
Change What You Can, Accept the Rest

Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA

West Chester, PA

Ari@TuckmanPsych.com

adultADHDbook.com

Your Life Has Been Harder

- ADHD creates additional struggles in every major realm of functioning.
- These struggles are especially problematic before a diagnosis is made.
- No wonder self-esteem suffers. . .

Improvement is Only Half the Battle

- Improve functioning by building skills and better strategies, but there are limits to this.
 - Even for people without ADHD.
- Work on acceptance of remaining limitations and setbacks.
 - This is easier if you value your strengths.
 - Not passive resignation, but active acceptance—stop fighting unwinnable battles.

Live a Big Life

- A life that is fulfilling, rewarding, meaningful, and interesting, where you make a positive impact on the world.
 - You accomplish most of what you set out to do.
 - You strive to be the person that you want to be.

Create That Big Life

- Get on top of your ADHD
- Know yourself well—strengths, weaknesses, preferences
- Chase what's important to you—feel the discomfort, but do it anyway
- Take risks, but only smart ones

- . . . because small lives are unsatisfying.

Value Your Strengths

Better than *Affirmations*

- Repeat daily: “I hate empty affirmations.”
- Your positive self-talk must be based in reality or it is bound to be short lived.
- Instead, give yourself credit for your hard work, positive qualities, and true successes.

Character & Actions: Both Count

- Value who you are: strengths, skills, and personal qualities
 - Did you bring your best to the situation?

- Value what you do: hard work, effective strategies, and intentions
 - Did you act with integrity?

Find the Good in the Bad

- Give credit where credit is due
 - Notice what went well or is positive, even in the worst experiences.
- Learn valuable lessons
 - The price has already been paid, so you may as well get the benefit.
- So maybe next time will be better (and there will be a next time).

Some Victories Mean More

- Your successes mean more if you had to fight harder or overcome more setbacks.
 - This is a sign of strength and perseverance, not weakness.

- Who is your comparison group?
 - No cherrypicking!

Accept Your Weaknesses

Life Isn't Fair

- You may need to work harder than others on certain things.
 - Acceptance doesn't mean that you're happy about it—but there are heavier burdens than ADHD.
 - Acceptance means not wasting time fighting the unchangeable.
- Whatever our strengths and weaknesses, we all strive to create a meaningful life.

Excuses vs. Explanations

- Excuses lower expectations and are ultimately limiting.
 - Excuses depend on others' willingness.
- Explanations offer understanding for why something is happening and therefore what you can do about it.
 - Knowledge is power. . .
 - . . . but the responsibility for change is on the individual to use that information.

Some People Resist the Diagnosis

- Some people feel bad enough about themselves already and see the diagnosis as official proof of their defectiveness.
 - Or don't see themselves accurately.
- Labels don't change what you are, but they *do* change what you can do about it.
 - And may be less of a secret than you think.
- Accepting the diagnosis is a step towards better things.

Redefining Yourself

- Getting diagnosed may change how you see yourself.
 - It's probably better than prior explanations.
- ADHD is a part of who you are, but not all of who you are.
- ADHD affects how you live your life, but doesn't rule your life.

Some Rain Must Fall

- Everyone has setbacks and failures, but ADHD folks' plentiful experiences can make them vulnerable to catastrophizing.
 - Theirs may be more obvious and/or frequent.
- Expect setbacks—then keep going. Success is rarely a straight line.
 - Separate setbacks from self-esteem.
 - Progress comes from persistence.

Actively Approach Challenges

Avoidance is Tempting

- We all would like to avoid the things that make us uncomfortable or tend to not go well.
- We may *rationalize* our avoidance to feel better about it.
 - Don't talk yourself into bad behavior—look for your favorite lies.

Discomfort is Unavoidable

- A comfortable life is a small life.
- Find a way to tolerate discomfort without allowing it to:
 - Stop you from doing what you need/want to.
 - Ruin your enjoyment of what you're doing.

Risk Failure

- If you never fail, it means you're playing it too safe—and living a small life.
 - In order to succeed, you must be willing to fail.
- Try something new and learn from the experience: knowledge = success.
 - The goal is to gain knowledge and refine your technique—for next time.
 - You have much more control over effort than outcomes.

Create Good Luck

- Tilt the tides of good fortune by laying a solid groundwork.
 - Diligence.
 - Persistence.
 - Being in lots of (right) places.
 - Generosity.

Handle the Boring Details

- Unfortunately, big successes require little details.
- Sorry, no magic wands here. . .
- Do it yourself or get someone else to do it.
- Keep your eye on the prize when persistence wanes.

