach them, that pattern is going to stay the same.

Dr. Postma: We have three kids at home here. They're all teenagers now, but not a single one of them made it through school and you know, they made it up through, into middle school. High school was very difficult. I have one who is homebound with high school right now. The other two are pursuing GEDs just because they couldn't make it in the system. And that's not always the school's fault either. Sometimes it's that sensory processing stuff that just kind of overwhelms them and they can't be in those types of environments. So, I just believe there's a lot of work to be done in this area.

Debbie: Yeah. I had a guest on the show Dr. Devon MacEachron who is in New York and yeah, she's fantastic and she talked with us just about the diagnostic process for especially twice exceptional kids and you know, we had that conversation like what are the best school options for these kids, and it was, it was pretty dismal, you know, and just even the number of schools that do accommodate twice exceptional kids are so few and far between. I am seeing more crop up every year, but she was explaining just even within those school systems, it's hard because the needs of the kids are so diverse. Even within a 2e school

Dr. Postma: You have to individualize for every twice exceptional child heard of the issue here is not a system or pattern that actually works consistently with them. So you have to individualize. It becomes very expensive and time consuming and staff consuming. So yes, I do see a lot of twice exceptional parents, homeschooling and that is OK because their needs are not being met in the schools for your child's. Devon is very accurate on that, she actually wrote a piece in my book and so I thank her for that, but also there are more options coming up, but I'm also seen schools closing. There was a great school in Orange

County, the Reid school, they just closed last spring I believe because of funding and so there are schools out there, but there's also schools that are struggling because they're just not getting the funding and then there's another whole can of worms in there. Whereas folks that need this type of school can't afford it. So you have low income families, you have families from a impoverished environments, inner cities, rural environments that just don't have access to these resources and so who helps those children? And these are folks that can't afford to be home with their kids. So you know, where do they end up? It's, it becomes a bit of a vicious cycle. So the onus once again falls on the school districts to be able to do some kind of accommodation. And as I say, and as I talked about in the book, it's, it's really isn't that difficult to make some accommodations and make, make the day a little bit more enjoyable for a twice exceptional child, hasn't been, you'd have to do everything, but there are certain things you can do. Giving them extra time on tests, given them a limbic breaks where they can just get out and just reconnect with themselves a little bit.

Dr. Postma: Those little things, given them leeway in the hallways where maybe they leave a two minutes early so they don't have to face the crowds, especially at the high school where that can be overwhelming, you know, little things like that can really assist our current twice exceptional kids to be able to navigate through the system. And, and as a teacher too if, I don't know a lot, maybe you have a colleague that does placement with different types of teachers that maybe have more training and understanding or, you know, the one thing I always emphasize is empathy. I've always said when I hire teachers in the past and said, I can teach you all the skills, but I can't teach you empathy and if you don't have the empathy, it's very difficult to teach one of these children

Debbie: So true. That's a great point. You've mentioned your book a few times. I'd love you to talk a little bit more about it. You've written a book called The Inconvenient Student. Could you tell us why you wrote the book, and who it's for, and kind of what you hope it does in the world?

Dr. Postma: Well, I wrote it. I'm currently because we struggled so much with our own children. I'm her oldest is actually on her own in Minneapolis and doing quite well. Almost a miracle, but she made it. But our second, Sean is 19, going on 20 and he's not been in school since early ninth grade. He just, he just couldn't do it. Alex is 17 a senior, but struggles with incredible anxiety and stress and depression. And then Amanda's our artists who again, hadn't been in school for number of years at 16 and she speaks, she's a nonverbal who speaks through her art. So how do you accommodate that in the classroom? So this is what really motivated me to start writing. I've also been working with these kids for many, many years and just seeing the struggles that these kids in and their parents it really it falls on the family as well, that extra stress. When they come home and just have these meltdowns because, you know, they tend to hold it in during the day and then it becomes an issue at home.

But, so partly for that and I'm partly for, for the teachers is written with teachers in mind and it's, it really is an introductory book. It's, it's not a heavy details but it's written so that, you know, the layman, the teaches with not a lot of training can go in there and just take some hints and some strategies and get in the classroom and do a few things that might help. But it was also written for parents. The first half is really developmental. The second half is more education approach. And even back in the day when I was still you know, working in the field of gifted ed in a school system and the teachers that really, they were gifted ed teachers that didn't quite understand the 2e child. So that's even more motivation that even within the gifted community we have misunderstandings and a need for more support.

Debbie: Yeah. When I saw the book and I saw the title, I just instantly resonated with me and I'm sure so many of our listeners, they're like, Yep, that's my kid, the inconvenient student. So thank you for writing it and putting it out there. The teacher education piece, that's what I think about a lot to TiLT Parenting exists to support parents, find more confidence and understanding and their journey. But you know, down the road I dream of working in schools as well. And just helping with that teacher education piece because I know the teachers want to support the kids in their class. They just don't know how. They don't understand that there is a big education piece missing.

