

7 Crucial Tips for Parents and Teachers of Children with ADHD



Bryan L. Hutchinson

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The information in this eBook may help improve a child's life.

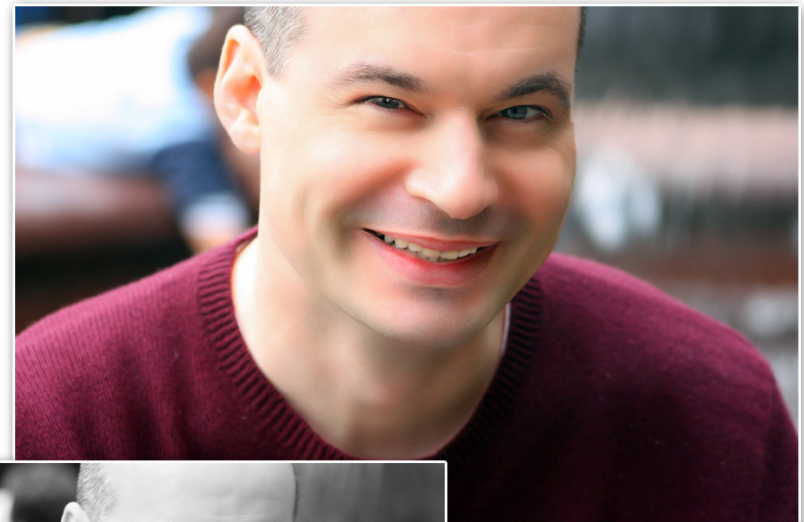
Adults with ADHD and partners may benefit as well.

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Who is Bryan Hutchinson?

Bryan is an adult with ADHD, the author of three books in print about ADHD and five eBooks. He is a world renowned book author and online blogger who writes about his experiences with ADHD and the founder of the [ADDer World](#) ADHD Social Network. He's sometimes humorous and sometimes serious, but he's always insightful, positive and enthusiastic. Bryan is humanizing the depiction of ADHD one word at a time. He believes each person is special and unique, well able to overcome their struggles and live out their dreams and passions. Bryan truly believes we are all better than we sometimes think we are.

For more information about Bryan, please visit his blog: adderworld.com.



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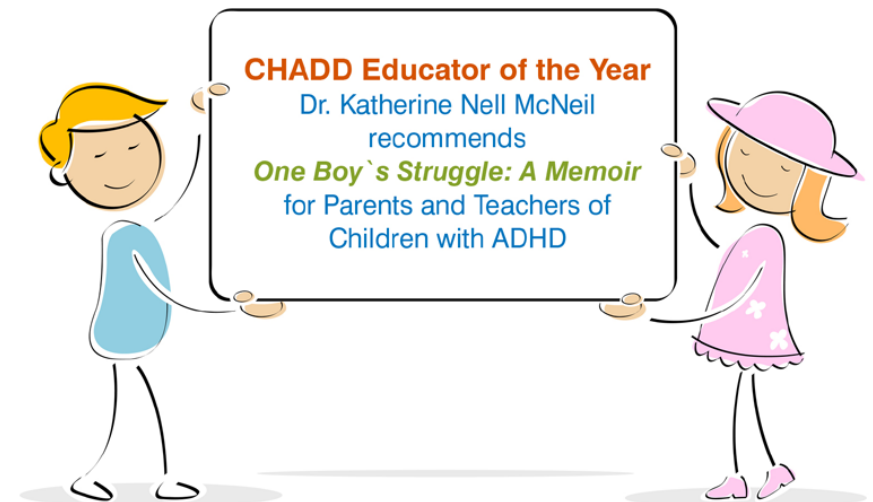
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Dedication & Thank You

This eBook is dedicated to all of the outstanding parents, teachers and professionals of the world who strive to improve the lives of children everywhere. Your task is the most challenging, the most important and clearly should be the most rewarding.

A special thank you to Dr. David A. Crenshaw and Dr. Catherine Avery for providing forwards to this eBook. I am deeply honored for your contributions. —Dr. Crenshaw, clinical child psychologist, is the director of Rhinebeck Child and Family Center, LLC.

Dr. Avery, clinical psychologist, is the author of *Life at Full Throttle: ADHD in Adults*.

And, **thank you** very much for downloading this free eBook. You are more than welcome to share it. *Please do*. At the end of this eBook

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This eBook is written in the sense of true friendship, compassion and hope. In these respects I am reminded of a certain quote and believe it fits perfectly in this eBook.

This particular quote frames nicely what my writing is always about:

“ A true friend knows your weaknesses but shows you your strengths; feels your fears but fortifies your faith; sees your anxieties but frees your spirit; recognizes your disabilities but emphasizes your possibilities. ”

~William Arthur Ward

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Foreword



David A. Crenshaw, Ph.D., ABPP



Bryan Hutchinson has written an uncommonly helpful, down-to-earth, immensely practical and readable eBook for parents and teachers of those who suffer from ADHD. As in his previous writings, Bryan courageously shares his own story of his ADHD not being recognized and in fact was undiagnosed until well into adult life. Bryan's wish to make this book available free as an eBook is

borne of his desire to spare others the same struggles and anguish that undiagnosed ADHD can create in the lives of children and adults.

The seven practical tips shared by Bryan are quite sensible and useful whether you are a parent or a teacher. Many of the suggestions that Bryan makes may be things you are already doing as a parent or a teacher but I think in that case you will find this book validating of your good judgment and common sense. Others will benefit greatly by viewing ADHD in a new way and will appreciate the user-friendly and easy to implement tips he offers. Many will agree with the wisdom of the practical advice that Bryan shares in this book but may find it challenging to put these insights into everyday practice. Don't be discouraged because parenting or teaching is not a "walk in the park" even when the children are not faced with challenges like ADHD or learning disorders. Patience, perseverance, and practice

will enable you over time to integrate the concepts that Bryan so capably delineates in this manual.

I particularly like Bryan's appreciation of strengths in those who face challenges whether in learning or with ADHD. I applaud his emphasis on finding the natural talents of children and encouraging the development of areas of interest and skill in the child instead of over focusing on deficits. The deficit-approach that derived from the medical model of looking at pathology under the microscope in order to diagnose the disease is a very limiting way to view human beings. Bryan does not fall into that trap and urges an appreciation of the whole person, his or her deficits but also giving equal attention to the resilience and strengths of the child. What a generous undertaking by Bryan to make this book available widely at no cost. Many will profit and benefit but most of all those children who suffer ADHD that too often is still greatly misunderstood. ~

David A. Crenshaw, Ph.D., ABPP

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Foreword



Catherine Avery, Ph.D.



Parents and teachers often grapple with how to best manage children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD. Although there are many resources that offer specific recommendations, Bryan Hutchinson, in his eBook *7 Tips for Parents and Teachers of Children with ADHD*, provides general principles on how

to nurture an ADHD child and to provide the foundation for personal success.

Bryan writes from his heart—for these tips are ones that he wishes his parents had been aware of when he was growing up with undiagnosed ADHD. As a child, Bryan was misunderstood by his parents and teachers, and rather than being supported and encouraged for his many talents, he was severely punished for behaviors that were beyond his control. Bryan survived and prospered due to his indomitable spirit and through the help of a kind and insightful therapist. Rather than celebrating his personal achievements through narrowly focused self-advancement, Bryan has dedicated his adult life to helping others with ADHD.

The fact that Bryan cares deeply about ADHD children is evident throughout this eBook. Bryan presents seven basic principles

that will bolster the self-esteem of ADHD children, while being mindful of their need for structure and consequences. Although he understands the frustrations that parenting an ADHD child can create, having experienced the confusion and self-doubt of an undiagnosed ADHD child, he is a tireless advocate for ADHD children and a resource for parents and teachers.

In addition to his highly acclaimed books *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir – Surviving Life with Undiagnosed ADD*, *The Brilliant Reality of ADHD*, and *Adult ADHD can be Sexy*, Bryan is the founder of the ADHD Social Network, ADDer World, which offers a safe haven for ADHD adults to congregate and share concerns as well as advice. The ADHD world is very fortunate to have Bryan as their advocate. ~

Catherine Avery, Ph.D.

Author of *Life at Full Throttle: ADHD in Adults*

www.lifeatfullthrottleadhd.com

Introduction

“ Learn from yesterday, live for today,
hope for tomorrow.

~Albert Einstein

This eBook is about the most crucial tips I can possibly give those who I consider to be the most important people in the world: parents and teachers! After all, the future is in your hands. Children are our future. These seven crucial tips are for the most part from my first book, *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir— Surviving Life with Undiagnosed ADD*. I'll be discussing and sharing with you parts of *One Boy's Struggle* throughout this eBook.

I have the most profound admiration for parents and teachers the world over, especially those of special needs children. I am offering this eBook free of charge because my insights and recommendations are the things I believe could have helped me as a child. The tips I share with you are not as easy to find as one would think and yet some of these tips will seem so obvious that they may be overlooked at times. The tips I have provided here I believe to be the most crucial from a psychological standpoint.

One Boy's Struggle has been a vehicle for me to tell the story about my life with ADHD (ADHD inattentive). It was important for me to give you the details, no matter how painful they were to write. It was also just as important for me to share those things that could have helped me in my situation as a child with ADHD, and later what has helped me as an adult finally diagnosed with ADHD. Joel Goodsen, Ph.D wrote this in a review of *One Boy's Struggle*:

“The book also provides a healthy dose of excellent, practical tips that people can relate to—because they are all couched in real-life stories, i.e. accounts from the author's life. The book is not scientific in nature, one learns from it by ‘experiencing’ how a young man overcame some tremendous obstacles to eventually reach a relatively healthy, well-balanced life.”

Writing *One Boy's Struggle* was an extremely emotional undertaking. It was originally conceived as a therapeutic effort to write down my experiences, my thoughts about those experiences, and what I have done as an adult to cope with them effectively.

“One Boy’s Struggle has become something of a cult classic amongst the ADHD community.”



Melissa Orlov, author of *The ADHD Affect on Marriage* wrote this about *One Boy’s Struggle*:

“The heart-wrenching description of Hutchinson’s traumatic childhood is great reading for adults trying to understand more completely how undiagnosed ADHD can distort a person’s life and the actions of those around him or her. It provides a tutorial in how and why people with ADHD develop coping strategies that don’t always seem to be in their best interests and is worth the read just for that.

However, the critical message for adults is what comes next—Hutchinson’s journey to understand himself, his acceptance of his ADHD, his accomplishments and, finally, his happiness. He talks openly about the resentment and shame his childhood induced and shares some of the ways he has overcome his past and his ADHD. His journey of learning and redirection will inspire many, I hope, to traverse a similar path. ‘One Boy’s Struggle’ is a quick read—let it inspire you to take on the challenges you face.”

Indeed, my childhood was traumatic in nature, not only at home, but also at school. Prior to therapy and writing my memoir, I was torturously embarrassed about my past. Writing it down in detail was difficult, but doing so helped me realize how far I had come and, more importantly, the truth of what I had overcome. Rationally, I know that there is no reason for me to be ashamed or embarrassed and although I have for the most part conquered those things, every now and then they still tap me on the shoulder and let me know that I’ll never be completely rid of them. Are any of us? But I know we can overcome them enough to lead positive, constructive and fruitful lives.

