

What is LD all about? Individual Stories

From kids like you, and published on www.ldonline.org:

ADD in School and Skateboarding

By: Anonymous, Age 15, Akron, Ohio

I have ADD and my mind constantly wanders all the time. I think that it's fun having my mind keep going all the time, except in school. I space out for pretty much the whole class, but not on purpose. When I try to pay attention, I start thinking about what would happen if I wasn't paying attention. The next thing I know, everybody around me is writing stuff down and I have no idea what we are doing and what's going on. I have an IEP but even my special ed teachers still get mad at me for not staying focused.

Skateboarding is my favorite thing to do. It is an outlet for me. If I had a bad day at school, I just go skate and everything goes away. I don't know why, but I can focus my thoughts better when I am skating. If I like the daydream I am thinking about, then I can keep thinking about it without forgetting what it was.

ADD has made it easier to think up of lines to do (a line is a bunch of tricks in an order that you make up) because I have so many things going on in my head.

ADD makes my life fun and I can't imagine what it would be like without it.

ADHD, Not a Disability

By: Eran, Age 15, Ramat Hasharon

I was 14 years old, more or less, when I was diagnosed as ADHD. Pretty much a problem for a perfectionist like me.

Because I am not hyperactive (but rather impulsive, and very quick to angry) I was told not to take any Ritalin. I was also told to learn geometry with a private teacher- even though I still didn't manage to get through it. Well, time had passed, and when I entered the 9th Grade, the private teacher for geometry and hebrew grammar (which I have to learn while it is very unusable) didn't manage to help me in school anymore. As my math class kept going forward with geometry, I failed to keep up with them, even though I stayed strong in algebra and functions. Then I started taking Ritalin. For the first week, it helped a lot. However, as time passed, it stopped effecting me. Apparently my geometry problem didn't have any connection to my ADHD and I was diagnosed as having a learning disability in Euclidean Space. When I enter the 10th Grade I won't be tested on geometry anymore.

However, I have come to learn about ADHD and its syndromes. I found out that many of the leading historical figures (musicians, scientists, tacticians, religious figures, kings, and emperors) had ADHD syndromes (impulsiveness, problems with alcohol and drugs, creativity, ambitiousness, not paying attention to what they dislike, sometimes hyperactive, the need of adrenalin, i.e. - need of action, anger attacks, sometimes depression, being more stubborn).

Here's a partial list (some have been diagnosed - Einstein, Newton, Archimedes, Beethoven and Mozart, the rest is my assumption):

- King Saul
- Moses
- Julius Caesar
- Alexander the Great
- Alexander Graham Bell
- Einstein
- Cyrus
- Mozart
- Beethoven
- Charlemagne
- Genghis Khan
- Isaac Newton
- Archimedes
- Achilles

We can clearly see by that, that all of those people wouldn't have achieved anything without their ADHD. Would Alexander the Great have done the impossible if he wasn't impulsive and willing to take the challenge? Without ADHD, would Muhammad have been daring to invent Islam without stubbornness and ambition? Without his depression and creativity, would Beethoven create such things as the 5th and 9th Symphonies? Would Einstein have reached anything without stubborn ambitiousness?

The answer is - NO to all.

If so, the modern world, good and bad, has a lot to do with ADHD, or so to say, the people who had it, whom have used it toward gaining their purposes.

To summarize, ADHD is not a minus at all. It's just another form of thinking, as well as other learning disabilities. It is nothing but another way of thinking, and if the knowledge how to use it exists, it is no disability.

Be proud of your disability

By: Diedre, Age 17, Hustisford, Wisconsin

My names is Diedre and I am a 17-year-old high school student who's in her junior year of high school. I was tested and put into LD class in second grade. I've been in LD ever since. There are times where I like it a lot and there are times where I just want to be by myself and say forget about it (wanting or needing the help).

When I do the forget about it, I later tell myself, "Why are you getting all upset about being in LD and getting the help that you need to get out of high school?" For everyone who's wanting to get out of LD before their heads explode with anger, think about what's going to happen when you don't get your homework done or don't understand it or fail tests. Being an LD student doesn't at all mean that you're stupid or brain dead,

because you're not. To me, being LD means you're not able to learn or understand what you need to learn to be able to get through life.

Now that I'm in my second last year of high school, I'm very driven to be successful. I'm not going to hold myself back at any challenges in my education because I want to be able to be a very educated and driven person at getting through college and my career. There's no way in this world that I'm going to hold myself, or let anyone else, hold me back from doing what I want to do in life or being what I want to be.

