



Self-Coaching

*Introducing A-N-S-W-E-R**

There are six basic steps you'll need to follow as you begin to coach yourself into control of your life.

- Acknowledge and accept your ADHD and associated challenges
- Narrow in on one or two issues on which you initially want to work
- Strategize a plan of attack using strength-based structures
- Work and follow the plan
- Evaluate your progress on a regular basis to see what is working and what is not
- Repeat the process so your guard does not let down

(*Taken from the book **The Disorganized Mind**, by Nancy Ratey.)

1. Acknowledge

- Understand that you have ADHD
- Learn what that means in general terms
- Actively examine what it means in your own life
- Separate your ADHD from yourself (I have ADHD, not I am ADHD)
- Move past self-blame
- Take responsibility for yourself
- Take action to change your behavior patterns
- Create accountability with others, if necessary

Separate Your ADHD from Yourself

In order to separate your ADHD from yourself, you have to learn as much as you can about your own ADHD so that you can understand the cause of your behavior and separate yourself from what you do. The following table shows the ADHD cause to symptoms often noted by clients. With this guide in mind, you can fill in the blank table on the next page with your own causes and outcomes.

ADHD Cause	Effect
Time Mismanagement	Always late Accomplishes little Seen as undependable
Procrastination	Often disappoints others Does work on wrong projects Avoids important tasks
Impulsivity	Spotty employment history Can't maintain relationships Can't tolerate boredom
Distractibility	Jumps from task to task Doesn't listen to others Misses deadlines
Trouble with Transitions	Can't let go Too controlling Easily agitated

ADHD Cause	Effect

2. Narrow

- Zero in on the negative aspects of the specific behaviors
- Navigate the traps and distractions you repeatedly face
- Select the one or two challenges most negatively affecting your life
- Eliminate the negative tapes that can sabotage your efforts

Narrowing Statements

1. Look back at the table on the previous page and complete the following statement:

The areas that cause me the most difficulty are:

2. Even though you probably want to make a change for every symptom you have listed, address only one or two issues. Complete the following statements:

My first goal is to address the following symptoms or behaviors:

By addressing these behaviors and symptoms, I will achieve the following outcomes:

3. Strategize

- Create a plan for self-improvement
 - Acknowledge your strengths as well as your challenges
 - Match strength-based strategies to those ADHD challenges
 - Recognize strategies and structures in one part of your life that you might implement in another
 - Understand the cues to which you respond
 - Engineer your environment to meet your specific needs
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Seeing Strengths

Successful strategizing involves acknowledging your strengths as well as weaknesses or deficits. As an adult with ADHD, focusing on what you can't do may come so naturally that you cannot see the positive aspects of who you are and what you have managed to achieve. Take some time to look at some of your positive attributes and abilities. Answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

- What seems to come naturally to me?

- I enjoy doing _____ most in life.

- What are my special skills or attributes? Have others ever commented about my skills or attributes?

- What kinds of positive feedback do I receive from others?

- Do I respond better to visual (post-it notes, lists, etc.) or auditory (alarms, beepers, etc.) cues or both?

What and How

As you self-coach, you must **slow down enough to see your issues strategically**. Coaching focuses on the practical: **it is outcome-based and goal-oriented**. Concentrate **not on why you are doing something, but on what and how**. Answer the following questions to get more clarity:

- **What** is the issue?

- **What** can I do about it?

- **What** strategies can I use?

- **How** can I maintain progress?

- **How** can I set up accountability?

4. Work

- Use your environment to keep you on track
- Remind yourself of past consequences
- Enlist others to help with your plan
- Be accountable to yourself and others you've enlisted
- Be willing to put in the time it takes to change
- Have a sense of purpose

5. Evaluate

- Take time to appraise your plan and strategies
- Allow sufficient time for new strategies to work
- Change those strategies that don't work by creating new ones based on your strengths
- Continually renew your commitment to the plan
- Affirm your success along the way
- Energize your effort

Evaluate Progress

Use the following questions to help you assess your progress. I will give you a tracking sheet with these questions that you can use as a way to check-in and evaluate your progress during the semester.

- What is working in my plan?
 - Why is it working?
 - What system can I use to track my progress?
 - If something is not working, why?
 - What is my commitment level?
 - How can I remember my commitment to my goal?
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If you get sidetracked from your goal, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I repeating an old pattern of not giving something enough time?
- Do I want to quit out of sheer boredom?

6. Repeat

- Acknowledge once again that you have ADHD
- Remind yourself that your ADHD will not go away
- Narrow the focus again to one or two key issues
- Strategize again, build strength-based structures
- Make sure you do not let up, take shortcuts, or get lazy when working the plan
- Evaluate again, chart how much progress you've made