One Boy’s Struggle has become something of a cult classic amongst the ADHD community, but I tend to think that has nothing to do with me. It’s more about the reality that unfolds in my story, how closely so many readers can relate to similar life experiences and that even under such circumstances, **hope** can be found.

“I was constantly under pressure as a child and because of that I lived in a constant state of anxiety.”

I was constantly under pressure as a child and because of that I lived in a constant state of anxiety. In the recent years since publishing my first book and introducing my blog, I have heard from so many adults with ADHD who have had similar emotional experiences. So many have lived lives filled with worry, grief, shame and remorse. It's important to note here that these are not ADHD symptoms per se; however, they may be the unfortunate consequences of living with ADHD.

These emotional feelings can take a demoralizing toll on us and, from what I learned in therapy, these emotions, beliefs, and inner turmoil can be just as problematic as ADHD symptoms are—perhaps even more so. The combination is truly disabling. Who wants to see their child become an adult riddled with such inner turmoil? I know you don't or you wouldn't be reading this. Let's do something about it together.

I am not surprised by reports showing that there may very well be a high rate of undiagnosed ADHD adults in the prison system. I am also not surprised when I read a headline in the newspaper about a tragic occurrence, even deadly, involving someone with ADHD, either as the culprit or as the victim. This should **not shock us** anymore. Instead, we need to do something about it for today's children growing up with ADHD.

I believe we can.

Above all, I am not surprised that so many adults with ADHD have a very difficult time holding down a regular job. In addition to problematic ADHD symptoms, Adults with ADHD are too often depressed, frustrated, upset and ultimately confused by their own behavior, about who they are and what they have to offer. Later, in **the section on Professional Therapy**, I will give you details as to why adults with ADHD may have so many difficulties and emotional turmoil beyond their problematical ADHD symptoms.

A condensed look at how ADHD affected me as a child psychologically



For a long time I believed the worst about myself and constantly inflicted my own punishment with self-deprecating thoughts. The worst was that I bullied myself in social settings by making degrading jokes about myself in order to blow off my mystifying and seemingly ridiculous behavior. I started bullying myself in grade school; it became a survival skill I used for most of my life. In my experience, no one can inflict as much punishment as we can on ourselves, and this is coming from someone who knows punishment intimately.

In school I would beat bullies to the punch by belittling myself first in an attempt to stop them or minimize their assumed power. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't, but either way I came away feeling bad about myself.

Too many people without ADHD just don't understand why anyone would behave in the ways someone with ADHD does. After all, they may have been taught and believe that many of the symptoms should be overcome with proper discipline and punishment. The thing about ADHD is that what constitutes proper discipline or punishment varies and, as was true in my case, can backfire with dire, life-lasting consequences. I highly recommend that every parent, teacher, and adult with ADHD read my book *One Boy's Struggle* to gain a fuller understanding of what I mean here.

I cannot relate in this short eBook the absolute importance of understanding the consequences of a life with ADHD that is either undiagnosed, or perhaps even worse, not treated as a serious disorder that may very well have traumatic consequences. It is with tears in my eyes that I write this, hoping that my message will somehow get through to anyone reading who still does not understand or still believes that proper discipline or punishment is the ultimate answer. Even today, even now at this very moment, I still feel the pain.

My childhood with undiagnosed ADHD resulted in my developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and chronic depression. I eventually sought professional therapy to help me, and thankfully it did. Professional therapy saved my life in more ways than I thought I could ever relate to readers. It is from what I learned in therapy that I have become one of

“I feel it is part of my responsibility to give back by helping others in their journey to overcome the potential devastation a life with ADHD can create.”

the most well-known bloggers on the Internet, blogging about life with ADHD from a positive perspective. Yes, a positive perspective.

If I could come out of the darkness from where I was in mind and body at the age of 28, when I first entered therapy, to where I am today, I believe others can too. I feel it is part of my responsibility to give back by helping others in their journey to overcome the potential devastation a life with ADHD can create. We can all be more than we think we can. I truly believe that with all of my heart.

The seven tips which I have put together in this eBook should perhaps have been included at the end of *One Boy's Struggle*. I may one day publish a revised edition with this list included or publish this eBook in print as a companion book. Feedback from you will help me decide.

Please keep in mind while reading that I only write from my experiences, what I have learned and believe may help others. My writing is in no way intended as medical advice or otherwise. I am not a doctor or a therapist. I am giving you my perspective, my insight into life with ADHD, especially growing up as a vulnerable child with undiagnosed ADHD. These tips are from my memoir, and I will elaborate on them for you. When I use terms such as ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘ours’, I am doing this for simplicity’s sake. I am only speaking from my experiences, my interpretations and my life-lessons.

It is my hope that if this eBook benefits you in some way, you will do me the honor of sharing it. Please pass this eBook on and pass on the importance of treating ADHD professionally. Identifying and treating the symptoms of ADHD when they first become recognized can lead to the best possible emotional and educational outcome for every child. As parents and teachers you already have the most difficult and challenging roles in the world. ADHD adds a huge amount of responsibility, understanding and care. However, I know that you are more than willing and able to assist the wonderful ADHD children of the world armed with the crucial information that would have helped me and many others like me.

7 Crucial Tips for Parents and Teachers of Children with ADHD



There are many helpful tips on the Internet and in books about how an ADHD child may learn to become organized, complete common tasks and many other excellent management tips. The tips I present in this eBook are not like those. The tips I present in this eBook I believe will help set up a necessary foundation to better facilitate organizational and task oriented coping skills. Many readers have their favorite tips and suggestions from my book *One Boy's Struggle*. The following tips are the ones I find to be the most crucial for parents and teachers.

“The tips I present in this eBook I believe will help set up a necessary foundation to better facilitate organizational and task oriented coping skills.”

1 Avoid harsh punishment because it may have lasting and devastating effects

“ Discipline must come through liberty. We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined.

~Maria Montessori

– *The Montessori Method of education* is based on her research and named after her, using the child's true normal nature.

There is no message I want to put out there that is more important than this message. *One Boy's Struggle* has been a medium above all for the message that the impact of harsh punishment (corporal punishment) is lasting and can only be detrimental to a child's development.

Spanking and other physical and psychological punishment may provide children with ADHD a dose of adrenalin that helps stimulate their minds into action. However, I wrote in *One Boy's Struggle* how this type of dose of adrenalin is deceiving. The reason is that it may seem that all that was needed was a quick dose of punishment to correct the child's behavior. And, as with medication that provides stimulation to the ADHD brain, one dose is never enough to be lasting day to day. Eventually, the adrenalin rush wears off and the ADHD child is back where he or she was, or worse.

Harsh punishment **can** produce lasting **negative mental and emotional consequences** for children. They may begin to believe that they do not measure up, that they are not good enough. They then may develop the perception that their parents and/or teachers dislike them and that they are worthless. The mind can play devastating tricks on a developing self-esteem and the more one is punished, the more these negative thoughts and beliefs solidify.

An ADHD child's behavior and the lack of improvement from any type of punishment can be confusing, upsetting and frustrating to the adult trying to help a child become a better student and do chores responsibly around the house. Having a child with ADHD

or any learning disorder requires extra patience and consideration for that child even when you may already be overwhelmed with your job and other family responsibilities.

Teachers are in a similar boat and have a multitude of students with various issues and typically do not have enough time to get to know each student as well as they would like. Sometimes they are compelled to call out inattentive or daydreaming children in front of the class to answer questions in order to get them to 'snap out of it' or to teach them to better pay attention. This technique may only serve to embarrass the ADHD child and further damage his or her self-esteem. And children being children, they will make fun of the self-conscious child because the teacher basically just did the same thing in their eyes.

Once the name-calling starts from the child's peers (such as "You're a dummy! – Moron! The teacher thinks you're stupid!" and it can get far worse), these names can be internalized and the mental stress on the child increases exponentially, leading to even more developmental delays. Worse, the child more than likely already has social difficulties and when bullying starts he or she may withdraw from others, living in daily fear and worry. This in turn leads to yet more difficulty in learning and developing. You can see how this may snowball quite quickly. Parents and teachers may not realize what is truly going on, but the only way to start helping is to recognize the issues such as those I describe here.

"I bet anyone reading this can remember something that was said to him or her as a child that was hurtful and has continued to echo through the ages."

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words may break my heart and soul to keep. I bet anyone reading this can remember something that was said to him or her as a child that was hurtful and has continued to echo through the ages. I don't need to tell anyone that words said to children that are hurtful, degrading or demoralizing are not only remembered, but they are all too often taken literally. Apologizing to a child or trying to explain that the words were spoken in haste just doesn't seem to work.

Remember those words from childhood that you have never forgotten? Not only are words lasting, but they can hold children back in their education, in their emotional well being and in their social behavior.



I am not trying to say that there shouldn't be any form of discipline instilled in children at home or at school, but rather that it must be well thought out and considered, because there is no such thing as a quick fix that will 'snap' a child into acceptable behavior. For example, privileges may be revoked for a certain amount of time or reward points taken away. I'll talk more about reward points in a moment.

Effective discipline is discipline that works **long term** and **empowers** a child to want to strive and do the right thing as best as he or she can. It can be as unique and individual as the child who is being disciplined. Knowing how to discipline children begins with understanding each of them, how they learn, and how they process the world around them. It's worth it in so many wonderful ways.

“Effective discipline is discipline that works long term and empowers a child to want to strive and do the right thing as best as he or she can. It can be as unique and individual as the child who is being disciplined.”

2

Understand children as well as possible

“ You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

~Plato

I know how obvious it seems that parents should get to know their children or a teacher should get to know their students, but when it comes to children with ADHD, this concept goes to the next level.

It is imperative to try to understand how the child thinks, learns and processes information in the world around him or her. This knowledge can be gained by observation, active listening and by asking questions about certain actions rather than immediately punishing a child for his or her misbehavior. However, when I was a child my most common answer was that I didn't know why I had done something. I really didn't know. That's the clinker, *I truly didn't know*.

ADHD is about uncontrolled impulses, distraction and in some, hyperactivity, among various other symptoms that play havoc with children's natural expected development. Of utmost importance for parents and teachers to realize is that these symptom behaviors are not exhibited 'on purpose'. Therefore, when a child says he or she doesn't know, he or she could very well be telling the truth. If they are punished enough for the answer of "I don't know" then the punishment could eventually lead to lying just to give some kind of acceptable answer whether it is true or not.

ADHD kids might be a lot of things, but one thing many of them are is **extremely clever** in finding ways to **get out of trouble** or **negotiate their way out**. I consider this to be a type of developed survival skill. If parents and teachers know this then they can be aware not to help develop a child's willingness to fib.

When the child starts to lie or starts showing promise of negotiating to get out of trouble or to get what he or she wants, this can be extremely deceptive to the parents and the teachers involved. *Ah-ha*, the child is actually quite smart and the problem really is a matter of simple laziness. Right? Wrong. It's not a matter of laziness. I'll get back to this shortly in an upcoming tip.

In today's world of both parents working and overfilled classrooms it is very difficult to get to know a child as well as should be. Even so, the more you know the child the better you can discover ways that will help him or her learn, cope with symptoms, complete homework, and accomplish the simple things around the house like cleaning up his or her bedroom. I shall elaborate on this idea more in the next tip.

