

Robert Toth on ADHD and Developing Creativity

By DOUGLAS EBY



"I found I didn't have an attention deficit disorder when I could focus my attention on what I like most." Robert Toth

In my earlier post [How Many Uses for a Shoe? Divergent Thinking, ADD and Creativity](#), I mentioned a research study showing that young adults with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) achieved better performance on standardized creativity tests.

A Publishers Weekly summary of [The Edison Gene: ADHD and the Gift of the Hunter Child](#), says the book proposes that "ADHD is a trait (referred to here as the Edison gene, because the inventor Thomas Edison is believed to have had the trait) rather than a disorder, because it once provided useful skills for functioning in a hunter-gatherer society."

In the introduction to his book, author Thom Hartmann relates meeting several businessmen and a physician on a train trip in India.

He writes, 'Curious about how they viewed our children diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), I asked, "Are you familiar with those types of people who seem to crave stimulation, yet have a hard time staying with any one focus for a period of time? They may hop from career to career and sometimes even from relationship to relationship, never seeming to settle into one job or into a life with one person — but the whole time they remain incredibly creative and inventive."

"Ah, we know this type well," one of the men said, the other three nodding in agreement. "What do you call this personality type?" I asked. "Very holy," he said.'

Not exactly the "learning disabled" label that is more typically applied by many people in mainstream psychiatry.

The book [Driven To Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood Through Adulthood](#) by Edward M. Hallowell, MD and John J. Ratey, MD (both of whom have ADD themselves) says, "The word disorder puts the syndrome entirely in the domain of pathology, where it should not entirely be. Although ADD can generate a host of problems, there are also advantages to having it, advantages that this book will stress, such as high energy, intuitiveness, creativity, and enthusiasm, and they are completely overlooked by the 'disorder' model."

One example of someone who has experienced such advantages is artist **Robert Toth**.

His work is displayed in many private collections and museums throughout the world. As one small example, his Darwin Busts appear in the movie "Salt" starring Angelina Jolie. A profile on the adhdcareersolutions.com site notes "Toth has received immense fame and acclaim as a sculptor and painter despite being challenged by ADHD and dyslexia."

Here is more from the article:

Toth's time in school was a struggle. Because of his ADHD and dyslexia, Toth says that he repeated 4th grade at least three times.

He didn't learn to read until he was 12 years old. Of the one class he passed in school, he has expressed the fondest of memories. His Science class was taught by two females who used the hands-on approach to instruct him using heavy visual materials.

"They taught by demonstration, and like a lot of people, I'm a visual learner."

He credits his success to his mother who nurtured his strengths and believed in him. She helped him to capitalize on his strengths, thus boosting his self esteem and enabling him to experience success.

Troth began focusing on his art and at age (14) had garnered a reputation for his work.

Of his ADHD and art, Toth has said, "I found I didn't have an attention deficit disorder when I could focus my attention on what I like most, and with that came the enthusiasm to hyper-focus."

From [Artist and Sculptor, Robert Toth Challenges Adults With ADHD to Find Their Genius](#)

Also see Toth's site: [A Realm of Art Gallery](#)

Photo from his Facebook page [The Realm of Art](#)

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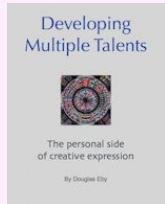
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Douglas Eby, MA/Psychology, is a writer and researcher on the psychology of personal growth and developing creativity. He is creator of the [Talent Development Resources](#) sites.



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He is author of the book [Developing Multiple Talents: The personal side of creative expression](#).

"Part book about creativity, part compendium of useful tidbits, quotations and research, and part annotated bibliography, this is a wildly useful and highly entertaining resource." - Stephanie S. Tolan, writer and consultant on the gifted.

"Packed full of insights and resources for the creative life, this book offers new ways to thrive as a creative person." - Cynthia Morris, Creativity Coach

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Last reviewed: 17 Oct 2011

APA Reference

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