How to Develop a Homework Routine

* Have your child write all assignments in a planner even if the assignments are on the website. (The act of writing down the assignment triggers the brain to remember the task. It also gives your child something to check off when he is finished.)
* Remind your child to look at the planner before leaving school to be sure he has all the necessary materials to complete the assignments.
* Give your child a 30-minute after-school break when he gets home, but he should also set an alarm to signal himself to get started on homework without a verbal reminder.
* Ask your child to tell you the order that he plans to tackle homework. (Some students like to do the hardest first while others like to start with the easiest first.)
* Suggest that your son try working in 15-minute chunks. He may also do better with 5-minute physical breaks like shooting baskets.
* Select a study area with the fewest number of distractions. Turn off the phone and TV. Music can be used to drown out noise distractions.
* If he is confused doing his homework, determine how he will get help. He can ask a parent, call a friend, or email the teacher.
* Tell your child to check off each assignment as it is completed and put it in the homework transportation folder. The homework folder is used to take completed homework to school and new homework to the home.
* Remind your child to place the packed backpack by the exit door along with other things he needs to take to school. This is done before bedtime each night.
* Suggest that your child reward himself with 30 minutes of fun time for completing all the homework without being harassed.

## "No Sense of Time" ADHD Frustrations and Academic Disasters

**Daniel:**  
  
Doesn't write down the assignment due dates.  
  
Procrastinates about starting the assignment.  
  
Turns in inferior work because of rushing to finish at the last minute.

**Laura:**  
  
Spends hours decorating the cover at the expense of the report.  
  
Dawdles and doodles while staring into space.  
  
Doesn't finish homework or turns it in late.

**Conclusion:**  
  
Both students fail to perform at their level of intelligence, and neither has an "inner clock" by which to measure time. Medication does not cure time management problems; the solution is training.   
  
Use watches for more than wrist decoration.  
  
Write deadlines on bathroom mirrors and post notes near exits.   
  
Use stop watches. Time how long it takes to start and finish. Compare with estimated time to complete the task.   
  
Use planner for assignments, fun time, and scheduled activities, such as soccer practice.   
  
To the ADHD mind, the past, present, and future do not necessarily connect in a pattern, a situation which makes it difficult to use past experiences as a basis for future decisions.

Accountability Plans to Help  
Your Child Stay on Track

* Provide your child a morning checklist for getting out the door on time. EX: 7 a.m. get out of bed; 7:15 a.m. shower and dress; 7:25 a.m. finish breakfast; 7:30 a.m. get in the car
* Introduce goal setting in baby steps. " I will review my school planner with Mom or Dad at 4:30 p.m. everyday." " I will have my homework finished by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p.m. on weekdays."
* Review accountability plan every Sunday night at 7 p.m. to determine what is working and what needs tweaking.
* Provide reasonable rewards for progress. Each step or stage of goal setting deserves recognition.

6 Steps To Becoming A Leader

1. **A good leader is humble.**  
     
   Discuss with your child that good leaders do not climb on the backs of others. Notice when some of your child's friends take all the credit for a group project. In contrast, point out when a friend did a kind deed for another. Discuss which would make a better leader.
2. **A good leader is trusted.**  
     
   Point out that the liar cannot be trusted. There are people that rather lie more than speak the truth. One lie could break the bond of trust forever. Discuss with your child how and when a person can be forgiven for breaking a bond of trust.
3. **A good leader can get angry at unjust deeds.**  
     
   However, the anger can't get out of control. Use the anger to keep yourself focused on correcting the unjust deeds. Out of control anger is never productive.
4. **A good leader requires courage.**  
     
   It takes a strong individual who is willing to take a stand against an injustice. Sometimes it takes great courage to overcome a struggle against great odds. Point out times when you notice that happening in your child's life or in the life of one of his friends.
5. **A good leader inspires others to do their best.**  
     
   Point out when your daughter has inspired others. Tell her how proud you are that she is willing to inspire people instead of always telling them how stupid they are or how smart she is.
6. **A good leader is willing to start at the bottom of the ladder.**  
     
   As he works himself up one rung at a time, he has to learn to "bloom where he is planted" at the moment. Learning to do the best of what is asked of him builds character. These people see success as a series of steps, not one giant leap to being the boss.

## Six Skills to Become Successful

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##### Question:

My husband and son have something in common. Neither are good at setting goals and meeting those goals. They seem to live in the moment. They can't stay with a task until it is finished unless I nag them. I simply can't depend on them to do what they promise. This behavior is destroying our family. What is wrong with them?

##### Answer:

They suffer from a self-regulating disorder. The part of the brain that is affected is in the frontal lobes. This process of self-regulation is referred to as executive functioning skills. This ability to self-regulate determines whether a person will become a successful, independent person.

**According to Dr. Russell Barkley, an expert on the importance of executive function in understanding and managing ADHD, there are 5 things individuals must do to themselves to set goals and complete tasks on a regular basis.**

1. **They need to self-direct their attention to produce a sense of self-awareness of their behavior.** Being able stay focused whether the topic is interesting or not is extremely important to become a successful student and an adult. If the individual's mind starts wandering during an important lecture or meeting, will he realize he is distracted and be able to redirect his mind to the current topic?
2. **They need to visualize their past.** If they can't visualize the past in enough detail, they will not learn from their mistakes, nor will they be able to repeat what was successful for them. They simply live in the moment. Knowledge is not transferring.
3. **They need to talk to themselves in their heads.** They should be saying to themselves things like: "I need to study until I feel like I am going to make an A, not just pass." "I need to design ways to test myself until I am positive I know the material." "I must not let myself get tempted to play on my computer while I am studying." "When I know I am fully prepared for the test, I am going to Facebook to see what is happening."
4. **They need to be able to inhibit and modify their emotional reactions to events.** Suppose your husband got fired. He became so angry at his old boss that he could not move passed the event to start hunting for another job. Being able to overcome obstacles requires a great deal of self-control to move forward. Everybody will hit a wall, but successful people are self-motivated and find ways to work through the problem and move forward.
5. **They must learn to restrain themselves when they have a strong urge to react negatively.** Every thought that comes to a person's mind does not have to be expressed. When a student in a classroom responds to a teacher with a ridiculous answer, your son should not say, "That is the dumbest answer I have ever heard. You are an idiot!"
6. **They need to manipulate information in their minds to problem-solve.** Problem-solving requires that they must take apart information, manipulate it in a variety of ways, and then recombine the information in a new format. Successful people play around with ideas until they find a good combination that can overcome an obstacle or problem.

**Dr. Barkley compares the inattentive ADHD person with the hyper ADHD person and their executive function skills:**

**Inattentive person:**   
These individuals have trouble with self-organization, problem-solving, and self –motivation.

**Hyperactive person:**  
In addition to the problems mentioned for the inattentive ADHD individual, these individuals have major problems with time management, emotional self-regulation, and self-restraint.

Dr. Barkley's research over 15 years has shown that this hyper group has trouble with time management as adults. They know time is passing, but they cannot govern themselves to alter what they are doing. There is a gap between knowing and doing; therefore they must use timers to show themselves that time is passing. They need consequences and rewards in place to make themselves meet deadlines. This technique works for short intervals, but long-term projects must be broken into baby steps. The completion of each baby step needs a reward. People with ADHD cannot handle delayed gratification. They need immediate and frequent rewards for their effort. Merely praising them for effort can be sufficient. Bosses need to learn this trick in the work environment.

## What Do You Fear? What Keeps You Awake At Night?

*"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot."*  
- Eleanor Roosevelt

Is it health issues? Flying? Drowning? Family Problems? What people think? Public speaking? Fear of failure? What tomorrow holds?

We all experience fear to some degree, but what separates those who are paralyzed by fear and those who use courage to face their fear? I can only answer on a personal basis. Instead of allowing my fears to get out of control, I'll share five strategies that work for me.

I verbalize out loud, " I'm currently afraid to do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." Saying it out loud seems to make it easier to tackle the fear.

Next, I pray for help to give me some ideas on what to do. I shoot for 2-3 options. Call them experiments.

I next do something productive like load the dishwasher or fold clothes. This distracts my mind from worrying to being productive.

If nothing comes to mind as a solution, I take a long, warm shower with water running over my head. Let your mind experience total freedom. Don't try to solve a problem. Think of the water on her face or head. How does it feel? This shower strategy usually is my most effective tool.

Always have a pad of paper and a pen near the shower. Write down any ideas quickly before you forget them.

Sincerely Yours,  
Carla Curtsinger

10 Ways to Make Following Directions Easier for ADHD Students

**Why is following directions so difficult for the ADHD student?**

1. They can have slow language processing skills.
2. They have difficult focusing and sustaining attention. To complete this type of task, one has to be focused when the direction are given. A wandering mind will miss details.
3. If there are multi-steps involved, the student must mentally be able to stay consistently on task (sustained attention). Getting distracted can mean incomplete directions.
4. Teachers are often angry and frustrated when students don't follow directions. As a result, often ADHD students see themselves as stupid. The reality is they have directions like a radio with static.

**Solutions at School.**

1. Establish **eye contact** with each student before giving instructions.
2. **Make it brief** but ask the student to **hold up a finger** for part of the directions.
3. Write directions in **colored chalk**. Use a different color per topic.
4. **Quiz 3 students** in different parts of the room. Check for missing details.
5. **Use a dramatic voice** that will get the attention of the students.
6. Encourage the use of **digital audio recorders**. They can dictate all the assignments for the day into the recorder. Students with hand writing problems would benefit from a recorder.

## 5 Rules To Change ADHD Behaviors

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##### Question:

I feel like I'm on a treadmill. Just managing simple daily details in a typical day can overwhelm me. I have trouble meeting deadlines at work. My impulsive mouth has gotten me in trouble with my friends, and my boss is getting really irritated with me when I laugh or say stupid things at the wrong time. I thought taking ADHD medication would help, but I think I need more than just meds. I need to change my behaviors before it is too late.

##### Answer:

The first step to change is becoming aware of what needs changing. You are already passed that hurdle.

It is true that medication can level the playing field, but you need damage control along with meds. According to Russell Barkly, Ph.D., an adult ADHD expert, there are 5 rules that can change your life in a positive way.

**Rule 1: Resist impulsive behaviors**

When you tell your wife that she looks fat in her new dress, you didn't stop to think how she might take your comment. You have to remember how things turned out the last time you made a similar comment. Think hindsight and weigh that against what you may say or do in this situation (foresight).

**Strategy:**

Make a list of situations in which you acted impulsively. Think of a time it was not OK to act this way. When you are about to become impulsive, buy time by doing one of the following things.:

1. Create a thoughtful expression and say, "Let me think about that before I answer." Slowly inhale and exhale.
2. Put a finger over your lips and look as if you are thinking.
3. Paraphrase what the person said, and ask is that what you want me to do?
4. Visualize locking your lips shut.
5. Slowing down your speech pattern will give your brain time to think before being attacked by an impulsive thought.

**Rule 2: Recognize your mistakes from the past, but move on**

ADHDers tend to have weak nonverbal working memory. This means they do not have good hindsight to guide their behaviors. They also don't recognize subtle aspects of problems; therefore, they try to solve all problems the same way. It is difficult for them have delayed gratification. That is why they struggle to save money, stick to a diet or schedule. They can't stay focused on the prize for their effort. You will need to learn from the past and use it as you plan for the future.

**Strategy:**

You will need to stop the action long enough to turn on your mind's eye to create an imaginary flat screen TV that is playing what happened the last time you were in a similar situation. Unfold the past in colorful detail. What happened when you put your foot in your mouth?

1. Did your joke cause people to laugh at you, not the joke?
2. Did your impulsive purchase mean that you did not have money to pay the full light bill at the end of the month?

**Rule 3: Feel the future with a super charged positive emotion**

The ADHDer bores quickly trying to stay with a boring task. They have to learn how to bribe themselves to finish the task. They need to dangle a "carrot" in front of themselves to inspire them. Imagining the negative consequences may not get the job done. Often it works better for them to visualize the emotion they will feel when they meet their goal.

**Strategy:**

Ask yourself, "How it will feel to get the job done?" Will you feel pride? Self-satisfaction? Happiness? Think of a time you felt that emotion. Put a photo of you experiencing that emotion on your bathroom mirror. Think of what you can do if you finish the goal. Cut out a magazine picture to capture that emotion. Surround your workspace with visual reminders of when you felt this way.

**Rule 4: Break down overwhelming tasks into smaller units and learn to reward yourself**

The ADHDer wants to escape when tasks take a long time and require several steps. Deadlines that are weeks later or months later are beyond their "live in the moment" world. These individuals usually need close supervision and some external motivators.

