

Brain Bites - Have you ever wondered if you or someone you know has ADHD? October 2010

Category – ADHD (ADD), ADT (Attention Deficit Traits) work place related

It's funny, I never had an inkling I might, primarily because I had never heard of ADD before I was diagnosed in the mid 90's.

That is when I first met Dr. Umesh Jain, (Current Chair, Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance, CADDRA). At that time he was at OISI, University of Toronto, and conducting research on adults with learning difficulties. Since I was interested in determining if I had any learning disabilities, because I was never very good at school and I had many struggles that I initially noticed in elementary school that carried into my adult life. So I signed up to go through their testing process. I thought the testing could really clear up some long term persistent questions that had about my learning style and needs, and help me to identify a plan of support for future learning.

Through the testing process, I found out that I had some learning disabilities, and what really shocked me was a diagnosis of Attention Deficient Disorder. [What is it?](#)

It turns out that one of the symptoms of ADD is poor conflict resolution... looking back, I guess I did have some challenges with somewhat explosive behaviour, to put it lightly.

Once diagnosed, I started to become aware of my patterns of behaviour when dealing with conflict (like how many I actually instigated). My perception was that everyone else was always wrong or it was their fault, or they were just too stupid to understand what I was saying. I know it may sound terrible, but I was not coming from a place of arrogance, I simply could not fathom that there was any other way and my filter seemed to always make me right.

Have you ever heard of the saying, "you don't know what you don't know". I never understood this saying until I started to become aware of my ADD. My responses to conflict either caused people to back away from me or move into confrontation mode. I constantly felt I was being misunderstood. After a while it was like having the same fight over and over again, I was going through the motions but had no other experiences to know that there was any other way.

Some other symptoms of ADD (ADHD) are lack of ability to focus and maintain concentration, restlessness, impulsiveness, tuning or zoning out when not interested in the topic, organizing and sequencing information, procrastination. Just Image what it was like to be me, situations of conflict were only one piece of my ADD puzzle!

Once I overcame the shock of my diagnosis I started to look at what resources I could put in place to help my newly identified self and needs.

First step, I went for a second opinion! With all of this conflict in my life, trust had become a big issue for me, and you know, Dr. Jain (a leading specialist and Current Chair, Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance) could have been wrong. The next Doctor however, confirmed Dr. Jain's diagnosis. I was in denial, I was actually considering going for a third opinion.

When I was ready to come out of denial, I looked into Coaching, medication, my current coping tools as well as outlets for the physical and emotional side which were coming in even faster and stronger with this new found label. When I initially became aware, my life seemed to become an endless cycle of chaos and control. I felt like such an imposter because I was no longer the person I thought I was. [Diagnosis](#)

By the time I went to my first life coaching session I was very down on myself, judging that I was a failure, filled with negative self talk and focusing on all of my ADD traits I perceived to be bad. [Emotional Journey](#)

The Life Coach really helped me to understand my ADD and that my cup was not half empty but was overflowing. I came to realize that many of the reasons for my success in business were thanks to my ADD traits. I was at the top of my Sales and Management career because I was persistent, tenacious, curious, strategic, keen at problem solving and had street smarts.

I realized that the management style I preferred was key to my success. So I sought out potential organizations and managers that demonstrated this style. I sourced many of my jobs through information interviews which led to being hired and from there I rose very quickly to a Director level. I was responsible for many teams, given project after project to explore new possibilities and implementation plans with many of my employers. Through understanding my strengths, I was able to gain these opportunities frequently on my own terms.

Ultimately, I decided I would take medication for my ADD and what a difference! With no other point of reference but my own, I thought the constant anxiety and feelings of chaos were normal for everyone. The medication helped me to slow down long enough to take a walk and start to understand what I wanted instead of reacting to everything in front of me. I'm not saying medication is for everyone; it was key in my understanding that there were options and helped me focus my energy. [Treatment](#)

Eventually I had to go off medication however, as I have a very high metabolism and my body was burning the drugs too quickly. Eventually the Doctor told me I would have to look into other coping tools as he would have soon have to cap my dose and if the dose was capped, then it would no longer be effective. This led me to look at other options to support the cognitive side of my ADD.

After researching many cognitive care options, I discovered that Brain Gym integrative movements were potentially my next best choice for self support. I decided to take my first course, Brain Gym 101. I arrived, un-medicated and started to learn the movements right away as my instructor had a very hands on style. As I did the Brain Gym movements, I could not believe the difference, it was like getting all of the benefits but without the drugs. I immediately felt more grounded, I could concentrate on what I was learning feeling confident and safe that I could remain in a focused state to receive the training. The Brain Gym program taught me about Neuroplasticity and Cognitive Fitness, and that our brains have the ability to rewire itself through experience, and this that could be done through movement was such a bonus. I cannot remember how many times, a teacher was angered by my jiggling leg, or slapped the ruler on my desk because I zoned out because she/he was starting to sound like the teacher on the Charlie Brown cartoons. With this easy and effective approach to learning through movement, the information was received and anchored, while I remained calm and focused. I now had practical tools that worked.

My first Brain Gym instructor is now my business partner, Jill Hewlett. She is an amazing trainer, keynote speaker and practitioner, among other things. We have been in business together for a number of years now, and each day leads to more success, personally and professionally. We are the Cognitive Fitness experts and we support our clients through education and training in achieving their goals. Businesses and Educational Institutions are at a tipping point for change. Wellness and self-care tools are leading the way. That is why our clients love Cognitive Fitness, because it supports the skills required for healthy and balanced students, employees, environments and organizations.

You have probably noticed that I keep putting links to the website www.totallyadd.com. For years I have felt very isolated in my diagnosis and how it plays out in my day to day life. When I found this website and met the people who ran it, it was like finding a long lost family member, from another planet...my planet. I was overwhelmed in my conversation as how much they really got me. Their entire website caters to the ADD mind, it's fast, it's funny, and it has great content. Hell, it's downright entertaining.

Jill and I decided that if we're going to host special events with experts in our area, these were ones that would be beneficial. So we've teamed up with Totally ADD to offer the following special event for those who would like to learn more about ADHD and Cognitive Fitness.

Join our upcoming workshop **Thursday, October 21st, 2010 – 7 pm - 9pm**

ADHD (ADD) & Cognitive Fitness Strategies for Success!

with Rick Green and Jill Hewlett

Event page - <http://www.brainworksglobal.com/events.php#add>

Preview Rick on U tube - Old ADHD... Old Spice... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka59V4TFefM>

Preview Jill on Breakfast Television – What is Brain Gym? ...<http://www.brainworksglobal.com/media.php>

Jill Hewlett and Sharon Todd are both Licensed Brain Gym® Trainers and *Cognitive Fitness Experts*. Their company, Brain Works Global Inc., train clients on how to maximize their learning potential while working in conjunction with their individual goals.

They provide keynotes, in house training, and sponsored events to a wide range of organizations, schools and the community. For more information go to <http://www.brainworksglobal.com> or call 905.830.6902.