



TOP 10's

Dos and *Don'ts* in a Relationship with an ADDer

Don'ts:



1. Do not play parent, i.e. mother or fatherly.
2. Do not take on the sole responsibility of trying to correct his or her behavior.
3. Do not blame every aspect of the relationship which might be damaged on his or her ADHD.
4. Do not make statements which are demeaning with the hope that it will spark his or her attention that they must make corrective efforts.
5. Do not say things such as, "This is the right way to do this or that," or "That's not the way things should be done."
6. Do not take his or her hyper focusing on projects or people, places or things personally. Hyper focusing is not about your relationship directly or indirectly, it's an ADHD trait that is difficult to control or much less, predict when it will kick in.
7. Do not insist that medication is the answer to your relationship issues as a whole. Treatment of ADHD will help, but there are at least two people in every relationship, not just one.

8. Do not expect ADHD symptoms to ever completely go away or that you can change someone's behavior. ADHD symptoms are not bad habits.
9. Do not expect your ADHD partner to say the right things or become interested in subjects being discussed in social gatherings; however, Adult ADDers have spent a life time trying to fit in and often mix into the background without attracting attention.
10. Do not predict what we may do or say in every situation – we are rather impulsive and tend to change as things change around us.

Dos:



1. Do learn all that you can about ADHD. I sincerely think it is best to learn from those who have ADHD, by reading their personal experiences, successes and also their failures. The very best book on the subject from this perspective is Dr. Hallowell's book '*Driven to Distraction*'. There are many books out there and online blogs written by people with ADHD, each with their own unique perspective. The best book by someone without ADHD is by Gina Pera, '*Is it You, Me, or Adult A.D.D.*'

There is also, of course, my personal account in my book [*One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir — surviving life with undiagnosed ADD.*](#)

2. Do keep an open mind and realize that you have traveled into a novel experience which you cannot predict or always plan for.
3. Do express your wants, needs and desires by asking specifically for a time and place to discuss and write them down. Keep it pleasant and be sure to explain how your ADHD partner will benefit by taking your needs into

account. I know it is difficult to understand why you or anyone would need to clarify such seemingly obvious things, but it helps to understand that communication cues are often missed by ADHD partners without us meaning to miss them, or (oh my, sorry) ignore you. ADDers also perform better from a reward standpoint and yes, even for you.

4. Do expect to find things in strange places. We tend to lose things quite frequently, to include, but not limited to: keys, wallets, letters, cards, utensils, cars and yes, even shoes. I take my shoes off just about anywhere in the house. I tried taking them off at the door for at least two days straight and then without considering it, I gave up on that. Each morning I search for my shoes. Joan usually knows where they are, especially if she tripped over them... hi Joan!
5. Do suggest eating out. Even if you cook, most of us loath nothing more than dishes, so if you like to be helped with the dishes, plan for eating out. Unless, of course, you don't mind doing the dishes, or letting them sit for days on end. Do invest in plastic, throw away utensils and plates.
6. Do expect changes to just about everything. We rarely do anything the same way twice and a lot of us love to rearrange things in our homes. If you're in a new relationship and your ADHD friend always seems to be rearranging their apartment furniture or decoration, roll with it, again, this is not a bad habit; it's a way of life.
7. Do expect delays. When we say about 10ish.... We really mean you should probably give us a call around 9ish to remind us or nudge us along, gently, politely... think rewarding thoughts that you might like to express when you call.
8. Do expect a lot of innovation and creativity. We often come up with new and usually confusing ways of doing things; some can save money, but often cost more money in the long run. I remember purchasing a \$2000.00 billiard cue (I had to save quite a while for it). I purchased it for the type of 'hit' it gives and performance, not for the art design, so I stripped down the butt end and painted my own design and lacquered it. Yes, that does seem odd, but again, I didn't buy it for the art design or the mother of pearl, which I destroyed

when stripping it... oops. The mother of pearl meant nothing to me, but....
Oh man!

9. Do expect (and I know this isn't fair) for us to maneuver ourselves out of house chores and somehow leave them for you. This isn't intentional, I swear it isn't, it just happens. I personally do not recommend a home with a garden or front yard, it is just not a good idea, trust me on this one. Goats that eat the grass in the backyard? Now we are talking!
10. Do expect our lists of do's to be rather outlandish, but on the other hand, totally serious! Do expect the unexpected.

By Bryan Hutchinson

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Originally posted on www.ADDerWorld.com

Books by Bryan Hutchinson [here](#).