

🚧 ADHD ftw!

THE ADHD HANDBOOK



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The ADHD Handbook

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Intro

This handbook is a short guide designed to give you a better understanding of what ADHD actually is, how it affects you and the way you work, and how you can use your ADHD to your advantage.

Maybe you've just recently learned you have ADHD, and you're in the process of learning more about how your brain works. Or maybe you don't have a diagnosis yet, and you're trying to figure out if you might actually have ADHD.

Perhaps you're like me: diagnosed years ago, always just thought of it as "the hyperactive thing," and recently learned that it affects you in so many ways, big and small.

Regardless of your ADHD story, if you're looking to learn more about how your brain works, this guide is for you!

Your ADHD is a gift!

Depending on when you were diagnosed with ADHD, and how your family, friends, teachers, and employers reacted to it, you may have some internalized negative feelings about yourself and your ADHD.

ADHD can definitely create some challenges.

But many of the difficulties associated with ADHD are actually the result of living in a world designed around the needs and preferences of neurotypical folks.

You're not worse. You're just different.

And as we'll talk about more later in this guide, nearly every challenging thing about ADHD also has a benefit that gives you a superpower or unfair advantage if channeled properly.

If you take nothing else away from this guide, I want you to know that you're amazing just the way you are, and I hope you'll love yourself and your ADHD as much as I love mine.

Not a doctor!

It probably goes without saying, but I'm not a medical professional, and nothing in this book should be perceived as medical advice.

I'm just someone with ADHD who's spent years learning how to turn it into advantage instead of something that gets in my way, and I'm sharing what I've learned with you.

I hope you'll find it as helpful as I have.

ADHD in a nutshell

ADHD, or *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*, is a poorly named condition.

People with ADHD don't have a deficit of attention. If anything, we have too much of it! We just have trouble *regulating* it. And people with ADHD aren't always hyperactive, either.

ADHD is better thought of as an *executive functioning disorder*.

What causes ADHD?

The exact causes of ADHD aren't known, but the trait that all people with ADHD seem to have in common is that our brains do not have enough dopamine.

Dopamine is an important neurotransmitter responsible for regulating focus, learning, memory, perception of time, and more.

It's unclear if ADHD brains don't make enough dopamine, absorb the dopamine we make too quickly, or some combination of the two. The end result is the same, we don't have enough of it!

ADHD is hereditary

If you have ADHD, one or both of your parents probably does, too.

Because awareness of what ADHD is and how it affects people is relatively new, it's highly likely that your parent with ADHD doesn't know they have it, either. They've spent a lifetime masking their symptoms and working around it.

If you have children of your own, it's also possible that some or all of them may be born with ADHD as well.

You always had and always will have ADHD

ADHD isn't caused by too much TV, or the internet, or short snippet-style social media. It's not caused by too much sugar.

If you have ADHD as an adult, you had it as a kid, too (even if you weren't diagnosed). If you had it as a kid, you don't "grow out of it," though you can become more effective at hiding your ADHD traits (often called *masking*).

ADHD Traits

Like Autism, ADHD has a range of traits that vary from one person to the next.

Not everyone with ADHD has every trait, and way an ADHD traits affects you might be different from how it affects someone else with ADHD.

ADHD Subtypes

Today, ADHD is described as having three subtypes:

- **Inattentive.** Easily distracted, difficulty concentrating or staying organized.
- **Hyperactive/Impulsive.** Exactly what it says on the label!
- **Combined.** Both inattentive and hyperactive/impulsive.

Historically, the *Hyperactive/Impulsive* and *Combined* subtypes were called ADHD, while the *Inattentive* subtype was called ADD (*Attention Deficit Disorder*).

Because the *Inattentive* subtype lacks the more physically obvious hyperactivity, people in this subtype are often underdiagnosed, or don't get diagnosed into later in life.

