

WHAT IT MEANS TO HEAR THE LETTERS ADD ATTACHED TO ME

By Deborah Speck

I am 66 years old and it shouldn't make a difference. After all I have lived this long with it and survived. But what is the definition of survived here? And what if I could become better, more me? Will it end up being simply a case of mind over matter?

Even now as I try to write, I get distracted by the dog and the quiet and picking which path of thinking to go with. It was lucky for me that I became skilled at grammar, aced it in grade four when my teacher tied me to my chair after I repeatedly got up to talk to my girlfriends spread out in the class. Now I can use it to write this way, making sure it all makes sense through the grammar rules. Grade four was my best year in school and I felt good. But that did not last. I look back and feel like it was not me being so talkative because I have such a hard time with small talk.

My mom had my hearing tested numerous times from about age 5 and up but it turned out my ears were working just fine. Could it have been I was just not paying attention, off in my own little world? My teachers often stated that I day dreamed too much and did not apply myself to my full potential. My grades throughout the years were consistently in the 50's and 60's, math being the exception. It came easy to me and I often got honours. After all the numbers did not have to be memorized. I could see them fitting together in my head as if I tapped into an already operating machine. Not like the other subjects, history, science and geography. Some how I could not get the facts straight. There seemed to be too many to put in order.

So no wonder I ended up working in a bank. But even then something held me back from being the excellent teller that I thought I could be and thought I was. I was fast counting and inputting numbers into the ever-changing computers. Rules and regulations were a totally different matter. If they didn't make sense to me, I either balked or skipped steps which inevitably landed me in trouble. Strange thing I was only labelled insubordinate once in all my 30 some odd years at the bank. I think it was growing up under my mom's strict parenting that helped me hide my true rebellion. Nonetheless I could always feel

strong resistance, a bodily stiffening, when ever I disagreed with a rule in any area of my life. The mediocre evaluations of my job performance even felt wrong to me at the time.

I remember feeling like I would run out of time if I didn't do what was right in front of me. Especially something life changing. Like when I was engaged at the age of 17, I had to get married as soon as possible because it felt like something would stop me if I didn't. The same went for having a child, buying a house, getting that job, moving to a better place, etc. I always blamed it on feeling like something was going to be snatched away from me and my childhood experiences. But maybe it was also something else. Maybe there was another factor physically that made my brain go fast and prevented me from taking in information and making a clear and informed decision.

Which leads me to realising that I am always in a hurry, everything has to be done now, this instant, even after I retired. Again, I have thought it was my upbringing (which could have been Mom's ADD) but I can also feel the extra energy in my body trying to get out when presented with any kind of task. Is this just a habit?

Projects, commitments, ideas and courses. These are all things I have started and feel I have yet to finish. The ones I have finished took a lot to get going. Overwhelmed with which first step, I often put them and life on hold until my depression would get so bad I would pounce at the first thought without any real order in mind. It wouldn't take long though before the novelty wore off and I would rush the finish, leaving parts undone and a feeling of mediocre once again.

Directions. Forget that. Even when I purposely concentrated to follow each step in order, I ended up skipping one as if it was never there to begin with and appeared out of nowhere after I realised something was missing.

When I was growing up, I always hated it when my sister and my cousin would tidy up. They seemed to like their rooms to be cleaner than I thought it needed to be. Sharing a room with my sister only shone that flaw in me. I would wander out of the room and let them go at it. It was more fun to be playing anyways. True for a child but

that habit followed me into adulthood and my house showed it. My house was clean. I hated grime and smells so I cleaned when I had to. It was lived in so to speak, a bit messy, to the point that a guest once complimented me for helping her feel comfortable in my home. It did become embarrassing and a problem though when my husband called in his sister to clean our house. At the time I apparently had plenty of time to really clean but had no motivation. Could this be the lack of organization skill that is attuned to ADD?

That is the list thus far that I have come up with to identify me as having ADD. I see it everywhere though. I see it in almost everything I do now. I see it in my family and maybe even in my ex. Is it simply like when you buy a car and suddenly there appears to be more of that same model on the road? Or could this be the answer I have been looking for, the one that has driven me to seek therapy for so many years? It feels like that time I discovered or became aware that I had been sexually abuse when I was 12, labelled it as such. That label again. I don't want to make excuses or become irresponsible but there is something here that now makes sense. For now it is helping me accept me as I am with all those flaws and struggles in my life. It is helping me move forward and learn. It is also helping me see other people as they are, especially my daughter, my son and my mom, possibly my ex-husband too. We are and have been doing the best we can with what we have at any given moment. I have said this before and maybe I just needed a reminder. Also for some reason forgiveness comes to mind, especially for my mom who passed away five years ago. Maybe that is all that is needed and what this is for.