**Strategy:**

Break down long-term tasks into smaller units. Set daily goals. Break the tasks into one-hour or half-hour segments. Check off what needs to be completed during each period. Make yourself accountable to another person, such as a friend, your spouse, co-worker, or supervisor. Celebrate each segment completed. Take a short break after a section, call a friend to tell what you finished, reward yourself or enjoy a privilege. Make it small and brief, but do it.

**Rule 5: Keep a sense of humor**

Learn to laugh at some of your behaviors.

**Strategy:**

Learn to say with a smile, "I'm sorry. That seems to be one of my ADHD behaviors again. I need to do \_\_\_\_\_ differently next time." This statement means four important things:

1. You admitted the mistake.
2. You explained why the mistake happened.
3. You apologized and did not blame someone else.
4. You promised to do better next time.

In doing so, you have kept your self-esteem, as well as your friends!

4 Back-To-School Time Management Tips

**Teach time estimation.** Ask your child to estimate how long she thinks each homework assignment will take. Write that estimate down. Time each assignment and record it. If she gets within 3 - 5 minutes of her estimate, give her a small reward (a piece of gum or 3 M & M's) if her work is accurate. Learning how to estimate time is a life skill. This activity helps with test anxiety.

1. Homework should take about 10 minutes per grade level (60 minutes for 6th grade). If it is taking much longer, contact the teacher and report how long each assignment is taking for your child. He may need extra help at school, and the teacher needs to know it.

**Use a large family calendar.** Have each child enter each of his activities on the calendar in his assigned color. Use this calendar also for school projects such as what will be completed each day until the project is due. Encourage the children to check off what they completed each day. This activity helps children understand how to work within the family's schedule and to plan ahead.

**Schedule Sunday night for backpack cleaning.** Start each week with a neat and cleaned out backpack. There are to be NO loose papers. Old graded papers are to be stored in a file box. This box should have dividers for each subject using a colored coded system she has been using in her binder. (math-red; science-green, etc.)

**Use an analog clock instead of a digital clock.** In this digital age, too many students cannot tell time and do not have a sense of time passing. They only have a sense of what time is "now." They don't have a sense of "If we have to leave in 17 minutes, what time will it be?" or "If it is 3:20 p.m. in Dallas, what time is it in Los Angeles?"

## 3 Ways to Adjust to Middle School

*"We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles."*  
- Jimmy Carter

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##### Question:

My sixth grade daughter is having trouble adjusting to middle school. There are issues with the locker, remembering her assignments, and getting all the homework in on time. She is my oldest child, so I'm not sure why these issues have become such a problem this year. She did not have these problems in elementary school. Can you help me?

##### Answer:

These are very typical problems when children transition from elementary to middle school. At this level she is suppose to be more organized. Let's look at each problem and come up with some strategies.

**Managing the Locker**

This is a common crisis for many middle school students. In fact, some students refuse to deal with the locker and carry all their books with them all day long. This is not wise unless she has a backpack on rollers. There are three separate issues with managing the locker:

1. **Remembering the combination.** Shop for a combination number that is easy to remember. Study the tag before buying the lock. Time your daughter opening the lock. When she can open it in 30 seconds three times in a row, she has no reason to panic.
2. **Deciding when to go to the locker.** Get a map of the school and help your daughter decide when to go to the locker based on the locations of her classes. I suggest three or four times a day.
3. **Arranging items in the locker.** I suggest purchasing a locker organizer insert that allows her to have a shelf in the middle. She can sort her books this way. Morning books could be on the top shelf, or she can start with all the books on the bottom. Books for classes that have homework can go on the top shelf. At the end of the day, she can collect homework materials quickly from the top shelf.

**Remembering the Assignments**

Now your daughter has six different teachers who assign homework in a variety of ways. Some put it on the board. Some give the assignment orally at the end of class. Either way, she must write down the assignment, and she needs a consistent routine for recording it.

1. **Buy a Week-At-A-Glance calendar.** She needs an assignment book with spaces for each subject already written in the boxes, one for math, social studies, language arts, etc. Usually the schools sell them. Buy two. She may lose hers. Even though many schools have a website for the assignments, you are not guaranteed that it is current. If she has a handwriting disability, she can buy an inexpensive hand held tape recorder for recording her assignments.
2. **Create a reward/consequence plan.** If she gets home with something written in each slot, she gets a 30-minute reward when she gets home. No homework should have NHW in the slot. If there is a single blank, she loses the reward for that day, and she must contact another student in the class for the assignment. Get this backup plan in place as soon as possible. You may need to contact the teacher to help you if your daughter is too shy to get a friend's phone number. Trust me. It is worth the effort!

**Do Not Lose the Homework**

When kids are leaving a classroom, they are in a hurry. They have one thing in mind: do not be late for the next class. As a result, worksheets get crammed into the "black hole" in the backpack or stuffed somewhere in the three ring binder. Things get lost. The solution is to have one homework transportation folder that holds all that day's homework.

1. **Use a Homework Transportation Folder.** Purchase one brightly designed folder with pockets or one clear heavy-duty plastic folder with rubber bands. This folder should be on your daughter's desk being used as a writing cushion or in her arm as she walks to each class.
2. **When she finishes the homework at home,** she checks it off in her assignment book and puts it back in the transportation folder. Then she puts the folder in her backpack. She should place her backpack by the exit door before she goes to bed each night. Morning is not a time to rush around hunting things.
3. **When she enters each classroom,** she will have her transportation folder in her arms ready to take out her homework. Many middle school teachers have baskets for the homework at the entrance. The students may be expected to put the homework in the basket without the teacher mentioning it. With the homework in the basket, the homework cycle is completed.

## 3 Back-to-School Supply Tips

**Homework Transportation Folder:** Choose one very colorful homework transportation folder with pocket-type inserts. This folder should look very different than other folders in the backpack. Use it only for homework going to and from school.

**Homework Assignment Book:** Expect your child to write down **ALL** assignments even though he may say he can remember them without writing them down. This is a life skill lesson. He should also check off his assignments before he puts his papers in his assignment folder.

If your child has serious handwriting problems, contact the teachers about an accommodation that asks the teachers to provide printed assignments for your child or at least teacher initials that indicate what he wrote in the assignment book was correct. Consider buying small inexpensive tape recorder that can be used to record the assignments.

**Color-code books and supplies by subject:** Use red for the math book cover, notebook dividers, and tabs in files for old graded papers. Use green for science, blue for social studies, etc.

## ADHD: To Medicate or Not

*"I prefer to distinguish ADD as****Attention Abundance Disorder****. Everything is just so interesting….all at the same time."*  
- Frank Coppola

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##### Question:

My daughter always seems so stressed and exhausted. Her four children, ages 4, 6, 10, and 15, are very bright and are driving her crazy. The oldest son (age 15) is H-Y-P-E-R and has major disorganization problems. His grades may range from A+ to F in any given week. Her 6-year-old daughter is a "space cadet" living in a fog. The other two children do not get much attention because the 6-year old and the 15- year old need so much help on a daily basis. My daughter's daily routine is one of ignoring bad behavior at first. Then she nags, which leads to yelling, and finally, she moves to the punishment stage. She can't see a light at the end of the tunnel, and she is not in favor of medication. I know if she gives up, four children could go down the tube. What should I tell her?

##### Answer:

It only takes one child to put an entire family on edge. In her case, I suggest focusing on the 15-year-old's needs first. His hyperactivity can disrupt a calm situation like striking a match to create a wildfire. If I were working with her, I would make sure she is looking at the big picture for his life. Let's call him Johnny.

**Strategies To Turn Johnny's Life Around**

1. **Take Johnny to a psychiatrist who works with teenagers who have hyperactivity.** (Get a reference from CHADD or an ADD-SR support group in your area.) You want an evaluation for ADHD. If he does have ADHD, you want a plan\*
   1. For him to be able to complete tasks without someone having to nag him to get results.
   2. For him to be able to stop and think before making decisions.
   3. For him to be able to keep up with his assignments and know when it is time to study for a test.
   4. For him to be able to ask questions to clarify his confusion.
   5. For him to learn how to be an advocate for himself.
   6. For him to make grades equal to his potential.

\*This summarizes the focus of Brainworks.

1. **Be open minded about medication.** There is not a parent on the planet that wants a child to take medication, even to get the behaviors listed above, especially if the parent never struggled in school. Our tendency is to say that we need to be more consistent with our discipline, but if you have tried all the tools in your tool kit, you should not feel guilty for trying a new approach if it can get the results we have listed.
2. **Doctors usually only offer medication; you may need academic coaching strategies and possible medication. Why is the combination so important?**
   1. Johnny's inconsistent focus in class may have resulted in gaps in his academic knowledge. He may be confused with fractions even though he is in high school. Consequently, he may need remedial work to fill in gaps before his grades can become consistent at his potential level.
   2. His mind could easily have been distracted when he was reading causing him to become frustrated to the point that he now avoids reading as much as possible.
   3. He has been told he is smart; therefore, he thinks he does not have to write down his assignments."Smart" people can keep that stuff in their heads.
   4. He has become addicted to a pattern of procrastination. He has learned the only way for him to become focused is to be in a crisis, and he relies on the adrenalin rush that comes with panic. This is not a solo panic; it is a panic that shuts down the whole family with shouting and tears along with promises to not let this happen again.
3. **What you should know about stimulant medications used for ADHD:**
   1. After three generations of research, the older drugs, like Ritalin, have proven to be safe for long term.
   2. There are many choices for medications, and a doctor does not know for sure which drug will work for your child. This experimentation can be very frustrating for a parent and the patient. Medicating the Inattentive ADHD person can be complicated because there could also be depression and/or anxiety present, which means two medications may be needed.
   3. The main side effect while a stimulant is in the system is that your son probably will not be hungry at that time. Therefore, he probably will not eat much lunch. The secret is learning that the appetite usually returns 30 minutes after the stimulant is gone from the system. Have your son eat then. Make sure he gets enough calories per day. He may need a bedtime snack too.
   4. Most people who have ADHD have sleep issues. Rarely does the medicine cause sleep problems. Your son just needs to learn how to avoid stimulating activities 30 minutes before going to bed. Also, coming off the medication can bring about hyperactivity that had been suppressed.
   5. If the medicine causes a personality change, it is the wrong medicine or the dose is too high.
   6. Track how long your medicine was effective. Students usually need medication to cover homework or up to 12 hours. (This can complicate meal planning.)
4. **How can you tell if the medication is working?**
   1. The student will suddenly realize that he is able to focus on what is going on in class without having to say constantly, "Pay attention."
   2. When the teacher calls on him, he will not have to ask, "Could you repeat the question?"
   3. His class notes will actually make sense.
   4. He will remember to bring home his assignments and remember to do them without someone standing over him.
   5. He will be able to read entire pages of a book and remember what the words were saying without getting distracted perhaps once every 1-2 lines.

## Interpersonal Problems: The Most Critical Factor in Career Failure

*"To be successful, you have to be able to relate to people; they have to be satisfied with your personality to be able to do business with you and to build a relationship with mutual trust."*  
- George Ross

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##### Question:

I have a coworker I have known for years who is extremely bright. She is witty and very creative at work, but she has trouble working with others. She dominates team meetings and is not interested in what others have to contribute. Her inability to tolerate differences is causing so much friction that there is little productivity. She has burned so many bridges that no one wants to work on a project with her. What is sad is that she appears clueless about her negative effect on others.

She says she has ADHD as if she should be excused from her behaviors that irritate others. She appears unaware that her pencil tapping and fidgeting is annoying to those around her. Instead of trying to persuade coworkers in a strategy, she becomes argumentative. She can forget to make an important phone call to a colleague because she is hyper-focused on a task. She always has an excuse for being late.

What can I do to save her from being fired?

##### Answer:

She needs a good friend; especially if you are getting wind that she may lose her job. Let her know why you like her. Be specific, such as you like her great sense of humor. But, also, let her know about your concerns for her job status. List some specific ADHD patterns that might be working against her and how you might suggest some things to do to get past the hurdles.

