

Can you have a successful life with ADHD?

By: Duane Gordon

ADHD, like anything else, presents challenges, but among the unique characteristics of ADHD, there are both positive and negative traits. These traits provide benefits, resources, skills, and strategies you can use to overcome those challenges.

An Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) can be devastating. We think, “This can’t be good! ‘Disorder’ is right there in the name.” Yes, **inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity can cause problems at school, at work and in relationships.**ⁱ And people with ADHD face a lot of stigma.ⁱⁱ But we find what we look for, and we’ve been looking for the problems ADHD causes for a long time. Remember, mental health isn’t only about not having an illness or disorder. Mental *health* is about recovery, coping, well-being and flourishing.ⁱⁱⁱ **With ADHD, your brain works differently, but not all those differences are bad.**^{iv} Broader studies find ADHD attributes like high energy, creativity, hyperfocus, agreeableness, **empathy and a willingness** to help others.^v

There are many successful people with ADHD. That fact alone is a clue. But even better, these people often succeed because of the positive traits of their ADHD. Their ADHD helps them flourish.^{vi} ADHD impairments exist across a spectrum, and there’s no denying severe impairments can make life tough. But as we expand our

search, we’re finding more positive aspects of ADHD. **ADHD helps with divergent thinking**^{vii} and **creativity** that delivers real world achievements^{viii}. People with ADHD use **hyperfocus to enhance productivity**. The “focused work-rate that hyperfocus produces enables creative genius to flourish”^{ix}. People with ADHD “don’t fit in,” feeling like outsiders.^x This *individuation* lets them blaze their own trail instead of following the crowd^{xi}. Life with ADHD has taught them self-acceptance. **Impulsivity, showing up as adventurousness or intuition, is an advantage in many careers.** Hyperactivity can make it hard to sit still in school, but many adults harness that ADHD *drive*. **When you are passionate about a goal, your ADHD energy drives performance and productivity.**^{xii}

You can have a successful life with ADHD; however, like anything else, it will present challenges. But there are positive aspects of ADHD. And when you can see these as benefits, resources, skills or strategies you can begin to use it to overcome many challenges.

About the Author



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