

## Chapter 20

# ADD and Learning - A Mystery Solved

*How would you rate your ability to stay focused on new ideas? Are you quick to catch on? Or do you usually need extra time? Can you learn from reading or are you better hands on? And how is your attention span? Are you easily distracted or can you stay on track? And have you ever been diagnosed with ADD? This is what we're about to explore; how getting distracted affects our ability to learn. Including that folks with ADD learn some things better than those who don't have it. Does this surprise you? Does it contradict what you know? Can you guess what I'm even referring to? We're about to find out. In this chapter of Plain Talk about Talk Therapy.*

### How About a Little Less Defining and a Little More Helping Please

*"Pay attention, Sidney."*

*"F off Miss Wordsworth."*

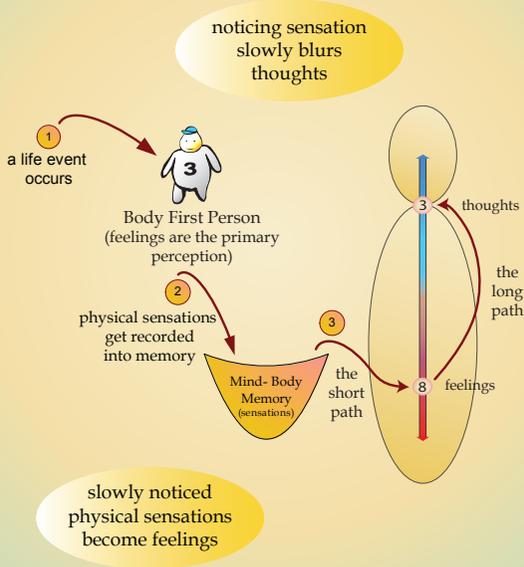
*"What did you just say!"*

*"You heard me. F off."*

# How Being Body First Causes ADD

(thinking is managed physically not mentally)  
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What Makes Body First People Vulnerable to ADD?  
Using words to Body First people is an event they manage with their bodies.  
Thus they commonly say things like, "I



As to why Body First People lack the mental feedback to properly manage words and ideas, it is simply that they think in slow motion.

*“Sidney. Go to the principal’s office. Right now.”*

*“Thank you, Miss Wordsworth.”*

### **It’s Hard To Treat What We Cannot Define**

Many folks today take for granted we know how to define ADD. Yet if you were to Google ADD, you’d find an incredible variety of conflicting opinions. One site says, “ADD is a *brain-based disorder* that affects all aspects of one’s life.” Another says it is “a *psychological term* currently applied to anyone who meets the DSM IV diagnostic criteria for impulsivity, hyperactivity and / or inattention.” Another says it is a “*neurobiologically-based developmental disability* estimated to affect between 3-5% of the school age population.” Yet another says it is “one of the most common *childhood behavior disorders*.” And yet another says, “About 35% of all children referred to mental health clinics are referred for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD. It is one of the most prevalent of all *childhood psychiatric disorders*.”

So what is ADD? A “brain-based disorder”? A “psychological term”? A “neurobiologically-based developmental disability”? A “common childhood behavior disorder”? A “childhood psychiatric disorder”? Anyone have a clue? And yes. I know. ADD as a diagnosis is now passe. The term currently in vogue is ADHD with and without HD. Which to be honest, seems a bit convoluted don’t you think? What is ADHD without HD? AD? ADHD minus HD? Sitting still but still not knowing what the heck is going on ADD? Argumentative Disruptive Disorder with a side order of stillness?

Obviously, there’s something wrong here. These definitions all disagree. Moreover if we cannot agree on a definition, how can we possibly help.

Let’s try this. Let’s set aside all this technical talk and only look at what is obvious. Starting with that we all get distracted. And lose our focus. However some of us have a harder time getting the gist of new ideas. Especially when they are taught in fast paced classrooms where teachers rely more on words than deeds.

What am I saying? I’m saying that there are folks who do poorly in classrooms wherein *fast paced word based learning* is the norm. As opposed to *slow paced action based learning*. Moreover what makes this relevant to ADD is that these folks, the ones who have trouble with fast paced word based learning, are the ones who get ADD labels.

Now let me explain why.

