Tips for Overcoming ADHD Mood Swings

by JEFF EMMERSON

Recognize Your Mood Swings to Succeed

ADHD mood swings are common in adults. While bipolar disorder is characterized by episodic instances of mood swings lasting a couple weeks or longer in duration, ADHD mood swings are much more consistent and rapid, presenting themselves up to several times per day.

It can be an exhausting process, especially in those diagnosed with both bipolar disorder and ADHD.

I can tell you from my personal experience that the first step in learning to thrive amidst mood swings is to recognize them. As with other ADHD symptoms, you can't fight what you can't see, so self-honesty and self-acceptance are two crucial ingredients in learning to cope with potentially debilitating mood swings – ones that often result in bad decision-making.

Here are a few key tips for learning about and working through mood swings with Adult ADHD:

Be Gentle with Yourself

Take a deep breath and remind yourself that the world *isn't* falling apart – even though it might feel like it at the time! You've made it this far, and as I've learned, we can literally make it through the worst disaster that can come our way as long as we're able to breathe and think.

Take a moment and read that back to yourself. After nearly 40 years on this planet, that's one thing I know to be completely true.

Make a List of Your Emotional Patterns

Get crystal-clear about yourself, even if you feel ashamed or embarrassed. That is the key here! People who don't face their patterns, their "dark sides." don't usually live very happy, fulfilled lives.

Decide that you're worth the investment and the work you're going to need to put in to truly live a better, more successful life.

Can Medication Help?

This one can be tough for people, especially if you aren't fortunate enough to find a medication that helps to level out your moods on the first few tries. I've been on 5 or 6 different medications, and only recently found one that helps my mood swings better than anything else I've tried.

As the old saying goes: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." It can be a roller-coaster of a ride (as it was for me), one that can make you wonder if you'll ever find "yourself" again. That's the warning, but if you don't

try, you'll never know.

Next page: doing your research and letting go of fear.

Do Your Research

This can include therapy, visiting your local public library, using YouTube and other internet resources, not to mention talking to friends, family and others who know you well. After all, listening to those who know you can be an excellent indicator of any mood swing patterns you may be experiencing.

The magic of therapy is that you can go as far as you want to go toward investing in your overall success and joy in life. It might sound cliché, but I say it because it's 100% true. Even if you don't have an official diagnosis, getting to know coping strategies, ways of "re-framing" your thought patterns and becoming more self-aware are tools for a better life, no matter who you are.

Trust me on this: commit to the journey to a better you and the rest of the pieces, the learning lessons to help you thrive, will naturally come your way. It took me decades to learn this fact.

Remember Shame and Fear Only Hold You Back!

This is yet another huge point to be aware of. I read a lot about shame and guilt, absorbing as much as I can toward seeing through the shame of my past, learning to let go and move forward while challenging myself!

That sounds scary, and it is. I've had some major anxiety/panic over it at times, but the more I learn about anyone who's ever been successful, the more it becomes perfectly clear that they had the courage to take risks along the way.

Taking risks helps us in several ways. It teaches us that we're stronger than we think, teaches us what to do and what not to do, and it also keeps us vibrant and living this adventure called life!

Are You Sure You're Properly Diagnosed?

I say this to those of you who might be questioning your diagnosis deep down. It doesn't mean you're wrong – just be sure you get a blood test to rule out other physiological diagnoses that can appear to be Adult ADHD. Even a poor diet can cause huge mood shifts due to blood-sugar levels. A lack of sleep can also mimic ADHD. Just a heads-up.

When mood swings come your way, the more you've taken the above steps to heart, the more you've done your research and been honest with yourself, the better off you'll be toward taking healthy steps to see those moods through and thrive. How do I know this? Easy – I live it every day!

Next page: personal growth and cutting yourself some slack.

No Quick Fixes

Everywhere I write I make sure to let people know that there truly isn't a "quick-fix" to any of these mental health challenges. To think any differently is cheating yourself from true growth, real happiness and joy.

Once I learned to accept myself, my patterns of behavior and the fact that I'm a very worthy, caring person (even with my flaws), my life began to change for the better, and people wanted to be around me more than ever before.

You and I can do a ton on our own, but remember that most of us aren't trained like specialists and counselors

are. Even if you are, you still need to see someone else/refer to help from outside your own brain to do it properly and get the most out of your investment toward self-growth and a better quality of daily life.

Adult ADHD mood swings can make us feel like we're losing our minds at times. Tools like mindfulness, exercise, creative outlets and re-framing techniques can make the difference between getting through a mood swing in a healthy, positive way and acting out of sheer emotion, sabotaging your life with bad decisions you might regret shortly after.

Listen to your gut, trust yourself, and remember that you have exactly what it takes to see the tough times through! As viciously intense as it might feel in the moment, it will pass! They always do. Where do you want to be at the end of the mood swing? In a healthy, happy and productive place.

Remember You're Human

In closing, I want to remind you that you're human. You'll NEVER be perfect. Stop being so hard on yourself and start being gentler on yourself through self-acceptance and kindness to that person looking at you in the mirror.

Guess what: I'm on this road right along with you! This is a journey that each of us share, one full of ups, downs and winding roads. Imagine how boring it would be if things were always easy and predictable!

That's not a world I'd want to live in, personally. As tough as mood swings and mental health can be, learning to love yourself and change your thought/behavior patterns toward a better life is something to be very proud of. It takes guts, courage and an open mind/heart. That's true leadership that lasts.