



## A Few Words for the ADD Student

by Debra Moore

Although this book is written about you, the ADD student, most of what's said in these pages is directed at parents, teachers, tutors, counselors, and ADD coaches. The book's aim is to give the adults around you some hints which would, in the long run, make your life easier.

We also hope reading about these tips will help adults reach a better understanding about how we ADDers "tick." One of the best parts about my job at Brainworks is I get to connect with fellow members of my "tribe" on a daily basis.

I know we are a difficult group to categorize and analyze. By nature, we are unpredictable, unorthodox, and unregulated; one minute we are exuberant and dramatically passionate, and sixty seconds later, we may lapse into passive dreaminess. Our tendency to operate on "impulse power" can be exciting or aggravating, depending on the circumstances. (My friends may get annoyed at me when I'm impulsively changing dinner plans, but they are far more tolerant of my impulsivity when I'm shopping for their birthday presents!)

Despite the fact that my undiagnosed ADD complicated the first 38 years of my life, I can honestly say, “I wouldn’t want to be any other way.” ADD has blessed me with a number of positive qualities, including an active imagination, a spontaneous sense of humor, and a heightened sense of compassion.

However, I’d be lying if I didn’t also acknowledge the negative impact of ADD; I’ve lost friends, changed jobs, and felt like a failure because I wasn’t reaching my “potential.” Being diagnosed was an important first step, but the next step was up to me. I had to learn to manage my ADD negatives. To do this, I had to “let go” of a great deal of guilt and bad feelings from my past. I said, “Ok, from now on, you have a responsibility to identify your ADD problems and figure out a way around them.”

It hasn’t always been an easy battle, but I have made a number of positive changes in my life. I hope this book helps you see some positive changes as well. To help you out, here are some special “tips” just for you!

1. Find a “quiet place” for yourself somewhere, a place where you can sit by yourself and spend time thinking for and about YOU. Dream about the great stuff you plan to do; it’s an excellent way to develop your “anticipation skills,” and dreams have an uncanny way of turning into goals.

**2.** Be kind to yourself. Don't call yourself, "stupid" when you experience a setback. Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to your best friend under the same circumstances.

Work consciously to say "good things" to yourself also. Before you go to sleep each night, think about one success you had that day, or make a list of "why people like me."

**3.** Work on "delaying reactions" to what people say to you. Most of the conflicts I've known happened because I tended to "leap to the defensive" when I misunderstood people. Now I ask, "What did you mean by that?" before I react, and this little question has headed off a lot of arguments!

**4.** Identify your special talents and pursue them. Many ADDers possess artistic gifts, such as drawing, dancing, or playing a musical instrument. Others are terrific mechanics, cooks, campers, or computer "hackers." Whatever it is that you do best, work at becoming better at it. Your talent may lead to a successful career!

**5.** Learn as much as you can about ADD. The more you know about the nature of the condition, the better able you are to control the negatives and exploit the positives.

**6.** Cultivate friendships with non-ADDers. I realize now how important it has been to have non-ADD folks in my life, and generally, such "combinations of opposites" are worthwhile for both sides.

Good luck!



A Few Words...  
For the Parents of ADD  
Students  
by Carla Crutsinger

As I thumb through these pages, one thought that pops into my mind is, “Boy, I sure wish I’d had a book like this when my son was still in school!” It’s amazing for me to consider the advances made in understanding and treating ADD in the twenty-two years since my son Sam was in the first grade.

Whenever I recall his struggles, I remember the pain he suffered; as a parent, I saw his zest for life and his joy for learning deteriorate a little bit each day. Even in elementary school, he experienced the confusion and frustration typical to many ADD students; he was intelligent enough to do his work, but he couldn’t manage to finish assignments on time, to remember to study for tests, or to keep track of his textbooks. Long-term projects were simply out of the question!

He seemed to be constantly in the academic “frying pan,” and his grades went up and down like a yo-yo. In one six weeks, he would fail a subject, but on his next report card, he’d make an A in

that class but fail another subject! The only consistent factor was inconsistency.

As a parent, I grew very tired of having to monitor his efforts on assignments, yet I was torn between allowing him to fail as a “lesson learned” consequence and watch his self-esteem crumble—or continuing to play the role of his “Homework Cop.” Over time, the quality of our relationship began to change as a result of my “nagging” him to stay on task, and I realized, “For the rest of his life, my son will remember his childhood as a time of torture.” I certainly didn’t want that!

His teachers assumed he was “lazy” and “didn’t care.” However, some subjects did interest him, and in those classes he made “A’s.” In other classes, he’d lose his attention five minutes after he walked through the door.

In a moment of desperation, I made a bargain with God, praying “If you get us through this crisis and help me discover what is happening to Sam, I will devote my life to helping others with similar problems.”

It takes a long time for some prayers to be answered, but eight years later, we finally discovered that Sam was dealing with ADD and other learning complications. Treating his ADD gave him new options. This gifted young man went from narrowly managing to graduate from high school to earning a college degree in four years, and in the

last year, he made the Dean's List! He majored in radio, television and film production and eventually entered the field of film and video productions; in the course of his career, he won an "Emmy" for his work on a television documentary. Currently, he is director of corporate technology of a national advertising agency, and he has worked as an audio engineer for television commercials and as a computer and graphics consultant for many businesses—including his mother's company!

Sam's triumph mirrors the achievements we have seen over and over in our clients' lives for the last 16 years. As we move into the 21st century, I see a new horizon of opportunities for ADDers, and I am especially pleased at how well schools are beginning to train teachers to adapt instructive strategies to fit various learning styles. I also find hope in the fact that research has added so much information to the body of knowledge about ADD, and doctors are responding to this knowledge. As scientific investigation continues, more effective treatments and management therapies will be available for ADDers. ADD "success stories" will continue to grow in number thanks to these advances.

God answered my prayer, and I hope this book helps you and your child find the path to a better and brighter future .