



Beverly H. Rohman



## ADHD and Success

What is it like to have Attention Deficit Disorder? Many images come to mind to describe it: Watching 10 television monitors at one time and trying to focus on all of them; Listening to a radio station with a lot of static and having to strain to hear what's going on. It can even be like trying to build a house of cards in a dust storm. In other ways it's like being super-charged all the time. You get one idea and you have to act on it, and then you've got another idea before you've finished up with the first one. So you go for that one, but of course a third idea intercepts the second, and you just have to follow that one, and pretty soon people are calling you disorganized and impulsive and all sorts of impolite words that miss the point completely. You're trying really hard --- it's just that you have all these distractions pulling you this way and that, which makes it really hard to stay on task. Energy overflows --- you're drumming your fingers, tapping your feet, humming a song, looking here, looking there, scratching, stretching, doodling, and people think you are not paying attention or not interested, but what you're really doing is helping your very active brain get focused.

This is how it is for millions of children and adults who have ADD ....or ADHD, as it is officially diagnosed. We also know that these individuals are usually very creative and talented, but often get stuck in a rut or get sidetracked before they even begin. However, when you put them in a compatible environment, with just the right amount of encouragement and support ---- amazing things happen and they take off like there's no tomorrow and are able to get the most incredible things done.

In order to appreciate the talents and creativity of individuals who have ADD you need to answer the question ..... ***How do you harness the energy and build upon the creative mind of someone who has ADD?*** For both the ADD child and adult, the key is to build a positive environment where their creative strengths can flourish. When on-task and engaged in an interesting activity, the ADD mind is freed up, allowed to think, producing amazing results. However, when pressured into an overloaded state, the ADD child or adult freezes up and gets stuck in a rut. To ensure the mind's ability to flow, here are some key elements to create a favorable environment to support their incredible talents and creativity.

**1. Find the right activity.** Don't attempt to force a square peg into a round hole. One of the best ways to provide support to someone who has ADD is to encourage them to do what they love. When you do what you love, the work becomes play and success comes easily. This is why many of the greatest CEO's, inventors, actors, and musicians throughout history have been identified as having ADD. Doing what they love, their minds have been free to think and take them where others never dared to dream.

**2. The importance of physical environment.** Having ADD can be a double whammy when it comes to productivity. Children and adults with ADD are often disorganized or have a hard time keeping their environments straightened up - yet it is hard to think in a jumbled environment. To prevent this, look at ways to keep the environment in shape. One successful adult with ADD suggests to "Box up what you don't need and hide it in the garage or a closet...you'll find it if you truly need it. Label drawers, buckets, or shelves for specific items and practice keeping things exactly where they're labeled. Try to handle paperwork once, act on it, and be done with it...And work hard to become a minimalist. We're typically the pack-rats of the world, but this is exactly the thing that can be our downfall."

**3. Create an environment for success.** While this may be difficult and met with protest, children and adults with ADD require structure to thrive. Without structure, they are prone to spin off in a thousand different directions, work very hard, but have little to show for it. The key is to build a daily routine so that we can get things done on time without panicking.

**4. Find a Coach or Mentor for support.** Find someone who works one-on-one to help the person with ADD find and develop their strengths and learn to manage the weaknesses that often overshadow their true abilities and talents. Someone who utilizes structures, strategies, accountability, support and feedback to help them to stay focused and get back on track.

**5. Build on results, not how you get there.** The ADD mind is always looking for new and creative ways to do things. One of the most important points to remember is that creative thinking does not work in a linear fashion, as in ABC. Chances are the ADD mind often finds a better and more direct route from A to C. Allow them the freedom to think differently and you may be surprised at the results. Having someone believe in your capabilities in a supportive environment produces positive

energy and success.

Remember, it's not how you get there, but that you find the success you desire. We must remember to foster the feeling of "I can do it" in children, adolescents and adults and inspire them toward their own personal greatness. Help give them wings and show them how to fly!!

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