**The following ADHD patterns can cause problems in the interpersonal arena at work:**

1. **Chronic lateness suggests lack of discipline. Let your boss know what steps you are addressing to change your habits.**
   * Get to work at least 10 minutes early by starting with getting to bed earlier. Avoid stimulating computer games, late-night TV, or mystery books.
   * Set a second alarm as a backup.
   * Allow extra time for a traffic jam or flat tire.
   * Avoid doing "just one more thing" before leaving the house.
   * Don't get involved in reading the paper or something else and lose track of time.
2. **Your procrastination will create frustration and resentment among the other members of your team because they cannot complete their work until they receive your work.**
   * Meet regularly with the team and set short-term goals, even daily goals.
   * Discuss each step in the project. Identify tasks that might produce procrastination and try to make assignments according to people's strengths such as writing, charts, research, budget, and oral presentations.
   * Don't expect your procrastination to be tolerated.
3. **Do not invade a coworker's space.**
   * Confine your belongings and work to a designated space.
   * Do not borrow and forget to return items. Ask first. Don't assume it is OK to use or borrow something.
4. **Be aware that you have a strong need for stimulation and can barely tolerate boring routine assignments.**
   * Do your fair share of the "dirty work."
   * Don't assume that someone else will pick up the pieces and do what you don't like to do.
5. **Learn to handle paperwork in a timely fashion.**
   * Create a simple filing system, perhaps consisting of a dozen boxes with clear labels.
   * ADHDers prefer a filing system using tubs or open carts.
   * Use color-coding filing systems.
   * Spend the first 15 minutes of the day filing to get it out of the way.
6. **Purchase a day planner to improve your sense of organization.**
   * Adopt the rule "Do it now or write it down."
   * Ask your supervisor to help you prioritize tasks at work.
7. **Stop ignoring your coworkers.**
   * A friendly smile and a quick hello are important to having good working relationships.
   * By interacting with others, you develop networks, partnerships, and friendships.
   * Make a point to greet people in the morning and say good-bye before leaving for the day.
8. **Stop distracting others from their work.**
   * Extroverts love to talk and may ignore nonverbal social cues telling them that the listener has work to do and wants to terminate the discussion.
   * Make regular lunch dates where longer conversations are appropriate.
9. **Memory difficulties can lead to resentment on the part of your coworkers.**
   * Ask for details in writing.
   * Use your day planner consistently.
   * Apologize sincerely and make amends through a small gesture if your lapse in memory negatively affected someone.
10. **Your restlessness can indicate impatience with others.**
    * Explain your restlessness with humor, so coworkers do not interpret it as lack of interest.
    * Use self-talk to calm yourself.
    * Always tell others where you can be found.
    * Always exercise each workday.
11. **Be aware how you conduct yourself in meetings.**
    * Avoid becoming argumentative.
    * Stop being too blunt or critical when disagreeing with a proposal. Usually bluntness is the result of frustration and anger.
    * Be aware if you repeatedly interrupt others. Take notes to help make you aware of your thoughts and questions to ask later, so you do not interrupt.
    * Be careful about tuning out. Writing down your thoughts can help you remember what you want to say before forgetting.
    * Learn to de-stress yourself, so you don't distress others.

## The Value of Doing Chores

*"If a twelve-year-old boy suggests that he has so much homework he had better get started on it right away, it must be his turn to do the dishes."*  
- Teresa Bloomingdale

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##### Question:

As a college advisor, I see students from a wide variety of backgrounds, and I stay amazed how many have left home without a clue of what it is going to take to make it in this world! Too many don't get to class on time. They don't understand the amount of work it is going to take to make good grades. Many don't know how to budget their time nor their money. Suddenly, they must now also budget time and money for homework, groceries, cooking, washing and drying clothes, cleaning, etc. They are free of a parent looking over their shoulders to fix their mistakes. When should a child first be learning good work habits?

##### Answer:

**A good parent will start teaching work ethics at age 3 to 4!** In fact, the University of Minnesota did a study on the important determiners of adult success. Dr. Martin Rossman's research showed that the best predictor of a child's success is that he or she began helping with household chores at age 3 to 4. These youngsters were less likely to use drugs, more likely to finish their education on time, and had better relationships than children who started doing chores much later or never had chores.

**What do children learn by doing chores?**

1. **Meeting deadlines is a life skill.** Most 3 and 4 year olds love to help their parents. They can be taught to pick up toys and put them in a basket or help to feed a pet. Create a daily routine like "We need to pick up all the toys before I can read you our bedtime story." This discussion tells them when the task needs to be completed. Chores also need a designated start time.
2. **Children need to learn how to be responsible.** The key to learning this character trait is learning how to find out what is being expected. Too often parents say, "Clean your room." That statement is too vague. Instead, make a checklist: Make the bed. Put all clean clothing in the proper drawer or put in the closet on a hanger. Put all dirty clothing in the hamper. The only things on the floor are furniture. The parent needs to demonstrate how to dust and vacuum, and then the child does it to show the parent that the message was clear. All supplies are then put back in the proper place. The parent should compliment effort every chance he or she gets.
3. **Teach how to budget time for chores within a busy schedule.** Before this is possible, you need to time how long it takes to complete routine tasks. Then you can use a calendar that has time blocked off in 15 or 30-minute time slots. Each child's chores can be on the family calendar that is posted for the whole family to see, but each child needs his own calendar, too. This visual will allow the child to see how much time is left for fun time. In the process, the child is learning a system to balance work and play.
4. **Parents should set a good example.**If Dad's regular chore is to mow the yard, he should do it without being reminded. Put the chore on the family calendar with a specific time when the chore should be started. You might want to stick up a reminder note. This note lets the child know that adults also need ways to remember to do something.
5. **Teach how to create a reward system for doing something boring.** If the kids are moaning about a chore, help them come up with something fun to do when the task is completed. For a 15-minute task, you could make a smoothie. For a 4-hour task, you might go to the movies. Children have to learn how to "bribe" the brain to do boring, menial tasks that are necessary.
6. **Remember it takes time to teach a child how to become responsible.** Yes, it would be much faster to do the chore yourself when a child is first learning how to do it. Fast forward 5 or 10 years. You will then realize all the time and effort paid off.
7. **Spell out consequences in writing when the chore is assigned so there are no surprises.** Natural consequences are best. If a pet is not fed by the deadline, the child does not eat with the family and must wait a set amount of time (long enough to make a statement) before being fed, but the child is still expected to feed the pet first. The parent can post a reminder note, but should not give a verbal reminder. You want the child in charge of the chore. The parent is not to do the chore. If a chore is not completed properly, the parent needs to be sure the child understands what is expected. Ask the child to tell the parent what is being expected. By doing this, you find out what is not in the memory bank. The chore needs to be redone properly.
8. **Find a chore that the whole family has to work together to complete.** It could be cleaning the garage. Time how long the whole task takes. Then explain how much faster it was to work together as a team than to assign the chore to one individual. Learning how to "pitch in" to help others can carry over at home, in others' homes, and in the community. Find a way to compliment each child for completing a specific task. Example: "I like the way you noticed that your sister needed help sweeping the floor, and you just pitched in without being told to do it. I'm so proud of you. Thanks.

## Decision Making: A Handicap for Three Types of Students

*"If you put off everything till you're sure of it, you will get nothing done."*  
- Norman Vincent Peale

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##### Question:

My 8th grade son is very intelligent, but he struggles with making decisions. In fact, he would rather avoid them if he could have his way. Even given a simple choice of hamburgers or hot dogs can take forever to get an answer from him. His usual response is, "I don't know or I don't care." The real problem is when he has to make decisions at school such complete a writing assignment or a project and be able to meet the deadline. He had rather talk about all the possibilities than make a choice and move on. I thought life would be much better by now, but instead, he has become more and more anxious.

What can I do to help my son?

##### Answer:

There are three types of students who tend to have decision-making problems: the perfectionist, the impulsive, and the decision by default (the passive).

1. **The Perfectionist**
   1. Develops rigid behaviors to manage disorganization, distractibility, and impulsivity.
   2. Develops compulsive neatness habits to survive; otherwise, the world becomes too chaotic.
   3. Develops perfectionist tendencies in response to past criticism; may suffer from chronic anxiety.
   4. Spends too much time and energy on unimportant decisions; therefore, can miss deadlines.

**Solutions for the Perfectionist:**

* 1. Narrow down your hunt for the perfect choice. You can get too much information. Limit the number of websites for your research.
  2. Understand that there is no perfect choice. You can only make your "best" choice given the time you have.
  3. Set a time limit with an alarm to force you to stop the hunt for information.
  4. Create a numerical limit (obtain three different sources) and then stop.

1. **The Impulsive**
   1. Leaps before looking at possible consequences.
   2. Acts on emotion more than reason.
   3. Often regrets actions.
   4. Can't stay focused long enough to think things through and consider options.
   5. Has trouble with executive function issues:
      1. gather information
      2. evaluate
      3. consider possible outcomes
      4. rank choices.

**Solutions for the Impulsive:**

* 1. May need medication and professional help to learn how to overcome patterns of "leap now and look later" habits.
  2. Needs to avoid "what the heck impulsive decision" by narrowing down the number of choices.
  3. Use your budget as a limiter if money is involved.
  4. Make yourself get three estimates before making a financial decision.
  5. Get information from at least three sources before making a decision.

1. **Decision by Default: the Passive Decision Maker**
   1. Lets others or circumstances decide for him/her.
   2. Creates a passive strategy for life – avoids decision-making.
   3. Finds someone who can keep him/her organized.
   4. Has been told that he/she makes stupid decisions.

**Solutions for the Passive Decision Maker:**

* 1. Is so overwhelmed that he/she becomes passive.
  2. Needs to look for ways to reduce being overwhelmed or overstimulated.
  3. Avoid loud, crowed, noisy environments when making decisions.
  4. Go to places with limited choices (2 – 3 ideal)
  5. Limit the number of options before you go.
  6. Decide on most important factor and focus on that when deciding. (cost, convenience, practicality)

**Reward yourself at each decision-making milestone.**

Amazingly, most parents don't understand the value of the reward system. They seem to believe the child should be doing that task any way. Follow this line of thinking.

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| **Carla:** | "How is it working for you if you don't recognize the effort required to complete the task?" |
| **Parent:** | "Do you mean I should be giving a reward every time for something as simple as finishing a project on time?" |
| **Carla:** | "Do you want the child to perform this task on a regular basis until it becomes a habit?" |
| **Parent:** | "Of course." |
| **Carla:** | "You need to think creatively. If you wanted a lion to go against his natural instinct and jump through a burning hoop, you would treat him with a small delicious treat that the lion liked after each successful response. Rewarding with a treat or praise for each step of effort can get amazing results with children too. I know a parent who has a sack of donut holes. If the child completes all the expectations for that day on a project, she gets one donut hole. If the entire project in completed on time, they will go for ice cream at the local ice cream parlor. Learning how to set up a reward system to bribe the brain to stay on an unpleasant task is a life skill that can be used even in the adult world." |

## Smart Son, But Clueless About Study Skills

*"A child educated only at school is an uneducated child."*  
- G. Santayana

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##### Question:

I am worried about my 9th grade son's attitude about studying. He is very bright and has done well in school until this year. The material has gotten more difficult, and the teachers seem to be moving at a faster pace than last year. Last semester's final exam grades were low C's and one F. This is a real drop from his usual A's. He also started getting 0's for late assignments and projects. In the past, he always did homework at school during class. He says now there is less time to do homework at school.

His attitude is "no big deal." Honestly, I think his high I.Q. has allowed him to develop sloppy study habits. School has been easy until this year. His current grade point average would not get him into a decent college. Is it too late to help him?

##### Answer:

No, it is not too late, but you have certainly been given a wake up call. Bright students tend to expect everything to be easy. They don't expect to have to work at studying. When they hit a wall, like I think your son has, they don't know what to do. While the rest of the world puts forth great effort to make good grades, students like your son merely go to class and make A's on tests without having to study. Such students want school to be easy. The reality is that school requires mental work. How should your son work his way out of this dilemma? Your son's "survival kit" includes a list of sound study habits that need to be put into practice.