### **The Two Gifts of Learning**

Okay. What I've just referred to, rather abruptly, are the two main styles of classroom learning. Fast paced word based learning. And slow paced action based learning. Moreover, I've just used the first of these two styles; fast paced word based learning, to introduce these two ideas.

The thing is, while some folks will be fine with my having done this and will now be wanting to know more, others will have been jarred by this and may already be feeling lost.

If this is you, please take a breath.

Now notice what you're feeling, *not* what you're thinking. Your body, not your mind, remember?

Now gently give in to that you got lost, close your eyes and clear your mind.

Now open your eyes and imagine that I have placed two beautiful gift boxes in front of you. Notice the colors and ribbons and such.

Now read the name tags on these two gifts and see your name written there. In beautiful blue and yellow fountain pen ink. Complete with curls and swirls.

These two gifts are for you.

But you have to open them slowly.

Know if you open these gifts slowly, you will get the gifts. And if you hurry and open them quickly, you will likely throw out the gifts with the wrapping.

This is true in the classroom too. Words are the wrapping, not the gift. Remember and you'll get so much more.

### **Being Body First is ADD**

For chapters now, I've been telling you that we all fall into one of two groups. Either you're in the Mind First person group or you're in the Body First person group.

I've also been telling you that there are two main differences between these two groups. The speed at which they sense life; quickly or slowly. And the place wherein these folks first sense life; either in their minds or in their bodies.

Which is which?

Mind First folks prefer to sample life quickly, while Body First folks prefer to sample slowly. Moreover, quickly sensed things become thoughts to human beings, whereas slowly sensed things become feelings.

Who does all this have to do with ADD and with the two styles of classroom learning? Basically just this. Because Mind First folks feel more at home with thoughts expressed quickly, they do best with fast paced word based learning. And because Body First folks feel more at home with physically based learn-

ing delivered at a nice slow pace, they do best with slow paced action based learning.

The thing is, because most folks see getting the gist of things quickly as the proof someone is smart, fast paced word based learning has become the norm in today's classrooms. And Mind First students, the stars. Which means what? Which means that Body First folks, those who learn best from slow paced action based learning, get relegated to what are seen as the dumb classes. You know. Home economics. Auto mechanics. Wood shop. Things like that.

So how do we explain putting kids in these classes? With words like aptitude and performing below grade level. And yes, overtly, their not keeping up with the "smart kids" is seen as no ones fault. However, in some ways, this is seen as the kid's fault. He or she just can't pay attention, remember. Hence the label; ADD.

My point here is, because we see speed with words as equating to intelligence, we see Mind First folks as smart and Body First folks as dumb. Or slow, if you use the more vague and indirect reference. Moreover, if you look at the symptoms we use to define ADD, you'll find they all describe Body First people.

So do all Body First folks deserve ADD labels? Absolutely not. In fact, no one does. And when you see how all this stems from not knowing about the mind body connection, you'll see why I'm saying this.

### **ADD in the Classroom**

The upshot of having ADD is, this entitles you to "special help." What does the help look like? You get segregated from your peers. And slotted in with the dumb kids. Not the best of positions for a kid to be in. Then there's the visits to the school guidance counselor, where you get asked questions like, "So Sidney, how's the math going. Did you pull up the English grade? And is the medication still working for you?"

Of course, no one takes seriously your complaints about how you're being taught. Why not? Because they're certain they already know what your problem is. It's some combination of your genetics, your parents, the food you eat, and your bad attitude. Which means what? Which means you have to hear things at home like, "Sidney, did you remember to take your pill. You know how you get when you don't take it?"

And when you ask how long you'll have to be on this stuff? Why of course. You might have to take it for the rest of your life. Which between this and the segregation and the being patronized, probably kills any desire left in you to even try to learn. Exit stage left the beautiful urges you were born with to explore your world.

Then there's the dreadful blankness you feel in school. Sure you're less restless

now that you're on the medication. But what about the pain of boredom? The truth? More times than not, you simply long for the day to end. Or at times, you blurt out answers hoping to find some way to fit in. Even when these answers involve the right words though, more times than not, they make no sense. Or stray off the topic. Or challenge the teacher's authority.