I hope that the people who are in LD and don't like who they are or are embarrassed about it understand that they're no different in any way from anyone else in this world. Yes, there will be times where you feel like you don't belong and there will be times where you *do* feel like you belong. Here's some advice that I hope whoever's ever reading this will take, "Just be your normal self." I always tell myself that. I also tell myself you're better than the people who think that they know it all and think that they can pick on you because you have a disability. You of all people should be proud of it. I should know — I have two disabilities: one's LD and the other is called a seizure disorder. I'm proud to have both of them because when you have a disability you learn more about yourself.

Capable of Anything

By: Megan, Age 16, Greenwood, Indiana

I hated school because I'm dyslexic. I hated everything about it. The teasing, the stares, the whispers when I couldn't read out loud in class, the tests that I would just stare blankly at. It wasn't until tenth grade that finally I was given a chance.

My English teacher, Mrs. B, noticed I was dyslexic right away, and talked to me about it. In class, she didn't call on me to read out loud, and she would let me take my tests out in the hall, away from people. She found out I loved music, and let me write my essays about it. She encouraged me to write my feelings down, and tell people how hard I was really trying. I wrote a story, and she helped me publish it online. I was so proud when I saw that this was something I could do, and do well. People liked my stories, and my ideas.

She encouraged me to talk to musicians, and I eventually got a job promoting little known bands I liked. She let me stay after school with her to share my ideas with her, and write them in a safe, happy environment, instead of my empty house. She changed my perspective about school, and my abilities. I see now that even though I'm not good at talking aloud, remembering dates or numbers, or taking tests, I'm good at telling guitars apart by their sound, telling stories, and helping people out. She changed my school life, and I am forever grateful for that.

Time running out

By: Aaron, Age 15, Frederick, Maryland

Dyslexia isn't a disease. The biggest problem right now is my time is running out. I am in 10th grade and there's little to no help for dyslexia, software wise, yet. I still go to school every day just to try to get A's.

People don't understand the abstractness of my thoughts. In English we have to use a pen and I always find myself marking a sentence out because there's a better ideal. I rarely had accommodations in my school life, maybe 1 or 2 times, but now im 15 in 10th grade. I've been taking what my mom had to say to the school say and I found myself having to go to the dropout interventionist, which put 1 thing into perspective for me

which was they don't see dyslexia as important. Yeah, dyslexia may not be visible to others, but dyslexia is visible to 1 person and that's the person that has dyslexia. The one question I have not found an answer to is if ADHD is treatable why does that give me more accommodations then my dyslexia.

All my friends know I have dyslexia and it doesn't bother me. I mean, some kids try to make fun of me about it. I want to help other kids with dyslexia. My time is running out quickly in high school the process of them looking into accommodations speeds the clock up the clock always ticks. I love how my mind works the abstractness of my thought. The biggest problem is organization of anything.

The Team

By: Cassie, Age 15, Alabama

At my high school every student was highly encouraged to participate in at least one extra curricular activity. As a gifted teen with several LDs this was more of a challenge than most people would believe. I am dysgraphic, dyspraxic, ADHD, and have several motor skills disabilities. I had tried sports in the past but that was in special needs leagues. I personally enjoyed these leagues but I hated the looks I would get from parents of "normal" kids and the kids themselves. At one time I chose to participate in a normal softball league but after one year of teasing and not being able to keep up I quit and was never going back. So what's left? Well there were three choices:

1. Drama, but this required dancing and memorization of lines. Both of which I knew would be torture
2. Student Council, but this would require being elected, which as the school "geek" and "spas" (which a cold hearted gym teacher had named me in 6th grade after a tick I had due to my tourett's syndrome during a game of soccer) or
3. The academic teams.

So which did I chose? Well believe it or not I chose the academic teams, also known as the Academic Challenge and Academic Decathlon. I actually did quiet well in competition but when it came to practice I could hardly make it through. I had a poor attention span and couldn't shut up and take notes like the other kids did. I eventually found out that the whole team thought I was a "loud mouth" and annoying. This took a major strike to my already low self-esteem. The next year I hoped never to see the team again but the coach had other plans. This coach just happened to also be my Algebra teacher. Believe it or not she also happened to be my regular education representative at my IEP meeting. During the meeting my written expression came up. Well guess what she decided to say, "Well Cassie, I hope you are planning on joining decathlon again next year. The essay and speech events reinforce all these goals." My mother was set then.

In reflection I'm still not sure whether or not I'm glad I participated in decathlon and challenge. I do believe it helped my written expression and verbal skills but my self-esteem and social skills took a major hit. However I still have 3 years of high school to decide which side I am.