

Conquering College with AD/HD

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Imagine this scenario for a minute. You're in a bowling alley. The noise, the chaos, the smelly shoes, bowling balls bouncing off the alley's wood floors, people yelling, hot dogs and Pepsi spilled down the front of your shirt, kids running all over the place totally out of control.

What does it sound like?

It sounds a lot like living with AD/HD!

"Living with AD/HD is like having a bowling alley installed in your brain".*

I was diagnosed with **A**ttention **D**eficit **H**yperactivity **D**isorder [**AD/HD**] at age 46. AD/HD wasn't on anyone's radar screen in the 1950's, 60's, or even the 70's. No one even knew what AD/HD was when I was a kid, and, no one ever told me it wasn't going to be a joy ride. All I knew, I was always bored to death in school, always screwing around, didn't pay attention half the time, always in trouble with my teachers, always challenging authority and always questioning why I had to follow rules I thought were dumb. I was sent to the principal's office and assigned detention so many times I should have just brought my sleeping bag and camped out there. My poor mother was called in so many times for the dreaded "parent/teacher meeting" she threatened to send me to boarding school. I was grounded so many times I thought I'd never get out of the house. Teachers gave her the same story time after time after time. "Lee is so smart, his grades could be so much better if he would pay attention, apply himself, not be disruptive, and stop horsing around". After school I'd get home, providing I wasn't distracted enough to make it home, my mother would tell me the same thing time after time after time, "stop horsing around and pay attention". My response to her, which incidentally, never went over particularly well, "I'm bored with school, it's not interesting, so I can't pay attention".

A lot of water has passed under that proverbial bridge since then. Accompanying that, a whole lot of time. Now, at the....umm....let's just say....tested?....age of 49 years young, this kid is back in school hunting down the degree I started in...[ok, now I'm really giving away my age]...1977?...Ugh!! ...You know, it's amazing how one doesn't comprehend how much time has passed until it actually does. Oh yea, I try to pass it off lightly and jokingly saying, "I'm on the 30-year plan". Well listen up everyone! "*Puleeeeeeeze*" believe me when I tell you it's been a long, frustrating, daily struggle. To this very day I'm still saying to myself, "What a long strange trip it's been".

Nevertheless, here's the "*Up-side*" of the "*Down-side*" for us Adder's when we're face-to-face with the "Institution of Higher Education".

They get it!.....Yes!... They finally get it!

Adder's listen up! We're now under a protective umbrella within this enormous entity called the "U.S. Education System". Not only that, this system is receptive to our condition, and needs, helping to ensure our success.

As defined best by Ed Hallowell, M.D., co-author of New York Times best sellers, "Driven to Distraction" and "Delivered from Distraction",

***"Having A.D.H.D. is like having a "Race Car" brain with "Ford Brakes".
"We just need a brake mechanic to install better brakes". *****

When I heard this I said, "That's it! That's exactly it!"
From our point of view this is what our administrators are, world class brake mechanics.

Look, there's a ton of support out there just waiting to assist us. Support groups, counselors, advisors, test centers, books, and the internet [my best source of information]. What I've found is "*deciding*" to make use of all this is the hardest part. Once this decision is made, hold onto your hat's because it'll come to you full throttle. Here at H.C.C., the Deans, student services, professors, counselors, advisors, even the library and its "crack" circulation dept, have accommodated me, bending over backwards, thus, saving me from committing academic suicide, a couple of times. By the way, thanks to each and every one of you for keeping me on track with your help and guidance. Not to say there haven't been a few speed bumps from time to time, but hey, the worlds not a perfect place is it? The great news is all this support doesn't stop here! I've been accepted to U.S.F. as a senior. Soon, I'll be cross-enrolled at U.S.F. and H.C.C. finishing my 3rd degree. After inquiring and searching through U.S.F.'s programs, any of you transferring will be pleased to know, you'll find the same spectacular assistance available. All higher educational institutions accommodate us Adder's. It's the law.

In closing, let me just say this. Some of you might think I'm putting too much of a positive spin on this, or, I'm living in a fantasy world. Maybe so, but listen up! We need to be positive about this and move forward as aggressively as we can. If not, think where you'll be in ten years. Take advantage of these resources. It's crucial to your success.

All you have to do is ask for it!

In the words of late NBC News' Washington bureau chief, and, moderator of
"Meet the Press," Tim Russert.

"Go Get'em"

*Martin Mull, Actor.

** Ed Hallowell, M.D./John Ratey, M.D. "Delivered from Distraction"