You'll sometimes hear that men are more likely to be in the *Hyperactive/Impulsive* or *Combined* subtypes, while women are more likely to be in the *Inattentive* subtype. However, I've heard from lots of men who just recently received an *Inattentive* subtype diagnosis. My hunch is that this subtype is just wildly underdiagnosed in all genders.

In my experience, the edges between the subtypes are also fuzzy. A person can shift from one subtype to another over time.

Hyperfocus or a hive a bees

Attention regulation is one of the most commonly shared traits for people with ADHD.

Often, you'll have a dozen or so ideas bouncing around in your head at the same time. Your attention shifts rapidly from one to the next and back again. It's sometimes described as having "a head full of bees."

Because your attention shifts rapidly from one topic to the next, you never get really focus deeply on any of them. This can make it particularly hard to start doing anything, because you simply cannot pick one thing to focus on.

Other times, however, your brain will laser focus on just one thing to the detriment of everything else around you.

This is often called *hyperfocus*, and it's like a more intense version of *flow* or *being in the zone*.

When you're in hyperfocus, you can often be absurdly productive. But you'll also miss meetings and ignore everything around you, including your own biological needs like eating, sleep, or using the bathroom.

And if you're hyperfocused on something you find interesting, you may put all of your time and attention into that instead of other, more important or time-sensitive tasks that you need to get done.

Limited working memory

If your ADHD brain were a computer, it would have a huge hard drive and a really small amount of RAM.

Our heads are often filled with tons of information about stuff we find (or used to find) interesting: random events from one we were kids, esoteric knowledge about current or past obsessions, professional knowledge.

Neurotypical folks will often say things like...

■ How do you even remember that?

But despite having a huge mental hard drive, we have very little RAM.

ADHD is a form of executive dysfunction, and one of the ways it affects us is our working memory. We have very little of it, and can only keep one or two things in our head at a time.

It's why you can't remember people's names even if they tell you a dozen times. It's why if you're in the middle of one task and someone mentions something else that needs doing, you forget one (or both) of them. It's why you go to the store to buy something and come home with everything but that thing.

Your brain will often just garbage collect things without writing them to permanent storage. And if you have too much information thrown at you at once, your brain may pinwheel on you.

When this happens, you may feel overwhelmed or frozen, and you're unlikely to retain any information.

Impulse control

Some folks with ADHD struggle with impulse control.

One part of your brain will tell you do something, but the part of your brain that says, “Hey, wait a minute!” is too slow to react. As a result, you’ll often do things without thinking them through.

This can be a big professional asset (as we’ll discuss in a future section)! But it can also become a professional liability, annoy some people in social situations (more on that later, too), and cause you to get injured.

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (or *RSD*) is a very commonly described trait among folks with both ADHD and Autism, though it’s not officially listed in the ADHD diagnostic manual.

RSD makes you more likely to experience strong emotional pain when you feel rejected or experience failure. Often, these feelings are outsized relative to the rejection or failure.

If you’re the kind of person who says “sorry” too much, wears your heart on your sleeve, or was (or are) really emo, you might have this trait.

RSD is a byproduct of having difficulty regulating your emotions (because again, we don’t have enough dopamine).

Time Blindness

Time blindness is the inability to accurately perceive the passing of time.

While everyone experiences this to some degree (the whole “time flies when you’re having fun” adage), it’s an ever-present reality for many people with ADHD.

Where this often affects developers with ADHD is in our ability to estimate how long tasks will take (even if we’ve done those task before).

It makes you more likely to miss meetings, and to over-commit to projects and requests. You may also forget to take food out of the oven or switch your laundry.

It means that boring tasks feel like they're taking foreeeevvvveerrrr, but you can spend 12 hours working on something you love and feel like barely any time has passed at all.

Hyperactivity

The H in ADHD! This can manifest in a variety of ways, both physical and mental.

You might talk really fast (because your brain is moving so fast, too), fidget or rock in your chair, or have difficulty sitting for long periods of time.

You might also feel like your mind is racing, or interrupt people when they're talking.

