



# Perspective of Life with Adult ADHD

*ADHD can test your willpower, but ADHD is not a test of your will.  
ADHD can test your attitude, but ADHD is not based on attitude.  
ADHD can test your feelings, cause us to feel 'lesser than', but ADHD  
is not based on feelings. ADHD can cause you to blame yourself, but  
ADHD is not based on who is at fault. ADHD can make you believe you  
are not trying hard enough, but ADHD is not based on how much you  
apply yourself.*

A lot of us with ADHD start out already at a very young age with big hopes and even bigger dreams. We tend to show so much potential early on, but as the years go by, more often than not, we lose our way. Along our journey, all too common our hopes and our dreams suffer, they get smaller and smaller until they all but vanish, distant and painful memories of what we once, so long ago, thought we wanted. Do you remember? So long ago?

Along the journey many of us do achieve things, sometimes even great things, but they tend to be anticlimactic. We become so numb due to low expectations from disappointments and frequent let downs that we usually can't find it within ourselves to celebrate the little victories along the way. Even the major victories become something like concession prizes. That word, *prize*, is somewhat strange and alien to us – it's something to watch on TV, read about in a book, but to believe we can achieve any is only asking for more broken dreams, if we have any left.

Victory is a confusing thing to many of us, because it can make us mad, angry and throw us further into inner confusion and turmoil. Why were we victorious in this effort when we failed in so many others? When will I be victorious again? How can I maintain and continue when I know the self-sabotage looming before me – so predictable the self-betrayal is, but

far from avoidable. How do we explain that to anyone who hasn't lived it?

Those without ADHD, who cheer, jump and dance to their own victories don't get it when we do not celebrate. We may seem to them that understand us not, that we are unappreciative and egotistical. *Nothing can please that person.* But they don't know, they just don't know. They don't know the years of making it through name calling, making it through constant threat and punishment. They don't know what it is like to be constantly betrayed by their own mind. They don't know that the fear of failure isn't a fear per se; it is more a *reality of failure* in spite of every effort, every desire to do and be better.

When a moment of victory does come, it is not a lack of appreciation or our ego that causes us to not jump with joy; it is the reality of past and future failures which makes us take tentative pause. The price of victory is paved on a road of seemingly trivial struggles most people without ADHD may never fully understand.

We all have setbacks, even without ADHD, but alas, ADHD can be one unmarvelous merry-go-round of constant and repeated setbacks, one after another, after another and another. Each setback set to the side, alone, may seem trivial to others, but over the years as they accumulate they become a profound compilation, with a strength in numbers that is so formidable that for far too many of us is overwhelming and seemingly insurmountable.

For those of us with ADHD who do find our way to win and find victory, it is not without pain and suffering, and it is not because of anything too special that others can't do it too. It's usually with the help of someone who 'gets it'. It's with the assistance of guidance, care and in many cases, love. Most of all though, it is something as trivial as *taking credit for the things we have accomplished*, no matter how small.

*- I made it to my dentist appointment on time last week! – I washed the dishes and dried them too! - I took time and lifted the spirits of someone who really needed a positive word of encouragement. -*

All that other stuff in-between could make me forget about what I *did right* and *on time*, but *I can choose* which memories are more important

to me and those memories build into something resourceful. In therapy I learned how to appreciate the good and make those memories count, and let me tell you, the difference is profound.

Remembering and accounting for the good things doesn't wash away or get rid of the bad, *that's not what it is about*, it's about balance and *taking credit* for more than just those things which didn't work out. The problem is that we are so used to accounting for what doesn't work, the setbacks, rejections and disappointments, that we can become blind to what we have done well and when that happens there's not much left to hope for, or to dream about, or to reach for.

It's not delusional to take credit for making it to an appointment on time or completing an assignment, *those things happen too* and they are realities that we *must* take credit for.

The good things must be accounted for and recognized. Only when we learn to do that will the world around us start to change, things we didn't see before will become clear and available. The problem is that we tend to reject anything we do well out of hand, because we are dissatisfied with what we can't do well, or what setback will come next. It can be vital to find a mentor, a coach or a therapist that 'get it' because they will remind us of the good things we have accomplished and encourage us forward.

Thankfully, there are special people that do understand, like you and me, and sometimes when we are lucky enough, we find a friend or a partner who is keen and caring enough to 'get it', even if they don't completely understand or relate, they still 'get it'.

If you've been lucky enough to find someone like that, take a moment to take in *that* victory! There is no greater pleasure than someone who understands. Let them know how special they are, because if you've found someone who 'gets you' then obviously they are letting you know how special *you* are!

By Bryan Hutchinson

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Originally posted on [www.ADDerWorld.com](http://www.ADDerWorld.com)

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This has been opinion and commentary only