



Beverly H. Rohman



Creativity and the Power of Positive Thinking

Ever felt stuck, unable to do even a simple task, and then someone comes along and gives you the biggest compliment? All of a sudden you feel you're on air, floating above the clouds, able to take on the most complicated and difficult task with ease. That's often how it is with people who have learning differences --- especially Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Children and adults who learn differently are usually very creative and talented, but often get stuck in a rut or get sidetracked before the begin. Yet put them in a compatible environment, with just the right amount of encouragement and --Voila! -- they take off like there's no tomorrow and are able to get the most incredible things done.

In order to appreciate the buried treasure within individuals who have ADD you need to answer the question ***How do you harness 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 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. ADDer's are often disorganized or have a hard time keeping their environments straightened up - yet it is hard to think in a

jumbled environment. Michael Sandler, an ADD coach with ADD, says that it can “create a spiral affect, keeping us from producing quality work, and frying our minds. And the worse our environments get, the less we’re able to focus and produce, or keep our environments straight. He calls the point of return “Critical Mass.” When this point of disorganization in the environment is reached, ADD’ers lose the ability to maintain their environments and keep on task. To prevent this, look at ways to keep the environment in shape. 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. Build your temporal environment for success. While they protest against it, ADD’ers require structure to thrive. Without structure, they are prone to spin off in a thousand different directions, work tremendously 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. 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 succeed. We must remember to foster the feeling of “I can do it” in those around us and inspire them toward greatness. Help give them wings and show them how to fly!!

~~~~~

*Beverly Rohman is the Executive Director and founder of The Learning Connections LLC as well as an AD/HD Coach and Learning Consultant.*

Published in Healthwise for “The Star Democrat,” April 2005