Easily distracted

A lot of folks with ADHD find visual or auditory stimuli extremely distracting.

Loud noises or movement (including in your peripheral vision) can easily break whatever you were focused on. As a result, shared work environments and open offices can be really distracting for someone with ADHD.

Similarly, it can be hard to make eye contact and listen to what a person is saying at the same time.

Some folks with ADHD find that absolute silence is also too distracting, and need some level of consistent "white noise" in the background: music without lyrics, the din of a public space like a coffee shop, or a show or movie they've seen a dozen times playing the background.

Rejection of authority

This is another trait that's not in the official ADHD diagnostic manual, but seems to be pretty common among folks with ADHD.

For whatever reason, many of us have a natural disdain for authority-for-the-sake-of-authority. For people with this trait, titles or positions of power don't evoke a sense of deference or respect. They're generally meaningless.

You may also be more likely to reject social norms, which often seem silly or nonsensical, and are less likely to give in to peer-pressure.

When asked to do something, you need to know *why*. "Just because" isn't a good enough reason to do anything.

Being blunt

Much like Autism, people with ADHD can have a tendency to say what they mean in very direct and honest terms without much nuance or sugarcoating.

I suspect this is the result of a combination of thinking social norms are silly and a lack of impulse control.

Neurotypical folks often find blunt direct honesty too jarring or intense, so in some social situations, this can create some challenges. But it also means you're the type or person who will always give an honest answer to someone, which is a great reputation to have.

Getting Diagnosed

If you haven't been diagnosed with ADHD yet, you may have read the last section and thought...

■ That sounds a lot like me! How do I find out if I have ADHD?

You have two options.

1. Self-diagnosis
2. An official diagnosis

They're *not* mutually exclusive.

Self-Diagnosis

Opinions on this vary, but I don't personally think you *need* an official diagnosis.

A self-diagnosis can be a great low-friction way to start learning more about yourself and how your brain works *right now*. ADDitude Magazine has two self-assessments you can take...

1. [Hyperactive/Combined Subtype Biased](#)
2. [Inattentive Subtype Biased](#)

The one biased towards inattentive subtype is labeled for Women/Girls, but many of the traits will apply to men with the inattentive subtype as well. If you're not hyperactive, it might be worth taking regardless of your gender.

For some people, a self-diagnosis is a first step on the path to an official diagnosis. For others, it's "good enough."

An Official Diagnosis

If you want to really *know* that you have ADHD, or you're interested in ADHD medication (more on that in a bit), you'll probably want an official diagnosis.

There's no biological test for ADHD. The process for getting an official diagnosing is basically a more robust version of the self-assessment.

Your doctor (or more likely, a psychiatrist) will ask you a bunch of questions about yourself. Many of them will be rephrasings of the same question to eliminate biases and validate responses.

A lot of what they're trying to determine is how prevalent your traits are, how many of them you have, and how long you've have them for.

Your doctor may ask just you, or they may provide you with questionnaires to be completed by other prominent people in your life like parents or partners.

Each response is given a numeric rating, and all of the ratings are added up. If you score over a certain amount, you have ADHD.

Knowing is empowering

Having ADHD traits doesn't necessarily mean you have ADHD.

But if you discover that you *do* have ADHD, it can unlock a whole suite of tools to help you understand yourself better and live life the way you want to. You'll also find yourself part of a community of amazing people!

I firmly believe ADHD doesn't need to be "fixed."

For me, its about understanding, "Oh, I suck at X because of ADHD. What sorts things can I do to make sure that doesn't negatively impact my life?" Or, "My ADHD makes me particularly good at Y. I should do more of that!"

That might mean doing things like folding clothes in batches, or avoiding dishes that aren't dishwasher safe. It means putting reminds in my watch so that I don't forget to bring the trash to the curb.

With systems in place, I can focus (ha!) on throw all of my energy into the things I'm actually good at!