Dr. Postma: Well, and I think part of it is, is, you know, we, we still run our schools in a bit of an old fashioned style. It's still very agrarian and in a sense where they were pushing them through no period after period after period and, you know, certain content, content, content heavy and I think education in itself needs to be revitalized and revamped. We have tired teachers that are seen so many kids per day that are getting very little time for planning and, you know, they're not set up to be successful with these kinds of kids. So part of the onus is on our administration and on the then the government in terms of really taking a look at how we teach our kids and maybe, you know, adjusting that to a point where we actually had more contact, individual contact, more holistic like I talked before holistic development versus just, you know, we've got to get through this curriculum.

We've got to get through the curriculum. We called the tyranny of the curriculum. And there's, there's ways to get around that. The whole culture of testing has taken over and, and that's, you know, all these things are pressure and anxiety points. They're not good for teachers, they're not good for kids, not good for families. So I think we, we have some bigger fish to fry overall, but again, the next book I'm hoping if I have some time to plan is more for parents, but in the meantime I did write an article for parents called In Search of Shangri-la, which is kind of helping to guide them to look for programs for gifted and 2e kids and what questions to ask and what to look for. Those kinds of things. Having been in the system for many years, you know, getting into kind of

the inside look. So and certainly would be willing to make that available as needed.

Debbie: Yeah, I would love to be able to share that with our community. That sounds right up our alley. And I'd love to hear. We've talked about SENG as well. So for listeners who aren't familiar, SENG is a national organizations or is it international?

Dr. Postma: It is international, yes.

Debbie: And it stands for supporting the emotional needs of the gifted. So, and I know that in the past year you've become the new executive director there. Can you talk a little bit about the organization's mandate and what you're hoping to do now that you're in charge?

Dr. Postma: The mandate, you know, the organization really represents looking at that holistic approach, again, supporting emotional social needs of kids and we see that is so valuable. The organization actually was founded by Dr James Webb way back in the eighties, late eighties, I believe and was based on a request from a family whose son had committed suicide, who was highly gifted and just could not cope with that social emotional intensity and the anxiety and the depression and all those different little pieces, you know, that sensory processing stuff that comes with being highly gifted. I see it alot with 2e kids as they're, they generally tend to be highly gifted, and it's par for the course. But so our mission is to really support family support individuals, giving them resources, provide them access to other gifted individuals so that they can find their way from a social, emotional perspective to, you know, to actualize in essence, um, because it's a difficult journey.

And if all you're doing is academics and ignoring that, that piece, which we tend to do, you're not developing life-long skills of just being wholly developed so that you can face challenges that you can navigate through life's pitfalls and successes and now you and I say successes because sometimes we have successes and we don't know how to handle them because we just don't have that emotional IQ in a sense. So that's what SENG is dedicated to, is really supporting that development of social emotional strength in gifted individuals, gifted families, gifted communities wherever they may be. And it's surprising to me that we still get phone calls from all over the world. Places like Turkey and the Middle East and South Africa and Asia and Europe and wherever. And we're hearing, in the same stories over and over. Even with the many of them are adults who just haven't, you know, haven't figured it out and you know, they need help, they need support.

So that is the is the mission and goal of SENG is to spread that. We do it through some coursework we do offer webinars or conferences, actually well known for its connectivity, meaning - every time I go to the conference I see a lot of crying parents. And the reason for that is they're there just for the first time in their

lives. They've connected with others like them. They've, their kids have connected with others like them and they just feel a sense of community. And giftedness can be isolating, you add the 2e piece, it can be very isolating and often you don't know where to turn. And so that's what we're trying to do. As we are a non-profit and we're very small and you know, we do need the support of families and communities out there to keep going. But we had been for three years now, 35 years and we will continue to do so as long as we can.

But yeah. I would encourage the listeners to check us out and if they can support in some way or another, that would be awesome because I really believe in this mission. I believe it is so important because I believe we may be one of the only organizations out there that really supports that social emotional part of the child and the adult and we, we tackled giftedness all the way from birth to elder. So we need to do a better job of doing more stuff for gifted adults. But, that is kind of what we do.

Debbie: When I first launched till I got a lot of comments from listeners who were thanking me for including giftedness is one the neuro differences that, that we talk about here. And because I think that giftedness in the mainstream, there's this idea that gifted, no problem, what do you have to, you know, complain about? And I remember a parent coach that we worked with when my son was quite young and she was the first one to say, well, being highly gifted as a special need. And that was mind blowing to me. I had never considered that, so I think it's just, it's a nice reminder that it isn't just about accelerated learning. It's not just about pushing kids up, it's that these kids experience the world in a much more intense way and they do need to be supported emotionally, mentally. The whole person, as you said.