Here are some other suggestions on how to get to know the children in your life better:

- Play with your children regularly. Kids can become quite relaxed and talkative when playing and they may reveal much of their inner thoughts and beliefs during this valuable time together.
- A great thing to do with a young child is to start doing fun puzzles with them. I don't mean giving them a puzzle and letting them do it on their own or simply teaching them how to do a puzzle *until* they can do it on their own. I mean start something like putting puzzles together with them at a young age, or any age for that matter. Make this a weekly fun event.
- Puzzles help a child in many ways to develop his or her ability to put things together, think out where pieces belong and organize. Putting puzzles together is mentally stimulating; however, the real key is the time spent together with the child, as the child will treasure that time more than anything. If starting this at a later age they may be a little rebellious at first because they are not used to it, but keep trying to connect with them.
- In *One Boy's Struggle* I reveal that as a child whenever I excelled beyond expectations, I got something much more from my parents and teachers at that particular moment.



Can you guess what it was? It was **their time**, of course. It was the same when I was in a special education class. I had an abundant amount of the teacher's *time*. Spending time with your child is the best way to stay connected. It should not be a reward. It should be available unconditionally.

When the child receives an unsatisfactory grade or ignores his or her responsibilities at home, consider how much of your time you have given him or her lately. Your time will not be a cure or a complete solution, but it may well help the child's self-esteem, help him or her stay on track and allow you to have a better understanding of what he or she is struggling with daily.

- Read to children. Pick stories they are interested in and read aloud in an engaging manner. Involve them in what you are reading by asking questions along the way. I know of one mother who read almost everything she picked up out loud to her son when he was still only a baby. I laughed when she told me that she read fashion articles from Vogue and British literature out loud to a two year old. Of course she read children's books, too.

Reading to your children stimulates their imagination, introduces them to new ideas, and gives them the gift of your time. Some of my fondest childhood memories that I still treasure to this day are when my mother read to me. This suggestion isn't meant to eventually teach the child how to read, although it may help reading comprehension and encourage a lifelong love of reading, as it did for me. Even when they start reading on their own, set aside time to continue to read to them or listen to them read to you at least once a week.

- Listen, observe and pay close attention. Sometimes a child may be going through issues that are not obvious. For example a straight A or B student who suddenly starts to fail classes and to withdraw from others could be the victim of bullying or showing signs of a health problem.

In second grade I was put into a special class with individualized instruction for reading and writing. I excelled in that class, but when I returned to my regular class I started to suffer and fail again. This should have been a sign of something out of the norm,

a learning disorder perhaps. Instead, I was punished and told I could ‘do it’ if I really wanted to, as I seemingly already proved in that special reading and writing class.

- Honestly evaluate your ADHD child’s potential as well as his or her limitations. Pride in children is a wonderful thing, but sometimes if one thinks a child is perfect or better than any suggested condition such as ADHD or a learning disorder, assistance and solutions to their situation may be overlooked. I wasn’t diagnosed with ADHD until I was 37 and that was already after nearly a decade in professional therapy.

Depression and PTSD as an adult masked my ADHD symptoms, but when I look back at my childhood, undiagnosed ADHD symptoms were obvious but misinterpreted as laziness, and possibly a lack of respect. Perhaps this was because my parents were so proud of me and I too often displayed confusing high levels of intelligence at random moments. One’s level of intelligence is not a factor in ADHD. Actually, obvious high levels of intelligence may mask the symptoms of ADHD or lead a parent or teacher to mistakenly believe that poor performance is in fact due to laziness or boredom.

“It can be quite complicated for a teacher or parent to fully understand why an otherwise clever and intelligent child is failing academically or not completing tasks at home.”

It can be quite complicated for a teacher or parent to fully understand why an otherwise clever and intelligent child is failing academically or not completing tasks at home. This is one of the reasons why consultation with an ADHD specialist is so important.

- **Be enthusiastic, positive and passionate.** Children, as do adults, respond much better to positive affirmation and confirmation. Positivity is contagious and inspiring. I consider enthusiasm, positivity and passion

to be the power outlets the mind plugs into for abundant energy. Negativity is the opposite and drains power, strength and a can-do attitude. Most people naturally gravitate away from negativity.

Confusing children can be seen as problematic, even confounding. Raising one’s voice at them and using threats to get them to behave may seem to work at times, but over time these genuine but frustrated efforts will discourage children. Consequently they may

develop a negative attitude filled with worry and fear. Instead, consider using a coaching process with consistent positive reinforcement and positive feedback.

Norman Vincent Peale wrote:

“You were not born with the worry habit. You acquired it.”

Please try to remember in frustrating moments that children with ADHD **are not doing what they do on purpose**. Negative feedback used to correct inappropriate behavior may compound the issues you are already working with. On the other hand, positive feedback, support and encouragement have the potential to sow seeds of aspiration and hope, to foster self-worth and ultimately to **bring out the very best in children**.



3

Use positive redirection

“ Don't let what you can't do
stop you from doing what you
can do.

~ John Wooden

This is where knowing and understanding a child really can come into play with positive results. In my book I told readers about a friend of mine, Matt, whose parents discovered he really liked to create his bedroom environment. He frequently enjoyed changing his room around and receiving positive feedback from doing it.

” Kids with ADHD have many confusing behaviors and at times they do such amazing things that just make you scratch your head in astonishment. Matt may have hated cleaning his room, but his parents discovered something invaluable about his behavior and *encouraged* him instead of punishing him. For example, his parents could have taken the angle that he would not be allowed to rearrange his room until it was properly cleaned, but they discovered something else far more valuable.

When Matt wanted to change his room around, as a consequence he actually was cleaning it up at the same time. He wanted things in a particular place and even though he probably didn't realize it, he picked things up and put them in order while changing his room around.

His parents may have slyly used positive redirection by encouraging him to do what he enjoyed and slipped in certain phrases like “That looks good over there, but we could get a great poster to put over on this wall. What do you think, Matt?” and while he answered such a question in eagerness of receiving a new poster to go with his new theme, his parents might have said something like “Well, I don't know, look at your green socks in

that pile on the floor. They don't really match the theme. I would do something about that pile because it just won't do the redesign of your room justice. What do you think, Matt?"

I can imagine quite clearly Matt putting away that pile in a jiffy because this process unintentionally worked on me as well. Who knows, perhaps Matt went on to become an architect or a designer.

Whatever positive redirection Matt's parents used it was contagious. I caught the 'change your room around' bug and went home to do the same thing to my room. I hated cleaning my room and no matter what punishment I received, I never cleaned it, *until*—well, here are two very short excerpts from my memoir, *One Boy's Struggle*:

"First, I had to clean my room, but that was okay because I was so motivated and focused on designing it, that it did not seem like a meaningless chore. I received such positive reviews from my sisters and parents that I began redesigning my room once a week. From then on, I rarely ever needed to be told to clean my room again.

By having Matt redesign his room, she had given him something fun and interesting to do while at the same time accomplishing the ultimate goal of getting the room clean. Matt's mother understood him well and knew how to motivate him by using positive redirection. Children with ADHD especially need positive communication and positive reinforcement from their parents and teachers in order to thrive."

"In order to truly use positive redirection effectively it is absolutely crucial to discover the child's natural talents, abilities and strengths."

In order to truly **use positive redirection effectively** it is absolutely crucial to discover the child's natural talents, abilities and strengths. Not all kids will have the desire to change their rooms around, but there may be something else that could be just as meaningful and useful. It could simply be awaiting discovery.

Children with ADHD are not doomed to failure.

More than 1 person with ADHD and/or a learning disability has founded and owned an airline. Perhaps they enjoyed model airplanes as children? As you know, a simple model airplane can be used to help teach a child many important things like geography, how to read a map and why planes can fly.



4 Foster natural talents, abilities and strengths

“ Every problem has in it the seeds of its own solution.

~ Norman Vincent Peale ”

When a child with ADHD first starts going to school and problematic behavior becomes noticeable, there is a tendency to start correcting the child's shortcomings and focusing on his or her weaknesses. Yes, while it is important to start helping a child improve in school, there also comes with it the potential to unintentionally miss a child's hidden talents, advantageous natural abilities, and true strengths.

I have written many times in my books and on my blog that **natural talents are being lost in today's modern world**. I believe part of the reason is that the focus is so much on getting a proper education, which is, of course, necessary. However, a large part because of that, kids do not have the time and are usually not encouraged to pursue their natural talents and abilities, especially when those talents and abilities do not seem to match up with the education process or are perceived as getting in the way of making good grades.

It's confounding really, because as you probably have heard, and I know I have heard it plenty of times, when we start seeking jobs we are told to look for a job that we enjoy, a job where our natural talents can shine and where we can work in our niche. But really, if we are never truly encouraged in the things we do well and never get a chance early to develop our talents, how can we truly discover and carve out our own niche?

Lots of people with ADHD have a very difficult time holding down jobs, perhaps because not enough consideration was given to their talents and natural abilities they may have displayed as a child. Then later when those talents and natural abilities would have become a benefit, they are extremely underdeveloped and, in some cases, simply forgotten

because they were never practiced or exercised adequately enough. As I've mentioned, this could be a significant part of the reason adults with ADHD have a difficult time finding jobs they are suited for; therefore, they end up in jobs that they do not feel comfortable in, and are not natural at performing. In such situations the symptoms of ADHD may become extremely pronounced and cause havoc far more than they might otherwise. I think for parents, teachers and society as a whole this is worth far more consideration than it is currently receiving. Ultimately, we are all losing out because talents are not typically being developed early in life today.

Here are a few points for consideration:

- The ADHD mind is quite peculiar because **people with ADHD are *not* dumb** and can be quite smart in fact. Just because they are not interested in particular homework assignments or chores does not necessarily mean they are stupid or lazy. However, what is often overlooked due to a child's disinterested and seemingly defiant attitude is that many ADHD children will focus for hours on end on activities they enjoy. This has become known as the ability to hyper-focus and many people with ADHD like me have found this ability to be advantageous in certain situations. I describe how I use hyper-focus in the section on therapy.

Understandably, we can't teach children that they only have to do what they 'enjoy,' but we can take the time to recognize that children with ADHD may have natural abilities and strengths in certain areas, and then foster those abilities to work to their advantage.

- Step back from a frustrating moment when a child is not doing what he or she is told and consider what he or she enjoys doing. Then tap into that talent using redirection. Redirect your request to complete the 'boring' assignment or 'mundane' task by considering the child's unique interests or talents. I believe many ADHD children have brilliant abilities that may not be fully obvious to them and could prove to be quite advantageous to their overall success in life.
- Let children develop their special talents and pursue their interests. When a parent or teacher discovers what a child is great at or what he or she is particularly interested

in reading or learning, they can use that to their advantage to help that child learn in other areas, as well as to assist and encourage them to continue to strengthen their natural talents.

Left to my own resources, I would read endlessly or simply slip into my daydreaming mode. I preferred to escape into my imagination, writing fantastic stories about intergalactic heroes, or drawing for hours. Invariably, everything else, such as schoolwork and chores, was ignored, which of course landed me in trouble more times than I would like to remember. As you can imagine, I was not encouraged to pursue my special interests, but to do what was expected of me at school and at home.

“The more I was discouraged from developing my natural talents, the more my talents were wasted, and the more my mind continued to drift during class and at home.”

