

ADD/ADHD: A Tool for Encouragement

Attention Deficit Disorder affects thirty-five million families in the United States. In trying to describe Attention Deficit Disorder I came up with this analogy, "Imagine an assembly line of computers, every computer going through a maze of phases from circuitry to wiring, then add Lucy Ricardo, of television show "I Love Lucy," to the mix. Some of her computers are going to be wired differently from the standard computer, but I content they still can be successful, even if the work they do is accomplished differently."

Unfortunately these differences in ADD/ADHD children can sometimes be frustrating to parents, friends, and teachers. Too often these children are dealt through negative criticisms, made to feel stupid or unmotivated. In what would be normal conversation in the normal household, in a home dealing with an ADD/ADHD child, these same conversations end-up explosive, with frustrated parents yelling, and making the child feeling inferior, thus lowering their self-esteem. This feeling of inferiority can lead to dangerous complications such as; anger, unrestrained emotional outbursts, a feeling of worthlessness, and addiction which often continues into adulthood. Many adults in anger management groups have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD, and carry many of these anger issues from adolescence.

My friend Mike Roth is one of the most intelligent and creative people you could ever meet. We met in 1996 when he applied to my production company for a job as a producer. However, along with Mike Roth's package of intelligence, loyalty, humor, brilliance, sensitivity to others, and insight, comes complications. He is off the charts with extreme ADD traits and tendencies. He is random all the time, he forgets things 5 minutes after he hears them, if he has even heard them in the first place, he loses everything, refuses to keep any notes or records, has a hard time concentrating and reading, forgets meetings and appointments, gets frustrated easily, and can't balance his finances. Therefore, Mike lives in a world of constant turmoil. Still, I consider Mike to be one of my best friends. He is loyal

and trustworthy. I appreciate Mike's counseling when I am perplexed and need his advice. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mike and greatly respect him, and would never expose any of the hilarious and sometimes disastrous stories. But to every parent who benefits from this tool, Mike should be your hero.

Mike was diagnosed with ADHD when he was in his mid thirties. This was not surprising to me, because the research and data to diagnose ADD/ADHD was not available to psychologist and psychiatrist up until fifteen years ago. Now, ADD/ADHD is the basis for an industry, and a financial staple for assorted drug companies. Ever since his diagnosis, Mike has made serious attempts to understand his behavior, and he has become a human divining rod in identifying Attention Deficit Disorder in other people. According to Mike, everyone has ADD. I'm not so sure he's wrong. He was very quick to diagnosis me although for a long time I didn't trust his judgment. With my best interests in mind, Mike pounded me with examples up until he forced me to read the book "Driven to Distraction" by Dr. Halloway. Until then I didn't realize he was right. Not knowing that there were various degrees of ADD/ADHD, I just took everything he said as rubbish, because I was not as extreme as he. ADD does have different extremes. His relentless pursuit of alerting people to the possibility they had ADD is such an incredible human gesture that I want every person to know that the enclosed tool was Mike's idea, efforts, contributions, and Herculean desire to help families.

Mike's parents had no idea what was going on with him. Therefore, he suffered emotionally, in self-esteem, and financially. His father sold a very successful insurance business because he didn't think Mike could handle it. Mike responded by becoming a top insurance agent/specialist. Proving he was more than capable. Mike's desire is to make a contribution to families by helping them understand their children, and to not misunderstand their capabilities. He doesn't want what happened to him to happen to anyone else.

My friendship and admiration for Mike drove me to make a tool that not only helps parents coach their children, but according to Mike's wishes, create a coaching tool for teenagers to succeed as well. The teenage market is void of any solutions, and for that matter so is the adult market. I contacted every research data content specialist associated with ADD/ADHD I could find. Along with offering very little research helping teens and adults, all of the specialists wanted fees just to use their research and name, and would help very little in the hands-on aspects this tool required for success. I was so disappointed and frustrated that I practically gave up. Then as luck would have it, I met Kathy Bradley-Klug. I was now producing assorted products for the Florida Department of Education, and by chance was steered to Dr. Kathy Bradley-Klug the State specialist and Consultant on ADHD. She was more than willing to donate her time, experience and energy to help families help their kids. She was a blessing, trust me, we needed someone who wasn't ADD helping with this project.

Mike, Dr. Bradley-Klug, and I created scripts based on case studies, case histories, tracking teens throughout an eight-month period, and an in-depth questioner. There are 17 categories with over 60 teens appearing, and openly addressing pertinent issues in their everyday life. Issues like self-esteem, confrontations, frustrations, work, and addictions. In each category you and your teen will hear from other teens, and be able to discuss your ADD teenager's feelings, strengths, and handicaps like never before. One of the many dynamics of this tool is that it gives a parent the understanding about their teen's feelings from another teen's input and point of view, thus creating an opportunity to discuss their teen's feelings, thinking, and strength. These discussions can lead to developing strategies for a teen to confront and overcome weaknesses associated with ADD/ADHD. This tool also allows a teen to explore help in developing their personal strategies in a private and confidential manner, in a manner of speaking this tool is like group therapy with 60 friends, but at a higher level because this group is dedicated to helping only your teen. In the privacy of your computer your teen might chose to listen to the professional

suggestions of Dr. Bradley-Klug, which are understanding and very positive.

Coaching the parents as well as the adolescent, makes this experience one the family as a whole can benefit from. This tool coaches parents on what to expect, and how to effectively communicate with their teen in a non-confrontational non-threatening way, thus lowering the amount of stress and frustration felt in a home dealing with ADD. Families will have a resource tool, not to be used in one sitting, but to be addressed and used as needed, sort of a psychologist in their computer. Among these tools, Dr. Bradley-Klug offers intimate and valuable professional coaching for parents as well.

This is a category sensitive coaching tool, giving a parent and child a staging ground to discuss issues, and be encouraging instead of negative and non-productive. This resource tool is intended to be used when your ADD teen needs help in developing strategies and understanding. This presentation was designed to introduce a family with an ADD teen to other teens, and learn that these are universal problems every ADD family faces. This tool is our contribution to creating open, honest, intelligent and successful discussions, needed to balance out the usual frustrating, energy-draining, battleground ADD families live with on a daily basis.

This tool is only a small part of the equation, and certainly not by any means the final solution, but this is a great resource tool a family can use to help sort out and understand how to best cope with the issues at hand.

For more information go directly to www.motint.org
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