Dr. Postma: This is one of the most vulnerable populations out there, they are affected by daily events, they are affected by daily news. I remember back when 9/11 happened, we were losing friends and communities that were just falling into deep depression and that can be devastating. If they don't have that social emotional support, that development of those types of social emotional habits that are to help them navigate through the day. They can be lost. There is a lot of work being done. I think a Dr Tracy Cross, over Woman Mary is doing a lot of work on suicide and depression with gifted individuals and you know, the numbers are staggering, but the vulnerability is, is really out there and there's so many struggles. We hear so many stories of folks just trying to cope with life and in an age where, you know, these, these anxieties are increasing in a measure. If you turn on the television, we have a lot of folks that we tell them just turn off the television. Don't watch the news, I mean you almost can't anymore because it can affect them so deeply and so intensely and if they don't have the coping mechanisms there, they're bound to do something that is not very positive.

Debbie: I really appreciate you saying that. Especially because in these times that we're living in, you know, we're talking about kids. A lot of our listeners are kids are

elementary, middle school age and there is always that balance of wanting to protect them and also wanting them to kind of as age appropriate, you know, let them know what's going on. But I do also agree that especially at this population, these highly sensitive kids that we need to be careful. My son was super obsessed with politics and he told me a few months ago we were watching Seth Meyers recaps of what's going on. And he said to me a few months ago, you know, and I think I need to stop watching this. It's making me depressed. And so we just stopped talking about the daily grind and what's going on. And I was happy he recognized that. But I think it's an important message for parents to just be aware that our kids are feeling these things maybe more intensely than we realize

Dr. Postma: Very much more intensely in it. It does have effect. It does have damage to the sensory prints and how they build on the brain. It has been found that the sensory prints - the intake of information through senses. There's a larger band and gifted in especially twice exceptional kids than it is in regular students, but they don't have the mechanism to cope with it, so they're. They're taking in information and a vast rate and that sensory piece is just stays there. These memories implant themselves in the implant themselves in a dense fashion, but again with other coping mechanism to support it and it can really be an effect. And I'm not saying you ignore the news but the type of exposure. You can limit exposure and you can talk about the news with family members, especially younger children. You know they have certain ages, they don't need to know, but as they get older and develop, they will know.

Dr. Postma: These are things you talked through and you talk about probability, you talk about, you know, the reality of, you know, for instance, this latest incident in Vegas, it's very difficult to cope with, as a highly intense person, especially a child. And I think the defense there is, you know, the probability of that actually happening is pretty low. It did happen. There may be another time it will happen again, but you know, the probability of you been involved in that? So everything is very low. Now, the other piece to is they still have to understand and be able to cope with how the world operates. There's a high sense of justice, there's a high sense of empathy with gifted children and that is another challenge in terms of helping them to cope with a world that sometimes is just not very fair.

Debbie: Absolutely. So before we wrap up, I also just wanted to make sure that listeners know that many communities have actually parent led groups. Correct? At first SENG, I know that at one of Asher's schools. There was a parent group that was a- It was a course that parents could kind of go through. Is that something that if it's not available in a parent's school they can connect with SENG and start their own group? How does that work?

Dr. Postma: Yeah, we have facilitators or across the country and even internationally and what we generally like if if a parent is interested to first contact their local school and maybe see if they are their local gifted coordinator, see if there's

anything available. They don't have anything available. They can look at the state site. They may have some information because we do. We run groups here and there, but it really depends on how many parents. They generally like to have a group of parents together rather than just a few. So you know, getting out there and finding a number of like parents who are interested and then contacting SENG, contact me, contact the office, and we have facilitators all over the place that we can alert and say, hey, there's a group forming in, let's say a Buffalo, New York for instance, that it would like to have be facilitated. Then we'll find someone that's close if we don't have someone close. We're also doing facilitator training, so if someone wanted to be trained as a facilitator, we run those as well. So yeah, we're, we do have access and resources.

There are some places we don't have a lot of access to more remote places that though we've also formulated something called SENG connect and the idea behind SENG connect that we can do these groups and alongside other support groups online through an online portal. I'm like Google hangouts or google classroom and in those groups we don't need to have folks all coming together in the same room so to speak. So we have actually groups going on right now. We have adult support groups for 2e that I just kicked off last week. We've had homeschooling groups, um, got more groups coming up in January and we're also encouraging folks to come into SENG Connect because there's a, there's bulletin boards, there's resources. Someone wants to start a chat groups. They can just go on and start to attract groups in him. Interest in dealing with perfectionism in my child anyone else want to meet with me at a time and a date, that's the intent of SENG Connect, to really be able to connect folks all over the place, without having to actually organize a specific group. So we're trying to hit it in both ways through the digital world and also through in person and we're trying to reach more folks with that.

