Learning to Accept Myself and My ADHD Diagnosis

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Accepting ADHD Into Your Life

Acceptance — we all crave it in some form or another. Hopefully, as we grow and mature, we look less for the acceptance of others and more from within ourselves.

If you live with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), you know a little about needing acceptance.

Your Diagnosis and Accepting ADHD

It is important to accept yourself, flaws and all, but accepting your ADHD diagnosis may just change your life.

A diagnosis is a beginning. You may have more to learn about it, you may need time to adjust or time for more research, but a diagnosis is finally the proof of what you have known deep inside all along. Everything about yourself that you, or others, never understood starts to make sense.

Labels

I've heard pros and cons of being "labeled" as having ADHD. Some say the label creates a stigma, but I don't see it that way.

We are not the sum of a medical diagnosis. As human beings, we are much more than notations in our medical charts.

My diagnosis allowed me to reclaim a bit of my dignity. I'd practically started hiding from the world, embarrassed by my anxiety and all my perceived shortcomings.

I was exhausted from not being like everyone else I knew. I was tired of never measuring up in my own mind. I was tired of being disorganized, forgetful and impulsive, when everyone else I knew was so "grown up."

Yes, I could succeed at life, but the effort it took to just get through the day was overwhelming. There had to be a reason for the constant internal turmoil that I tried so hard to hide from others.

Diagnosis Is a Tool

If I can name something, I can fight it. If I know what I am up against, I can learn, plan and grow.

That's what diagnosis did for me. It gave me something to work with. It gave me relief and peace of mind.

Suddenly, there was hope where I had none before. I was able to give a name to a whole bunch of behaviors I had not entirely recognized as symptoms.

Everything changed in that moment. I didn't have excuses, but I had reasons.

Now I could learn and find better ways to help myself and to live my life instead of beating myself up all the time.

The Truth Is Worth It

Seeking a diagnosis can be scary. Receiving the *correct* diagnosis can be time-consuming and stressful, but it's worth it in the end.

When you have a correct diagnosis you can begin to live. You no longer have to beat yourself up for things you've never fully been able to control. Also, you can find tools and resources to make managing your life with ADHD so much easier.

I never struggled to accept my diagnosis, because it was like someone finally gave me a fantastic gift. I know some who have not been so lucky. We all come to terms with things in our own way, and that's okay.

Everyone is different and we all bring our own experiences to the table.

My diagnosis was the beginning for me. It started me on the path of new growth, change, and yes, acceptance.

I could finally be myself and stop wondering why I couldn't be like everyone else. I could stop the self-loathing. I now had a name for my behaviors, which gave me something to work with.

A Community of Your Own

Diagnosis was the first step for me. The second step was learning all I could. My best teachers have been people like me.

Accepting ADHD meant accepting myself for who I was, and finding others who knew what it was like. For every story I had about life with ADHD, I found people with similar stories to share.

We are all different, and we all struggle with different aspects of ADHD as well as celebrate different aspects of our personalities, but we all share a common thread. We are all familiar with the ups and downs.

ADHD communities are extremely supportive and a wonderful place to learn about your diagnosis and what to expect. When you feel lost and alone, it's comforting to know that others get it.

Just Be You

To me, accepting my diagnosis meant accepting myself. And in the end, I think that is all any of us can do.

Maybe we've spent a lifetime feeling inadequate. Maybe people have told us too many times that we should try harder.

It's time to stop feeling inadequate. It's time to stop thinking we are never enough. We have challenges — but we have talents too.

I make jokes about my forgetfulness, even when the trait bothers me. It's still part of who I am. I'm not going to change it — I can own it now.

I've released myself from the burden of thinking I have to do things like everyone else. Before my diagnosis, I was desperately trying to be "normal," and always feeling like I was failing. I don't pressure myself like that anymore.

I want to be productive, I want to contribute something to society, I want to be an upstanding citizen, I want to be

a good person. I can be all those things, while still accepting that my methods might not be quite like everyone else.

It’s okay if I do things differently. It’s okay if I have my quirks — it’s who I am. Getting a diagnosis gave me that, and I will be forever grateful.