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Doug Craig

Climate of Change

### Everything you always wanted to know about ADHD

January 29, 2011 1:37 PM | 9 Comments

I remember standing in the hall at the former elementary school that was the original home of [Wright State University's School of Professional Psychology](#). It was 1980 or 1981 and I was a member of the charter class of that brand new program. I was about 25 years old and I recall standing outside the restroom that said "Boys" on the door next to the drinking fountain that was about knee-high. I recall even the chalk-trays on the chalkboards were knee-high. There was no money to remodel the building for us adults.

But it kind of fit how I felt at the time because even at 25 I was wondering what I was going to be when I grew up. Attending graduate school is like making the major leagues. No matter how good or smart you thought you were before, you find yourself surrounded with people smarter and more talented than you. I spent the first two quarters filled with anxiety that at any moment I would be found out, that they would realize they made a mistake in accepting me into the program.

Over time, the class dwindled in size as various classmates dropped out, one to become the manager of a waterbed store in Denver. I still think that was a dumb move. I eventually come to accept that maybe I did belong in the program but it took awhile.

On this particular day, we had a break from class and I was having a conversation with an older guy who was probably 35. He seemed so wise then. I thought he had it all figured out. He was working for a therapist there in Dayton, Ohio named Howard Fink, a kind of local legend, the Yoda of psychotherapists. He said he planned to buy the practice after he graduated. I was impressed.

And this guy (I don't recall his name) asked me what my specialty was. "Specialty?" I



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#### About Doug Craig

Doug Craig was an Air Force brat born in Germany, grew up in L.A., Northern Virginia

and Dayton, Ohio. Obtained a B.A. in Journalism and a Doctorate in Psychology. Employed as a clinical psychologist in private practice in Redding for 24 years. One wife, two daughters, two cats, two dogs, 36 solar panels and three hybrids.

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asked. "Yeah, you know, when you are done with school. What are you going to specialize in?"

Now the truth is the thought had never occurred to me. Looking back now I suppose it is logical for someone in med school to know they wanted to be a cardiologist or a dermatologist but at that point in my professional development, all I knew is that I wanted to "help people."

But now I had a whole new thing to worry about as I realized I had no idea what I would specialize in. It began to bother me. Others seemed to already know their particular approach to treatment. Some were psychoanalytic or they leaned toward Object Relations or saw themselves as behaviorists. Some knew they wanted to work with children while my best friend was already focused on sex therapy as his specialty. I had no idea.

In fact, it was not until December of 1990 at a workshop in San Francisco that I found mine. I was almost 35, had been married, divorced, graduated, moved to California, got licensed, married again, had my first kid, and was three years into my private practice and still had not figured out my specialty or niche. During my post-doc year at Shasta County Mental Health it kind of dawned on me that the model I used with my clients was [Cognitive-Behavioral](#) but I did not "choose" that approach as much as it evolved naturally from the process.

But still I did not have a specialty. I was "eclectic" which meant I was willing to work with almost anyone with almost any problem with any approach that seemed useful. I did a lot of play therapy with kids and I saw couples and families and lots of women with depression and anxiety issues. I gave a bazillion IQ tests to [Far Northern Regional Center](#) clients. But then I took this workshop from [Russ Barkley](#) who then and now was and is the psychological god of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The first day of the workshop was on working with defiant children. I still use what I learned that day. The second day was about ADHD and on that December day over 20 years ago, my mind was officially blown. Like all of us, I suppose, I have had this kind of experience a few times in my life but when they happen, you better take notice. When you know your bus has arrived, you better get on. And I did.

I came home from that workshop with [Barkley's Handbook](#) and the realization that I now knew my specialty. I spent hundreds of dollars on the [Achenbach](#) series of behavior rating scales, spent \$1500 on the [Gordon Diagnostic System](#) and for the next few years traveled around the country attending workshops with all the major names in the field. Names like Gordon, [Brown](#), [Robin](#), [Prince](#), [Solden](#), [Wilens](#), [Dendy](#), [Hallowell](#), [Ratey](#), Copeland, Parker, [Quinn](#) and [Nadeau](#), to name a few.