And when you do this, what happens? In essence, everyone ignores you. Or just sighs. Or pities you. Once again. And yes. The whole class knows you just offered a hollow answer. But no one cares enough to call you on it. Too much trouble. So the focus just moves off you and you get ignored and forgotten. Or if the teacher's in a bad mood, then you get seen as disruptive and perhaps, get kicked out of class.

So are folks with ADD dumb?

The odd thing is, if you go by IQ scores, a lot of these folks have higher than average IQs. This I know personally. Some of the smartest folks I know fit this exact criteria. More than you might have imagined.

What's up with these smart but inattentive folks then? Are they smart but bored? Rebellious to a fault? Brilliantly disruptive? Victims of a mystery condition? The truth? It's none of this. In fact, despite all the conjecture about gross brain scan dimness and vaccinations, studies show people with ADD are neither dumber nor smarter than the average bear. They're just people whose minds and bodies respond differently to learning situations. Literally. In fact, the current research shows that in brain scans, less of their brains light up. Which only offers more proof for the mind body differences I've proposed.

Unfortunately the world hasn't caught on yet to that there is a second brain in us. The enteric nervous system. Moreover, even the folks who champion this as being physiologically important fail to look at how this affects learning. This despite the solid evidence that the gut is the home to our intuition and emotion.

Would we find that people with ADD light up more in their bodies than Mind First folks? The psychological evidence overwhelmingly points to this. Whatever the case though, we need to remember what our purpose is here. We are trying to help. Thus I'm not sure we need to wait for this evidence. In fact, I'm sure we do not. We need to do something now.

What can we do? We can start with a better definition.

### **What Is ADD Then?**

Seriously now, so what is ADD?

ADD is what people who lean toward the Body First end of the Mind Body Spectrum look like when they are asked to learn in conventional settings. Which means what exactly? Which means compared to those on the Mind First end

of the spectrum, these folks need more time to digest a teacher's words. A lot more time in fact. Especially when the teaching style is fast paced word based learning. As opposed to slow paced action based learning.

On the other hand, these same folks pick up slow paced action based learning noticeably more quickly than do Mind First folks. Especially when the learning involves body focused skills such as those you use when you perform music, practice a martial art, play sports, or learn a technical trade.

The thing is, because these classes do not get taught with fast based word based learning, most of us see them as being less practical in the real world. Why? Because the prejudice built into education insures we'll overvalue mind based learning and undervalue body based learning. That is, until we need it. At which point, it is the Mind First people who will feel slow and dumb.

Not sure what I mean? Well consider this. And be honest. Did you think kids who took high school auto mechanics were the smart kids or the slow kids? Fine. Don't answer. But have you ever tried fixing your own car? Including the bashed knuckles and grease under your nails. So how was it? Did you feel dumb doing this?

How about playing music? When you were in school, did you see the kids in the rock band as the outcasts and social misfits? Okay. Maybe they were. But have you ever picked up a bass or guitar and tried to play it? Hmm. Did it feel awkward to you? And how dumb did doing this make you feel?

How about modern dance? Did you see classes like this as extra curricular fluff, something schools throw in just to round out peoples' educations? Well let me ask you. How many left feet do you have when you dance? And what's it like when someone asks you to dance at a wedding reception? Do you feel smart then or do you struggle to just keep up?

And how about Tai Chi or Qigong? Have you ever tried to grasp the philosophy beneath these rich ancient teachings? No fast paced word based learning here. This despite the fact that learning these things requires great intelligence. Do you think not? Well ask yourself, what do you know about internal balance? Do you even know what the word "chi" means?

My point? We see classes like these as less important than main stream learning. Why? Because they all involve the minority teaching style; slow paced action based learning. Which is why we often call them "special ed classes" and "extra curricular activities."

At the same time, while Mind First folks struggle to learn these things, Body First people thrive here. And why shouldn't they. They all get taught with slow paced action based learning.

This differs markedly from the way we teach main stream classes. Those which involve the majority teaching style; fast paced word based learning. The

thing is, we call these classes; English and social studies and chemistry and such, the “required classes.” Which means what as far as feeling smart and dumb? Hopefully it’s beginning to be obvious. The learning style used grossly biases our opinion.

