

EXTENDED SYNOPSIS

At age 17, Micki appears confident, capable, and ready to lead her own orchestra.

But she did not always feel that way.

Looking back on her childhood, she remembers being a bright and curious girl who loved music, cared deeply, worked hard, and wanted to succeed. She also remembers the confusion and frustration of feeling that school demanded more from her than she believed it demanded from other students.

Beginning in her early school years, Micki sometimes misses instructions, drifts away mentally, struggles to begin tasks, becomes distracted, and studies for long periods without receiving the results she expects.

She is intelligent and determined, and her grades are often good enough that adults may not immediately recognize the depth of her struggle. Her ability and effort help her compensate, but compensation has a cost.

Micki begins to believe that if she simply works harder, focuses more, studies longer, or becomes more disciplined, she will finally perform the way she thinks she should.

She keeps trying.

When the results do not change enough, the explanation turns inward.

Perhaps she is not smart enough.

The orchestra metaphor gives shape to Micki's internal experience. Her mind is filled with instruments—thoughts, emotions, instructions, responsibilities, worries, ideas, and distractions. Each instrument may be meaningful, but they do not always enter at the right time or follow the same score.

Without understanding, the music can feel like noise.

The book follows Micki through public and private school experiences, family conversations, academic pressure, growing self-doubt, and the

eventual identification of ADHD and vision challenges.

Her father's journey is also part of the story. He initially believes that greater effort and focus may solve the problem. Later, he recognizes his delay in understanding and fully supports her efforts to thrive and raise above her ADHD and vision challenges. Her mother is initially more open to the possibility that something else may be happening, but the family must still move gradually toward clarity.

When Micki finally learns that ADHD and related challenges have affected the way she processes school, she experiences something she has needed for years: relief.

The diagnosis does not excuse every difficulty, erase responsibility, or eliminate the need for effort. It gives her a more accurate explanation and access to tools.

She begins learning how her brain works.

She begins learning how her eyes work.

She begins learning how she works.

Treatment and weekly in-person vision therapy become part of her journey. So do practical strategies, support, and increasing self-awareness.

Most importantly, Micki begins rebuilding confidence.

She realizes that the orchestra was never proof that she was incapable. It was evidence that she needed the sheet music and the ability to conduct.

The emotional arc moves deliberately from confusion to frustration, self-doubt, clarity, self-understanding, and empowerment.

By the end, Micki has not become perfect, and every challenge has not disappeared. She has gained something more durable: an understanding of herself.

That understanding changes how she interprets difficulty, asks for support, uses her strengths, and imagines her future.

Written by a 17-year-old African American author and inspired

substantially by her own life, ***Learning To Conduct, My ADHD***

Journey is intended for middle-grade readers while offering important insight to parents, teachers, counselors, and communities.

It is the book Nia wishes someone had given her earlier—a story that tells struggling students:

You are not broken.

You are not alone.

You may simply need understanding, tools, support, and the opportunity to learn how to conduct your own music.