The more I was discouraged from developing my natural talents, the more my talents were wasted, and the more my mind continued to drift during class and at home. Well, not entirely wasted because I write everyday now and find creative ways to relate my experiences living with ADHD to those who understand the disorder and to those who don't.

I'm now in my 40's. What if I had been encouraged early in life to pursue writing? I'll never know. Please don't let your child's talents go to waste or allow them to remain so long underdeveloped. Those talents may pay off for him or her in the long run.

- Below is an excerpt from one of my recent blog posts called '[Is the burden of ADHD causing lost childhoods?](#)' which will help clarify my point.

“I remember back in elementary school, second grade, I was temporarily put into a special reading / writing class and the ONLY difference was that there were fewer students, the teacher spent more time on each of us and we had special, individualized learning methods. These things helped me stay focused and learn. In that environment I excelled beyond expectations.

In that class I discovered I loved to read and write. I also discovered then, in that wonderful environment, that I had a talent for writing. Unfortunately,



it would be over a decade or more before I would rediscover my love for writing. To me, this speaks clearly about the major problem for us when we are in the wrong environment for our individual ways of learning.

It's too bad that I did so well in that special class that I had to go back to the normal classroom environment only to have my problems again (you can read the story in *One Boy's Struggle*). I can't help but wonder what my school experience would have been like if it had been individualized as that special class was.

For a short time, as a child, I felt smart and well able to accomplish my lessons. For a short while my mental and emotional outlook was healthy and positive, and when class time was over I was free to be. My experience in that class still benefits me to this day."

- Kids who show an ability to negotiate their way out of trouble, or find loopholes, so to speak, to get out of trouble are also actually displaying creativity in my opinion. Their creativity may be extremely beneficial to them. People with ADHD tend to be known for their unorthodox and 'out-of-the-box' thinking. It could very well be worthwhile to help a child explore his or her creativity. Not only will it help discover other hidden talents the child may have, but it will also help their self-esteem improve.

Children and adults tend to perform much better when their self-esteem is raised to healthy, positive levels. What are the primary things aside from job knowledge that companies always seem to be looking for in new employees? 'Out-of-the-box' thinkers, motivators and those who are passionate about what they do! If job knowledge is equal between possible applicants, or one may seem to have a little less knowledge but is **more passionate and willing to learn**, which one would *you* choose?

- Although it is important to encourage the development of children's strengths and areas of interest, there are times that we need to encourage activities that will develop areas of potential weaknesses. For example, children with ADHD tend to have difficulty in social situations and recognizing non-verbal cues. Sometimes they

“Children who have difficulty in social settings tend to be remarkably aware of this issue and may tend to become withdrawn and genuinely scared to death of joining a club or team sport.”

miss the meaning in verbal cues as well. This is a crucial area in their development and more than likely will affect them in adulthood if not addressed. A way to help children in social settings is to involve them in a team sport or school club that they will enjoy being a part of.

Children who have difficulty in social settings tend to be remarkably aware of this issue and may tend to become withdrawn and genuinely **scared to death** of joining a club or team sport. However, it is remarkable how interested ADHD children may become in their self-growth when they are doing something that they truly enjoy.

In One Boy's Struggle, I told about when my parents signed me up for a bowling team. My mother later told me that at first they were going to pull me back out of it because I was terrified and didn't seem to engage. But perhaps because of the sincere desire of my teammates to see their own team member succeed, I soon let go of my fears and felt comfortable. The people on my team had my back and encouraged me. It felt new and wonderful. I went on to become a pretty good bowler too. The lessons I learned playing and communicating with my teammates still benefits me to this day.

When children are in situations where they have a **self-invested** desire to improve their natural talents and abilities, they then are potentially more open to guidance in other things, both at school and at home.

5

Show love and caring

“ Nothing can be done without
hope and confidence.

~ Helen Keller ”

This seems so obvious doesn't it? But, let's be honest here. A child who has ADHD can be extremely challenging to teach and to raise. Indeed, parents love their children and teachers care about their students. Let's face it though; *sometimes kids just don't recognize this*, and that can be frustrating.

That's a problem for the kids, the parents and the teachers; however, it is not something children can resolve by themselves. This falls mostly on the parents and teachers shoulders. It is up to parents and teachers to get through the message of caring and love. Please keep in mind that kids with ADHD typically have delayed learning, but this doesn't mean they will not eventually *get it*. Don't give up! No, please, never give up on any child for any reason.

Sometimes parents have a hard time showing their love and concern, and it may be expressed through discipline or high expectations. As I realized much later in life, my father was so hard on me mostly because he worried about me growing up and eventually trying to hold down a job. He was a good man, but didn't know any better in dealing with a child like me so he tried his best to correct my behavior. Still, his choice to use severe punishment wasn't the right choice. It took me much longer to develop emotionally and educationally because I lived a life filled with panic and worry.

Living in constant panic and worry can create a sickly person who simply doesn't believe in himself or herself. Panic and worry puts the brain in a constant state of crises

and very few, if any, can perform even half as well as they normally would if they are under constant duress. And that's the complication with most punishment—instead of encouraging the child to perform better it actually may exacerbate the problem and can contribute to physical problems such as ulcers, headaches and many other ailments.

“People in general simply do not typically do their best under negative pressure.”

We used to believe that ulcers were a problem for older people, but they have become a problem for the younger generation as well. People in general simply do not typically do their best under negative pressure, no matter how much it seems as though they do. As I explained in my book, I used to believe that pressure was my antidote to my behavior and constantly inflicted it upon myself to perform better. Unfortunately, it seemed to work and I repeated the process over and over. It's no wonder, really, that depression eventually pulled me down so far that I no longer felt like I could go on.

Here's an idea. Think for a moment about the first time you were in love. I mean really, truly, in love, when it was new and fresh. The world seemed so much brighter. Suddenly you were able to do things you had only dreamed of and you felt like you could leap the tallest buildings. Why was that? Maybe it was because you felt like someone cared about you, thought about you, gave you due consideration and undivided attention. You were loved and cared about. You also loved and cared about that person. It's a powerful feeling that enables us to do things we never imagined that we could. This caring and love can make us feel better overall, to be nicer to others and give things a go that we may have failed at, or not even dared to attempt.

What if it is the same way with children? When children know, I mean **really, truly, without a doubt** know they are cared about, thought about, given due consideration and undivided attention, doesn't it stand to reason they may feel the same way?

As I wrote in *One Boy's Struggle*, my father did something devastating, but I will not include it in this eBook. However, my mother did something that was far, far more powerful and is part of the reason I am who I am today, trying my best to share positive



messages. I will give you an excerpt from *One Boy's Struggle* of what my mother did for me below. It may seem small in this excerpt, but it was profound and healing.

"I fell to my knees on the hard wood floor, and just sat there for hours holding my arms around my shoulders trying to calm my trembling, but it just seemed like it would ever stop. I was always in trouble for something. I had to be so careful, so very careful and consider everything I did. I didn't want to make my dad mad again, but I would, and I knew I would.

I just didn't feel like I had the intelligence that other kids seemed to have. I felt stupid and worthless, and I felt like the best thing for me was to run away or die. Sometime later that day, my mother had come home and I could hear her through the walls yelling at my father. She had a temper herself and they fought for hours. I think she had threatened to leave him. I don't really know, because the walls muffled the actual words and I was still sitting on the floor in my room trying to stop from trembling.

Later on, she came to my room, and I didn't know if she was mad at me too, so I backed away a little bit. She lifted me up gently by the shoulders and helped me to the bed. She didn't say a word; she just stroked my hair back and held me close, and then I started to cry uncontrollably. I never felt so helpless and it was such a relief that my mother still cared about me."

There is nothing more meaningful from one person to another than showing true caring and love. Caring and love can lift spirits, lift one's self-esteem and lead someone to be better than they ever thought they could be. Caring and love are a child's foundation, and it will help them to avoid developing an inferiority complex or worse. Above all, showing heartfelt compassion for children will give them hope.

Help children acquire the power of HOPE

Children should dream of reaching for the stars and if they miss, perhaps they'll at least get some stardust! That's a popular saying isn't it? Of course it is, and there's a very good reason why it has become so popular. Hope may be the most influential aspect of human nature. It takes something very special to give a child with ADHD hope, such as: love, caring, enthusiasm, consideration, coaching and mentoring, but it is so worth it. A reviewer of *One Boy's Struggle* wrote this:

"What makes this book special? On a personal level, my Mom and I **BONDED** over it. While reading it, my mother found me crying and asked what was wrong. I told her what this memoir was about, and let her read it. Once she finished, we cried together. We also laughed because it helped make sense of my own experiences with ADHD.

Though Mom had read a few of the "popular," recommended ADHD books, she had never before understood my behaviors or my feelings. The book is highly readable (especially for someone who has ADHD!) due to its short chapters, its vivid descriptions, and the fast-moving story that moves from pain to triumph. I couldn't put the book down. This book has changed my mindset from one of alienation to one of **hope**."

"Hope inspires confidence, it inspires motivation and it inspires greatness – the word hope is inspiring in and of itself."

In the thousands of emails I have received since publishing *One Boy's Struggle*, there is always one word that seems to ring out above them all and as you've probably guessed, that word is: **hope**. Hope inspires confidence, it inspires motivation and it inspires greatness—the word *hope* is inspiring in and of itself. Hope enables one to have courage even in the most difficult of times.

I wonder if there is any word that means more or is more motivating in the human language. There's a strong argument for *love*, but, of course, love not only brings with it hope, but gives it as well. There's a strong argument for enthusiasm, but again, *enthusiasm* is created from, and creates, hope.

In my opinion, what's most important about hope for a child with ADHD is that it is a helpful antidote to pessimistic thinking. It is extremely easy for a child with ADHD to become a pessimistic thinker and consequently see life from a disadvantaged point of view. It's extremely difficult for anyone to make the best decisions and look forward to a fruitful future with too much self-doubt and possibly, anger. Furthermore, negative thinking can lead people to become unwilling to see that things can improve, or find good things within themselves. Their lives can become an emotional spiral that also affects those closest to them and may lead to self-isolation.

Adverse negative thinking could also lead someone to become friends with destructive thinkers who reinforce their negative self-image. I know parents are always concerned that their child may get mixed up with the 'wrong crowd'. However, unrecognized feelings of hopelessness could inadvertently lead them into the arms of the 'wrong crowd' and this may be avoided.

One of the things that I tend to worry about when I talk with parents that have a child with ADHD is their **fear of getting their child's hopes up**. Of course, it's natural to not want to see a child get hurt or let down, but as you'll find out in this eBook I didn't have any real hope as a child. I was told when I was very young that if I didn't do better in school that I would be digging ditches for the rest of my life. Even though I didn't understand what that meant at the time, I never forgot those words. And you know what? Those were not motivational and did not improve my desire to do better. I did end up digging ditches for a while. Beware of scare tactics that are sometimes used on children, as they **could come true**.

Of course my parents didn't want me to become a ditch digger, although there's nothing wrong with that occupation. I earned good money doing it. I am betting you want your children to achieve something good for themselves as adults as well. And I believe wholeheartedly that they can. Especially with understanding and caring parents and teachers like you who realize what they are dealing with and who get children the help and consideration they need to manage their ADHD symptoms.