Of course, there is another reason why we call these classes, the required classes. Like it or not, our world is biased in this way. The thing to ask then would be, so am I saying that folks with ADD cannot adapt to fast paced word based learning?

The truth? Yes, I am saying this. However, if you take this to mean I think these students cannot learn these subjects, you’re wrong. Nor am I saying these kids are better off in special ed, even if the teaching style used there does fit them better.

What I am saying is that we need to look at how we favor students who respond well to fast paced word based learning. And how we designate them as “smart.” As opposed to how we see those who cannot learn well from fast paced word based learning as being dumb and slow. Or mentally challenged. Or something equally patronizing.

Are Body First folks in general, slower? Actually, yes they are. But only when it comes to fast paced word based learning. Unfortunately, because this is the majority teaching style, folks with ADD suffer though a lifetime of feeling dumb. And slow. Or disruptive. And worse.

A better way to see ADD then would be to see it as being similar to how we see being left handed. And to see how accurate this comparison really is, consider how being made to conform to the majority teaching style; fast paced word based learning, parallels what we used to do to left handed folks. What did we used to do? We used to physically force left handed kids to learn to be right handed. Often under threat of physical punishments.

Does it sound like what I’m saying here is that folks with ADD are not bad. They’re just different? And that as such, they deserve special consideration?

The truth? If this is what you’re hearing then you’re missing my point. I’m saying folks with ADD learn best in ways which we usually reserve for special ed and extra curricular activities. And that if we taught required classes with slow paced action based learning, we’d see a marked improvement in how these kids do.

Think this is all just nonsense? Well consider this. Consider what normally happens in the plots of movies wherein the slow disruptive kids finally come into their own. What happens? Always the same thing. Someone uses slow paced action based learning to teach these kids required subjects. And suddenly, they thrive.

For example, take 2007's, *The Freedom Writers* (Richard LaGravenese's adaptation of Erin Gruwell's best-seller *The Freedom Writer's Diaries*) and 2006's, *Take The Lead* (wherein screenwriter Dianne Houston's tells the real-life story of Pierre Dulaine, who taught dance as a volunteer to at-risk students at New York elementary schools). In both films, someone uses slow paced action based learning to inspire the love of learning into Body First kids.

### **Seeing ADD as Diversity**

Okay. Movies aside. So there are two kinds of people (Mind First and Body First), and two possible styles of teaching them (fast paced word based learning and slow paced action based learning). But despite there being two possible styles, we force fit everyone into the one majority style. And demean those who would better fit in the other style.

What would it look in real life if we were to face this reality and learn to use both styles of learning not just one?

What would it look like? Teachers and parents alike would see and honor the differences between *fast paced word based learners* and *slow paced action based learners*. Moreover, instead of using what these differences to divide students into the good group and the no so good group, we'd begin to see the way students learn as one overall spectrum. A continuum on which all students differ not in that they do and do not get distracted but rather that they all get distracted. Some by words. Some by actions. Some by quick paces. Some with slow.

In a way then, what I'm suggesting here is that we need to reevaluate how we test for intelligence. Especially in light of the fact that a good portion of the world learns best the other way. And that many of the skills we need in life are best taught in this other way.

How would classrooms change?

Teachers would learn to make connecting to students more important than getting them to pass tests. How? By talking slower. By leaving room for thought. And by focusing on the love of learning rather than on learning the facts alone.

And if this happened?

Students would have time to digest a teacher's words. Not just the "poor slow learners." All students. In this way, the Body First students would have a chance to fall in love with words as well.

### **The Pain of Not Knowing**

What would this do?

It would shift the focus from speed and words being the measure of learning to depth and relationship. From being rewarded for promptly parroting answers

to being honored for having the courage to stay in the questions. Not sure what I'm saying here? Well consider this.

Part of what I've been saying is, in general, we overvalue quick answers. Why? Because no one teaches us how to endure the pain of not knowing the answers.

This idea then, that there is pain in "not knowing," is one of the more invisible distractions in education. And because it is invisible, we fail to see that the answer to ADD is not getting these folks to have more answers. It's realizing that it takes courage to openly admit to not knowing these answers.

Not sure what I'm getting at? Don't think this applies to you? Well try this. Try asking yourself a difficult question. Like why some children have to suffer with cancer.