Working with your brain

A big part of thriving with ADHD is learning what kinds of tasks and activities align with how your brain naturally works, and which ones fight against it.

Ideally, you want to seek out and focus on things that work with your brain instead of against it.

Stuff you suck at...

Boring and repetitive tasks

Jobs that require you to do the same thing over-and-over again will get boring very quickly. And boring is painful! Avoid these if you can.

Tracking time

Because of time blindness, roles that require you to give tightly constrained estimates and closely track your hours can be a real challenge. A time-tracking app like [Toggl](#) or [Timing](#) can be really helpful.

Getting started

For a lot of folks with ADHD, our brains are like a big, heavy boulder. Getting it moving can involve a tremendous amount of effort. But once it's rolling down that hill (and you shift into hyperfocus), it can be really hard to stop.

Interruptions

Any task or job that involves frequent interruptions means that you'll never have time to properly shift your brain into hyperfocus, because getting started is hard.

Loud noise and visual distractions

Because ADHD brains are easily distracted, any work environment that involves lots of noise and people walking in your periphery all the time is going to make it extremely difficult for you to get things done.

Multitasking

Similar to jobs with frequent interruptions, if you're required to task-shift regularly, you'll be fighting your limited working memory pretty much all day.

Stuff you're awesome at!

Big challenges and creative problem solving

ADHD brains thrive on novelty. It triggers a massive dopamine spike. Jobs that involve finding creative solutions to unique challenges can more easily trigger your hyperfocus, and align well with how your brain naturally works.

Innovation

Because you lack impulse control, you're a lot more likely to take healthy risks, too. This makes you an exceptional innovator. That voice that tells someone not to explore a new idea because it'll never work? You don't have that! You just go for it!

Quickly learning something new

As a byproduct of your hyperfocus, when you're really interested in something, you'll fixate it on intensely, and quickly become a resident expert. When paired with the large HD in your brain, you can become the go-to person for your area of expertise.

Honest feedback

While being blunt has the potential to turn into "being rude," it also means you're the person who will point out the flaws in an idea or behavior when everyone else is too polite to do so. This is an excellent trait for consultants and people in leadership roles.

Empathy

As a result of both RSD and a disdain for social norms, people with ADHD tend to have a lot of empathy for others, particularly around issues of social, environmental, and economic justice.

Moral compass

Because you don't blindly follow authority, there's a good chance you have a much stronger moral compass than a lot of neurotypical folks do. And because you're not as beholden to social convention, you're more likely to act in accordance with that moral compass, too.

ADHD Medication

ADHD medications sometimes get a bad reputation (for a variety of reasons), but they're an important tool in the ADHD toolkit.

Just to reiterate, I'm not a doctor, and this is not medical advice!

Why ADHD meds have a bad reputation

If you grew up in the 1980s or 1990s, you may remember that Ritalin was the main medication used to treat ADHD.

Because of its release timing and our relative lack of understanding on proper dosing, there's this stereotype of ADHD medication turning you into a zombie or being overprescribed.

But today, there are a *lot* more options for ADHD medication, including both stimulant and non-stimulant options.

Most doctors start patients on extremely low doses, and work up to higher doses until the right one is found, dramatically reducing the likelihood of the "zombie effect." You should never experience that.

ADHD meds are like glasses for your brain

I have terrible vision.

Before I got glasses in third grade, I could still read all of the same stuff my friends could, but I had to work a lot harder at it. Squint. Get really close to the blackboard. Guess at certain letters.

When I got my glasses, I wasn't reading anything new. I just didn't have to work as hard at it.

In my personal experience, ADHD meds are like that. I'm still my loud, enthusiastic, weird, "wow you're a lot" self (ask my friends and family)!

But I don't have to work quite so hard to direct my creativity and energy where I want.

ADHD meds don't "fix" you (you're not broken, btw). They don't change your personality (if they do, it's not the right medication for you).

Medication is a bit like the glasses Cyclops in the X-Men wears. He still has his cool laser eyes. He can just control where they point.

