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10 Tips for Practicing Positive Thinking as a Tool for Managing ADD

By Jennifer Koretsky

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At first glance, it would seem that positive thinking and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) have nothing to do with one another. But many of us with ADD develop negative thinking patterns because we become frustrated by our challenges and frequent feelings of being overwhelmed. This negative outlook then makes it even harder for us to manage those challenges and move forward.

Practicing positive thinking allows people with ADD to focus on our strengths and accomplishments, which increases happiness and motivation. This, in turn, allows us to spend more time making progress, and less time feeling down and stuck.

The following tips provide practical suggestions that you can use to help you shift into more positive thinking patterns:

1. Take Good Care of Yourself

It's much easier to be positive when you are eating well, exercising, and getting enough rest.

2. Remind Yourself of the Things You Are Grateful For

Stresses and challenges don't seem quite as bad when you are constantly reminding yourself of the things that are right in life. Taking just 60 seconds a day to stop and appreciate the good things will make a huge difference.

3. Look for the Proof Instead of Making Assumptions

A fear of not being liked or accepted sometimes leads us to assume that we know what others are thinking, but our fears are usually not reality. If you have a fear that a friend or family member's bad mood is due to something you did, or that your co-workers are secretly gossiping about you when you turn your back, speak up and ask them. Don't waste time worrying that you did something wrong unless you have proof that there is something to worry about.

4. Refrain from Using Absolutes

Have you ever told a partner "You're ALWAYS late!" or complained to a friend "You NEVER call me!"?

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Thinking and speaking in absolutes like 'always' and 'never' makes the situation seem worse than it is, and programs your brain into believing that certain people are incapable of delivering.

5. Detach From Negative Thoughts

Your thoughts can't hold any power over you if you don't judge them. If you notice yourself having a negative thought, detach from it, witness it, and don't follow it.

6. Squash the "ANTs"

In his book "Change Your Brain, Change Your Life," Dr. Daniel Amen talks about "ANTs" – Automatic Negative Thoughts. These are the bad thoughts that are usually reactionary, like "Those people are laughing, they must be talking about me," or "The boss wants to see me? It must be bad!" When you notice these thoughts, realize that they are nothing more than ANTs and squash them!

7. Practice Lovin', Touchin' & Squeezin' (Your Friends and Family)

You don't have to be an expert to know the benefits of a good hug. Positive physical contact with friends, loved ones, and even pets, is an instant pick-me-up. One research study on this subject had a waitress touch some of her customers on the arm as she handed them their checks. She received higher tips from these customers than from the ones she didn't touch!

8. Increase Your Social Activity

By increasing social activity, you decrease loneliness. Surround yourself with healthy, happy people, and their positive energy will affect you in a positive way!

9. Volunteer for an Organization, or Help another Person

Everyone feels good after helping. You can volunteer your time, your money, or your resources. The more positive energy you put out into the world, the more you will receive in return.

10. Use Pattern Interrupts to Combat Rumination

If you find yourself ruminating, a great way to stop it is to interrupt the pattern and force yourself to do something completely different. Rumination is like hyper-focus on something negative. It's never productive, because it's not rational or solution-oriented, it's just excessive worry. Try changing your physical environment – go for a walk or sit outside. You could also call a friend, pick up a book, or turn on some music.

Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, by visiting <http://www.ADDmanagement.com/e-newsletter.htm>

8 Essential Skills for Managing ADD

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So many adults with ADD find themselves chronically overwhelmed with every day life. This means that they generally wake up feeling like they are running behind on all the things they need to do, spend the whole day on high speed in order to get all those things done, and yet still go to bed most nights feeling like they never got anywhere. Or, they spend the whole day in a fog, constantly aware of all the things on that to-do list, but never mustering up the motivation to tackle the tasks. This leaves them feeling unorganized, unproductive, unhappy, lazy, guilty, and...the list goes on.

I used to be one of those people. Constantly overwhelmed and always disorganized. Through dedication, hard work, and lots of time and practice, I've gotten to a place in my life where I know how to manage my ADD. (The key word here is "manage.") Through both my personal and professional work, I've isolated what I believe are 8 Essential Skills for Managing ADD. Today I'd like to share them with you:

1. Slow Down

ADDers seem to always be operating on over-drive...mentally, physically, or both. In my opinion, slowing down when you feel speedy, stressed, overwhelmed, etc. is the first and most necessary skill for managing ADD.

2. Practice Excellent Self-Care

ADDers are prone to putting themselves last. Why is this? How will you ever "get it together" if you don't dedicate time and energy to yourself?

3. Know Your Own ADD

ADD affects us all in different ways. You can't effectively manage ADD without being aware of the specific ways in which it affects you, and the specific ways in which your challenges are triggered.

4. Actively Use Your Learning and Processing Modalities

Identifying the natural modalities in which you are able to sustain focus and process information and feelings will make your personal and professional lives much easier.

5. Focus on Your Strengths

Everyone has strengths, skills, talents, and passions. Increasing the time you spend on these good things will increase both your self-esteem and your happiness.

6. Think Positively

Patterns of negative thinking can be reversed. Negative thinking will hold you back. Positive thinking will propel you forward.

7. Plan the Time to Plan...Everything

Planning doesn't always come easily to ADDers. Developing tools and systems for planning will streamline organization and time management, but you have to take it one step further and plan the

time to use them.

8. Take Risks

This doesn't refer to speed racing or skydiving! It refers to stepping outside your comfort zone and doing things that may be uncomfortable, like asking for that raise, taking up that new hobby, or pursuing that life-long passion. If you don't take the risk, you won't get the reward.

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