



Living with an ADHD Partner

Oh, this is great fun! Don't you think? Living with someone who has ADHD? Oh, you don't think so? C'mon it can be fun—yes, it can also be frustrating, weird at times and just plain ridiculous, even scary and sometimes quite sad. But, hey, your life will be anything except boring!

We ADDers can be charming characters; we can excite you, enthrall you and make you believe you are the only person on earth worth being around. And if we are spending all of our time with you, then hey, you've got some charm yourself.

I have been married twice. I am happily married to Joan who knows I have ADHD and she has found ways to get along with me and my ADHD and she has helped me become a better person. I will talk more about our relationship in a moment...

My first wife did not know I have ADHD and that's because I had not yet been diagnosed. My behavior was inexplicable and seemingly inexcusable at times. Even with diagnosis, much ADHD behavior is inexcusable, but I have already explained how awareness makes a difference, this article is about relationships with an ADHD partner. A relationship needs sugar and spice and everything nice, but a relationship with an ADDer probably has more spice than the rest. We can become bored easily and it takes a dynamic character to keep our attention. This is my experience. Living with me was emotionally devastating for my ex-wife and although our life together had some redeeming qualities, overall it was a building volcano. She deserved better.

I don't get along well with being told I need to clean this or that. I don't get along well with being told that the way I am doing it is wrong because it does not conform to some rule. I don't like to be told I am overdue with doing this or that, even if it is true. I don't have a problem with those things if I am being paid (incentive), but in a relationship I absolutely abhor it! That's the thing about being married or befriending an ADDer, other ways must be found to do things together and get things done together, especially things that are tedious and just plain not fun. Criticism towards an ADDer and his or her traits can be disastrous! Beware of this, even constructive criticism can be detrimental. Positive Redirection is far more effective and appreciated.

I do not have all the answers to living with someone who has ADHD, even ADDers are unique, but I can tell you a bit about what has made my relationship with Joan such a treasure. She is a very well educated woman who has insight that is absolutely remarkable. She knows things I didn't expect or know myself and is as highly creative as I am, if not more so in some ways. I might have a problem paying attention to certain things, but she doesn't and she knows how to make a point. She has made some very attention grabbing points while I have been with her just to get my notice and some of them have been so extreme that I just had to shake my head in wonder and yes, sometimes disbelief. She caught on to what makes me tick very early in our relationship and knew right away when I was drifting my attention and she got it back with her own creative, ingenious and sometimes radical ways. Both of us have had to modify such behavior and become better people for each other. It was not easy or even pretty at times, but it was certainly worth it.

Before I was diagnosed with ADHD Joan would start something, washing dishes, clean or create something and ask me if I would help her. A simple request and somehow in her own way she would make the chore exciting and not a chore. We have laughed, we have cried and we have held each other in moments of discouragement. The key is we are there for each other even when the chips are down or if everything is going our way. Commitment, Understanding, Love and accepting the truth are key. There is no single answer for making a relationship with an ADDer successful, but one thing I can say for sure is that compassion, understanding, being inventive and seeking help are things which have a positive influence. It's not a one way street, both partners must make efforts. I read a lot about how to get along with an ADHD partner and sincerely, ADDers must take steps to get along as well. Being stubborn and refusing to recognize the reality of a situation can not only be detrimental, it is foolish. ADHD is a reason, which can be improved through awareness, but using ADHD as an excuse is inexcusable!

Relationships are about love, connection and communication. Some relationships just don't work out and we can blame them on whatever we want, but if two people are not meant to be together then any kind of idea or suggestion could just prolong the inevitable. However, using ADHD as an excuse, really is just an excuse to continue certain innate habits without any effort of adjustments, because, knowing ADHD is a reason, a valid reason, which can be improved upon, gives us opportunity and the ability to improve.

Yes, we can improve—maybe we can't fully change and there is no cure, but I truly believe that when there is a will, there is a way—I have been through the horror, I have felt and lived the pain and my partners, family and friends have felt it too. There is such a saying as meeting halfway and that's what we have to do, learn about ourselves, learn as much as possible about ADHD and seek the help we need and strive to be better. Most of this goes for everyone, not only us ADDers. I truly believe that when you are with the right person and the desire is strong enough, all excuses go out the window and ways suddenly are found to work on improvement and new, positive habits. That's something which is unique to ADHD above most other disorders, a mental effort through support groups, ADHD education, therapy and a host of other supportive measures can be employed. Most partners will help, if the ADDer is willing to help him or herself too, it is a matter of love and companionship and togetherness.

I know all about struggle, I have been down, I have been severely degraded, I have been chastised and ridiculed and misunderstood and I have been stubborn to a fault, and so yes, I know how difficult it is to change, but it is of the utmost importance to put the effort forth to try. The effort to try can be everything! Awareness and acceptance is imperative. Learn all that you can. Nagging, complaining and just being upset all the time will destroy any relationship in the long run and sometimes in the short run.

The crazy thing about having ADHD for some strange reason, the partners of ADDers get a lot of criticism too. Such as—why don't you change him or her? Why do you allow him to do that? Why do you stay? Can't you do better? You are at fault, he or she wasn't like that before you came along (maybe traits weren't as noticeable)... and the list goes on and on and on, sometimes this part of the relationship can be just as difficult or more so.

It is not easy to be married to an ADDer, but it can certainly be worth it. Joan doesn't like flying and I don't really like heights, but that did not stop our

love from whisking us away on a trip to Vegas to get married! The point is it took our personal efforts and love and caring and understanding to get us there. The middle info might not be the stuff of stories and celebration, but it is there and helped us become who we are—together.

There are valid reasons and there are excuses, it's important to understand and realize the difference and that's what really builds a relationship between any two people, in my humble opinion.

This is an excerpt of the book: [*The Brilliant Reality of ADHD*](#)

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