Same thing for ADHD medication.

Medication options

ADHD medications come in two varieties, stimulant and non-stimulant.

The end goal of both types is the same: to increase the amount of dopamine or norepinephrine (another neurotransmitter) in your brain, to make up for what you don't make naturally.

Most stimulants do this by telling your brain to make more of it. Some non-stimulants do that too, while others focus on preventing your brain from absorbing what you do make so quickly, so that it lasts longer.

Some folks find that a combination of stimulant and non-stimulant together works more effectively for them, but most people who take ADHD medication choose one type or the other.

Because everyone's biology is different, the right brand and type of ADHD medication can vary wildly from one person to the next.

I have friends who saw no difference at all on stimulants, but found non-stimulants worked really well. I have other friends who didn't like the side-effects of non-stimulants, but have had great success with stimulant-based ADHD meds.

You don't *need* ADHD medication

For decades, I managed and harnessed my ADHD exclusively through systems, tools, and environmental modification.

It's served me relatively well, but it's also been a bit of a roller coaster.

And now that I'm in my 40s, I'm finding that some of those tools and systems don't work quite as well as they used to. I'm unsure if it's my aging brain, the complexity of life that comes with middle age, or (most likely) a mix of things.

But it feels like I'm playing on hard mode more than I previously did, and I don't want to anymore.

If you have systems and structure in place that work well for you, or don't feel like you need ADHD medication, there's nothing wrong with that, either.

If you *are* interested in ADHD medication...

Step one is to talk to your doctor.

Stimulant ADHD meds are a controlled substance in most countries, so you'll need a formal ADHD diagnosis to get a prescription. Depending on your age, some doctors will also want an EKG or stress test first, because they can elevate your heart rate.

Non-stimulant ADHD meds are generally easier to get a prescription for.

They're *not* a controlled substance, so you don't always need a formal diagnosis to see if they work for you. Your doctor might also feel they're better choice if you have other underlying conditions. They statistically tend to work well for fewer people with ADHD than stimulants, and take longer to start working.

Regardless of which option you're interested in, start by reaching out to your doctor. They may direct you to a psychiatrist.

ADHD Accommodations

The modern working environment was designed around the preferences of neurotypical folks.

Open office plans. Lots of little meetings and forced synchronous communication. Work built around and measured in two-week sprints. Social expectations around eye contact and beating around topics instead of addressing them directly.

Many of the challenges of getting work done when you have with ADHD stem from that, rather than any personal failings.

If you feel comfortable disclosing your ADHD at work, you can actually ask for accommodations to get your work done.

In many countries, this is a legal right. For example, in the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to provide “reasonable accommodations.”

In Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Act grants those rights. In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 does the same thing.

Disclosing your ADHD

In order to ask for accommodations, you (may) need to disclose your ADHD to your employer.

Quick aside: *if you don't want to disclose your ADHD, you can still get accommodations (more on that shortly).*

Whether or not to disclose your ADHD at work is a deeply personal decision.

I'm extremely open about my ADHD because I want to destigmatize it, be clear about my needs and how I work best, and avoid any confusion or awkwardness later.

However, I'm also a cisgendered heterosexual white dude with a social safety net. That comes with immense amounts of privilege.

Some of my friends with ADHD in more marginalized demographics have told me they would never disclose their ADHD at work. As one of them put it...

I already feel like people scrutinize my work more closely because I'm [a member of a marginalized group]. Telling them I have ADHD just gives them another reason to nitpick my work.

And that's completely valid!

For me, disclosure has been nearly all upside. But my privilege has a lot to do with that. Not everyone has a good experience with it.

What is a “reasonable accommodation?”

Most laws around providing accommodations for ADHD (and other disabilities) use some form of the phrase “reasonable accommodation,” which is often defined as one that does not create “undue hardship.”

An “undue hardship” typically means that the accommodation is significantly difficult, expensive, or disruptive to the business.

