
Grab the Reins: ADHD is an Explanation, Not an Excuse

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ADHD IS MISUNDERSTOOD

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The Problem with Assumptions

- ADHD is not a disorder of knowing what to do, it's a disorder of doing what you know.
- ADHD folks have trouble turning their good intentions into action.
- If you don't have ADHD as an explanation, what are you left with?
 - People assume others operate the way that they do.

Excuses

- Excuses lower expectations because a person is seen as incapable.
- This is ultimately disempowering because it relies on others to be forgiving—and not everyone will be.

Explanations

- Explanations offer understanding for why something is happening—and therefore what you can do about it.
- The responsibility for change is on the individual to use that information productively.

Excuses Sometimes Don't Work

- Excuses don't work in every situation.
 - The electric company doesn't care if you have ADHD—they still want their payments on time.
- Explanations assume that we can't easily change the rules for individuals.
 - Explanations don't mean that you have to act on the knowledge, but you can if you choose to.

Who's in Control?

- People who use excuses expect most of the change, flexibility, or accommodations to come from others—and are thereby powerless.
- Using ADHD as an explanation places most of the onus for improvement onto the person himself—that means accepting responsibility but also offers hope for a better future.

ACCEPTANCE IS EMPOWERING

Striking a Balance

- Diagnosis isn't a get out of jail free card—still need to function in the world.
- Forgiveness + accountability = solid self-esteem.
- Balancing act between hopelessness (too hard) and carelessness (too easy).

Knowledge is Power

- Learning about how ADHD affects your ability to get things done gives you the power to make better informed choices.
 - Improve your batting average with a short list of targeted strategies.
- General good advice often isn't very helpful.
 - No matter how earnest. . .

You can't leave the past in the past if it's still happening in the present.

FACING YOUR DEMONS & BUILDING GOOD SELF- ESTEEM

Better Self-Esteem

- Solid self-esteem is based on realistic accomplishment and legitimate skills.
 - No one can take that away.
- Each success creates a step up the ladder of future success.
 - Lessons learned
 - Skills sharpened
 - Confidence and willingness to take chances

Choose Your Battles

- Sometimes discretion is the greater part of valor.
 - Colonel Custer isn't famous for his bravery. . .
- Moral victories are expensive.
 - Pursuing inappropriate goals.
 - Not pursuing appropriate goals—cutting your nose to spite your face.

Manage the Social Costs

- Active expectation management can reduce the social costs of ADHD.
 - Give people permission to remind you, etc.
- Re-interpret ADHD behaviors as unintentional and discourage over-reading of their meaning.
 - Talk symptoms before diagnoses.

Clean Up Problems

- It takes guts to admit you blew it.
- Clean up the problem:
 - Fix the problem, if possible
 - Make amends
- Sometimes the cover up is worse than the crime.

BUILD ON SUCCESSES

Look on the Bright Side, Too

- Value existing strengths and successes to counter-balance weaknesses and failures.
 - Even if shortcomings loom larger.
- Give yourself credit for the effective strategies that you already use.
 - And don't cherrypick others' good qualities.

Work It From Both Sides

- *Improve functioning* by building skills
- *Work on acceptance* of certain limitations and weaknesses
 - This is easier if you value your strengths.

Persistence, not Perfection

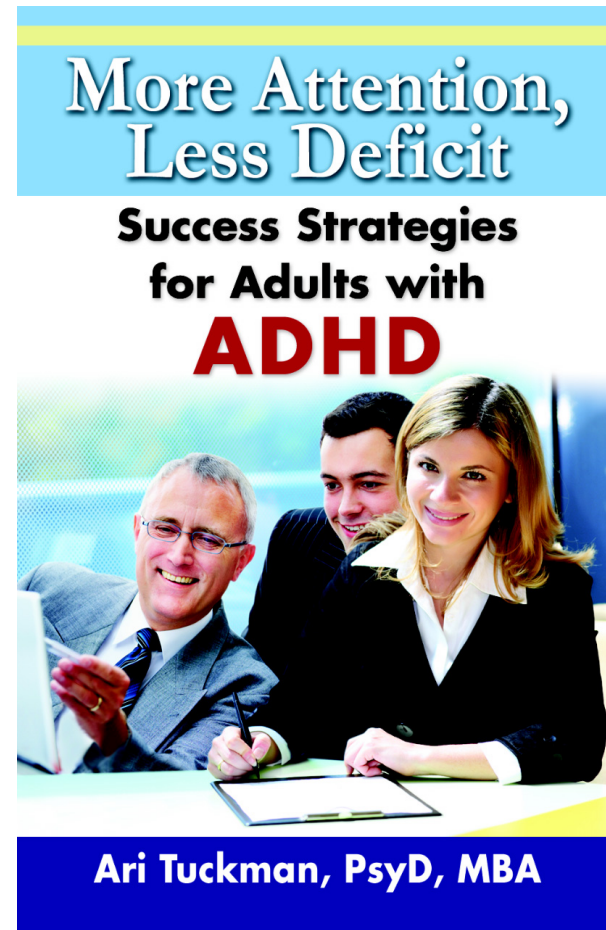
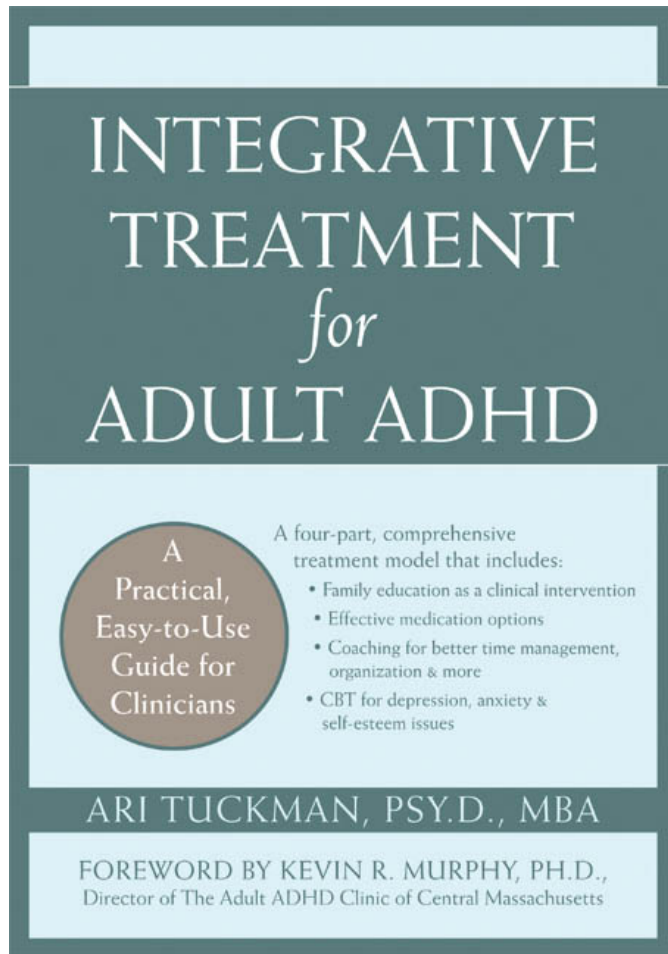
- Solid self-esteem doesn't require perfection, but enables you to survive the setbacks—and keep trying.
- Life is a constant learning process.

Create Good Luck

- Everybody benefits from a lucky break sometimes, so enjoy them.
- But don't get too down on yourself when you get dealt a crummy hand.
- However, good luck is also created—tilt the tides of fortune by laying a solid groundwork.

*Work the process and the
product will follow.*

adultADHDbook.com (podcast, too!)



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