And I started giving workshops around town to parents and teachers and therapists. I became obsessed, kind of like I would later do with climate science. While I still know very little about a lot, and a lot about very little, at least when it came to ADHD, I was determined to know as much as a person could possibly know. And to this day, the learning has not stopped.

So if you are curious about ADHD and want to learn a small piece of what I know about the subject, tune into [KNCR](#) on Sunday, January 30 at 10 a.m. on my Wake-Up Call program. And for about 45 minutes I will ramble on about this curious disorder that became my first specialty. And call in if you have any questions.

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Jan 29, 2011  
7:42 PM

**Cure for ADHD writes:**

Reply

There is a wonderful cure for ADHD, and that is giving a child a good spanking!  
It's amazing how quickly they will begin to focus!

Jan 29, 2011  
8:20 PM

**Cure for ignorance writes:**

Reply

"There is a wonderful cure for ADHD, and that is giving a child a good spanking!  
It's amazing how quickly they will begin to focus!"  
  
Hate to break it to you, but if a child has the ability to focus simply because they were spanked, they didn't have ADHD in the first place.

Jan 29, 2011  
11:28 PM

**I have it writes:**

Reply

Cure for ADHD,  
You are a fool if you believe that.

Jan 30, 2011  
4:30 AM

**Kevin writes:**

Reply

Cannabis has been a cure for this for a few years now, Parents are using it for Autism as well ADD, OCD, PTSD and ADHD...but see this is where some schmuck will comment that pot is bad and their is no known medical use and that im just advocating smoking pot! Believe what you want, but nobody on this site can bring any research to disprove the claim, and i have found a ton proving it! Its not about smoking it, its about eating it, and what chemically takes place after you eat it! The International Cannabis Research Society is not a bunch of potheads!!!

Jan 30, 2011  
8:00 AM

**ADHD DAD writes:**

Reply

Kevin  
I am curious about the eating it part? My son who is 19 was diagnosed with ADHD when he was 6. He had taken a slew of meds until he was 18 and decided to try cannabis in order to get off of them. He is now 19 and it seems to be working for him. I can tell you from experience, cannabis does have medicinal value, it is just societies closed mindedness that stops real research and legalization. And to Cure, we did try spanking and it did not work. Now I am not saying that I would have had him try cannabis when he was 6, but I probably would have looked into it once he was about 16. Of course by then he had already figured out that he could self medicate with it and get good results.

Jan 30, 2011  
10:57 AM

**Cure for ADHD writes:**

Reply

In the old days, we didn't have all of this ADHD,ADD, OCD, Etc. carp. If you misbehaved, it was a spanking! Simple and effective.  
  
These liberals and their namby, pamby sweekcake, sugar coating of it all.  
  
Give the kid a good whipping! It will be amazing how quickly they pay attention!

Jan 31, 2011  
8:46 AM

**No\_Really writes:**

Reply

If your child had a hearing impairment or a broken leg, what would you do?

Jan 31, 2011  
9:44 AM

**Cure for ADHD writes:**

Reply

No\_Really - try to stay on track here! Try to have at least a semi-adult, intelligent conversation. Your point and/or comment makes zero sense.  
  
Stay with me.

Jan 31, 2011  
1:13 PM

**No\_really writes:**

Reply

Cure for ADHD  
  
I ask you a question and you made no attempt to answer it. Why? Are you a troll?  
  
I am not opposed to spanking a child; it's one of many forms of discipline. I define a spanking as a pop on the backside and the child having been notified

of the impending consequence for misbehaving. I do not think spanking will correct a mental disorder.

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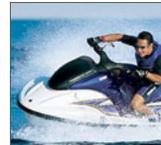
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