**Study habits involve more effort than just studying for tests.**

1. **The student is expected to be alert in class and to take notes on important material. The following are possible problems:**
   * Some students struggle with note taking because they do not know what is important, while others can't write fast enough to keep up with the teacher. Consider using a tape recorder for lectures. This is an excellent way to edit notes taken during class. For best results, he needs to listen to his tape recorded lecture the evening of the lecture, and he should edit his notes that evening.
   * There are students who feel uncomfortable at the very thought of asking a question in class when they feel confused or need further explanation. These students fear that they might be asking a question that others consider stupid. You and your son need to meet with the teacher about your son using a private signal to get the teacher's attention that he needs private help. To prove this routine can work, he needs to use the signal on the first day after taking to the teacher.
   * Some students need to be prescribed medication, which when taken at the appropriate level, would enable them to stay focused, so they could take notes. The medication can keep them from getting distracted and miss important information.
2. **Students need to complete all homework on time.**
   * It is necessary for a student to learn how to use a planner or calendar to avoid being late for project deadlines and routine homework. Often gifted students assume they can always remember when the assignment is due?
   * Once the assignment is completed, it should be checked off on the planner and put immediately in a "homework folder." This routine keeps the assignment from getting lost.
   * Some students may require medication for completing homework. Their medication might have run out earlier in the day.
   * Getting the assignments to the teachers can be confusing for a student. Some teachers call for the assignments, while others have a basket. Your son should know each teacher's routine, and he should have a system for turning in assignments to the correct place at the appropriate time. Some students wear colored rubber wristbands to remind them to turn in homework. For example, a red band might mean to turn in math homework.
3. **Long-term projects require time estimation and extra time-management planning.**
   * On the day a project is assigned, the student needs to mark the deadline on his calendar. He also needs to mark what he plans to do each day until the project is given to the teacher.
   * Too many students don't know how much time the project will take. These students wait until the last minute to start the project, only to turn it in late because they have run out of time.
   * Your son should record how long each step of the project takes.
4. **Students need to clean out their backpacks on a weekly basis.**
   * The rule is: "No loose papers should be kept in the binder or subject folder."
   * Old papers should be filed weekly in a box with subject dividers for future reference and for major test or exam reviewing.
5. **Students need to learn how to read a textbook more efficiently.**
   * Get an overview of the textbook material by skimming or reading what is printed differently on each page of a lesson or eventually an entire chapter. Read all the bold face print, italics, charts, pictures, graphs, colored words, and quotes.
   * Read the first sentence of each paragraph. 85 – 90% of all paragraphs have the main idea in the first sentence.
   * Read in small chunks. Read a paragraph. Paraphrase what is in the paragraph on paper. If you can't do that, re-read the paragraph and then once again try to summarize it on paper.
   * It is always best to read the chapter before the teacher discusses it. This technique of scouting ahead gives the student working knowledge of what will be presented.
6. **There are several stages of test preparation.**
   * Students should read over their class notes before going to bed **each** night. This review process is not the same as "learning" the material.
   * If the student is confused to the point that he cannot teach the lesson to a peer, he needs to get help **the next day** from the teacher or a peer. The brain does not store confusion.
   * On the same day the student learns a new fact, he should prepare an index card for future drill and practice. He should write a question on the front and the answer on the back. Different colored cards can help him sort different types of information. Green cards could be nouns, blue-verbs, yellow-adjectives.
   * Preparing some cards each day is more productive than making all the cards the night before the test. It is also easier to learn 5 cards in one night instead of 50 the night before the test.
   * He should sort what he knows from those facts that he doesn't know. He needs to spend his time studying the more difficult questions by using a variety of memory associations such as color, humor, jingles, and first letter linking sentences.
   * A student should review all cards the night before the test, making sure he that he knows every card within the "three-second" rule. Once he has mastered the material at this level, it is time to go to bed.
   * Your son should go through the cards one more time after breakfast. He should now feel confident that he knows the required information.
   * He should expect an A on the test and give himself a pat on the back for a job well done!

## ADHD: Why Are So Many Females Undiagnosed?

*"Once I began taking medication for my ADHD, I felt like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz stepping into a world full of color for the first time."*  
- Liz Packard

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##### Question:

I am a 33-year old married female with three young children. I work for a large advertising firm and love my job, especially the opportunity to use my creative skills. However, trying to juggle my marriage, work, and raise three children has put me over the edge emotionally. My husband jokes that I have a piling system, not a filing system. I've had mood swings from joy to raging fits. A few months ago I was diagnosed with depression. The antidepressant could not clear the fog in my head. I could not keep my brain focused to do everything I needed to do. When my son was recently diagnosed with ADHD, I realized I, too, could have ADHD. His psychiatrist put me on the same medication as my son. I feel less forgetful and less edgy. I actually feel happier than I have ever felt. Why has it taken me 33 years to get diagnosed while my son was diagnosed at age 6?

##### Answer:

I will assume you are neither hyperactive nor impulsive. In school, you did not cause the teacher any problems. You probably spent time looking out the window thinking about other things. However, you really wanted to please your teacher and your parents. You had to work very hard to make your good grades because your mind liked to wander. Your friends called you "space cadet." Your teachers considered you bright but lazy. Instead of becoming aggressive, you turned your frustration inside. You became anxious and depressed and suffered from low self esteem. Living under the radar kept you from being diagnosed. Look at the Symptom Checklist and see if these symptoms describe you.

**ADHD Female Symptom Checklist (Kathleen Nadeau, psychologist)**

* **Anxiety and depression**
  + I often feel like I want to cry.
  + I get a lot of stomachaches or headaches.
  + I worry a lot.
  + I feel sad and sometimes I don't know why.
* **School anxiety**
  + I dread being called on by the teacher because, often, I haven't been listening carefully.
  + I feel embarrassed in class when I don't know what the teacher told us to do.
  + Even when I have something to say, I don't raise my hand and volunteer in class.
* **Social-skill deficits**
  + Sometimes, other girls don't like me, but I don't know why.
  + I have arguments with my friends.
  + When I want to join a group of girls, I don't know how to approach them, or what to say.
  + I often feel left out.
* **Emotional over-reactivity**
  + I get my feelings hurt more often than most girls.
  + My feelings change a lot.
  + I get upset and angry more than other girls.
* **Classic Female ADHD signs**
  + Do you often lose personal items, your keys, purse, or backpack?
  + Is your room or desk always messy –– even 15 minutes after you have cleaned it?
  + Do you often feel anxious about getting school or work assignments in on time?
  + Do you talk excessively?
  + Do you behave well at school or work and come home and explode at the end of the day? Can you be pushed over the edge by trivial annoyances?

**Undiagnosed ADHD puts females at risk.**

* Females are more depressed and anxious than males.
* Girls with ADHD are more likely than boys to engage in antisocial and addictive behaviors.
* These girls are at high risk for developing depression, self-injuring behaviors, and eating disorders.
* Hyperactive girls are stigmatized more than boys with the same diagnosis. Hyperactivity and impulsivity are to be boyish. ("Boys will be boys.") Girls are ostracized.
* Girls do better than boys with the structure of rules and routines at school. Young ADHD adult females become more anxious and stressed without the structure of school.
* When ADHD women marry and have kids, they hit a wall of frustration. They can't juggle all the expectations.

**ADHD females need a different treatment plan than their male counter parts.**

* Both need stimulant medication, but females also usually need medication for anxiety.
* ADHD females benefit from cognitive behavioral therapy and coaching, like what Brainworks offers.
* Group therapy (women only group) can encourage females to use their verbal strengths to give one another support and coping strategies. Group therapy keeps women from feeling isolated.

## I'm About To Get Fired for the 7th Time!

*"People with ADHD should qualify for bulk rate mail on tax returns because they have at least 24 W-2's"*  
- Anonymous

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##### Question:

I can see the handwriting on the wall. My days are numbered. I'll admit that my ADHD behaviors are not helping the situation. My distracted mind combined with impulsivity has caused me to be off task way too many times. My boss likes my creativity, but I think he has run out of patience since I have a bad habit of not taking deadlines seriously. I mean to finish on time, but things just happen. My wife swore she would leave me if I got fired again. Can you help?

##### Answer:

You are in what my granddaddy use to call "a pickle of a fix!" My first response is a question. Have you ever been medically evaluated by a doctor that has experience with adult ADD/ADHD? Medication can help you if you stay with the plan long enough to find the correct dosage and timing for taking the medicine. For a period of time, you also need to consider using an ADHD coaching system like we offer at Brainworks. You have to be willing to try new strategies if you want to be successful on a consistent basis.

**6 Strategies for ADHD Challenges in the Workplace**

1. **The distracted mind**  
   Make a point to carry a notepad with you at all times. When people tell you they want something done, write it down and ask when they want the task finished. Every task needs a deadline. Otherwise, you will forget. If your boss doesn't give a deadline, you need to create your own. All tasks need to be prioritized each morning with your boss. Check off tasks as they are completed, and keep a paper trail of how you are taking deadlines seriously. Show your boss your system and ask if she has any suggestions to improve it.
2. **Impulsive emails or texts**  
   Technology has made it possible to pass on your opinions and thoughts in a matter of seconds. Therefore, if you are upset, remind yourself that you should not post anything that could embarrass you later. Consider writing a draft email and sit on it for 24 hours before mailing it. Bosses also notice how often you are texting while on the clock at work. They may not say anything at the time, but I can assure you a mental note of irritation is made.
3. **Talking too much or not at all**  
   Monologues instead of dialogues can destroy relationships. Set your phone to vibrate every few minutes to remind you it is time to ask a question and listen to the other person. Hyperactive individuals usually dominate the conversation, and they are not aware they are doing it.  
     
   If you talk too little, preplan a few interesting current topics you could discuss. Ask the other person his opinion about the topic.
4. **Constantly interrupting at the office**  
   Often annoying people are avoided. You had rather be appreciated than avoided. When you enter someone's office, ask if this is a good time to talk about a certain topic. Keep your notebook with you and jot down topics you want to discuss later and check off topics you have discussed.
5. **Chronic lateness**  
   Your lateness can alienate all your relationships and cost you your job. Your colleagues at work take your lateness personally. They believe that you don't value their time, and your lateness forces them to pick up your slack. Instead of arriving at the exact minute, program yourself to arrive at least 10 minutes early. You can bring a magazine to read for pleasure. However, realize this spare time could be eaten up by a traffic delay. Plan for the unexpected.
6. **The value of an ADHD coach**  
   Even though you may be taking medication, you need life-changing behaviors to break the cycle that has been causing you to get fired. Someone you trust who can point out behaviors that are getting you in trouble can be extremely valuable. A coach can guide you to try new strategies until you see results. Then you want to use those strategies on a consistent basis, at least 21 consecutive days to create new habits. The key is consistency. Brainworks knows you can have job security and a lasting marriage.

## How To Become Bully Proof

*"In the end, we will not remember the words of the bullies,  
but we will remember the silence of our friends."*  
- Martin Luther King

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##### Question:

My daughter is 15 and a freshman in high school. She has ADHD and can be very hyperactive. This can make her a target for being bullied. Girls that she considers to be her friends can turn on her in a flash. Their favorite tactics are to exclude her, ignore her or make fun of her. It crushes my daughter. She doesn't know whom she can trust. One minute they can be her friends, and the next she is ignored. How can I teach my daughter to stand up for herself?

##### Answer:

I feel your pain. I hope you read the last article I wrote on "Bullying Has Become A Crisis." Bullying is unfair and one-sided. It leaves the victim feeling frightened, emotionally hurt, threatened, and left out. Girls' bullying usually includes spreading rumors, gossiping, and excluding. This is done either in person or in cyberspace. Bullies enjoy the feeling of power and seldom own up to what they are doing. They play innocent.

**You need to know some facts from "The Bully Cycle and ADHD" by Joan Teach, PhD.**

1. **Children with ADHD** tend to be **bullied four times more** than their non-ADHD peers.
2. **30%** of children with **learning differences** are bullied. Usually both the victim and bully have **reading and writing problems**.
3. Both the bully and the victims often have elevated **anxiety** and are at a greater risk of **dropping out of school**.
4. **Retaliation** is the reaction of many bullies for being victims themselves.
5. **42% of teens** with Internet access have been bullied online. It is so easy and is not face-to-face.
6. **21% of teens** have received threatening messages.
7. **58% of teens** have sent mean and threatening messages. (If it is in print, it is taken as gospel truth.)
8. The bullying cycle increases the incidence of **drug and alcohol abuse**.
9. Bullies are **four times more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24**.
10. **Technology makes it possible to:**
    1. Bully by direct hits (slander, porn, pictures, etc. using a website or blog).
    2. Attack by proxy (getting someone else to do the dirty work).
    3. Become a victim without even knowing what is being said until the damage is done. Cyber Bullying spreads very quickly. The world knows even though there is not an ounce of truth in the message.

**How to stand up to a bully**

1. Change your daughter's mindset.
   * Get her over the feeling that she has to take the taunts.
   * Teach her to do or say the unexpected. The bully expects her to show fear or anger.
2. Teach your daughter to have an "I can and I will attitude." Body Language can speak loud and clear.
   * Show her how to create an assertive stance by practicing in the mirror.
     + Look her bully in the eye when talking.
     + Hold her head high.
     + Maintain eye contact and speak clearly.
     + Practice movements with confidence.
     + Show no fear. Fear can give the bully power, and the bullying can accelerate.
3. Respond with assertive comeback lines, but turn to leave the scene **before** the bully can respond. Keep walking with confident body language.
   * Avoid arguing or trading insults with the bully.
   * Your daughter can practice the following comeback lines and discuss with you when they would be appropriate. Have her make up some of her own.
     + How does it feel to be this mean? (Questions shock the bully.)
     + Are you talking to me? You're wasting your breath.
     + I'm glad you noticed.
     + My big ears come in handy when I need to hear your thoughts.
     + I hear you, but I could care less.
     + Are you finished?
     + Do you have a life?
     + I choose to ignore you. You are not worth my time.
     + Aren't you bored yet? You seem to have a one-track mind.
     + Mission accomplished. Move on. Get a life.
     + Do you have anything to do but try to bug me? Get a life.
   * Teach your daughter to remain cool at all cost.

