

Author William G. Brett, formerly of Glen Ellyn, puts focus into book about living with ADHD

On the Web

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William G. Brett has found his focus. Living with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Brett, affectionately known by his friends and family as Billy, has lived with the neurobehavioral developmental disorder since he was in elementary school living in Glen Ellyn. Now, at 45, the Virginia police officer has balled up his energy and focus into a book detailing his life with ADHD. "Billy's Never-ending Battle: Creating a Wonderful Life With Imagination and Purpose" gives insight into the disorder, as Brett added anecdotes throughout the story, making references to "Superman" the movie.

How old were you when you were living in Glen Ellyn, and what memories do you have of your time there?

I lived in Glen Ellyn from 1972 through 1978, so I was 6 to 12 years old at the time. Glen Ellyn is something I talk in great length about in my book. For the first five years of my life, I attended St. Petronille (Catholic) Elementary School, and then as I was going through being diagnosed with ADHD, in sixth grade I was transferred to Churchill Elementary School. I have great memories of my time in Glen Ellyn. I remember going sledding and sliding down a massive hill there during the winter. It's a great place to be a kid.

What was being diagnosed with ADHD like for you?

I was first diagnosed in 1972, 1973. Back then, they called it hyperactivity. They didn't call it Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Testing was done before they diagnosed me, and I began taking Ritalin, but I'm one of very few people that Ritalin didn't work for. My teachers would say that I was focused in class, but that it took away my spark in my personality. My teachers actually recommended that I be taken off of Ritalin, and I was. And from there, I've just learned to deal with my ADHD.

Why did you decide to write this book?

(Through suggestion of his wife) I started doing research on ADHD, reading self-help books. I read the "Driven To Distraction" books (by Edward M. Hallowell and John J. Ratey) and within the first chapter, a light went on in my head. ... It's like they knew me, they knew my symptoms. I started reading more books. I even got in touch with a specialist who said I should keep a journal to keep track of my symptoms. Writing in the journal, I knew what the title of my book was going to be, how I'd start the book. I just knew. ... I was able to make all these dots connect. I wrote the book from that journal and it just flowed. ... I'm not a doctor by any means; I just know about Billy Brett's battle with ADHD.

The book makes references to Superman. Why is that?

You'll read it in the book, but I've grown up learning that no one comes in and out of your life without a reason. Everything happens for a reason. And part of my book goes off of a Marlon Brando quote in the "Superman" movie, where he played Jor-El, Superman's father. The quote is 'They are good people, but they lack the light to show the way.' I'm paraphrasing, but I use this as an anecdote, and many others, throughout the book. ... I hope this book helps people to understand their thoughts and actions when dealing with ADHD.

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