

[IMAGE]

Unwrapping the Hidden Gifts of the ADHD Patient

By Editorial Staff

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is commonly regarded as an affliction of the young, conjuring images of impatient, unruly, easily distracted children frustrating their parents and teachers to no end. Medication is often the first-line treatment approach. But look a little deeper and you'll find that ADHD can also affect adults; that ADHD sufferers often have as many, if not more positive attributes, including creativity, passion and intuition; and that your doctor of chiropractic can play a significant role in treating patients with the condition.

Look a little deeper and you'll find that, as Dr. Edward (Ned) Hallowell – psychiatrist, founder of The Hallowell Center for Cognitive and Emotional Health in Sudbury, Mass., and New York City, and author of numerous books including *Driven to Distraction* – explains in this exclusive interview, ADHD is not so much a condition as a trait. What's more, says Dr. Hallowell, effective management, involves a comprehensive strategy designed to unwrap the gifts hidden inside each patient.

Q: *Dr. Hallowell, how has your personal experience with ADHD helped shape your philosophy regarding the condition and how to most effectively treat it?*

A: I was diagnosed after I'd completed Harvard College, Tulane Medical School, a residency in psychiatry back at Harvard, and was starting a fellowship in child psychiatry, again at Harvard. It was 1981 and I was 31 years old. What struck me at the time was that I had achieved at a very high level in school and professional training. Therefore, it made no sense to me that I should look at ADHD entirely as a disability. I began then and there my quest to unearth the benefits hidden within this supposed disability.

ADHD patient - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **Q:** *You've called ADHD a "trait" rather than a condition. How would you describe ADHD and the patients (children and adults) who possess this trait?*

A: The trait of ADHD can become a horrible curse or it can turn into a marvelous benefit, depending on how you manage it. That's why diagnosis and proper advice on management are so critical. This trait is comprised of problematic symptoms such as distractibility; impulsivity; restlessness; impatience; poor tolerance of frustration; forgetfulness; poor organizational skills; poor time management; poor money

management; mood lability; tendency toward compulsive behaviors or substance abuse; anxiety and depression; trouble with anger management; and a tendency toward inconsistent performance. On the positive side, people with this trait are usually highly creative and original; independent; visionary; pioneering; sensitive and deep (but cover this over); loyal; passionate; humorous; tenacious, gritty, never say die; and highly intuitive.

Q: *It's been said that ADHD is both underdiagnosed and overmedicated (in the sense that medication is often the exclusive treatment approach). Would you agree with this statement? Please explain.*

A: Millions of adults who have ADHD do not know they have it. Adults in general, and adult females in particular, represent the most underdiagnosed of all groups. We need to educate professionals to identify ADHD not only in children, but also in adults. Medication is far too often the only intervention offered. While medication can help, there are a host of other interventions that produce excellent results that do not involve the use of medication at all. These include coaching, education, nutritional changes, meditation, physical exercises, proper sleep hygiene, and various other treatments like acupuncture and cerebellar stimulation. Chiropractic is now becoming one of the most exciting treatments for ADHD.

Q: *In your considerable experience, what is the most effective way to "treat," for lack of a better word, people with ADHD?*

A: First, learn what ADHD is and what it is not. Second, identify talents and strengths the patient may have, as well as hidden or latent talents and strengths. Third, identify the main obstacles that are standing in the way of the person reaching his or her goals. Fourth, review lifestyle issues and make changes where appropriate. Fifth, consider coaching to improve organizational skills. Fifth, make sure the person is in the right job if an adult, and in the right school, if a child. Sixth, deal with family or couples issues that may be causing trouble. Seventh, prescribe wellness steps, such as diet, exercise, meditation, and specific interventions, such as chiropractic. Eighth, consider all other possible interventions, including medication if desired. Ninth, provide regular follow-up and encouragement weekly.

Q: *A hallmark feature of chiropractic care is assisting the body's innate ability to heal itself. How is this philosophy relevant to the ADHD conversation?*

A: This is why chiropractic makes for such a perfect opportunity in managing ADHD. Help the patient's own body, spirit, and soul assist in unwrapping the gifts hidden within the person. I am so excited to be

teaming up with chiropractors, because this kind of strength-enhancing intervention is the best of all.

Q: *Anything else you'd like to add?*

A: Working with people who have ADHD is really fun! Their lives improve quickly, they work hard to grow, and they tend to be funny, dynamic individuals, be they children or adults.

To learn more about Dr. Hallowell and his philosophy on ADHD, [click here](#).

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