Strength Happens Advocacy 101

In this episode of Strength Happens, Janine and Jill explore the heart of advocacy through the lived experience of parenting children with disabilities and chronic illnesses. They reflect on why advocacy so often becomes a necessity, not a choice, and share personal stories of navigating complex medical systems. Together, they unpack what effective advocacy looks like in real life...trusting your instincts, communicating clearly, building collaborative relationships with professionals, and gradually empowering children to use their own voices. The episode closes with a grounding reminder: advocacy is a learnable skill, and every voice matters,even the quiet ones.

> “Advocacy is about using your voice.”

Key Takeaways

- Advocacy is often a necessity for parents of children with disabilities or chronic illness.
- Trusting your gut matters—especially when something doesn’t feel right.
- Advocacy means using your voice to stand up for your child’s needs.
- Our advocacy sets an example for our children.
- Advocacy can be exhausting, but it is essential to effective caregiving.
- Strong relationships with medical professionals support better outcomes.
- Support systems (family, friends, community) make advocacy sustainable.
- Teaching self-advocacy is a gradual, age-appropriate process.
- Medical systems can feel overwhelming due to power imbalances.
- Advocacy includes finding the right professionals and supports.

> “Advocacy isn’t a choice,
> it is a necessity.”

Reflections

- Where have you already been advocating—even if it didn’t feel like it at the time?
- What does using your voice look like for you right now?
- Who is part of your advocacy support system?