Better Self-Esteem

- Solid self-esteem is based on hard work, realistic accomplishment, and legitimate skills.
 - No one can take that away.
- Each success creates a step up the ladder of future success.
 - Lessons learned, skills sharpened.
 - Confidence and willingness to take chances.

Manage Your Reputation

- Active expectation management can reduce the social costs of ADHD.
 - Tell people what they should and shouldn't expect from you.
- Re-interpret ADHD behaviors as unintentional and discourage over-reading of their meaning.
 - Get ahead of the story.
 - Talk symptoms before diagnoses.

Intentions Count

- Others are more likely to be flexible if they feel that you take ownership and are trying.
 - Others often misinterpret ADHD symptoms for bad intentions.
 - Give a little to get a little—you're on the same team.
 - You may need to *show* that you are working at least as hard as the other person.

Clean Up Problems

- It takes guts to admit you blew it.
 - But it also gives you the power to fix it.
- Clean up the problem:
 - Fix the problem, if possible.
 - Make amends to reduce the social cost.
- Sometimes the cover-up is worse than the misdeed.

Know When to Walk Away

Live Your Own Life

- This is the only way to be successful and happy.
- This means:
 - Your goals
 - Your way
- The method doesn't matter as long as it's ethical.

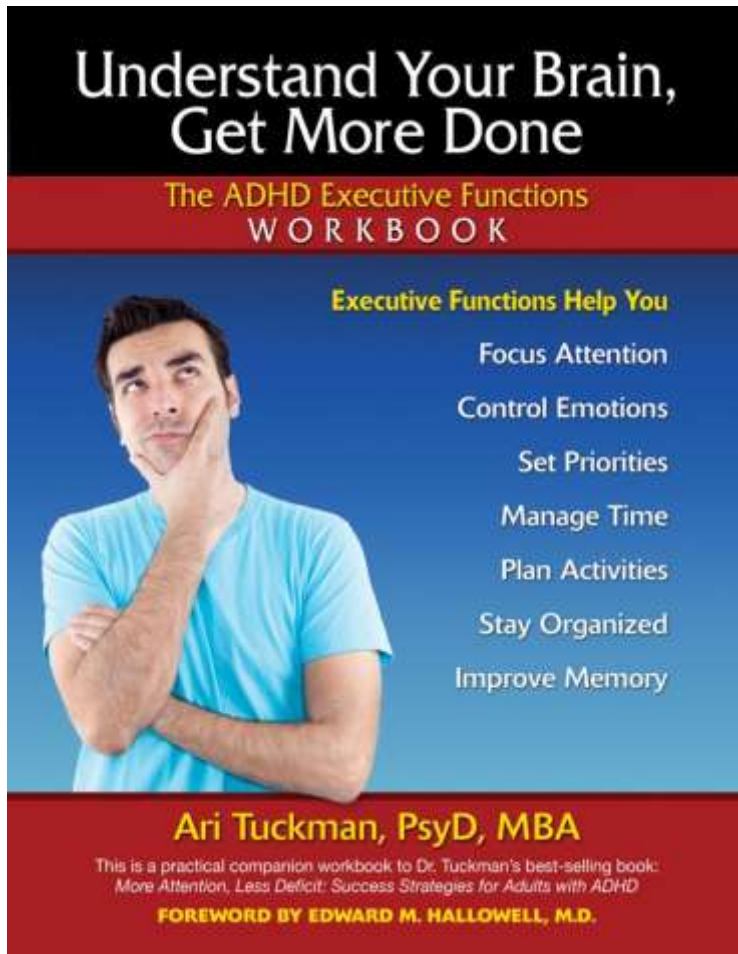
When Persistent Becomes Stubborn

- Digging your heels in can feel empowering, but it's ultimately empty and expensive.
- Stubbornness is a sign that you have something else on the line.
 - Is there a better way to accomplish that goal?