Debbie: That's fantastic. What a great resource. Again, listeners, I'll make sure you have links to all of this and I highly recommend you check out the website. That's just so much great content on there and then now I'm going to be signing up for some of these forums because I could use that support myself.

Dr. Postma: There's, if they have questions, they can certainly email me at any time. You know, we have membership options where if they come to the conference itself is just an amazing event and I wouldn't normally say I go to a lot of educational conferences and a lot of conferences I speak at and there's just nothing quite like the SENG conference where you have so much access to the experts who are just like you, down to earth and just the conversations and the comradery is just, it's incredible. Our next conference is in San Diego in July nineteenth through 20 second and there's information when that probably coming up soon, but it's just a great resource or biggest complaint last year was that the folks couldn't attend every session, didn't have enough time to download, you know, because so much information coming at them. So again, I know I'm plugging my own organization, but...

- Debbie: That's part of why we had you on, it's a great organization that I want our listeners to know about it. So plug, plug away
- Dr. Postma: We are in our membership campaign where in donor campaign we need support and again we're small and we're trying to grow. We are a non-profit. So, you know, there is a tax deductible donation if you're interested in, we really would like to keep going and we would really like to keep supporting the cause for folks all over the world. We're actually just starting to, we're going to start launching SENG Canada and SENG Europe and hopefully no other organs, you know, affiliate organizations and we just were on a mission to reach people everywhere, and the more we reach, the more people we can help. I think the better. That is our standard of success for us is how many folks we can reach and support.
- Debbie: Well that's great. Well, I'm currently living in the Netherlands, so I look forward to SENG Europe happening and watching SENG grow all over the world. So I had one last question. Do you have time for one last question? We're running a little long, but a lot of this has been kind of heavy and that's the reality for a lot of us raising these fascinating children. Do you have any advice, maybe one word of advice for parents who are raising a complicated, gifted, twice exceptional kid on how they can best support or advocate for them, especially in a school setting, if they're not in a position where they can homeschool, they're not in a position where they can afford one of the few private schools catering to kids like their child.
- Dr. Postma: I'm not sure I have one word. It's tough, but being the advocate sometimes you might be the only advocate they have, so you have to know your kids. You have to understand them. You make sure that you have some sort of identification so that you really can understand who they are because you can't advocate for them if you don't know who they are, how they learn, where their strengths are, what their interests are. What are the weaknesses? You know too often we take a remedial approach to these kids and we hammer on the remedial approach when quite honest, if they really need to need to work on their strengths first. It is through the strengths that you could build their weaknesses and cause if there is subjected to a more remedial approach they getting very frustrated, getting angry and despondent and, you know, they, they either lash out or they become passive and internalize and then I actually am more scared of kids internalizing then I am with kids lashing out, and for teachers, you know, started recognizing these traits and understanding. So for parents, I always, you know, be the advocate and see if we can find an ally finding at least one ally in the school system that is willing to listen, willing to understand and support and eventually you can, you can build that coalition.
- Debbie: That's great advice. Thank you. Well listen, I just want to thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today. This has been super insightful. We haven't done a ton of episodes around this population, so I know it's going to be really

well received, so thank you for sharing and good luck with your work at SENG and your mandate and we look forward to watching it grow.

Dr. Postma: Thank you very much. It was my pleasure.

Debbie: You've been listening to the TiLT Parenting podcast for the show notes for this episode, including links to Dr Postma's website, his new book, *The Inconvenient Student*, SENG and all the other resources we discussed. Visit tiltparenting.com/session86, and don't forget to check out my *After the Show* short video where I share my top takeaways from my conversation with Dr Postma. You'll find the link on the show notes page or you can go straight to tiltparenting.com/aftertheshow. If you like what you heard on today's episode, I would be grateful if you could take just a minute to head over to itunes and leave a rating or a review. And if you're looking for a little bit of extra emotional support, you might want to try my differently wired seven day challenge. I'll send you a short video each day for one week aimed at helping you shift your experience. One thought and action at a time. Sign up until parenting.com/sevenday. Thanks again for listening. For more information on till parenting, visit www.tiltparenting.com. Yeah.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- Dr. Michael Postma's website, [Gifted Matters](#)
- [SENG](#) (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted)
- [*The Inconvenient Student: Critical Issues in the Identification and Education of Twice-Exceptional Students*](#) by Dr. Michael Postma
- [Dr. Devon MacEachron on Supporting 2e Learners](#) (podcast episode)
- [The Search for Shangri-La: Finding the Appropriate Educational Environment for Gifted and Twice-Exceptional Children, a Parents' Guide](#) (article in *2e Learners* by Dr. Postma)
- [SENG Annual Conference](#)
- [SENG Community and SENG Connect](#)