



Beverly H. Rohman



What Is It Like To Have Attention Deficit Disorder?

Many metaphors come to mind to describe it. It is like watching 10 television monitors at one time and trying to focus on all of them. Or it's like listening to a radio station with a lot of static and you have 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.

There is good news to all of this. Learning differences are often positive indicators of creativity and intelligence. Once a child has been diagnosed with AD/HD, there is much that can be done with the help of teachers, parents, colleagues, mental health professionals, AD/HD coaches. Understanding the effects of AD/HD on the individual can help everyone learn to cope with it. Understanding your child's individual learning style, recognizing their strengths and identifying their weaknesses can lead to very positive results. An untapped realm of the brain swims into view and the child who had been such a problem, such a nudge, such a general pain in the neck to himself and everybody else, that person starts doing things they had never been able to do before. They surprise themselves.

If you have, or think you have, a child with AD/HD, what do you do next? Consult with your pediatrician or physician or mental health professional to get a proper assessment or diagnosis. Learn how your child can receive special services through the school system. Consult with the school psychologist or social worker who can usually offer you educational material or resources to learn more about AD/HD. Enlist the aid of support groups, and AD/HD Coaches who offer a tremendous amount of support, information and education in learning how to turn these challenges into a very positive and successful experience.

The Learning Connections of Easton offers consulting and coaching services for individuals who have AD/HD or other learning differences. The Learning Connections offers a monthly support group at the Nick Rajacich Health Education Center in the Easton Memorial Hospital. Bring your questions or concerns and we will provide information, offer resources, show videos, have guest speakers and discuss tips for managing these personal and family challenges. For more information about The Learning Connections or our support group, call 410-763-7097.

Send your questions to *ASK TLC*, 101 Bay Street, Suite 6, Easton, MD 21601, or write to info@thelearningconnections.net and look for answers in our upcoming columns.

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