Now sit quietly and try to feel what this question means. And yes, I said, feel, not think. What does this question feel like? In your body?

Body First people have more native talent to sit with these kinds of questions. Why? Because they are more used to *feeling* questions, and more experienced at not having answers.

Unfortunately, because we overvalue having answers, we fail to honor these folks. So much so that most people today feel shame when they do not know something. Which is why we so frequently look down when we don't know. Our very bodies reflect this shame.

Given you can get people to believe they will not be shamed, you'd be amazed by what most folks with can come up. Including that folks with ADD, and Body First folks in general, have an amazing reserve within them for compassion and insight.

And the Mind First students in the class? Have I been making it sound like they are less important?

I am a Mind First student. I literally live this every day. Moreover, I like being a Mind First student and thoroughly enjoy fast paced word based conversations.

The thing is, while I savor these words and concepts, without the body half, I miss seeing much of the meaning. In fact, if I think back on what I've come to love the most, without exception, it begins in my body. And then extends out to my mind.

The thing is, to a Mind First person, going slow hurts. Why? Because what we experience slowly is experienced as feelings, not as thoughts. And because Mind First folks by nature have less skill at navigating their feelings.

This is why, when people talk slowly, this annoys the heck out of most Mind First folks. Why? Because they cannot escape the feelings present by going up into their heads.

This in fact happens to all learners. We all seek quick answers to escape our feelings. Not the least of which is the pain of not knowing which all human beings feel.

Of course, when you consider how our tendency to see quick answers as the proof someone is smart has all but destroyed our ability to sit consciously within the learning process, you may see this somewhat differently.

Some might now ask, aren't feelings better dealt with out in real life than in school? For instance, isn't it unfair to put the Mind First kids into a slower paced class?

Is it unfair? Yes it is. Just as unfair as it is to put the ADD kids in a fast paced word based class.

So what's the answer? Continue to favor one group over the other? Or face the problem where it starts?

If we face it where it starts, we get to conserve the self worth of slower learners. And if we do this in the presence of the faster paced students, we teach them something perhaps more valuable than all the facts put together. We teach them how to see the value in all human beings.

### **The Second Change: Show Then Tell Learning**

Is this it then? Slow down the pace and use actions as well as words? Actually, not. You see Body First learning occurs best when teachers present their slow paced action based lessons in Show then Tell order. Rather than in Tell then Show order. Why? Because the minds of Body First students empty quickly and lose focus if they are subjected to lessons taught in Tell then Show order. And because Mind First students can learn well this way too, albeit, they may need to be reminded of how they too used to learn this way.

Not sure what Show then Tell order is? Then you might want to page back to the end of chapter 17. The whole chapter focused on this. Or you might simply reread the Two Gifts of Learning section above. I wrote this in Show then Tell order.

As for making yet another change, does this sound like more catering to the "poor slow students?" And unfair to the Mind First students? If so, tell consider this.

The lessons we learned in kindergarten, and those we learned in first and second grade, were all slow paced action based learning taught in Show then Tell order. Why? It's simple. Because before we learn to use words to escape the pain of our feelings, this is what works best. For all children.

And after we get older?

Well if you consider once more the plots of those "slow students come into their own" movies, you'll see this works pretty well for older folks as well. All

these stories are based on how Show then Tell order helps. As well as in that emotions belong in the classroom.

And if we did make these changes, what would it accomplish?

Within a very brief time, perhaps within one school year, teachers and Mind First students would realize being Body First does not mean a person is dumb. It means being smart in a different way. And no. I'm not saying this different way is limited to being smart at things like sports and auto mechanics. I'm saying the potential for learning is unlimited as long as the lessons are taught in a language they can understand; as slow paced action based learning taught in Show then Tell order.

"In a language they can understand?" Does this sound like I am describing Special Ed here? Know I am not. I am describing what amounts to the left handed learning style. The style from which all kids learn when they first enter school. But the style which is later used only to teach things like sports and technical trades. And equally discounted careers such as being an artist, musician, or dancer. Careers not considered "practical." Careers said to make you "unable to support yourself."