If that language sounds vague and subjective, that's because it is.

But generally speaking, if the accommodation isn't particularly difficult, costly, or disruptive, your employer has an obligation to provide it.

Accommodations to ask for

ADHD is a spectrum.

Everyone's ADHD is a bit different, and the things you find difficult and accommodations that will help you work more effectively vary from person-to-person.

With that said, here's a big list of things you might ask for.

- A work-from-home arrangement, so you can avoid the distractions of an office.
- A quiet, private space to work in, if you have to be in-the-office.
- Meeting-free days
- Shorter meetings, fewer meetings, or fully asynchronous meetings, to avoid interrupting you mid-hyperfocus.
- Irregular hours, if your peak performance doesn't happen during normal 9-5 hours.
- Specific types of work that you find most interesting. For example, you might ask for fewer mundane tasks and more "big hairy problem" work, or the ability to pick your own projects from a list rather than being assigned stuff.
- More frequent breaks.
- All requests in writing rather than verbal (where you're likely to forget them).
- Being excused from non-essential administrative tasks (for example, logging hours worked if you're a salaried employee).
- Having your employer purchase software or tools to help with things like tracking time (if required) or todo items.

I would recommend starting with a short list of two or three of the highest impact accommodations to start.

You can always ask for more later.

Things you can do if you're not ready to ask for ADHD accommodations at work

If you're not ready to disclose your ADHD to your employer (*or don't ever want to*), there are still some things you can do to accommodate your own ADHD...

- Block time out of your calendar so people can't book midday meetings and disrupt your time.
- Bring fidget tools with you.
- Work from home. If your company has a general policy for that, use it. If not and you're feeling bold, you could also just start doing it.
- Work irregular hours. If you already work remotely and have team members across time zones, you can often time shift your schedule to what works best for you without even telling anyone.
- Look into dopamine-generating activities: talk to your doctor about ADHD medication, drink coffee or soda (caffeine can help), exercise in the morning, or spend some time outdoors.
- Occupy an empty meeting room as your private office.
- Use a shared space like the cafeteria as your workspace. A busy communal space is often less disruptive than an open office, since no one talks to you directly and the din of the room becomes background noise.
- Turn off all non-essential notifications. Close your email and Slack/Discord apps. Disable push notifications. Set a reminder to check them a few times a day.
- Get a smart watch. This is the single biggest tool I have for not missing meetings!
- Use an app like [Toggl](#) (*free*) or [Timing](#) (*paid*) for tracking hours.
- Stop doing non-essential tasks so you can focus on your best work. Often times, busy work is just that, and no one actually cares or notices if you don't do it.

How far you go in just doing what you want to do your best work will really depend on how strict your company is, how secure you feel in your role, and how comfortable you are with risk.

For example, choosing to just work from home if your company doesn't generally allow that is a lot riskier than sitting in an empty meeting room to have a more quiet workspace.

I've worked at places that really wanted tight control over where, when, and how employees did their work. Candidly, those were not a great fit for me.

I've also worked at places that didn't really care as long as you got your work done. There, I was able to just accommodate my ADHD myself without even needing to ask anyone.

Fidgeting

If you have ADHD, you may fidget (sometimes called *stimming* or *self-stimulation*).

To an outsider, it often looks like you're distracted or not paying attention. But for someone with ADHD, fidgeting is a focus aid.

It provides a way for you to channel excess energy (mental or physical) so that your brain can pay attention to the one thing it's supposed to be focused on.

One of the challenges with fidgeting is that it can be distracting to others. Below, you'll find a list of tools you can use to fidget without distracting others or appearing inattentive.

Depending on your level of comfort, you can even tell folks what you're doing:

■ Just a heads up: I'm paying attention. I have ADHD and this helps me focus.

You may not feel comfortable disclosing your ADHD to people.

But if you do, I find that being open about my ADHD actually makes it less of an issue than if I try to pretend I don't have it.