**I recommend the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program for schools.**  
The strength of this program is that it encourages the witnesses to speak up and stand up for the victim. It trains students by role-play and interactive activities.

I have written two books ([**Teenage Connection**](http://www.brainworks.info/publications/publications.aspx#teenage_connection) and [**Confidence Power**](http://www.brainworks.info/publications/publications.aspx#confidence_power)) that work on building self-esteem to prevent bullying. They both have a questioning format to get at the core of the person's value system. We include activities from these books in all of our weekly lessons. We have discovered that when self-esteem improves, students are less likely to be bullied.

*"You must be the change you want to see in the world."*  
- Mahatma Gandhi

## Bullying Has Become a Crisis

*"Until there's a public commitment and action to back that commitment,  
an antibullying policy is only words on paper."*  
- Tim Field

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##### Question:

My son is in middle school. He is small for his age, rather shy and impulsive. He says the same group of guys bully him every day. Because he has ADHD, he has become a good target. Apparently my son is taunted until he retaliates. Then the bully or bullies retreat so my son is caught in the act of retaliating and takes the brunt of the punishment. I'm concerned that these frequent attacks can damage him permanently, or he will end up being a bully himself. What can I do to help my son?

##### Answer:

I'm sure you feel very alone, but you can equip yourself with knowledge. Bullying has become an epidemic. Here are some statistics you need to know and to use to your advantage as you fight for your child because the problem can get worse. (See [CHADD](http://www.chadd.org/) article *"The Bully Cycle and ADHD"* by Joan Teach, PhD.)

1. Bullying is the number **one reason for school absenteeism** in the United States and is closely linked to teen**depression and suicide**.
2. A Harvard study of high school students says:
   * **96%** of the students have been bullied in their lives.
   * **85%** have witnessed bullying.
   * **46%** refuse to go to extracurricular activities because of the bullies being present.
   * Other studies report that **282,000 students are physically attacked** in their secondary schools **each**month.
   * **2%** of students commit suicide after being consistently bullied.
3. At least one event of bullying occurs **every 7 minutes**.
4. Adults intervene **only 4%** of the time.
5. Peers intervene **11%** of the time.
6. Victims are left to fend for themselves **85%** of the time.

If you really want this to stop, you need to learn how to become a person that can make a change for your child while helping others. A group of 3 - 5 parents can bring about change. One parent alone has very little chance. Spend the time to find out the names of other children that are being bullied and also get the names of the bullies. Believe it or not, you need to include both sets of parents (the bullies' and the victims') and their children in your group.

Invite these parents for coffee to discuss the bullying problem and what can be done. If you don't feel comfortable having the meeting in your home, have it at the school or a local church. Those parents that show up will become your core group. (When I sent out a mailer to parents to discuss drug addiction on my son's football team, I planned on 20 attending, but 200 people came! I was glad we were meeting at the school.) Next, as a group, go to the principal to let him or her know that you are forming a group to fight bullying in your school. You need to have the principal and counselors on board. Be friendly, but firm.

Let the principal know you are researching programs that could make a difference. I would recommend Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Do your homework. The strength of this program is that it encourages the witnesses to speak up and stand up for the victim. It trains students by role-play and interactive activities. The whole community gets involved. Each school has, I think, two days of training.

Brainworks uses two books ([Teenage Connection](http://www.brainworks.info/publications/publications.aspx#teenage_connection) and [Confidence Power](http://www.brainworks.info/publications/publications.aspx#confidence_power)) that work on building self-esteem to prevent bullying. They both have a questioning format to get at the core of the person's value system. We have discovered that once you like who you are, you are less likely to be bullied.

I have learned that all school districts will say they can't afford new projects. That is when your group can have a fundraising drive or find corporate sponsors. You need to give the impression that you are not going to go away! Go before the school board and present your proposal. Invite the superintendent to one of your meetings or bring your core group to his or her office. From my experience, to get the best results, your core group needs to meet weekly until you see change happening. It takes energy and time to bring about change.

The only way you can change the bullying cycle is by working together and having the whole school actively involved. I know the satisfaction of making a difference in my child's life and in the lives of others. Your child is worth it too! Bullying has reached epidemic numbers. In the time it took you to read this article, two students were bullied. That is two too many.

Carla's Pearls of Wisdom to Parents  
Part 2: 6 through 10

*"While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about."*  
- Angela Schwindt

* **Learn to apologize to your child when you are wrong.** If you want your child to learn this skill, you need to role model it. Swallow your pride and admit your mistakes even if you are still the boss. Both you and your child will benefit. In the business world, have you ever wanted a boss to admit she was wrong? If she did, would you have more respect for that person?
* **Expect your child to strive for excellence; do his or her best.** If you will only accept perfection, you could be setting the child up for constant fear of failure. Not everyone is cut out to be a pro football player or a college cheerleader at a major university. Everyone needs to learn how to plan for a plan B if plan A does not work out.
* **Privacy is a myth when it comes to the internet.** You must protect your child from what comes into your home. The computer needs to be in the family room and supervised. You cannot be lazy about checking what your child is doing. The temptations are too many.
* **Teachable moments are not during the conflict.** You have to catch the child doing something right. Give an immediate sign of approval such as a wink, a "thumbs-up" sign, or a verbal approval like "I noticed that you unloaded the dishwasher without being reminded. Thank you." Be as immediate as possible with your approval. Don't wait! Always be specific about what you like. Never give a back-handed compliment such as "It's about time you cleaned your room. What took you so long?" or "I noticed you took out the trash, but I had to remind you last time." You may have to hunt for a reason to compliment, but every child deserves at least one compliment per day. You may be the only person who can catch her doing something right.
* **Every child deserves to go to bed each night feeling your unconditional love.** The child needs to hear the words "I love you" even if he is in big trouble. Try to bridge the gap before he goes to sleep. Our emotional state when we enter the sleep cycle determines what is being stored in our memory bank.

Carla's Pearls of Wisdom to Parents  
Part 1: 1 through 5

*"When a child with ADHD receives a drop or two of praise, it's like rain in the desert."*  
- Dr. Edward Hollowell

* **Train the child to fly from the nest.** From day one, your job is to train the child to be able to survive on his or her own. This means you need to teach decision- making early by giving two choices, not several. This act gives the child self-confidence and a feeling of independence within limits.
* **Teach children how to learn from mistakes.** They need to discover strategies that will work for them so as not to repeat the same mistakes. Don’t be tempted to rescue them on a regular basis. They need to know how to fail and bounce back. Remember how you got excited when your child was learning to walk? You encouraged her to get up and try again even if she cried when she fell down. You helped her keep her eye on the prize –– walking solo.
* **Teach the child to become a responsible person.** Give the child age appropriate chores with consequences if they are not done without being reminded. At first you have to show him how. Make a game out of it. Try to put all the toys in the basket before the song is finished. Doing chores is the foundation of building trust in the family unit.
* **Discipline the child with dignity and respect.** Provide limited choices and rules that are based on mutual respect and cooperation.
  1. If you are too strict and don’t give choices, the child does not learn decision-making. This fear-based discipline results in rebellious teenagers with low self-esteem.
  2. If you want to be your child’s best friend (permissive discipline) with unlimited choices to make the child happy, you get a teenager that is manipulative, spoiled, and someone who can’t tolerate frustration. These teens blame others for their problems, and they don’t understand consequences for their behaviors. Yes, they also have low self-esteem.
  3. It takes more effort to be firm with dignity and respect, but you get a child with high self-esteem who is self-disciplined, responsible, honest, a good problem solver, someone who understands cooperation, and treats others with dignity and respect.
* **Praise a child for effort if you want to motivate the child.** If your child is very smart or talented and is told constantly how smart or talented he is, it could backfire. He may believe in a "fixed mindset;" life should be easy. If he has to work at the task, he must not be smart or talented anymore. This way of thinking can be traumatic when he encounters someone smarter or more talented. Children who are praised for their efforts choose to pursue more challenging tasks that they can learn from. They can remain confident and engaged even after a setback.

Carla's 10 Commandments for Students

*"Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it."*  
- Proverbs 22:6

1. Set goals and use strategies to make achievement possible. Start small and gradually build up to major goals.
2. Learn what it takes to motivate you to do something boring. Much of life is dealing with tasks that are not exciting.
3. Decide to be open minded when learning a new skill or having to work on a skill not yet mastered. If you think "I can’t" without trying, you are absolutely correct.
4. Confusion is the first step toward understanding. Smart people keep asking questions until it makes sense. You must find someone that can help you. Sometimes you might find that your peers can explain something better than the teacher.
5. Understand that natural consequences are great teachers for life. If you forgot something, don’t call home for help.
6. When you make a mistake or get in trouble, replay what happened in your brain as if you will be presented with the same situation again tomorrow. Determine what you must do to get a better outcome.
7. You are in charge of your destiny. Learn what it takes to be independent without being nagged. Start the day by getting yourself out of bed on your own.
8. Learn to manage your time. Otherwise, you become dependent on others to manage it for you. This factor can separate leaders from followers.
9. True perfectionists live in fear of being a failure. Those individuals who are more satisfied are those who strive for excellence.
10. Be present at every school meeting when your parents discuss your grades or behavior. Become proactive. Present a list of how the school can better meet your needs. Be specific so your ideas can be implemented.

## Strategies to Motivate the Twice Exceptional (2e) Student Part 2 of 2

*"The only one who can tell you 'you can't' is you, and you don't have to listen."*  
- Nike

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| ASK THE EXPERT |
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##### Question

Even though people say I am smart, my grades seem to depend on the teacher’s teaching style. If the teacher has variety in the presentation, I tend to pay attention. I can’t handle straight lecture, especially in a monotone voice. Boring, boring! My brain goes to sleep or starts to wander. I like it when a teacher gives me the big picture first using a graphic. Then the details don’t get so mixed up. If I can’t see it in my mind’s eye, it is hopeless. Just reading over material to study for a test has never worked for me. I need tricks to help me memorize; otherwise, I lose interest and quit studying. Do you have any suggestions to help me?

##### Answer:

You are describing the typical way a 2e student thinks. I have listed below tricks and strategies that will help you in the classroom and at home.

1. **Identify and use your gifts and talents.**
   1. **Design strategies in area of strength** i.e. art talent –– draw a picture to explain the meaning of a vocabulary word. Make it funny or weird to help it store in your memory.
   2. **Think about the big picture before the details.**
      * Write thought-provoking questions to hook your interest in the topic as you read.
      * Use graphic organizers to tie complex information together as you read.
      * Use color to organize concepts as you read.
      * Use satire, metaphors, and analogies to explain concepts on note cards.
      * Combine names and dates on a timeline.
   3. **Tap into your excellent communication skills and advanced vocabulary.**
      * Write discussion questions (how and why) as you read. Ask the teacher these questions during class discussion.
      * Share some unknown fact you discovered about the topic during class discussion.
      * In lieu of written compositions, ask if you can do videos, audiotapes, Power Point presentations.
   4. **Find an adult mentor outside the family to enrich your talent.**
   5. **Encourage your parents to tell teachers about your special talents or interests as a potential bonding tool.**
2. **Design strategies to compensate for weaknesses.**
   1. **Time management weakness**
      * Set project deadlines for each part of the assignment. Put them on a calendar.
      * Try to turn in each section of the project as it is completed instead of waiting until the main deadline.
      * Learn how to estimate time by timing your tasks.
      * Have set time for homework.
      * Track amount of time spent on homework. If it exceeds what is recommended for your grade level, have your parents notify the teacher orcounselor.
   2. **Focusing weakness**
      * 2e students retain 90% of the information if they have to teach it to someone. Find someone to teach. It will make you smarter!
   3. **Memory weakness**
      * Use mnemonics –– Form a word or sentence using first letters: The great lakes (**H**uron, **O**ntario,**M**ichigan, **E**rie, **S**uperior) for the word **HOMES**.
      * Create lists from textbook information.
        + Watch for clues: headings, subheadings, words like first, second, many, stages, examples.
        + Create flash cards: questions and mnemonics or picture on the front; answers on the back.
        + Self-test (goal: 3 seconds per card)
      * Use color to organize information and notice patterns (Ex: spelling –– red for vowels and blue for consonants)
   4. **Note taking weakness**
      * Listen for verbal cues such as "Listen carefully." or "You should remember this."
      * Copy information following these comments using key words, phrases, or short descriptions.
      * Tape record the lecture and fill in notes from the recording before going to bed.
      * Use laptop computer for note taking.