The thing is, there is a clear and logical reason why we see these careers as impractical. How much we pay people is largely based on the degree to which their career is rooted in fast paced word based learning. Not always, mind you. But much of the time. In a moment, we'll look at why.

The point I'm making here is, we tend to see folks with ADD, and Body First learners in general, as slow and dumb and worse; as unable to learn higher concepts. However, none of this is true. Not just because I say it isn't but rather because I've been using what I've been suggesting here to change the lives of folks like this for years now. More so now that I've discovered the underlying nature of this problem; the mind body connection.

To what degree have I done this? For over ten years, I've been making direct longitudinal observations. These observations involve hundreds of people. Many who carry learning disabled labels. The result? In many cases, I've been able to affect changes not thought possible. Including that I've restored the love of leaning in many of them. A love they had not felt since first entering school.

In addition, since discovering the mechanism of the Mind Body Connection, I've found it easier than ever to connect to folks as a teacher. Including complex learning. For example, my friend John, a highly Body First person, became the first person to understand the concept of how our world is a fractal based reality. No small feat even for the smartest of folks. In fact, this affected him even to the point wherein he told me recently that since learning to see the difference between *fast paced word based learning* and *slow paced action based learning*, that for the first time in his life, he feels smart. Can you imagine? This from one of

the smartest men I know. But only when he goes slow and takes his time.

### **ADD, Prejudice, and People Relationships**

Where does the real solution lie then? It lies in our learning to recognize this bias toward fast paced word based learning as a prejudice we all have. A prejudice toward speed as the test for intelligence. And a prejudice against using feelings as a way to learn. And lest you think you are not affected by this prejudice, consider this. If I were to be able to wave a wand over you and make you either quick mind and silver tongued or slow minded and physically adept, which would it be? Why, of course, quick minded and silver tongued. Right? Who would want to be seen as slow at anything?

And if my wand waving were to be irreversible, would this alter your choice? In other words, if you had one time only and you'd stay this way for life, would you still pick the former; quick minded and silver tongued?

Why of course, any sane person would still pick the quick minded one. Wouldn't they?

The thing is, within the past few months, and in some strange unexpected way, my writing this book has caused this very thing to happen to me. Thus I, a man who has loved being quick minded and silver tongued, have fallen in love with slowness. In effect, I now teach, speak, and live at a much slower pace than I ever thought possible. And not because I'm trying either, but rather because I like living this way. Even as a talk therapist. Especially as a talk therapist, in fact.

I've also come to realize how my overvaluing speed has hurt my relationships with people. The result? In one of my recent four hour teaching groups, I repeatedly broke into tears as I realized how unfairly I'd been treating the Body First learners in my group. And how biased I had been toward the Mind First learners in the group, by making fast paced word based learning the norm.

Since coming to see all this though, not only have I stopped making these judgments, I have also fallen in love with this style of learning. Along with realizing how my inability to see this beauty kept me from doing some things I had always wanted to do. Like learn to play piano. And play sports. I always felt too inept to even try to learn.

In truth, I was inept at the things. But not because I was dumb. Rather because I failed realize I needed to learn these things with my body rather than with my head.

Of all these failures though, perhaps the most painful one of all was my fear that I could never learn to make my own car repairs. What makes this so painful? My father an auto mechanic. And a good one at that. Sadly my refusals to let him teach me what he knew made it difficult for him and I to connect.

In the end, my father and I came to have a deep and genuine friendship

anyway. This despite my prejudice against slow non verbal learners.

Sadly, he suffered from the same prejudice and saw himself as less intelligent than me. Leading us both to conclude, wrongly, that we had little in common.

In reality, we had so much in common. And my father was not dumb. Not at all. He was only what I am now calling a Body First learner. A man who would have learned best from slow paced action based teachers as opposed to fast paced word based folks such as myself. How can I be certain?

There was a time once when we bridged this difference between us. Inadvertently, of course.

On that morning my father had asked me to come fix something on his computer. Something which required replacing parts. However when we went to the store to get these parts, we found the store hadn't opened yet. And as we stood there considering what we should do while we waited, my father suggested we go into the Barnes and Noble.