“The progression increased my self-esteem. Seemingly from nowhere I began to have hope. It was unlike any feeling I had ever had before.”

Eventually, my therapist’s efforts helped me see that I have value and innate strengths as a person, even with ADHD. After learning this, I ultimately began to believe it and finally exercise those strengths. The progression increased my self-esteem. Seemingly from nowhere I began to have *hope*. It was unlike any feeling I had ever had before.

Once the feeling of hope sparked inside of me I began to see possibilities. I discovered the things I really wanted to do, things I wanted to learn and things I wanted to write about. I would have never dreamed of becoming an author if I hadn’t first developed hope in my life. I’ll give you a glimpse into my experiences with professional therapy soon, after the tips.

When ADHD is effectively managed either with professional therapy or medication, or perhaps both, children with ADHD can endeavor to become whatever their heart desires! Children with ADHD can grow up to be authors, they can be marketing agents, they can be doctors or therapists, and they can be so many other things. The potential for children with ADHD is endless. If this seems like I am overshooting the mark—what if **that** is actually part of the problem? What I mean is that children are highly intuitive and if their parents and/or teachers don’t show belief in them to be able to accomplish things, why should children believe they can?

However, I repeat, it is so important to know and understand a child’s wants, needs and desires—who they are as an individual person. I remember that there were times when my parents showed great pride in me and ‘talked me up’ in front of others, but the problem is that they were talking about things that didn’t interest me and I really wasn’t that good at. This made me feel smaller and underperform even more so. If they had been more in tune with what I truly wanted to do and what I tried to do on my own, that would have given them a better basis for what I was interested in and what I could potentially become good at.

“Aspirations and hope are two main driving factors in living a happy, successful life.”

Here's the information that, had they realized it, could have been used as an affective basis on which to praise me: When I was a young boy just becoming a teen, I would read and write constantly on my own. I also loved to tell stories. The only person in my family that showed any interest in my writing was my little sister. I didn't start getting serious about writing until I was 37 and had been treated with therapy, which as I mentioned had begun to instill hope in me. Had my parents known about my love for writing stories and bragged about me for something so meaningful to me, it really would've made me feel proud of myself and given me confidence and, above all, hope!

Something that can extinguish hope in an ADHD child faster than anything is when they are in situations where they are constantly focusing only on their ADHD symptoms and their weaknesses. In my opinion, kids with ADHD have a better chance of shining when they are focusing more in the areas of their natural strengths and learning to basically manage their weaknesses and their symptoms of ADHD. Of course, it won't help to become a rocket scientist if they grow up to be always financially broke due to mispending, but if money management and only such important skills are the sole consideration in their treatment, then they probably won't become a rocket scientist anyway. Managing the symptoms of ADHD is one thing. **Allowing that to limit their hope is another thing.**

Children don't have to be limited by their ADHD symptoms, especially when they are being treated for them effectively. Aspirations and hope are two main driving factors in living a happy, successful life. It's the journey and not the destination that is important, and hope inspires the journey in a way that nothing else can. Give children as much hope as you can. Instill it. Make the sky the limit, or better yet, **the stars!**

The more parents and teacher seeks out the positives in children, the more enthusiastic they naturally become. When parents and teachers displays such care and belief in children, it not only will help them feel better, but also perform better, even in difficult or uncomfortable situations.



6

Discipline

“ If a reward is tangibly real enough, a person will work harder to receive that reward than he will to avoid punishment.

~ Unknown ”

I am against severe punishment, in any form. However, there is simply no way of getting around some kinds of discipline. It doesn't have to be severe or physical though. We are smarter people about this today and if parents and teachers have taken the due time to truly understand a child, I believe severe punishment can and should be avoided. Besides, as I have tried to point out, severe punishment is ultimately counterproductive and, therefore, typically backfires.

Have you heard of reward systems as forms of rewarding good behavior, but also disciplining bad behavior? As much as ADHD symptoms are for the most part out of a child's control, they still must learn right from wrong in their actions and behaviors. I'll get to professional help in a minute, but let's talk a little about rewards. Children and even adults with ADHD react positively to rewards, especially instant rewards. A reward system can address this aspect of the ADHD mind.

The basics of a reward system are: If a child does a certain number of things correctly, or on time, he or she receives a certain number of points. At a specific number of points the child gets a reward of some sort, smaller rewards at closer together intervals and much larger rewards at more distant intervals.

It's very important, though, to stick to the rewards and come through on the promise if the child achieves the required points, as doing so will create consistency in the child's behavior if he or she reacts well to the reward system. Now the thing is, when the child does something that is not considered good behavior, it is important to take away a

certain number of reward points. When reward points are taken away it takes longer to get to the prize and that's not what any child wants.

A warning though—remember this is a child with ADHD and he or she may collect negative points faster than positive points. The reward system will be utterly ineffective if the child never accumulates enough points to achieve a reward. Therefore, it is important to come up with an individualized system that may work with each child. The reward system isn't for only pointing out negative behavior, but rather to highlight positive, desirable, constructive behavior.

Prizes for the reward system do not always have to be material. They could simply be an extra amount of time playing outside, or playing a video game or watching TV. Again, it is important to know a child as well as possible, because the rewards will be tailored to his or her likes and dislikes. I like the idea of giving extra specified time as a reward and taking a specific amount of time away, because as you may already know it is very difficult for a person with ADHD to recognize time.

For a person with ADHD the concept of time is a huge issue and something I have written about, but it would take up too much space in this eBook. By using time as part of the reward system it may be possible to help children with ADHD learn how much time they actually have for something they care about or, alternatively, for doing something they dislike. If they know they have to rake the leaves for half an hour, they are likely to get to know how long that half hour truly is. Same with if they are given an extra hour to watch TV or play a game—they may learn to appreciate that extra hour a little more if they had to work for it through improving their behavior or school work.

Those are just the simple basics of a reward system. I recommend looking up different kinds of reward systems as a form of discipline and rewarding improved achievement.

I am sure you will find, and possibly modify, a system that is more likely to work in your particular situation.



Children with ADHD need consistent messages, instructions and discipline

I know it is sometimes difficult for parents to maintain a united front, always agreeing on what is best for their child. At times they may also disagree with their child's teachers. That's natural and normal, but for children with ADHD this could play utter havoc with their perceptions of what is expected of them.

Children with ADHD need **consistency** from their parents, teachers and other authority figures, because inconsistent messages can confuse them more than they already are. Mixed messages also enables the **ingenious ADHD mind** to play one parent against the other and could encourage them to develop skills to fib or manipulate others, which in turn could unintentionally become maladaptive coping skills.

This can also potentially happen when one parent sends a child to the other parent to make a decision and then the other parent sends the child back to the first parent for the answer and back again. It was exhausting just writing that. This type of method actually may **speed up** the ADHD merry-go-round in the child's mind.

It's so important to have an understanding of how ADHD effects each child and his or her developing mindset, especially in common situations such as following directions and completing tasks. That way, parents and teachers can potentially avoid unnecessary confusion and behavioral problems before consequences set in.

Another special word of caution

Parents and teachers may consider putting an ADHD child in a corner or putting him or her on restriction alone in a room. However, in *One Boy's Struggle* I explained how this was used as a form of punishment with me and why it was extremely counterproductive to my improvement. It actually may have contributed to my delayed development. This form of punishment, in-fact, enabled my disabilities to become more problematic.

Let me just say that if a child is prone to daydreaming in class and at other inappropriate times, it might not be a good thing to *reward* such behavior with giving them more time to do exactly what is getting them into trouble. Making me stand in a corner or restricting

You know what I wished for as a child?



me to be alone in my room gave me ample time to get lost in my imagination. Approved time to daydream could have been better served as a *reward* to me for good behavior if I had been better understood.

An ADHD specialist can help with finding proper discipline that has a chance of working appropriately, while still maintaining and improving a child's self-esteem.

I wanted my parents to legitimately understand me. I wanted the same thing of my teachers, even if I didn't completely understand myself. I think most kids want this, but it takes a lot of time and commitment. Sometimes it seems there just isn't enough time. When time passes and there hasn't been enough of a connection eventually a child may drift away and then not want to reconnect. It takes time and effort from parents and teachers to regain that connection.

I talk about doing puzzles, reading and playing with children, because that keeps the connection open. Parents and teachers need to actively bond and maintain the bond between adult and child. Bonding may help avoid discipline because constructive and beneficial conversations with a child become possible.

Instead of simply sending children out to play or for recess, what if we go with them a few times a week? Make that normal, and eventually magic will begin to happen as these activities are looked forward to. There are so many missed opportunities for open communication with children. This is unfortunate, and it doesn't have to be that way.

The one or two times that my father gave me his time to play ball with me, those were the most rewarding times I ever spent with him. During those precious moments with my late father I was open, receptive and eager to learn. I felt valued and loved. Isn't that what we all want?

7 Seek professional advice and assistance



If you are not sure your child has ADHD or you suspect he or she may have ADHD, or any type of learning disorder, please seek professional advice and counseling. I highly recommend a specialist in evaluating and treating ADHD. The school counselor may be a good place to start to discover a specialist in your area. In some cases, you may have to travel to a specialist dealing with ADHD, but I assure you it will be well worth it.

It is not always easy for parents to truly get to know their child, especially if the child has already become withdrawn, or has the perception that the truth will get him or her into more trouble. A child therapist may help you in that area and help the child resolve issues he or she may already be dealing with that you might not fully be aware of.

It could be that despite the best efforts of even the best parents and teachers, without the help of a trained specialist, the task of helping a child with ADHD may seem impossible. However, this is not a reflection of anyone's parenting or teaching skills. The good news is that trained specialists for children with ADHD know what they are doing and will do their very best to assist you and give the child the greatest chance for a bright future.

Many believe a combination of child therapy and medication is the best approach for children with ADHD. However, only a trained professional can give proper, accurate information, tailored specifically for each child. Please do seek out the advice of a trained professional.



On the following pages are links that may assist you in finding **helpful resources**.

I have also provided a section of **recommended ADHD books**, which is followed by a section about **professional therapy**.

Resources: Websites

(Click title to go to the resource)

- [Dr. Charles Parker](#) has written an excellent eBook about ADHD medications. Click on his name to go to the book.
- [ADHDclasses](#) offers opportunities to learn more about ADHD in general from expert coaches and other professionals.
- [Adhdfamilyonline](#) a resource for families dealing with ADHD.
- [ADDitude Magazine](#) has a directory on its website to help you locate a healthcare professional, or a coach, or support groups and more. ADDitude is a vast site with many valuable resources.
- [ADD.About.com](#) is an excellent resource for more information about ADHD and many other conditions.
- [ADDA](#) is an organization that helps adults lead better lives with ADHD.
- [CHADD](#) is another excellent organization that helps people with ADHD and their families.
- [Joan Teach](#) has provided outstanding information for teachers and parents about bullies and much more.
- [The Edge Foundation](#) is a site offering coaching for students with ADHD.
- [ADDresources.org](#) also has very good information and resources.
- [ADHD Central](#) has excellent information.
- [The ADHD Social Network](#), [ADDER World](#) is a website I have created for people with ADD/ADHD, their families, friends and for professionals to come together. Visit and meet others in the same boat.

Hope you 'friend' me!