Fidgeting tools

***Note:** Some of these are Amazon Affiliate links. They're all tools I've personally used.*

- **Twist-Cap Pen.** You can twist the cap while listening/working. It's far less disruptive than a "clicky pen," and almost as satisfying.
- **Push Poppers.** I keep a bunch of mini ones scattered around the house.
- **Doodling.** Sketch in the corners or margins of a notebook. I really like the pocket-sized [Field Notes notebooks](#) for this.
- **Fidget Spinners.** Best for remote meetings. They can be loud in-person.
- **Chewables.** If have a tendency to chew your nails or the cap of your pen, you can instead get silicone chewables, including pencil toppers, necklaces, bracelets and more. A company called [ARK makes high-quality options](#), and [Amazon has more affordable choices](#), but make sure you get body-safe silicone.
- **Stress Balls & Cubes.** A few of my friends swear by [NeeDoh Nice Cubes](#), which have gel in them and more resistance than a typical stress ball.
- **Hair Elastics & Rubber Bands.** I like to wear them on my wrist like a bracelet, and then twirl them around my fingers when I need to focus on something.

Stop ADHD Masking!

In neurodivergent circles, *masking* is when you behave in a way that hides your neurodivergence from others.

For someone with ADHD, that might mean trying really hard to sit still and not fidget, or deliberately talking more slowly. It might mean not talking much around others because you've been told you're "a lot," or you're worried your lack of impulse control might make you say or do something people think is stupid.

Designer [Anna E. Cook](#) described it very well on BlueSky (*emphasis mine*)...

I've been holding myself back because I am a very energetic, bubbly, and animated person.

People don't always love that, understandable.

But it's physically uncomfortable to make myself smaller.

So I'm currently trying to be myself more but also not make others uncomfortable if that makes sense.

Masking sucks up all of your energy. It robs you of the joy of being your whole, authentic self.

Like Anna said, it's *physically uncomfortable*.

Stop masking!

We live in a world with others, and you shouldn't be deliberately annoying, or violate other people's needs for space, quiet, and so on.

But that doesn't mean you need to *reduce yourself* for other people's comfort, either.

Not masking can be hard at first. You need to get used to being an acquired taste. A lot of folks won't like you. They'll find you to be *too much*: too loud, too energetic, too honest, too whimsical.

But that's *their problem*, not yours.

And the beauty of it? You *know* that the people who like you *actually* like you. The real you. Not the smaller shell of yourself.

Shine bright! Be a unicorn in a world full of boring horses!

The ADHD Beehive

Fellow neurodivergent folks have a *shared empathy*. They'll often instantly "get" you in a way that neurotypical folks do not. And they won't just understand you. They'll like you just how you are.

A group of ADHDers together is a bit like a busy beehive.

There's an energy, *a buzz*, that's an absolute joy to be part of. You feed off each other. You support each other. You can be weird and excited and bounce from one topic to another and back again, and they'll be right there with you, basking in it.

If you're looking for a place to connect with other ADHDers, [I run an online community](#) where you can chat with other neurodivergent folks about all things ADHD (and more).

More resources

If you feel like your ADHD is holding you back, I can help you unlock your ADHD superpowers.

Over at ADHDftw.com, I have [a ton of resources](#) designed to help developers with ADHD thrive in a neurotypical world.

You'll find a free newsletter, a podcast, a handful of courses and guides, and my ADHD community.

[Check out the full list here.](#)

About the Author



Hi, I'm Chris Ferdinandi. I help developers with ADHD thrive!

Early in my career, I felt like I couldn't get anything done. Since then, I've discovered a bunch of systems and strategies that let me succeed *because* of my ADHD, not in spite of it.

I create courses and workshops, publish several daily newsletters, speak at events, and have advised and written code for organizations like NASA, Apple, Harvard Business School, Chobani, and Adidas.

I love pirates, puppies, and Pixar movies, and live near horse farms in rural Massachusetts.

You can find me:

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