## The Dilemma of Being Twice Exceptional (2e) Part 1 of 2

*"I stopped to think, and forgot to start again."*  
- Anonymous

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##### Question

I have just returned from "another" meeting with my son's teachers. I don't understand what is going on with him. His counselor showed me the results of the state assessments, the ITBS, and the district's 12 week assessments. My son received "commended," "shows mastery of subject," or scored above grade level on all of them. I should be happy, right? Wrong!! His teachers also keep telling me that my son wastes class time doing nothing, and he daydreams. They also said that he rarely turns in a completed assignment; but when he does, his work is excellent. He is in 8th grade; and before this year, he has not had any academic problems. I have tried to talk with my son about this situation, but all I get is a blank stare. What is going on? Has he hit a wall?

##### Answer:

Without meeting your son, it is difficult to say for sure what is going on with him. I suspect that he is a Twice Exceptional (2e) Student. His high intelligence may have been covering up a learning disability such as ADHD, dysgraphia, or dyslexia. Consequently, I suggest an evaluation for any undiagnosed learning disabilities.

**Brainworks defines the Twice Exceptional (2e) Student in the following three ways:**

1. Labeled as gifted due to high intelligence but has "hit a wall."
2. Labeled as having average intelligence, but the intellectual abilities mask one or more disabilities.
3. Labeled as learning disabled and treated as LD at the expense of developing gifts and talents.

**Life with a 2e student is very confusing and full of contradictions.**

1. Reading and Math: 2e students can be gifted in math and yet be two grade levels below peers in reading or vice versa.
2. Verbal Skills: 2e students can be very creative and gifted verbally, but have "brain freeze" when putting thoughts on paper.
3. Organizational Skills: 2e students have poor organizational skills –– lack a sense of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow), lose papers, miss deadlines, and can’t stick to a schedule.
4. Memory Skills: 2e students are too impatient when they are trying to memorize; they are easily overwhelmed and tend to give up easily; they make careless mistakes and can experience test anxiety. They have a problem applying what they have learned (working memory).
5. Visual/Motor Integration: 2e students are often directionally challenged (left, right, before, after, north, south, up, down); as a result, their handwriting, gross motor, time management, and driving skills suffer.
6. Learning Style: 2e students generally learn and remember what they see or do and forget what they are told. In fact, they retain 90% of what they have been taught if they teach others!
7. Self-concept: 2e students tend to have low self-esteem; they feel defeated because their high goals are rarely achieved. Their negative self-talk does not help the matter.
8. ADHD Behaviors: ADHD is the most common learning disability for this gifted and learning disabled population (ex: distractibility, impulsivity, inattention, hyperactivity).

## Lazy or Inattentive Attention Deficit Disorder? Part 2 of 2

##### by Debra Moore and Carla Crutsinger

*"I'm sorry. I wasn't paying attention to what I was thinking."*  
- Shelley Curtiss

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| ASK THE EXPERT |
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##### Question

My son is a high school senior, and I am very concerned how he will do in college. Even though he has been in gifted classes since elementary school, I feel a disaster coming. I question his ability to take notes in college. His handwriting is so messy that I doubt he can read his own writing, even though he says he can. He has no sense of time. Procrastination is his middle name. Therefore, most of his projects are late because he will not start working on them until the last minute. He loses everything. Every morning is a fiasco –– lost keys, missing papers, a textbook. His teachers say he rarely participates in class discussions because he is daydreaming. His poor listening skills cause him to miss details in conversations. As a result, his friends will ask, "Hello? Is anybody home?" By now, I expected him to be more mature. Is there a reason for these behaviors?

##### Answer:

He is an example of what is called the Twice Exceptional Child, being very bright but having a condition that keeps him from performing up to his potential. He is gifted, but could have Inattentive Attention Deficit Disorder. He would benefit from visiting with a psychiatrist to see if he has ADHD, and he would profit from working with an ADHD expert who can provide him with new strategies that he can use in college when there is not a parent present. In answer to his level of maturity, individuals with ADHD tend to mature at a 30% delay. That is why many ADHD students transition better to a university environment by starting out at the junior college level first.

**Below you will find 10 more characteristics of the Inattentive ADHD child.**[Click here](http://www.brainworks.info/bwtips/lazyinattentiveadd.aspx)**for the first 10 characteristics from Part 1.**

* Acts impulsively or may not appear to react at all; is not good at crisis management (detaches rather than takes action).
* Could have spatial and/or motor skill difficulties (messy handwriting, poor sense of direction, or coordination problems).
* Is unaware of time (either underestimates or overestimates time, but is usually late).
* Appears disorganized (messy locker, room, and desk).
* Spends time daily hunting for things such as keys, papers, books, purse, etc.
* Has errors in logical thinking and/or has irrational thoughts.
* Does not advocate for self; rarely asks questions in class or participates in class discussion.
* Makes mediocre grades (or all A’s if person is a perfectionist). May put in extra effort to hyperfocus in order to compensate for inattentiveness.
* Has poor listening skills (misses details in conversations, teacher directions, and lectures).
* Has short-term and working memory problems; therefore, has trouble with application of learned information.

## ADHD and Handwriting: Is There a Connection?

##### by Carla Crutsinger, M.S.

It has been known for decades that individuals with ADHD are more than likely going to have problems with handwriting (**dysgraphia**). In fact, there are studies that say over 60% will have handwriting difficulties, but in the 29-year history of Brainworks working with ADHD students, we feel that number is low. We feel it is closer to 85%.

When we hear a student complain about written assignments, we have to think about two factors. We ask, "Do you struggle with the physical act of making the pencil move fast enough on the page, or do you struggle with getting your thoughts organized to get the words on paper, or is it both?" Most of the time the answer is "both."

The medical profession of occupational therapy looks at all aspect of the handwriting process, and they see handwriting as a developmental fine motor skill. Sadly, teachers are not trained in the stages of fine motor development, and as a result, have wrongly accused many students of being lazy and having no sense of pride in the neatness of their work. It would be extremely helpful if teachers were made aware of why handwriting is so complex. Occupational therapy sees handwriting not as one skill but as a coordinated effort of 14 abilities that need to work together and smoothly.

##### 14 Abilities Needed for Handwriting

If a student struggles in **one or more** of the following abilities, he or she could have a handwriting disability (**dysgraphia**) and dread written assignments:

1. **Visual focusing:** the ability for the eyes to work together
2. **Mental attention:** the ability to screen out distractions
3. **Organized physical movements:** the ability to maintain posture and hold the writing tool
4. **Receptive language:** the ability to perceive abstract concepts and follow verbal directions
5. **Inner expressive language:** the ability to think clearly, organize ideas and concepts, and communicate through writing
6. **Memory recall:** the ability to remember letter formations and the required movements necessary to make each letter and connection.
7. **Concentration with awareness:** the ability to maintain consistent awareness of details and form over a period of time
8. **Spatial perception:** the ability to utilize space.
9. **Organization:** the ability to organize mind, body, and space to produce meaningful responses
10. **Integration:** the ability to unite the mind, body, and space to create meaningful written expression
11. **Eye-hand coordination:** the ability to use the eyes and hand together as a unit.
12. **Motor planning:** the ability to plan and carry out an action
13. **Tactile input:** the ability to feel the pencil in the hand and apply the appropriate pressure to write
14. **Crossing midline:** the movement of the eyes, a hand, or forearm to move across the midsection of the body without moving any other part of the body

##### Visual Perception and Motor Planning Training

Since handwriting is a developmental process, we must consider the mechanical aspect of writing as the primary cause of the problem. Neat handwriting requires visual perception and motor planning at the same time. Students with visual perception problems may trace a shape, but they do not notice that the triangle looks like a lumpy circle and do not see the difference in their shape and the sample. These same students have trouble making letters a consistent size, and they may not have spacing between words. Also, letters could be of different sizes within words, or there could be a mixture of print and cursive or upper and lower case. In many cases, there could be an inconsistent slant of letters. When the teacher comments on the mistakes, their brains cannot see the problems.

When students with visual perception problems are first learning to write, they need to describe orally what they are thinking as they make their letters. "h is tall; it starts up in the clouds at the top." "j starts at the middle of the line and dives below the water (bottom of the line)." This is done until they can make their letters faster than they can describe what they are writing. The check for this motor memory is to have students write the letters on unlined paper with their eyes closed. By doing so, you are speeding up letter production.

The best way to build confidence and familiarity is to introduce the letters in a developmental sequence. Start with letters with straight lines and angles like H, T, I, F, E. Next introduce letters with circular shapes C, O, P, B, U. The most difficult letters are K, S, Y, X, and A. In the lower case, start with the letters that look the most like the capital ones like o, c, p, t.

##### Directionality Training

There is another interesting pattern about ADHD students that we have discovered at Brainworks. A majority of them have directionality problems that continue longer then their non-ADHD peers. They have to spend extra time thinking about which direction to draw a letter such as d, b, p, q. All those letters are a ball and a stick. The difference is where the ball is in relation to the stick. These students still confuse their left and right directions. They need directionality training that is combined with a metronome. When they can keep the beat of the metronome in their training, directionality is becoming automatic. And that is the goal in handwriting.

##### Pencil Grasp

For motor planning problems, one has to consider the pencil grasp. Have you noticed how many awkward pencil grasps you see in today's world? There is a reason. Teachers are not trained in all the aspects of teaching handwriting; they are given a book and told to get the students writing paragraphs as soon as possible so they can pass the state exam. No one is taught to look for the child that has weak muscles in the fingers or the thumb that could cause an awkward pencil grasp. These students actually need strengthening exercises before they are ready to tackle writing paragraphs. Also, some students hold the pencil very near the pencil lead. These awkward pencil grasps can cause muscle spasms, and students in pain do not like to write. Instead, they tend to procrastinate on all writing assignments. These students would benefit from using pencil grippers that have a specific place for the thumb, pointing finger, and middle finger. The pencil is to rest on the middle finger, not the ring finger. The thumb is not to curl around the top of the fingers.

##### Timing

Another mechanical factor in handwriting is timing. Being able to cross "t's" and dot "i's" requires that the student hit a target on the paper. Timing is also required for students to take notes while a teacher lectures. The task demands a fast execution of writing numbers, letters, diagrams, and symbols along with spelling words correctly and punctuating the sentence properly. If the student gets stuck having to think of any one of these factors, he often will lose his thoughts to complete the sentence. Thus valuable information in the lecture could be lost in the process.

##### Handwriting Strategies

Some students with visual spatial problems need additional aides to write successfully. Consider using graph paper in math to keep the numbers in columns. Use an index card to mark your place when you have to copy from the book or read. Some students seem to write better if they are allowed to write in colored pencils. Others do better if they write using a slant board to elevate the surface at an angle. Any method to make it easier for the student should be allowed.

The typical ADHD student may have so many ideas in her head that it is difficult to make choices about a sequential thought process that could lead to an organized paper. Grouping and sorting thoughts is complicated when you can also get distracted and forget where your thoughts are taking you. At Brainworks, we have discovered that the ADHD brain works so much better if the thinking process is separated from the writing process at first. Therefore, we try to get students to tape record their thoughts or use a graphic organizer to get ideas on paper before worrying about sentences.

##### Stimulant Medication

Stimulant medication can make a major difference in the handwriting, especially for students that are in the primary grades. Their writing is more legible and tends to flow better. There are studies comparing gifted ADHD students on and off medication. The differences are extremely pronounced. The unmedicated students could create a well, organized, detailed and descriptive story orally; but when the students were asked to write the same story, they could barely construct a single legible, understandable paragraph. In addition, those same students could appear lifeless with their heads on their desks as they struggled to write. It appeared that the energy had completely been sucked out of them.

##### Accommodations

If the student's handwriting problem is a major issue, he can appear lazy and defiant. Even the thought of writing seems to rob these students of much of their cognitive capacity resulting in writing that lacks creativity or eloquence. This is why there should be accommodations available to them. Skipping recess should not be an option for students with dysgraphia.

1. By 4th or 5th grade, allow students to type their rough drafts and final papers.
2. Provide keyboarding lessons for these students.
3. Allow more time to complete written tasks.
4. Allow students to begin projects early and turn in their work as soon as it is completed.
5. Adjust note taking by providing a partial outline so the student can fill in the details under major headings.
6. Allow some students to take oral tests.
7. Provide a copy of the math problems instead of the student having to copy them.
8. Allow the student to use graph paper in math.
9. Teach the stages of the writing process (brainstorming, rough draft, editing, and proofreading) and considering giving points for each stage of the process.
10. Allow students to use colored paper and colored writing instruments.
11. Encourage the use of mechanical pencils.
12. Encourage the use of pencil grips or pencils/pens with the grip built into the instrument.