Resources: Books

(Click title to go to the book)

Books for Parents & Teachers

- *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir*
- *The ADD/ADHD Checklist: A Practical Reference for Parents and Teachers*
- *Parenting Children With ADHD: 10 Lessons That Medicine Cannot Teach*
- *The ADD & ADHD Answer Book: Answers to 275 of the Top Questions Parents Ask*
- *The Gift of ADHD Activity Book*
- *Learning To Slow Down & Pay Attention: A Book for Kids About ADHD*
- *Teenagers with ADD and ADHD: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*
- *AD/HD Parenting Handbook: Practical Advice for Parents from Parents*
- *The Survival Guide for Kids with ADD or ADHD*
- *Making the System Work for Your Child with ADHD*
- *Reverence in the Healing Process: Honoring Strengths without Trivializing Suffering* (note—this book is not ADHD specific)

Adult ADHD:

- *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir*
- *The Brilliant Reality of ADHD*
- *Life at Full Throttle: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults*
- *Driven To Distraction : Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood Through Adulthood*
- *Delivered from Distraction*
- *The Disorganized Mind: Coaching Your ADHD Brain to Take Control of Your Time, Tasks, and Talents*
- *Neat and Simple Guide to Organizing Your Home Office: Ultra-Simple, ADD-Friendly Strategies to Conquer Chronic Disorganization, Clear Clutter and Organize Your Life!*
- *Survival Tips for Women with AD/HD: Beyond Piles, Palms, & Post-its*
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Adult ADHD*
- *You Mean I'm Not Lazy, Stupid or Crazy?!: The Classic Self-Help Book for Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder*
- *Buzz: A Year of Paying Attention*
- *More Attention, Less Deficit: Success Strategies for Adults with ADHD*

Resources: Books and Blogs

(Click title to go to the resource)

ADHD & Relationships:

- [*Adult ADHD can be Sexy—Relationships, Love and Loss*](#)
- [*The ADHD Effect on Marriage: Understand and Rebuild Your Relationship in Six Steps \(Assertiveness Motivation Self\)*](#)
- [*Married to Distraction: Restoring Intimacy and Strengthening Your Marriage in an Age of Interruption*](#)
- [*Is It You, Me, or Adult A.D.D.?*](#)
- [*A.D.D. & Romance*](#)
- [*Understanding Women With AD/HD*](#)
- [*Women with Attention Deficit Disorder*](#)

Online Blogs

(Here are links to blogs for parents and teachers that you may find helpful. There are many other excellent blogs. Check each blog for links to more blogs. Not all bloggers continue blogging forever. It is possible that some of these blogs may no longer be available depending on when you receive this eBook.)

- [My Picture Perfect Family](#)
- [A Mom's View of ADHD](#)
- [ADHD & LD Resource Blog](#)
- [Tammy Time](#)
- [Can Mom Be Calm?](#)
- [The Miller Mix](#)
- [The Truth Behind ADHD](#)
- [Parenting a Complex Special Needs Child](#)
- [Special Education Law Blog](#)
- [Reading Rockets](#)

Professional Therapy

“ Once we accept our limits, we go
beyond them.

”
~ *Albert Einstein*

I recommend professional therapy for anyone who has ADHD and I'll try my best to explain why. This section may seem more for adults, and to a degree it is, but as you read, it will become clear why I included this for parents and teachers. Please keep in mind that I am only relating my interpretation from my experiences and lessons learned. This is not to be read as medical advice because it's not. This is simply my opinion about professional therapy and describes my experience with how it helped me achieve a healthy, optimistic outlook on life and effectively manage my ADHD symptoms.

Medication is becoming better understood and accepted as a viable, safe treatment for ADHD. But much less is known amongst the ADHD community about how professional therapy may help people with ADHD. I am going to use this opportunity to help clarify how professional therapy may help. I will also explain why someone like me might speak openly and positively about his ADHD. I cover both of those topics in this section.

A child's upbringing through school and home life is absolutely critical to dealing with ADHD later in life. As I learned firsthand, it is quite possible for a child with ADHD to develop a negative, self-defeating mindset and counterproductive survival skills. In my case I also developed chronic depression and PTSD.

Unbeknownst to me, due to the affects of ADHD in my life, as a child I started to believe certain things, such as: I am a born failure and I will never learn. In other words if I failed, I wasn't letting myself down because I already knew I would fail. My mind had created a survival skill to protect me from the emotional letdown of failure.

However, my self-confidence became non-existent because I was so used to failing that I learned to expect it. It is quite common for those with ADHD to repeat mistakes and lose confidence, but when we eventually learn to anticipate failure we may even lose the confidence to successfully do things we once did well. Predicting failure usually leads to failure; therefore, a survival skill like predicting failure becomes a substantial hindrance.

“Failure became so anticipated that even the things I achieved in the past were no longer possible, even when ADHD symptoms didn’t actually play a part.”

Failure became so anticipated that even the things I achieved in the past were no longer possible, even when ADHD symptoms didn’t actually play a part. The line between ADHD symptoms and self-defeating thoughts and survival skills can become blurred when our minds revert to a survival mode. Everything can become a challenge, even living life day to day.

My mind developed many survival skills that inhibited me. As a child in school I came to believe I was incapable of doing just about anything.

I failed nearly every grade and I began to fail the subjects I enjoyed and had shown potential in. The more I failed and was punished for it, the more I withdrew into my shell of mental protection, which lowered my self-esteem, confidence and expectations further and further. I lost any optimism I might have once had and ultimately lost any belief in the very concept of hope.

As a child suffering from undiagnosed ADD, I could not simply pull it together. It didn’t matter how much I was punished. Without proper assistance and consideration, a child with ADHD may sooner or later internally, effectively give up.

I already felt, and truly was, different from my peers due to my ADHD. I experienced further loss of self-esteem at the hands of my peers, teachers, and parents. I had few friends, which is unfortunately common for too many ADHD children. I was bullied by my peers. I was “called out” in front of my classmates by my teachers in their well meaning but futile attempts to get me to pay attention. My father, unaware of what caused my behaviors, misattributed them to laziness and disobedience and continuously punished me in attempts to make me behave.

Because I had no idea why I couldn't behave the way everyone wanted me to, I internalized the message that I was "bad". I carried this message into adulthood!

It wasn't possible for me to break the mental cycle of devastation and failure that ADHD helped develop in my life without professional therapy. Worst of all, it did not just affect me, it also affected the ones I loved and cared about. There has been too much collateral damage caused by the affects of ADHD in my life. I am ever thankful to therapy for helping me work through my issues and learn to manage my symptoms positively and constructively as best I can. Each day is a work in progress.

I was shocked at the survival skills I had developed as a child to get by. Unfortunately, those same skills were holding me back as an adult. That was extremely difficult for me to eventually understand, admit and accept. I explained in *One Boy's Struggle* how undiagnosed ADD negatively impacted my first marriage. I also know that my first marriage was negatively impacted by what had become maladaptive survival skills, which were developed due to my life with ADHD.

What is the benefit of therapy?

In professional therapy I learned to understand my past, including my childhood experiences, and myself better. I learned why I behaved the way I behaved all of my life. I learned to forgive myself and understand that many situations in my life were beyond my control. Ultimately, I learned to stop blaming myself. I have overcome guilt, shame and many damaging beliefs and assumptions that began in childhood. Therapy also taught me how to better manage my symptoms of ADHD as an adult and how not to allow them to bring me down mentally and emotionally.

I didn't start therapy until I was 28 years old. Frankly, I was scared when I first began, completely terrified, because I felt therapy was my last chance. I didn't know where I was going in my life, but I knew it wasn't somewhere good. As early as childhood, I had begun to feel so empty, so hollow. If you've read my story you know what I mean.



At the same time, I had a hidden benefit and that was that I was open and naïve. I wasn't able to think my way out of professional therapy because I didn't know enough about it. I had no preconceived notions about what it would or wouldn't do, or whether it would help or not. Even though I was scared, I had blind trust, maybe.

Yes, I was naïve, but my naiveté turned out to be a wonderful gift that allowed me to go into therapy with an open mind.

Professional therapy is a process of dialogue and is not necessarily designed to directly tell a person anything about himself or herself. Professional therapy is at first more about the person with ADHD talking about his or her past and the circumstances he or she has lived through. It also addresses situations in the present, here and now. Therapists are non-judgmental and help guide the discussions with questions to dig deeper into a topic and to help keep one on track, which is quite beneficial to someone like me with ADHD. When a person with ADHD comes to a certain point where he or she has arrived at a state of understanding and acceptance, skills to help manage ADHD effectively can be learned from a well-trained therapist.

Some thoughts and beliefs are hard to let go of. Since we are so used to them, they become part of our comfort zone. Therapy takes us out of our comfort zone and this is where many either forge ahead with therapy, or decide to believe the entire process is not working or is silly and useless. Fortunately, I stuck with therapy and discovered many truths about myself, my thoughts and my beliefs. I came to terms. Only by discovering and accepting the truth about my thoughts, my beliefs and the circumstances I lived through was I able to move forward, learn to believe in myself, and develop the useful skills I needed to flourish in a healthy manner.

As was the case with me, it may take a while to feel at ease talking about one's self and one's life, but when people open up there tends to come with it several moments of unexpected clarity and astonishment. It is when people finally discover the reasons for their behavior, their thoughts, their assumptions and their core beliefs, that there's a

chance for anger, resentment and even shame to start to give way and be replaced with acceptance, understanding and even much-needed compassion for one's self.

The most difficult aspect of therapy for many is that we may fear blaming ourselves. When we become aware via therapy that we have developed certain ways of doing things that are counterproductive and are not actually the ADHD symptoms themselves, but are the maladaptive survival skills developed due to living with ADHD, we may believe that this is our fault. It's not. I learned that this is natural and these skills are developed by our mind to initially 'protect' us.

Remember my example from my childhood where I learned to fail? My mind was protecting me from the emotional letdown of failure, but this inhibited me from achieving at the same time. Therefore, although my young mind attempted to protect me from letdown, it likewise inadvertently created situations where I would be letdown even more. I know, this may seem confusing, but that's why professional therapy is so important. Keep in mind that's only one example of the many maladaptive survival skills I had subconsciously created for myself.

“Whether we realize it or not, we tend to blame ourselves and therapy actually helps us learn to stop.”

It took me a while to accept that I didn't need to place blame on myself or anyone else. The most important thing to realize is that there is no blame. Whether we realize it or not, we tend to blame ourselves and therapy actually helps us learn to stop. Think about it—when we treat ADHD 'symptoms' we can blame the symptoms, which is natural, but this does not really help. Also, by blaming the symptoms we avoid dealing with the other stuff that is causing us problems which continue to effectively hold us back. In my opinion, it doesn't have to be that way. A professional therapist can help guide us to more positive, beneficial ways of thinking and behaving.

I recommend therapy because I have met too many people with ADHD that are aware of their ADHD symptoms and have developed personal coping skills, but are still struggling severely day to day and are confused as to why. I may not know exactly why they are still struggling, but professional therapy may help them find the answers as it did for me.

I must admit that I am grateful I was not diagnosed with ADHD prior to therapy. If I had been, I may have avoided therapy and chosen only to deal with the specific symptoms of ADHD. If I had realized what therapy was about before I started it, I confess that I probably would have declined. The reason I would have declined therapy is that having a target such as ADHD would have given me the reason I needed to avoid facing myself and my deeper issues in therapy. Let's be honest, most of us want to believe we know ourselves already and it is rather scary to think we've created certain thoughts and beliefs that are holding us back.

