

ACCEPTING MY ADHD

-Toni Denton



As I reflect on my journey of accepting my ADHD, it's like peeling back layers of a mask I've worn for far too long. Back in those early days, before I even knew what ADHD was, I was constantly at war with myself, battling against social expectations that I couldn't seem to meet. Forgetfulness became my constant companion, a trait I chastised myself for endlessly. From missing appointments to leaving the washing in the machine for days on end, I felt like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole.

The labels society slapped on me - forgetful, dopey, ditzzy - only served to deepen the distance between who I was and who I thought I should be. For years, I hid behind a mask of normality, ashamed of my inability to navigate the world with the ease others seemed to possess effortlessly. Outwardly, I laughed along when people joked about my disorganisation, but inside, I felt like I was crumbling under the weight of my own perceived inadequacies.

It wasn't until I embarked on the journey to become a counsellor that I began to peel away the layers of my carefully constructed mask. Slowly but surely, I allowed others to see the vulnerability I had spent so long hiding. Growing up, emotions were my constant companions, but I quickly learned that showing them was seen as a weakness. I buried that part of myself deep, trading authenticity for acceptance.

As a teenager, I morphed into the person I thought others wanted me to be, sacrificing my own interests and desires on the altar of fitting in. Sports and crafting, once sources of joy, became casualties of my quest for acceptance. I became the person who would do anything to be liked, even if it meant compromising my own values.

As I matured and became a parent myself, I realised that the mask of perfection I had worn for so long was suffocating me. It wasn't just about meeting the expectations of others anymore; it was about setting an example for my children and showing them that it's okay to be imperfect, to ask for help, and to prioritise self-care.

Seeking my own diagnosis was a pivotal moment in my journey towards self-acceptance. It was a validation of everything I had felt but couldn't articulate, a recognition that I wasn't broken or defective - I was just wired differently. And in embracing that difference, I found a newfound sense of freedom and self-compassion.

Today, I can look back on my younger years with empathy and understanding, knowing that I did the best I could with the tools I had at the time. And while the journey towards self-acceptance will always be ongoing, I take comfort in the knowledge that I am enough, just as I am - ADHD and all.

You've got this!

Love

Toni x