Sometimes Quitting is Smartest

- **Consciously choosing to quit is a sign of wisdom and strength.**
 - Dropping the ball or bailing out is not.
 - Don't confuse these two!
- **Give yourself credit for being smart enough to see it and brave enough to do it.**
- **Look for lessons learned.**

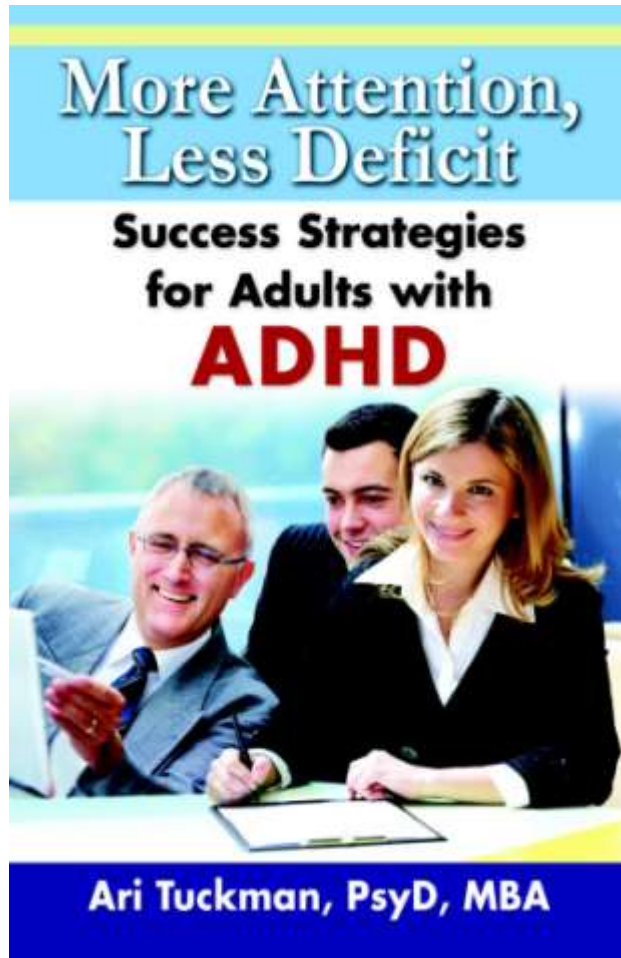
Workbook



“Dr. Tuckman continues to do an exceptional job of distilling the essence of theory and science about ADHD into a very practical guide for the adult with ADHD.”

—Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D.

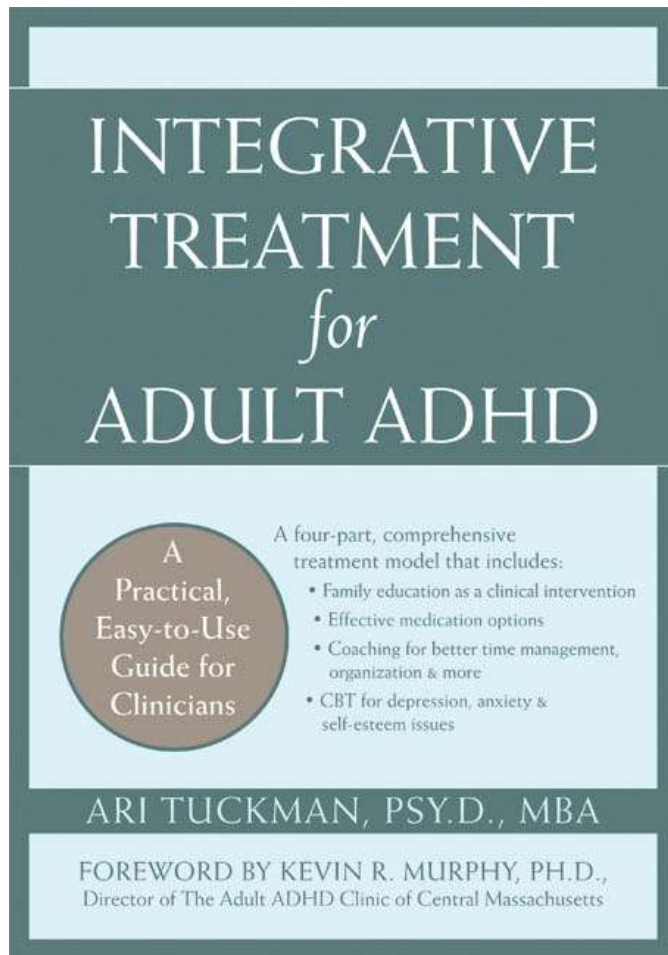
Book for Adults



“Written in a clear and easy-to-understand style, the book brings together a vast amount of information, ideas, suggestions, and research. All adults with ADHD can benefit from this book, as well as all people who care about them. Superb!”

—Ned Hallowell, M.D.

Book for Clinicians



“... it is a real pleasure to read Tuckman's superbly rendered book on ADHD in adults, for it is so well-reasoned, science-based, information-rich, to the point, and finally—useful! Apart from wishing I had written it, I sincerely wish that you will read it.”

—Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D.

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