I am grateful I didn't know any better prior to therapy and that's why I try to shed light on the benefits of therapy for others. The basic fact is that ADHD symptoms are not bad habits to correct; however, the maladaptive survival skills I developed are similar to bad habits and had I not entered therapy and resolved those issues, I would not have improved as much as I have.

I think it's clear that treating adult ADHD raises the level of care that is needed. There could be other psychological factors that may have come into play throughout one's life that cannot be resolved by only treating ADHD symptoms. I have not explored all of the many co-morbid issues because that is an area each person must discuss with his or her medical professional as each can be so different and bring with it its own complexities per individual. I believe that the earlier one receives professional help for their ADHD, the less it will affect them the way it has affected me and many other adults with ADHD who are late diagnosed.

A very good therapist can help us learn techniques for managing our lives and our ADHD symptoms. However, the most interesting thing is that we may already know and use the techniques that help us manage our ADHD symptoms. It's all that other stuff we collect along the journey of our lives that litters our mind with self-defeating thoughts and blocks the clarity we need to see a more positive path toward understanding—a path where we can eventually use our skills practically, effectively and in a healthy self-supportive manner.

**Why do I speak
about ADHD from a
positive perspective?**

A therapist can help us navigate our emotional journey toward discovering the good things about ourselves. Thanks to therapy, I have learned to find strengths and positives in myself and my ADHD. This is where there is some confusion about therapy for ADHD. Good feelings and good thoughts will not cure ADHD. Let me be very clear about that. It is not possible to simply say that ADHD is a gift or benefit in order to automatically cure the disorder. That is not the intention and is oft times misunderstood. It's almost the same as saying taking medication will cure ADHD. It won't, but the medication may help manage the symptoms.

"It is quite difficult for anyone who has been treated effectively with medication to relate its helpfulness to someone who hasn't yet experienced it."

It is quite difficult for anyone who has been treated effectively with medication to relate its helpfulness to someone who hasn't yet experienced it. Their world is so much better with medication; they have clarity and can finally focus on those things they couldn't focus on particularly well before. To someone who hasn't taken medication, or can't, such a description could seem exaggerated, magical, or all together impossible. They won't fully realize what is meant unless they too have been treated successfully with effective medication. It's much the same way with

professional therapy.

When professional therapy is successful people with ADHD learn to see the positives within themselves, to find their strengths, including in places that they may normally not consider strengths, even from their ADHD symptoms or traits. Here's an example: when I hyper-focus on writing while I should be listening to my wife, that's damaging to our relationship and is not fair to my wife. However, this doesn't make hyper-focusing altogether a bad thing, because when I hyper-focus on writing at the right time and in the right place, that's good and helps me write as much as I do. Professional therapy helped me not only see this difference, but also learn how to develop this difference in my life beneficially.

The above is a simple, straightforward example concerning the hyper-focus trait; however, there's really nothing simple about it. My therapist had me initially write down a list of strengths I already considered for myself. Then as we discussed those, he helped me dig a little deeper and discover strengths I hadn't previously considered. As I discovered those

less obvious strengths he guided me in how I could use them in practical, useful ways. This entire process helped lift my self-opinion and hence my self-confidence and self-esteem.

Remember that I mentioned in [tip #5](#) that showing true caring, love and consideration may help a child. This is also what therapy helps us do for ourselves. That is what much of the writing in my book *The Brilliant Reality of ADHD* is about.

Let me forewarn you that the strength-based approach method may make one's internal warning systems go haywire with absolute denial about whether this process will work. The longer one has gone without effective professional therapy for his or her ADHD, the louder this warning system may be. Our logical minds may argue fiercely against finding strengths within ourselves, especially those which may seem to result from ADHD itself, such as I described with hyper-focus. For those who may be feeling this way, from what I understand that is a natural reaction and is quite common. If one realizes this is normal and could be a factor, it could be helpful to know that this is a possible reaction and try not to allow it to circumvent one's efforts for improvement.

For the process of discovering one's strengths, I think ADHD coaching may also be of benefit. I may have been somewhat prepared for this area because I had been coached in bowling and billiards. Coaches have a way of encouraging us to find our strengths and use them. There's so very much within each and every one of us and there's nothing wrong with having someone help us see what's there. I truly believe this and I encourage everyone to not go through life allowing one's self to miss out on what may be budding inside just waiting to be discovered. Sometimes we have to let down our guards to give ourselves a chance and discover wonderful things about ourselves.

"A good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are."

~Ara Parasheghian

For some, the explanation of seeing the positives in ADHD may seem foolish, as if ADHD is not being taken seriously enough. After all, how in the world can anyone see anything positive in something which has been so disabling? In therapy there is no effort



that I know of to take away any of the seriousness of how problematic ADHD can be. However, consider that holding in the back of our minds how detrimental something is (ADHD in this case), as if we might forget it, may lead to more serious problems. I learned that this was another survival skill I also used. I had learned to live and survive in a state of crises. Living in a constant state of crises, like a cat always ready to pounce, isn't as helpful as I once believed.

Too many of us with ADHD learn to survive living in crisis mode, a learned comfort zone of continuous anxiety. Yet this can be a destructive, uncomfortable emotional whirlwind through life for ourselves and especially for those closest to us that we love and care about. But that's also part of the key to professional therapy, to get to a point where one chooses not to live in perpetual worry, stress and crisis. Living that way can cause ill health, anger, resentment and a host of detrimental consequences, which may not be ADHD itself, but are brought on by the survival skill of constant alertness in crisis mode.

"We need a healthy level of awareness for danger and harmful situations, but when that awareness is at the forefront all the time it can be unhealthy."

We need a healthy level of awareness for danger and harmful situations, but when that awareness is at the forefront all the time it can be unhealthy. It can be difficult for someone with ADHD to develop an appropriate level of balance between a healthy awareness and a constant state of crises. Therapy helped me develop this balance in my life and it has made such an incredible, beneficial difference.

Some people with ADHD may feel very comfortable and do extremely well in times of crises, but there are ways in therapy to learn how to use this survival skill constructively without allowing it to be all-consuming all of the time.

The following is a list of skills that I learned in therapy. They are not typical skills that can be easily learned on one's own. Furthermore, unless one has been through effective professional therapy it is possible for someone with ADHD to write these management skills off as impractical, if not impossible or even foolish. Be that as it may, I believe the skills learned in professional therapy are, in fact, most advantageous to someone with ADHD. Allow me to explain further.

Here are some of the most useful, healthy skills I learned in therapy to help me manage my ADHD symptoms:

- ✓ **Learn and accept my strengths and talents.**
- ✓ **Maintain mindfulness.** This helps me stay in the moment, to be aware of what's going on around me and what I am currently involved in. This has also helped me stay in tune with conversations, effectively take part in meetings and allowing me to truly listen to someone, rather than just hear them. Ultimately, I am more aware of my present thoughts, my current beliefs and myself as a whole. Mindfulness helps me stop and smell the roses.
- ✓ **Redirect negative emotions to more constructive outlets, like Tai Chi or other exercises.** To this day I continue professional therapy because it has been so helpful. Plus it's a good place to discuss any negative feelings and emotions I currently may be experiencing.
- ✓ **Better manage my worrying.** This was probably one of my most profound problems and I haven't completely overcome it, but I have learned to manage it much better. I grew up in a constant state of panic and worry. Worrying became a sort of survival skill that gave me the belief I could anticipate trouble and punishment in order to avoid it. However, worrying too much eventually made me jump at shadows. When I didn't worry about punishment for a mistake or trouble I may have created, I turned to worrying about whatever else my mind could come up with in my imagination. Constant worry can be paralyzing, creating a constant state of anxiety.
- ✓ **Develop belief and optimism in who I am.** I strive to become a better person each and every day. Having optimism helps me see the world differently, to find the *good* and *possibilities* in myself and the things around me and to not simply look for the bad or negative consequences. It's important to have a healthy awareness for dangerous or harmful things and situations, but when that was my primary awareness it had detrimental consequences.
- ✓ **Become *hopeful* in a healthy and constructive manner.** Hope is a wide-open word and I think many of us who are dealing with ADHD have a difficult time being hopeful, or even understanding what hope truly is. When you've let yourself down as many times as I have, it becomes extremely difficult to be hopeful, but a life without hope is empty.

- ✓ **Treat others with due respect.** I believe I have always been respectful of others; however, this goes beyond that and also taught me how not to be drawn into negative engagements. Prior to therapy, I was easily swayed into confrontation no matter how juvenile they were.
- ✓ **Overcome guilt and shame.** This is a big one and probably needs to be read about in *One Boy's Struggle*. Needless to say, this has been one of the most profound benefits of therapy for me. I devoted a blog post to this subject recently. [Click here](#) to read it, if you like.
- ✓ **Make concentration a conscious choice without getting angry or upset with myself when I drift.** Because ADHD isn't curable (don't we wish it were!) and I still have it, this means I still drift and get distracted from time to time. There are also many ways I now use modern technology to help me stay focused, concentrate and bring me out of potential moments of drifting, distraction and hyper-focus. Smart phones with alarms have helped me greatly! However, prior to therapy I had learned to believe that nothing could legitimately help me in the area of concentration and distraction; therefore, I subconsciously sabotaged any potential techniques to prove to myself that they wouldn't work. This went beyond ADHD symptoms and, as I mentioned, the line got blurred for me when I expected certain things to be a certain way.

I've only given a brief overview of my experience and interpretation about therapy, but since you may have many more questions I recommend doing further research. I will give you a link to more information in a moment.

Keep in mind that some therapists still might not accept ADHD as a valid diagnosis, so for anyone interested in seeking therapy, it is important to ask if they accept and treat people with ADHD. Seeking out a highly trained, seasoned specialist who focuses on ADHD specifically, I believe, would be the most beneficial. Also of note is that if someone does not feel comfortable with a particular therapist, it might be better if they try another one. They can 'shop around' for a therapist that they feel comfortable with. I



could not open up completely when I did not feel comfortable. I went to 4 or 5 therapists before I found the right one for me.

Unfortunately, not all therapists are created equal; therefore, asking for references, if possible, is a good idea too. There are also several different types of professional therapy. [Here is a link](#) to more information about some different types of therapy.

I hope I have shed a little light on the process of professional therapy for people with ADHD. It will vary a bit from therapist to therapist and the type of therapy. As with all that I have written, these are just personal tips from someone who has been there and done that.

I now know who I am and what I am about. **I am finally comfortable in my own mind.** That's what therapy has done for me.

Why did I write this eBook?

I believe many of my life's difficulties due to growing up with undiagnosed ADHD could have been avoided if I had been diagnosed early in life. Early diagnosis could have given my parents, teachers and other adults in my life the explanation about my behaviors they needed to work with me in more appropriate, supportive and effective ways.

Parents, if you suspect that your child might have ADHD, please save him or her some of the pain I experienced by seeking an accurate diagnosis. If your child is diagnosed with ADHD, perhaps consider a qualified therapist specializing in children with ADHD. If you're an adult with ADHD, I hope you'll consider therapy.

