

Encourage A Child to Harness Their Learning Disability To Succeed



Every parent fears hearing a diagnosis of a learning disorder or disability from a therapist, doctor, or educator about their child. Some of the more common ones are Dyslexia, ADHD, Dyscalculia, and Test Anxiety. But the good news is that many children, if caught early enough and given proper encouragement, resources, and attention, can learn to live with it, sometimes outgrow it, or even harness it to their advantage. Many people diagnosed with such learning disorders have gone on to live very productive and fulfilling lives.

As one who lives with ADD, I can tell you there is absolutely a way to co-exist with it, and sometimes flourish because of it. We must encourage our children to see that what makes them different is not necessarily bad – and others should come to see that about them, too.

ADD, or Attention Deficit Disorder, is a condition where one could experience poor working memory, as well as an inability to fully pay attention and concentrate on a task at hand. People with ADD are easy to distract. ADHD, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, describes a condition where one is impulsive and hyperactive. Children who are dealing with ADD may find that they are slow to make decisions. Some struggle to maintain focus, especially when they unable relate to the material. Students with this disorder tend to daydream in a class or even fall asleep when they fail to understand certain concepts.

For me, I often have a scattering of many ideas competing with each other for attention. I have a strong desire to follow multiple passions simultaneously. I also like to talk a lot – because so many thoughts swirl in my head. When my ADD is under control, it makes me productive, creative, and very engaging. But people can treat you differently when they hear or see you are different.

I also am afflicted with Bell's Palsy, a condition that causes a temporary weakness or paralysis of the muscles in my face. It causes one side of my face to droop or become stiff. Having these two conditions actually inspired me to write an award-winning, critically-acclaimed, Amazon best-selling children's book, *Ack! The Nantucket Duckling*, which is about accepting one for whatever makes them different. My book, both its message and the inspiration to create it, proves that what makes us unique can be an asset.

Encourage your children to embrace what makes them different, no matter what it is.

Many have learned to harness their abilities and learning disorders to their advantage. Witness this tiny sampling of a long list of successful people with afflictions like ADD:

- Harry Potter Oscar-winning actor Daniel Radcliffe. Dyspraxia.
- Grammy-winning Maroon 5 singer Adam Levine. ADHD
- Grammy-winning singer Justin Timberlake. OCD and ADD.
- Award-winning comedian, actress, and talk show host Whoopi Goldberg. Dyslexia.
- Elon Musk, one of the richest people in the world. Aspergers/Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Olympic gold medalist swimmer Michael Phelps. ADHD
- CNN-TV talk show host Anderson Cooper. Dyslexia.
- Celebrated comedian Jim Carrey. ADHD.
- NBA legend Michael Jordan. ADHD.
- Billionaire Richard Branson. Dyslexia.

Once parents understand that their children's learning disability could actually be viewed as a gift, they will start to feel empowered and see their child in a more positive light. Children should never feel being different is bad or that their learning disorder somehow makes them less than others. The very opposite may actually be true.

A.K. Spurway, certified in Positive Parenting, is a mom of three young children. She is the founder and CEO of www.Nanducket.com, an empowering children's lifestyle company, and the best-selling author of *Ack! The Nantucket Duckling*. Her mission is to help the newest generation to embrace tolerance, see differences as advantages, feel happy with who they are, and to adopt a mindset of self-love as they are.