##### Modifications

1. Instead of writing in complete sentences to answer questions, allow the student to use phrases.
2. Reduce the length of written assignments.
3. Provide extra guidance on long-term assignments.
4. Extra time on tests.

Without teachers and administrators who are willing to think out of the box for these ADHD students, too many of them will see themselves as losers who cannot keep up with the workload.

## Lazy or Inattentive Attention Deficit Disorder? Part 1 of 2

##### by Debra Moore and Carla Crutsinger

*"I was trying to daydream, but my mind kept wondering."*  
- Steven Wright

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##### Question

Teachers say my 13 year-old daughter is very capable of doing the work based on her diagnostic testing, but she becomes overwhelmed so easily. Homework time can take forever. It is like she simply can't make herself get started. To look at her, you would think that she had just completed a marathon, but she has not completed the simplest of assignments. I try to get her to ask the teacher for help, but she is too quiet and shy to do so. When I ask her to explain a definition that I feel she knows in her own words, she gives me a blank stare as if I am speaking German. I feel I am in a trap. I am constantly helping her to get through each day. As a result, I think she is developing a habit of expecting to be rescued. Is she simply lazy or is something else going on?

##### Answer:

It sounds like she could have Inattentive Attention Deficit Disorder. I am pleased that you have had diagnostic testing done to rule out other possible problems such as a learning disability. I recommend that you and your daughter visit with a psychiatrist because this individual has more training to recognize the symptoms of Inattentive ADHD. It is more complex to diagnose than a hyperactive child.

**Below you will find 10 characteristics of the Inattentive ADHD child.**

* Becomes overwhelmed easily; can only concentrate on one thing at a time.
* Has trouble starting and/or finishing tasks (often forgets to do homework, family chores, or may take "forever" to finish homework).
* May daydream while getting dressed in the morning; fixed stare may mask wandering mind.
* Is distracted by internal thoughts and external stimuli. (The brain can be on 16 channels, but the body appears exhausted.)
* Has a lethargic and apathetic appearance; even when the person thinks fast, he fatigues quickly; is often called lazy and unmotivated.
* Does not get needs met in the classroom because he or she doesn't disrupt others; tends to be quiet, shy or withdrawn resulting in cognitive deficits getting overlooked.
* Has social skills problems (may be quiet, withdrawn, or possibly shy; has trouble with small talk and figuring out rules of social interaction; has a problem reading social cues; tends to be lonely and aloof). Unfortunately, this passivity can cause the person to be an attractive target for bullies.
* Does not perform up to potential; is slow at processing; appears confused or stressed; has difficulty with synthesizing and organizing ideas; is slow responding to questions.
* Is repeatedly rescued; uses learned helplessness and passive manipulation; feels powerless; becomes chronically dependent.
* Could be on an emotional roller coaster (anxious, depressed, explosive temper, grumpy, sarcastic, rude, or abrupt).

## Differences Between High Achievers and Under-Achievers

*"The smarter you are, the harder you work. The harder you work, the smarter you get."*  
- Dr. Sylvia Rimm

* **High achievers** believe they are capable of achieving. **Under-achievers** see themselves as a series of failures.
* **High achiever**s have determined that school is important to them.  **Under-achievers** do not see the connection between school achievement and their future.
* **High achievers** have developed strategies that will lead to success. **Under-achievers** lack the strategies needed to solve problems and manage their behaviors.
* **High achievers** believe in hard work and determination. **Under-achievers** often avoid any work they think is too hard, and many times they just give up.

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##### Question

Please help!! My daughter is driving me crazy.  She will not complete her math homework.  She works the problems she finds easy, but refuses even to try the hard ones. When I ask her why her homework is incomplete, she always says, "Those problems are too hard. I’ll make a "C" on what I’ve done, and that’s good enough for me." If she would do all her homework, she could make a "B" or even an "A" in her math class.  How can I convince her that "good enough" is not good enough?

##### Answer:

Your situation is one we hear often from parents when they first come to Brainworks.  They have been told by teachers and school counselors, "If your children would work harder, they could make straight "A's." The problem that brings them to Brainworks is that their student is content making "C's."

There is no magic pill or quick fix to turn an under-achiever into a high achiever, but at Brainworks, we have many success stories of changing lives.  (Visit our website at www.brainworks.info to read some of these stories.)

It sounds like your daughter is an under-achiever, but we would need to meet with her and discuss her academic attitude before we could develop a personalized lesson plan to change her approach to school. Here are some general questions we might ask:

* Does your daughter have memories of when her efforts have led to success? Or does she blame others for her dilemmas?
* Is she willing to take the time to look for mistakes and correct them?  Or does she avoid editing because she is afraid she will find mistakes?
* Does she have an undetected learning disability that causes boredom, frustration, or inconsistent performance? Or does she lack a competitive spirit?
* Does she set academic goals for herself?  Or does she lack basic skills and study habits, which are the preliminary to goal setting?
* Has she developed organizational and time management systems? Or does she do her school work at the very last minute?
* Does she desire new daily challenges in school or non-school activities?  Or does she avoid new experiences?
* Does she advocate for herself to get her needs met in school?  Or does she fail to understand that she controls her destiny?

## 7 Rules for Setting Goals

*"You need a plan to build a house. To build a life, it is even more important to have a plan or goal."*  
- Zig Ziglar

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| **Rule 1:** | **Put the goal in writing; be specific.** |
| **Rule 2:** | **Why do you want this goal?** |
| **Rule 3:** | **Make a list of what can prevent you from reaching your goal. Write out a strategy to avoid derailing.** |
| **Rule 4:** | **Trick yourself into getting started.** |
| **Rule 5:** | **Create an accountability system.** |
| **Rule 6:** | **Make it fun! Make it a game!** |
| **Rule 7:** | **Reward! Reward! Reward!** |

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##### Question

I am in 7th grade and don't have any friends. My mom said to make it my New Year's Resolution to make friends in 2010. I have been back at school a week now, and I haven't talked to anybody. I don't know what to say or do. Can you help me?

##### Answer:

Your mom gave you good advice, but I think you need to change your desire from a Resolution to a Goal. Resolutions are wishes dreams, usually without any plans. A goal is specific and must have a plan. Let's follow the 7 rules and see if we can make a plan for you.

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| **Rule 1:** | **Write down you goal.** "I want to make for friends in 2010." Describe in detail the kinds of friends you want, what you want to do with your friends and if possible, name some people you think you would like to have as friends. Then, write down your goal on sticky notes and put reminders everywhere - on your computer, on the bathroom mirror, in your shoe. These reminders will help you stay focused, so put them where you will see them every day. |
| **Rule 2:** | **Why do you want friends?** List the benefits of having and being a friend. Make a poster stating your goal and all the benefits when you succeed. Put this poster in one of those daily places and read it out loud every day. |
| **Rule 3:** | **Make a list of the problems you have had before or think you will have this time.** Are you shy? Are you afraid? Is making friends a priority to you? Do you have a positive attitude? Write down your strategy for each obstacle. |
| **Rule 4:** | **Trick yourself to get started.** Break your big goal of making friends into several smaller goals with daily tasks for you to do. You might, for example, set a daily goal of talking to two new people. Find out at least one thing about each of these new people. Does he have brothers or sisters? Does she have a pet? What is their favorite music? What kind of video games do they like? Learn to listen so you can ask follow-up questions. |
| **Rule 5:** | **Score yourself at the end of each day.** Hold yourself accountable. It often helps to report to another person, so you might ask your mom to be involved in this with you. You might not have accomplished all of your daily goals, but by having an accountability system in place, you can see what you did accomplish. Give yourself a score from 0-5 points.  5 - Completed the entire daily goal. 4 - Almost completed daily goal. 3 - Worked on goal a little, but not very much. 2 - Made minimal effort. 1 - Thought about goal; took no action. 0 - Forgot about goal completely. |
| **Rule 6:** | **Make a game out of your goal.** Keep it fun. If you talked to 1 new person today, why don't you try to talk to 2 tomorrow? Try to beat your record. If you talked to a new person for 1 minute today, why not try to talk with her for 2 minutes tomorrow. Role play with your mom practicing asking questions. Get a feel for how long a minute conversation is by timing your role-playing session. |
| **Rule 7:** | **Reward yourself as you succeed with your small daily goals.** When you accomplish your big goal of making 2 -3 new friends, invite them for pizza and a movie to celebrate. |

Make sure you congratulate yourself. You set a goal, you achieved it, and you have also learned a very important life lesson about setting goals. Scary goals are made possible by using a step-by-step plan.

#### Part 1 of 6: Six Steps to Perseverance

*"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."*  
- Albert Einstein

1. **Personal Expectation**
   * What do you want the end result to be?
2. **Strategy**
   * Break major tasks down into daily goals.
   * Follow the assignment directions.
3. **Sense of Time Management**
   * Pace yourself along the way.
   * Do not wait until the last minute.
4. **Internal Speech - Self-talk**
   * Say, "Yes, I can do this!"
   * Bribe your Brain - ex: "When I finish this today, I am coke float or get on Facebook for 15 minutes."
5. **Ask for Help**
   * You need to know when to ask for help.
   * Delayed action can damage the outcome.
6. **Internal Joy of "I did it!"**
   * Joy at crossing the finish line **IS** the reward.

**This plan works in ANY life crisis.**

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##### Question

My son had a meltdown with every long-term assignment given to him last year. His English teacher just assigned the class to read To Kill A Mockingbird and to write a compare and contrast paper. How do I help him without our usual fighting and emotional outbursts?

##### Answer

Let's Follow the Six Steps to Perseverance.

* I would ask your son what grade he want wants.The higher the grade desired, the more effort is required. He needs a goal.
* What are the steps involved? First, know the teacher's requirements. (Most teachers hand out a rubric with specifics.) Be sure he understands each part of what is expected.
* Get a calendar. Mark the due date. Mark how many days it will take him to read the book. (How many pages can be read in 30 minutes?) Mark daily goals: deadlines for reading, brainstorming, organizing material, rough draft, edit, and final copy.
* As soon as he finishes his task each day, he should reward himself with guilt-free fun.
* If he feels confused, he needs to contact the teacher immediately. Try having him email the teacher if he is shy.
* **Celebrate!! He crossed the finish line.**
* When he gets the paper back, ask him if he had the same assignment again, what would he change to improve his grade?

## Life Changing Behavior Series

#### Part 2 of 6: Learn How To Overcome Fear

*"Fear is that little darkroom where negatives are developed."*  
- Michael Pritchard

1. **Verbalize and Analyze the Fear.**
   * All fear is real to the individual.
   * Identify the specific fear.
   * On a scale of 1 - 5, how serious is this fear?
2. **Design a Supportive Environment.**
   * Gain knowledge and information.
   * Give yourself time to process options.
   * If you feel overwhelmed, it is time to call on a higher power. "**Fear Not**" is the most widely used command in The Holy Bible (366 times)
3. **Think about a time in your past that you conquered a fear.**
   * This gives you a history of successful change.
4. **Devise a plan of action.**
   * Ask yourself, "What is the worst thing that could happen?"
   * What are the odds of the worst thing really happening?
   * Ask yourself, "What is the ideal outcome?"
   * Set realistic expectations.
   * Be **Pro Active!!**
   * Be willing to experiment with different strategies.
   * Set milestones and record each success no matter how small.
5. **Do It "Scared"!!!**

[Learn how Carla, the Brainworks founder, has used the 5 Steps to Overcome Fears when faced with her and her husband's cancer diagnoses.](http://www.brainworks.info/stories/cancerjourney.aspx)

**This plan works in ANY life crisis.**

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##### Question

My 15 year old daughter, Alice, is afraid of her algebra teacher. She won't raise her hand in class or ask questions. She has been sick for 5 days and will not contact this teacher for her make-up work. How can I help her?

##### Answer

Let's use the 5 Steps for Overcoming Fear.

* Ask your daughter why she is afraid of this teacher. Have her give specific examples of what she fears might happen. Have her rate each example on the scale of 1 - 5 and discuss it.
* Sit down with your daughter, discuss options, and make a plan. Consider the school's policy about make-up work deadlines. The least fearful approach for most students (including your daughter) is to contact the teacher via e-mail requesting her assignments. Alice (not the parent) must do this before she returns to school.
* Remind her of past experiences that scared her, but she did them anyway.
* Have Alice think through the worst-case scenario for the time when she meets with the teacher. The odds of this actually happening are small, but if Alice is prepared with plans for the worst thing, she will be better able to deal with the actual meeting.  
    