The good news is that children brought up and educated with supportive, understanding, caring, and open-minded parents, teachers and other professionals like you have a much better chance of developing a healthy self-esteem and mindset, which may help them avoid many of the negative developmental and emotional issues of having ADHD. And that is what I hope to have conveyed in this eBook.

Post Script

“ Half the failures in life arise
from pulling in the horse as
he is leaping. ”

~ Augustus William Hare
and Julius Charles Hare

Have you seen the movie *The King's Speech*? *The King's Speech* is based on the true story of King George VI who suffered from a speech impediment, stuttering. I highly recommend it not because of King George VI or even Colin Firth's excellent acting, but rather due to the speech impediment issue itself and how it was overcome. In the movie (as was in real life) the king of England suffered from speech impairment and had to learn through therapy how to overcome his stuttering and stammering.

There is one scene in the movie that stood out to me above all the others. That was when the still living father (King George V) of the eventual King George VI finished a perfect speech he made for a radio broadcast, and then asked his son who had stood by listening to the speech to sit in his chair and give it a go. As George VI struggled to utter the first word, his father then started giving his son instructions in the old fashioned 'You can do it if you want to' manner. Although it wasn't further dramatized, I can imagine how small someone would feel hearing those instructions, how much more it might hold him or her back, and effectively do the opposite of what was intended. It reminded me of my childhood.

In *One Boy's Struggle*, I reveal to you that I trembled terribly. I didn't do it all the time. I trembled whenever in conflict of any sort and I was extremely embarrassed by it. I could never control it as a youth or as a young adult. Eventually, in therapy, I discovered it was part of a physical manifestation of PTSD.

I developed PTSD due to the severe punishment I received as a child for my inexplicable ADHD behavior. Every now and again, when I am in extreme conflict I still tremble, but

it doesn't last as long and it isn't as obvious. All the same, it still shows up at times, which I cannot completely control. And that's kind of the same with ADHD—no matter how good I get at coping and reframing my ADHD symptoms, every now and again they show up and I cannot completely manage them.

As with my trembling, my ADHD symptoms can be embarrassing and I tend to feel ashamed. I wish I didn't, but there are times when I still do. I started very late learning how to cope with my ADHD symptoms, depression and PTSD.

“There is so much hope for children with ADHD today. ADHD is so much better understood and far more accepted, even though there's more work to be done in that area.”

There is so much hope for children with ADHD today. ADHD is so much better understood and far more accepted, even though there's more work to be done in that area. If children are given half a chance with proper diagnosis and early treatment, they will already have so much more than I had. Just think what more the ADHD children of today can do with a head start. That head start of diagnosis, proper treatment and, above all, due consideration, can make all the difference.

Together, each in our own way, let's make it a better world for people with ADHD. There's so much more to us than just the problems. We are all special in our own unique ways. Indeed, we are all better than we sometimes think we are!

If you enjoyed reading this eBook, please also considering reading *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir—Surviving Life with Undiagnosed ADD*.

Thank you.

To you and your children's successes!

Bryan

On the page after next there is an extra about the seven signs that I had undiagnosed ADD as a child.

Thank you for reading. Please share this eBook. It's free.

Sharing it will be very much appreciated. Email it to friends, post it to your website or blog, or post it to Facebook and Twitter. And, thank you for your support! Here are direct online links to the eBook and to the cover:

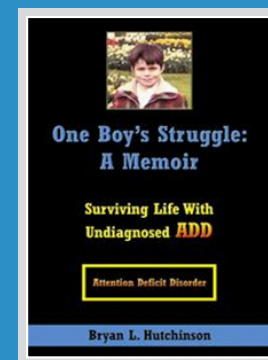
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If you would like more details and to read more about ***One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir***, [click here](#).

Also check out *The Brilliant Reality of ADHD & Adult ADHD can be Sexy*

[For more free eBooks click here](#)



ADDERworld

Anything & Everything ADHD



Seven signs that I had undiagnosed ADD as a child!

And you thought I had already said everything I had to say in this eBook didn't you? As serious as the issues are with children today sometimes we forget to have some fun too. What's a childhood without fun? **A lost childhood.** We all know how serious life can be, but sometimes we forget to lighten up just a little and in some cases, a lot. When a child has ADHD they have quite a bit more on their shoulders than the average child. They have to work twice as hard to perform as expected and three times as hard to exceed any expectations. It's easy for children with ADHD to lose out on their childhood. Let's not let that happen. Therefore, I am going to take this opportunity to end this eBook with a lighthearted look at the seven sure signs that I had undiagnosed ADD as a child.



1. I was frequently distracted around doors. Or rather, I didn't pay particular attention to doors, which had I paid attention to them it would have saved me a lot of physical pain. In the 1st grade bathroom I started talking to someone on my way out while my hand was still in the door frame. The door closed and I lost 4 fingernails! That was my first hospital trip probably thanks to my undiagnosed ADD. Then when I was a little bit older I closed my mother's car door on one of my fingers. Oh, the pain! That did not result in a hospital trip, but the next door would. Back in Sacramento I had a thing for climbing up on the kitchen counter as a small child. That should have been a sign by itself, but of course there was one time that I did not look up to see a cabinet door was open above my head. That was my second hospital trip thanks to a door. I visited the hospital a lot as a child for absentminded accidents.

Recently I met with a McDonald's door which cut me between my eyes. I was distracted by my phone at the time! I guess the McDonald's staff figured it was my own fault because they didn't offer me so much as a napkin or ask me if I was okay. But about 4 little kids got a kick out of it; first they were shocked and then they giggled uncontrollably! In true ADHD fashion I cleaned myself up and had lunch with my wife. Well, as soon as I could get her to believe I was okay. Eat first, treat cut seriously later. Yes, I have got my priorities straight, right? I was hungry.

2. In school I failed **nearly every grade!** That's right, nearly every grade, but somehow I was passed on grade after grade seemingly without much of a second thought. The strangest thing about flunking almost every grade is that I was an ace in special school projects that I had an interest in and enjoyed. In a certain computer class that I failed **twice**, I was the winner of two computer graphic contests that had to be created for the school's faculty to judge. The graphics were created in class on the school's computers under the teacher's supervision so it was impossible to cheat. That's important, because in sixth grade I was accused of cheating on a book report that I wrote. I wrote the report about a book that I loved, but because I was an all around failure in the overall English class the teacher thought **someone else must have written the report**. I guess the teacher didn't know me that well.

"I wrote the report about a book that I loved, but because I was an all around failure in the overall English class the teacher thought someone else must have written the report."

To date I still can't remember any of those English lessons and I only have a vague idea of what a pronoun is! I've written magazine articles, newspaper articles and I have written books and have a rather popular blog, but I could never pass English and when I did write about what I loved **I was accused of cheating**. That my friends and neighbors is what I call a sure sign I had ADHD as a child! The book was *Gulliver's Travels* by the way. I still love it!

3. I was rarely in tune with what was going on in class. I don't know how many times I was called upon in class to answer a question and I was totally lost. I was



typically daydreaming and nine times out of ten I was caught off guard. Once or twice may seem common, but almost every time? Trust me, I didn't want to be embarrassed or made the class clown! My self-esteem was low enough already. I used to daydream about answering to perfection any question a teacher would ask; however, that means I was still daydreaming! Well, at least I had the intent to do well, but although desire and willpower in themselves are helpful, but they are not the complete answer to ADHD.

4. My most common answer as a child was "I don't know!" I **really** didn't know. I was usually so caught up in my daydreams and distractions that I wasn't paying enough attention to know. You know? It's all a vicious cycle really. This kind of reminds me of a dog chasing his tail. Why do they do that? It doesn't matter. They don't know either, but they are still going to do it. At least, as humans, if we know the answers for our behavior we can usually do something about it. You know what I mean? Of course you do. Because, **you know**. Me too, now.

5. I was deeply involved **in the things I enjoyed** and I could amaze my parents and teachers with things I would come up with as to explain just about anything. I seemed to have a deep understanding for certain things that was beyond my years. I would watch TV shows with my Mother or watch a documentary movie in class and was fully involved with discussions about what we had watched and I could give compelling explanations for what had taken place in the show. However, I usually had to be monitored closely if my homework was to be completed and I needed a tutor to help me with mundane assignments.

The obvious logic is that it seemed I could keep my attention and showed high levels of understanding when "**I wanted to**". This contradiction of behavior I believe is part of the reason I was passed on from grade to grade even though I failed most all my classes.

6. Doors were not the only things that caused my trips to the emergency room. Some believe a hit on the head at an early age may cause ADHD in some, but in my

case I believe that it was undiagnosed ADD that caused so many hits on my head! The worst of the bunch was when me and a friend picked up a long, heavy steel pipe we found in the field behind our houses. I wanted to carry it back with us for some reason that I can't remember. I was always building things in my backyard. While we were walking my friend lost his grip and we both dropped it. The pipe bounced into the air and part of it dropped right on my head! A few minutes later I was rushed to the emergency room yet again with a bloody towel wrapped around my head!

Which comes first the chicken or the egg? Yes, I hit my head a lot, but if I didn't **already have** ADHD I don't think I would have hit my head so many times.

7. My daily behavior and actions created constant contradictions which were puzzling to my parents and teachers. I didn't like being in social situations as a child because I felt uncomfortable and lesser than my peers. This was an obvious problem of mine. Indeed, I was for the most part shy and stayed away from group events, **but** whenever I was somehow forced to be involved I usually became **the leader**. Even at an early age I had this odd sense of understanding for human nature and it frequently brought me to the forefront of groups, especially when it involved competition.

"I've always loved competition and I love to win! Nothing beats instant success for someone with ADHD!"

I've always loved competition and I love to win! Nothing beats **instant success** for someone with ADHD! With the right incentive I was able to 'over' perform and lead. This wasn't from some misguided desire to prove I was any better than anyone else or to somehow make myself feel better, which it did, but rather it was an internal pleasurable desire that was healthy and healing. There's a misconception that when people with ADHD strive for success or work extra hard to accomplish things that they are **always compensating** or self-medicating. In some cases that may be true, but I think for the most part this isn't the case. Just think of anything you love doing, be it your job, or your hobby. I bet that stems from an internal indescribable desire and

is not from any hidden motive. Besides we all strive to prove ourselves, that's natural and human and is not limited to those of us with ADHD. Professional therapy can help us discover what is healthy and what may not be so healthy. Just because we may have ADHD doesn't mean that everything we do is unhealthy or wrong.

I can imagine how puzzling this must have come across to my teachers and my parents. Again: "**He can if he wants to.**"—If you find yourself saying "He or She can **if** he or she **really wants to.**" That may be a sign of undiagnosed ADHD! The aspect of our nature that strives for instant success is partially why reward systems can work so well with us. But, if the reward is too far out, then it's usually going to be wasted. If I could not see something coming then it didn't interest me enough to strive for it. Sometimes I think schools should have six quarters, because the distance between each report card doesn't give us enough tangible incentive to truly care about them. More quarters at shorter intervals to give more frequent reports I think might help. However, if you tell kids I wrote that then I will deny it!

I hope you enjoyed these extra tidbits of lighthearted hindsight from my childhood. There are many other signs that I had undiagnosed ADD as a child. I reveal them in my personal story in *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir—Surviving Life with Undiagnosed ADD*. I hope you read it.

Bryan

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