Know his asking me this caught me totally off guard. As far as I knew, my father had never been in a book store. Not had I ever considered he'd like being in a book store. Moreover, because I read constantly and my father didn't, and because I am a fast paced word based learner and he was a slow paced action based learner, I thought my father was simply doing this to be nice to me. Or looking for some kind of technical book. A car repair manual, for instance. Or a book on some mechanical skill.

About a half an hour later though, I realized how wrong I was when my father came over and asked me what I thought of the book he had in his hand. It was a book of poetry! What would my father, the auto mechanic, want with a book of poetry? To say I was confused is putting it mildly. I simply did not know this side of my father. And not knowing, I offered him some sort of hollow answer then and passed it off as an oddity.

We then went back to his house and I commenced with fixing his computer. But a few minutes later, he interrupted me again, this time to ask me what I thought of another book.

When I looked, I found this too was a book of poetry. This one old and dog eared and yellow and falling apart. And when I asked him what it was, he told me it was his favorite book of poetry. And that during the Korean war, he used to read these poems to the men on his ship.

Oh, God, was I confused. And embarrassed. And sad. Who is this man, I thought to myself? And where have I been? Worse yet, considering I have loved poetry all my life, it felt all the more painful to me.

To this day, I feel a great loss over this; that I had not previously gotten to know this side of my father. Nor I found out had anyone else in my family. Moreover, because of the timing of all this, I never got to share much of it with

him. He died not long after that.

My point for telling you this? That my prejudice toward slow learners cost me dearly. For another, that if my father was a kid today, he would certainly be put on medication for ADD. And be classified learning disabled. And be patronized for being slow and dumb.

In reality, he would deserve none of these things. My father was a smart man who like many other smart folks, learned best from slow paced action based learning presented in Show then Tell order. Knowing this explains not only what made him so love action based John Wayne movies, but also what made him love books of deeply emotional poetry.

The thing I remember most here? I remember him telling me it took him years to read that book. And when I think of what I would have thought of this and what I know about it now, I feel doubly sad.

Now think about it. Were my father to be in school today, can you imagine a guidance counselor advising his parents to put him in a poetry class. Moreover, can you imagine the wrongful assumptions they'd make about what he was capable of? This is what it's like to be a Body First learner.

It doesn't have to be this way.

We can change.

But only if we learn to see how our prejudice toward fast paced word based learning is killing the love of learning in half our kids. Including those with ADD labels.

## So What Can We Say About ADD?

Alright. So there are several ways we can better quantify and define ADD. Moreover, by using what we now know about the mind body connection, and by adding to this a few things from Emergence Personality Theory, we can more accurately move this term from a reference to disability and distraction to a place on the spectrum of all learning styles.

Specifically what can we say?

- **One.** We clearly have a prejudice. We see quick minded word based learners as being smart. And slow minded action based learners as being dumb. This despite the fact that we already know that the speed at which you can parrot the gist of things has little to do with actually having learned anything. Thus real learning almost always requires more than cursory exposures.
- In addition, we not only need to see the flaws in seeing the faster style of learning as better. We also need to see how we overvalue careers which are based on this faster style of learning as better. And pay people

commensurately.

- We also need to open our minds and hearts to that learning quickly is not as good as learning completely, mind and body. And that we can change this if only we come clean with that we have this prejudice. And learn to see the good in both speed and depth.
- Finally, as far as ADD goes, folks with ADD almost always require slower paces in order for them to learn. Not because they are less intelligent but rather because they need to process things first through their bodies and only later through their minds. Moreover, because minds are inherently quicker than bodies physiologically, we need to adapt to this difference. Without seeing this as “special ed.”
- **Two.** Mind First people and Body First people learn better when the teaching style used fits their particular mind body type. Here, the two types of teaching are *fast paced word based learning* for Mind First people and *slow paced action based learning* for Body First people. Folks with ADD are Body First people. Thus, while in theory what would be best for them would be to slow the action down, in practice, what would work best would be to find a middle ground between these two groups. A pace at which actions are followed by explanations but at a pace which maintains the interest of the Mind First people. Including intellectually deep learning as well as learning physical adeptness.
- **Three.** Given you account for these two differences in teaching styles, the order in which you present what you are teaching also matters with Mind First people and Body First people. *Tell then Show* works best for Mind First people. *Show then Tell* works best for Body First people. Again, folks with ADD are Body First people. Therefore they need to be taught in a Show then Tell sequence. In addition, since all people learn in this order when they enter school, and since it works well for both mind body orientations, it would seem only logical that we could simply continue to teach in this order throughout a student’s lifetime and regardless of mind body orientation. That we teach most things in the reverse order is sad. That we can easily change this is a plus.
- **Four.** Emergence Personality Theory adds two more traits which could be used to describe ADD. One. Having Freedom as your first Social Priority. And Two. Having a Decision Tree Type wherein Digression is followed by Bluntness. What could be done here? Social Priority tests exist wherein people can be typed in less than fifteen minutes. Often in less than five. And teaching people the Four Decision Trees can usually be done in one sitting, including self identification. This means schools could use these two criteria to better match teachers to students. So