  On her first day back in algebra, she should approach the teacher with any completed work and her list of questions for completing the remaining assignments. Encourage her to take a friend with her. While Alice is talking with the teacher, her friend can write down all the information - due dates, make-up tests, dates, tutorial times, how to get missing class notes, etc. Alice should read the dates and information back to the teacher BEFORE leaving the classroom. This guarantees that Alice and her teacher are on the same page. After the meeting, have Alice send an e-mail to the teacher thanking her for the meeting.
* Alice must go through these steps herself. You may be involved, but **she** must contact the teacher each time. Doing this for herself will help her overcome her fears, and she will be better equipped to communicate with her teachers in the future.

**Celebrate her success!!** Alice now has a strategy for communicating with any teacher, even a college professor. Document this event on a calendar.

## Life Changing Behavior Series

#### Part 3 of 6: Learn How to Make and Keep Friends

*"A friend is a present you give yourself."*  
- Robert Louis Stevenson

**Why are friendships important?**

1. To develop self-confidence, your mind needs regular feedback from peers who can give you unconditional love - they will be with you no matter what.
2. Your friends need to offer you tough love - tell you what you need to hear even when the truth hurts.

**What are the 6 initial steps needed to establish a new friendship?**

1. Listening to what is being said around you is a way to find an individual who shares a common interest. Make an effort to understand what is being said.
2. Asking a question about the shared interest is a great way to start a conversation. This is an opportunity to learn more...about the interest and about the person. Changing the current topic being discussed may not build an immediate connection with that person.
3. Follow-up questions (after the person responds) will let the other person know that you are interested in keeping the conversations going.
4. Common interest found! Now is the time to share the fact that you have a common interest with this person. Ex: "We both like WWII stories."
5. Sharing experiences together is what builds a friendship. Target the conversation toward a time when you both could visit a museum, play a video game, etc. Spending time together is not only enjoyable, but it also results in bonding the friendship.
6. Golden Rule works every time. Treat your new and old friends as you want them to treat you.

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##### Question

My son seems to be able to make friends, but not keep them. They all just stop calling or coming over, and he says he has no clue why the friendships ended. What can I do to help my son?

##### Answer

Maybe your son has forgotten the 10 basic courtesies of relationships. Lets see.

1. **Eye Contact:** Look the person in the eye as you talk and lean toward him or her as you have a conversation and/or listen.
2. **Tone of Voice:** Speak in a pleasant tone of voice with a smile on your face.
3. **Thank you:** Saying thank you when someone does something nice for you or gives you a compliment shows appreciation.
4. **Compliments:** Look for ways to compliment a potential or current friend.
5. **Apologies:** Apologize when you might have hurt a friend's feelings.
6. **Teasing:** Be cautious about teasing a peer. It can backfire.
7. **Good Sport:** Be a good sport. If you lose, congratulate the winner. If you win, be gracious.
8. **Being polite:** The guest is always right. Be polite to your guest.
9. **Ranking Friends:** Rank your friends based on important qualities like being nice, making you laugh, listening to you rather than who is popular.
10. **Two-Way Relationship:** Create a safe two-way relationship, so you can share not only the good times, but also the not-so-good ones.

**Practice. Practice. Practice. Friendships take effort to maintain, but they are worth it.**

## Life Changing Behavior Series

#### Part 4 of 6: Six Factors for Achieving Excellence

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."*  
- Aristotle

1. **Set a realistic goal and analyze it.**
   * Why do you want this goal?
   * What obstacles can keep you from achieving your goal?
   * Write down solutions before obstacles arrive.
   * Identify past failures and what stopped you from succeeding.
   * What will you gain if you achieve your goal?
2. **Find ways to keep your focus on that goal.**
   * Post reminders on your wall, computer desk, andonline calendar.
   * Post your progress on your personal blog.
   * Clear away distractions and focus completely on the task.
3. **Use self-talk.**
   * Start ignoring any thoughts that can derail you.
   * Change "I can't do this" to "I'm going to try." "If Jane can do this, I bet I can."
   * Have strategies to defeat the urge to derail. Urges usually last only a minute or two. Ride out the wave.
   * Think about how good it will feel when you have accomplished what you are trying to do.
4. **Create a support team.**
   * These people feed your mind on a regular basis, and your mind needs to be feed well to become a strong, confident mind.
   * Adhere to the golden rule of building a support system. Hang out with people who will be your cheerleaders.
   * Remove saboteurs and enablers from your support system. They tell you what you want to hear, but following their advice seems to always get you into trouble.
5. **Have regular rewards in place.**
   * Celebration of baby steps is more effective than waiting until the long-term task is completed.
6. **Practice, Practice, Practice**
   * To make your goal a habit, do it consistently for 30 days. (This is the model for achieving excellence).

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##### Question

I need help!! I am a college freshman. I carry a full class load, and I am also a member of a sorority that performs a lot of volunteer and community work. Now my grades have really fallen, and my parents want me to drop out of my sorority. I don't want to, but I also don't know what to do about my falling grades. Can you help me?

##### Answer:

I think striving for excellence would help your grades and allow you to stay in your sorority. Let's use the 6 factors in this article to help you.

1. **Set realistic goals for each class.**  
   Identify the obstacles stopping you from achieving these goals. Is the sorority the only obstacle or are other factors taking your focus away from academics? Ask yourself, "What will I gain if I achieve the grades I want?"
2. **"Keep your eye on the prize."**  
   Write down those ideal grades and place reminders all around your room - on your computer, mirror, wall or door. Also write down those grades in your school planner and on your online calendar. Blog about your new focus.  
     
   Create distraction-free zones to study. Unplug the TV. Turn off your cell phone. If your roommate is chatty, change your study place or time, so she is not a distraction. Find a quiet space on campus.
3. **Start positive self-talk.**  
   Remind yourself that you can improve your grades. Once your grades were higher, right? Try to remember what you did during that time to make those good grades. Recapture the good feelings you had at that time, and think about how good it will be to feel that way again.
4. **Create a support team.**  
   Talk to your sorority sisters that consistently have high grades. Tell them about your goal of improving your grades. Find out how they balance academic work and sorority life. Ask them to help you stay focused on your school work.
5. **Celebrate each success, even the baby steps.**  
   Plan a daily coffee break at Starbucks at 9 p.m. with 1-2 friends. If you have finished all your deadlines for the day, have some guilt-free fun. Rewards are vital.
6. **Implement the 30 day strategy.**  
   Keep "Improve my Grades" as your main focus. As you learn new habits and strategies, you will be on your way to achieving excellence.

## Life Changing Behavior Series

#### Part 5 of 6: Six Truths to Learn About Making Mistakes

*"It is not our mistakes that define who we are; it is how we recover from those mistakes."*  
- Bo Bennet

1. **Avoid being a perfectionist.**
   * A perfectionist is driven by "fear of failure."
   * Someone striving for excellence is driven by a "desire for success."
   * Being afraid to make a mistake will create a mental barrier for taking risks.
2. **Learn to apologize for hurting someone's feelings.**
   * Quickly admit when you are wrong.
   * Explore what you can do to prevent the same problem from occurring again.
   * A sincere apology can go a long way to restore trust.
3. **Don't dwell on the mistake; move forward and let it go!**
   * Accept that the mistake was made and can't be changed.
   * Think about what you can learn from the mistake.
     + How could you have avoided the mistake in the first place?
     + What is in place to ensure the mistake does not reoccur?
     + How can you help someone else avoid making the same mistake?
4. **Don't waste time trying to justify mistakes.**
   * Our natural instinct is to try to justify our actions.
   * People are rarely interested in excuses.
5. **Understand why the mistake pattern is repeating.**
   * Did it happen when you were angry? Do you need to work on anger management?
   * Did it happen because you were overwhelmed? Would you benefit from learning new ways to relax?
   * Did it happen because of a bad habit? Can you change the habit and avoid making the same mistake?
6. **Discover that mistakes are opportunities to learn.**
   * You can gain wisdom and self-confidence from analyzing mistakes.
   * You may discover a new strategy for the future.
   * Even though you didn't get the exact result you wanted, at least you tried.

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##### Question

My school choir was holding auditions for a solo in our fall concert. I practiced day and night for weeks; but when the audition was held, I was so scared that I froze. My voice came out all squeaky and off-key. Several of the other students laughed at me and I got angry. I yelled at them for being so mean to me, and I ran off the stage crying. Now I am embarrassed whenever I see any of them at school, and I can't face my teacher. What can I do now?

##### Answer:

You are learning very important lessons about making mistakes: You tried something that did not go well. Your mistake would be never to try a solo again knowing that your teacher knows you have talent. The mistake is usually less important than what you do after making the mistake. Let's apply the 6 Truths to Learn about Making Mistakes to help you get out of this situation.

1. **Perfectionist?** Did you expect the audition to go perfectly? Did a fear of failure get in the way of your doing your best? Don't let this experience stop you from trying again. Go to your choir teacher and ask if you can audition again.
2. **Apologizing** to the teacher and the students for yelling at them will help you. Even though your classmates were cruel to laugh at you, if you will apologize for yelling at them, you will feel better and help heal those relationships. (You might have even laughed at someone else under the same circumstances.)
3. **Accept** that your audition went badly and learn from it. Do you need more experience singing a solo in front of others? To approach the next audition with a less "fear driven" attitude, practice singing in front of friends or family members until you feel more comfortable.
4. **Wasting time** trying to to justify your audition and your emotional outburst is simply that - a waste of time. Apologize with no excuses. "I apologize for yelling at you when you laughed at my squeaky voice during the audition. Now that I think about it, it did sound funny."
5. **Understanding** why you froze and got angry can help you avoid repeating this mistake. Examine how you prepared for the audition. Did you get stressed from too much practice? Were you angry with your classmates or yourself? Have you been in a similar situation and experienced the same result?
6. **Discover** the lessons you can learn from this experience. Explore different strategies for the next audition. Taking deep breaths might calm you before singing. If your peers laugh again, count to 10 before reacting to your classmates. (This really does work.) This delay may give you time to compose yourself or to think of a snappy or even funny comeback. Finally, look at what you accomplished. Even though the audition did not turn out like you wanted, you tried. Stand tall and be proud of yourself! Try again.

## Life Changing Behavior Series

#### Part 6 of 6: Leadership Skills Using the Win-Win Principle

*"A good leader inspires others with confidence in him; a great leader inspires them with confidence in themselves."*  
- Dwight Eisenhower

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| **Step 1:** | **Great leaders learn to listen.** They make an effort to really understand what is being said in a conversation or meeting.   * Listen to the other person's point of view before sharing an opinion.   + Listen for the feelings behind the words.   + Listen for the intended meaning of the message. |
| **Step 2:** | **Great leaders have a cooperative spirit.** They seek solutions using the Win-Win attitude. A person with a Win-Win attitude sees problem situations as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one.   * Seek agreements that can be beneficial to all parties.   + See problems from all parties' perspective.   + Identify key points and concerns.   + Determine options that can get results. |
| **Step 3:** | **Great leaders seek the best solution.** They use creative problem solving strategies and the team approach.   * Value differences: All ideas are put on the table without rejection. * Embrace innovation: Consideration should be given to all ideas, even the most novel ones. * Use each person's strengths: Treat each person as an equal. |
| **Step 4:** | **Great leaders make the final decision.** They create a new solution that pulls together as many ideas as possible, but they give credit to the team that led to the final decision. |

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##### Question

I just got a promotion at work. I now manage 10 other designers. We have daily group meetings during projects, and I am supposed to be in charge. All of our meetings end with me being the dictator boss making the final decisions, and the other designers are angry and hurt. How can I make my team work together?

##### Answer:

Your situation sounds like the perfect time to experiment with the Win-Win approach. Let’s apply the 4 steps to leadership using this principle.

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| **Step 1:** | **Listen!** Do you go into the meeting with a “take charge mentality,” or do you let your team know that you want to hear their ideas? Use a whiteboard and write down the opinions expressed. This will not only show your employees that you value their opinions and ideas, but it will also let you refer to what each person has said before you speak. |
| **Step 2:** | **Seek cooperation, not competition.** Find the common key points and concerns. Then as a team, determine the options that get the best results. Remember Win-Win is not based on compromise or persuading others to see things your way. It is based on an "abundance mentality" - there is room for everybody's ideas. |
| **Step 3:** | **Express your appreciation and admiration for all the ideas expressed at the meeting.** Encourage the team to keep an open mind as the process moves forward. |
| **Step 4:** | **Restate the problem and take charge.** Propose solutions that combine what has been said. All members should feel by now valued. The hurt and angry feelings from the past should be eliminated because everybody has played an important role in the meeting. Don't forget to give give credit to the team for coming up with such good ideas. It will be a Win-Win for all!! |

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."*  
- John Quincy Adams