

MY STORY

The road to the creation of ADD In Focus Coaching began 40 years ago when as a public school teacher, I began to notice, and found very interesting, that there many bright students in my classes who were struggling academically and whose behavior was often puzzling to their teachers. This interest led me to 2 years of being totally immersed in learning how to diagnose and teach children with Special Needs and earning a Masters' Degree in Special Education from San Francisco State University. I spent the next decade in public education in California and Massachusetts working exclusively with children with learning disabilities and ADHD.

After 8 successful years of heading-up a large Resource Room in an elementary school, I made the agonizing decision to hand in my resignation one month before the new school began. My co-workers were shocked and disappointed, but I was exhausted and worn out from spending so many nights throughout those years writing ed plans and other tedious paperwork until 2:00 a.m. I was also struggling with getting work done in a noisy room with 6 people (3 teachers/3 aides) teaching at the same time. There were many days when I had to leave the classroom, go outdoors and walk around the parking lot just to gather my thoughts and regain my equilibrium -- but I wrote that all off as being "stressed-out". Today I know it was not all stress related, it was also my ADHD. It was the last thing that I thought of for myself.

However, that was twenty years ago. I was a successful professional, always did fine in school and 20 years ago, there was not much information around about Adult ADHD. So, did I seek treatment for my ADHD? No. Instead, I did what many ADDers commonly do, I changed careers and took a detour deciding to pursue my second passion -- career counseling and went back to school to receive a Masters in Counseling and Psychology.

During my internship as a career counselor in a community college I noticed that many of my clients were adult versions of the kids I had taught in special ed over the years and I became totally intrigued by the prospect of

finding solutions for adults with all kinds of disabilities to have fulfilling careers.

Shortly thereafter, another door opened for me with an offer to work as a therapist in a community hospital. Again, like many ADDers, I walked through that door because it offered a new and intimate experience with people in crisis. Most of us who worked there could be considered "intensity junkies", as there was always a client in crisis; whether it was a suicide attempt, a difficult detox, PTSD, or the first psychotic break of a young adult with bipolar disorder. I often wondered how many of the nurses and counselors were adults with ADHD given our common addiction to problem solving in crises. Moreover, I was struck by how many of the patients themselves could also easily be diagnosed with ADHD, from the cocaine addict claiming the drug calms him to the alcoholic escaping life's frustration with his drug.

As often happens in our lives, there are signposts that keep directing us back or guiding us to a certain area. There were several that kept directing me back to individuals with LD and ADHD and the deep connection I felt with them. My next signpost was a college professor who recommended that I would be a natural for working in a college disabilities office. Once again, the door opened and I went through it, feeling that I had found my home at last - my calling, so to speak. I became Suffolk University's first director of the LD/ADHD services at its award winning Ballotti Learning Center and I thrived there.

How I then ended up at DBM, one of the foremost career transition companies in the world, as a career coach for executives who lost their jobs is a story to be told another day; but, having the opportunity to be in that setting gave me a new awareness and the valuable experience of working with hundreds of executives who were going through the turmoil of sudden career transitions.

It is through that path, I knew it was time and felt ready and well equipped to

bring to adult professionals with ADHD, my unique experience and knowledge of the workplace and the skill sets required for success combined with the depth of knowledge I had attained of how ADHD operates in those adults undergoing career decisions and workplace performance issues.

Of course, being a dedicated ADDer myself, I wanted to make sure that I had all of the necessary credentials to be the best ADHD coach around, so, what did I do next? If you guessed, "she went back to school again" Yes, you are right. I went back to school -- two coaching schools to be exact -- The College of Executive Coaching and ADD Coach Academy. I was ready to emerge in my new role of "Super ADD Coach".

I knew that coaching bright and ambitious professionals experiencing challenges in their careers or in the workplace due to ADHD was to be my true "calling". And as you have probably heard when you finally find your true passion, life is unbelievably sweet. and fun too. To give you a taste of what is so special about my clients and why the time spent with them is stimulating and so much fun, I share with you a quote from Kathleen Nadeau, a psychologist who is also ADD.

"ADD people are high-energy and incredibly good brain stormers. They will often work 12 to 15 hours by choice. The business community should not fear ADD. Instead, they should see that they have a potential gold mine here." (from an ABC News Report)

*Oh and by the way.....I almost forgot to tell you that I did eventually get 'officially' diagnosed with ADHD when I was in my early 50's, and always wanting to be certain about everything I went back again last year and got re-diagnosed through the Hallowell Center. But the true confirmation for me is brought home when I am in the presence of another person with ADHD and I recognize myself in every story and identify with many of the ADD traits discussed. And let me tell you, my clients are an awesome group of people. They are individuals who are bright, productive and ready to learn how to deal with the challenges that come their way and. maybe like you

too, many have carried around since childhood the unfulfilled feeling of not being all they were meant to be, and a deep longing to do something about it. I feel privileged that they turned to me for guidance in beginning that journey and trusting in me to stay on the road with them along the way -- and I would consider it a privilege to be on that road with you too.