much so in fact that much of the power struggle which currently exists between teachers and folks with ADD could significantly diminish. And ultimately vanish.

- **Five.** In the long run, we need to do a lot more than address how best to teach kids with ADD. Especially with regard to the prejudices I mentioned in point one. For instance, while we definitely make a lot of well meant efforts to teach kids the curriculum, our love of learning report card is currently all “F’s.” Why? Because we fail to keep this love alive in more than ninety percent of people.
- What would need to change? A whole lot of things. Beginning with acknowledging that labeling people with disorders and medicating them so they don’t “disturb” others has more to do with making it easier for us than with helping them. We also need to learn to see differences in people as diversity rather than as disorders, and realize that our not understanding this hurts us all. Including that people with ADD have much to teach us about the warm and fussy side of life. And who among us couldn’t use more of that mixed in with our fast paced word based world?

### This Chapter's Session Notes

As I began writing this chapter, I shared with my friend Ed, a consummate Body First person and wearer of the president’s award for having achieved high levels of ADD, my opening ideas. Including my mock ADD student and “ignorant about ADD” teacher conversation. To which Ed responded by roaring with laughter. And remarking how accurate this conversation felt. At which point I responded, internally, with relief. You see, not being a Body First person at times inhibits me from writing these kinds of teacher student parodies. After all, I carry the exact opposite president’s award. I am a card carrying Asperger’s student.

The thing is, both Ed and I have risen above what the world would have thought possible for us. As has our equally ADD friend, John, and our totally rebellious as a learner to the point of being given a president’s award for being oppositionally defiant friend, Christine.

Has it occurred to you yet that in part this is why I’ve been writing this book? My friends and I would all be considered trouble makers and outcasts and weirdos. The thing is, when you understand human nature, you realize that calling people trouble makers and outcasts and weirdos is just the worlds’ way of referring to those folks who cannot sit still and watch children suffer. Nor see learners feel dumb and say nothing. Nor let teachers continue to feel like failures. Nor let talk therapists talk nonsense.

The thing is, we all have it in us to change this world. Trouble maker or not. And if we can find the courage to admit our mistakes and to look deeper into how we learn, then we all have it in us to leave this world a better place for our having lived in it.

Can you face your prejudice towards folks with ADD? Or toward folks who struggle with learning in general? Like my dad.

Can you find it in you to learn to speak slower? And like it? Then you have it in you to face your prejudice and change the world.

I, myself, face this feeling pretty much every day now. And daily find myself in tears as to how my not knowing I had this prejudice I must have hurt so many people. Yet true to my nature and to my father's as well, I will not stand here and wallow in this regret. I will do everything I can to make this different from now on.

In this same spirit, I invite you the reader this to do the same. Spend not one minute wallowing in either regret or in denial. Instead, spend some time today learning how to talk slower. And play piano. And think slower. And live with the feelings.

Only then will we truly be able to connect to each other. Mind to mind and body to body.

Only then will we be able to stop labeling kids. And giving them drugs. And judging them as being slow.

And who knows. The person you thought was the dumbest may turn out to be the biggest lover of poetry. Or have the smartest of advice to give you. Or have the most authentic friendship to share with you.

You have only a whole world of connecting to gain. And truly nothing of value to lose.

Come join the weirdos and outcasts and trouble makers and for once, see yourself for who you are. A truly amazingly smart human being.

Until the next chapter then.

I hope you are well,

Steven