

# Where Are All the ADHD Success Stories?

By Zoë Kessler, BA, B.Ed.

I don't know about you, but for me, there's been one thing missing in all the work I've seen in the ADHD field:

Success stories. Or perhaps I should phrase it, "the story leading to an ADHDer's success."

I see a lot of work out there by the Hallowells, the Matés, the Hartmanns, the winners of the ADHD world – but how did they get there? What were their challenges?

## Stories make the world go 'round

If you're like me, you like stories. In fact, stories are what our culture is comprised of. Everything from movies to gossip, job interviews to nights out with the girls – it's all about stories. Even a visit to your doctor (if you have a good one), will entail stories. Not just a cold, clinical list of facts ("Just the facts, m'am"), but the nuances, the shape, the subtleties of what's going on.

I've read countless books on ADHD, studied the symptoms, traits, theories, and treatments ad nauseum. But never have I read a book that walks me through the struggles and triumphs of an ADHDer in a way that gives me hope for my own resurrection from my abyss of symptoms.

The only one that comes close, is Howie Mandel's excellent autobiography, [Here's the Deal: Don't Touch Me](#).

## Hard-core ADHD versus ADD-lite

What I'm looking for is a similar book from a woman with ADHD – someone with serious, knock-'em-down, drag-'em-out, out-n-out debilitating issues.

Like me.

I've been asking ADHD experts whom I've had the good fortune of interviewing if they felt that there were levels of severity of ADHD symptoms. Without exception, they all said, "yes." (More about this in a future post).

Several years ago, I coined the phrase "ADD lite." Meaning, those who've managed to complete a higher education, function in high-level careers, and have successful marriages (ok, for most, this means a successful second marriage, but nobody's perfect) and close family ties BEFORE their diagnosis which usually occurs in their late 40's.

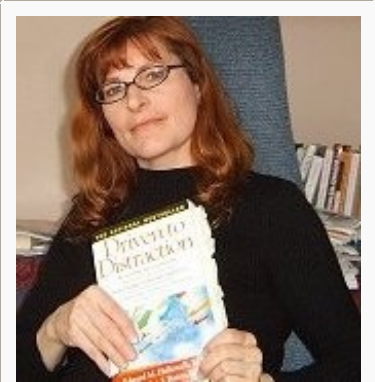
Sound like you?

Me neither.

## I need an ADHD Heroine!

The reasons why some make it before their diagnosis and some don't are for another day. For now, I am pining for a book or article or movie – something – that will take me through the life of someone at the far end of the spectrum ([comme moi](#)) and have a happy, successful ending. Something I can sink my teeth into and pin my hopes on (and write more clichés about).

I want to see how that person's life looked in childhood, how they felt, and how ADHD affected them. I want to see them verbally abused, maybe adopted, I want to see them with zits and skinny legs in high school, with coke-bottle glasses and feeling like an outsider. I want to see them drop acid, hang out with the brainy kids, be misunderstood and hit on by their teachers. I want to see them victimized, traumatized and scrutinized – and fight their way through it all with their creativity and optimism in tact.



Zoë and Driven to Distraction by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., and John J. Ratey, M.D.

I want to see them get fired from their first adult job(s). I want to see them go into therapy and mess up relationships and still manage to shine once in a while. I want to see what keeps them going, and I want – most of all – to see them find a diagnosis, take ADHD meds (or not) and turn all that around. I want them to be happy. I want them to overcome. And I want to know I can do it, too (maybe I've said too much here, she says enigmatically).

I NEED a woman's story. I believe there are one or two (besides Mandel's) out there already from the boys.

### **Write what you know...**

This Chick A-D-D is working hard to fill that gap with my own book. Trouble is, I can't bloody well remember my childhood. Barely remember my teenage years, and my adult life is hazy.

So be patient, dear ADHD sisters (and brothers). I'm tapping my sister's excellent memory, my own teenage journals, letters, etc., adding research and interviews with other ADHD women, and hope to fill that gap as soon as possible.

In the meantime, I'm sharing my own story here, with you, and appreciate every single one of you who shares a part of yours.

P.S. – if you know of any such books by ADHD women, PLEASE send in the titles! Thanks!

You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.



| *Last reviewed: 29 Apr 2011*

### **APA Reference**

Kessler, Z. (2011). Where Are All the ADHD Success Stories?. *Psych Central*. Retrieved on February 6, 2012, from <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/adhd-zoe/2011/04/where-are-all-the-adhd-success-stories/>