



Ari Tuckman ([00:05](#)):

Hi there. This is Dr. Ari Tuckman and I am here for another TADD talk. I'm going to be talking about what I'm presenting at this year's 2023 Big ADHD conference sponsored by CHADD, ADDA, and ACO. So my topic this year for our exciting get-together in Baltimore is Persistence isn't futile, and it's kind of a loose part one, part two. I'm going to be talking about how to strengthen your mindset, how to sort of hang in there, how to sort of keep working hard. ADHD coach Brittany Smith is going to be doing a part two where she gets a bit more into the sort of the nitty-gritty details of how to use tools and systems and strategies. However, she's also going to be rather pregnant at the time, so she's going to need a bit of a different persistence.

Ari Tuckman ([00:56](#)):

So let's all send her some really good mojo. But so here's the thing about ADHD is it makes it really easy to kind of not be persistent to kind of give up and feel like, you know, what's the point anyway. That if you don't really understand your ADHD that well, and if you're just sort of not managing it that well, performance can feel really sort of inconsistent, right? Like it's hard to be, I don't know, just sort of effective in a predictable kind of a way, right? Just that basic like getting stuff done. And because it feels so unpredictable, it's kind of easy to kind of blame yourself for it, right? Like other people seem to do this, there must be something wrong with me. I don't recommend that as a point of view, but it's easy to get there, right?

Ari Tuckman ([01:48](#)):

And a lot of what I do as a psychologist here, here in my office all day is help folks with ADHD better understand how ADHD impacts them and more importantly, what they can do differently to sort of manage the demands of life more effectively. And when it comes to this, right, one of the sort of basic ideas of therapy is it's not just what happens, it's the meaning that we make of what happens, right? How do we interpret these events? So if you do something well and it works out, I don't know, is that just luck? Did you just get lucky? Do you give away the success? On the other hand, if it doesn't work out, do you take the blame, right? Do you say, yeah, I know. because I didn't do the things I was supposed to do, right?

Ari Tuckman ([02:38](#)):

So to what extent are successes or failures attributed to just plain old luck to external events to just inherent ability or character, which means you can't really change it that much. Or is it about kind of the effort you put in and the practice that you've been applying? So for example, if you've really been working hard at, you know, putting stuff into your schedule and setting reminders, right? When it works out well, do you give yourself credit? Do you say, yeah, I've been being intentional about this. This is something I'm working hard at. Maybe I'm not perfect. Maybe I don't do it all the time, but when I do it, things tend to work out better, right? So like, that's a place to give yourself a bit of credit. Those are the moments to notice so that you can continue to persist in the rest of the demands of life that continue to be difficult.

Ari Tuckman ([03:28](#)):

So sometimes, like I've got this line I sometimes use, which is, when it comes to managing ADHD, take it seriously, but not personally, right? So seriously, meaning work hard at it, right? ADHD is going to keep showing up. So you need to keep showing up with good effort, with good intention, with something of a smile on your face. Maybe that's too much to ask, but you know, at least some sort of a positive attitude, by which I mean feeling that you have the ability to do what you need to do. Now sometimes things don't work out, right? They don't. And sometimes it's just random bad luck, but sometimes there's something to be learned from it, right? Or another way of putting it is every intervention is diagnostic, right? So I did this thing, how did it work out?

Ari Tuckman ([04:21](#)):

What parts of it went well? Where did things not work out well, are there lessons to be learned here? So in other words, I set a reminder that's good, but I didn't really hear the reminder because that got lost in all the other stuff going on in my phone. Cool, that's good to know. Maybe you need a different kind of reminder. Maybe you need less other stuff going on on your phone. So, right? It's this sort of way of approaching it with this problem solving mindset, that takes every experience as an opportunity to learn something, right? To figure out something a little bit better about how to be more effective in your life. Or another way of putting it is aging is mandatory. Wisdom is optional, right? So we want to gain as much wisdom as we can. Now, one of the big things for me in terms of how I think about this is that, you know, if you're not managing your ADHD well, too much of your life becomes about kind of like avoiding negatives, you know, so stuff like, I have a big paper, I'm not ready for it.

Ari Tuckman ([05:29](#)):

I need to stay up all night to get it done. Or as an adult, you know, just all that stuff, right? Screaming at the last minute to get something done for your boss, right? So it's not about, this is interesting, I feel good about what I'm doing. It's more about I need to dodge the bullet here, right? I need to kind of pull my bacon out of the fire. Which I mean, it's sort of motivating, like fear and panic. I mean, it works, but it's not inspiring, right? You don't feel good at the end of the day when you sort of dodge the bullet. So it becomes a situation that if too much of what you're doing all day is about avoiding those negative outcomes, then pursuing the positive outcomes kind of get squeezed out, right? Like, you don't have the time, the energy or just the sort of like, emotional bandwidth to pursue the things that are really actually interesting, the stuff that's meaningful, the stuff that's important, the stuff that makes life kind of worth living.

Ari Tuckman ([06:33](#)):

And I feel like that is ultimately the biggest loss. So it kind of then, you know, it sort of raises a question of like, what's actually worth working towards? Right? What matters to you? And that, that is then the motivation to do the other work when you don't feel like doing it. I'm going to put it another way. Like, I'm sort of okay with suffering if you get something for it, right? Like suffering just to suffer seems like a kind of terrible sales pitch, but suffering for something better. I don't know, like that's easier, I think to swallow. It's easier to take on. So kind of a couple questions I'll sometimes use with clients is, what do you want and what are you willing to do to get it right? Like really, really what do you want? What's important to you?

Ari Tuckman ([07:25](#)):

What's significant and meaningful? And therefore what is worth the effort to make that happen? So, you know, to be effective in the world, you need to work well with others. Which obviously like, you know, we need to be kind of good partners or good coworkers or good neighbors or whatever, good roommates. So, you know, you do need to take other people's standards and preferences and desires into account, but it kind of becomes this thing if you're not managing your ADHD, well, I don't know, it can feel like other people are the ones who set the bar, right? They're the ones who decide this is what you need to do. And then unfortunately, it's a bit of a setup for disappointment on their part and maybe failure on your part. So, you know, so kind of think about it, right?

Ari Tuckman ([08:18](#)):

How good is good enough? Certainly everyone has an opinion, but you also get to have an opinion on that. So, you know, like that's another piece of it is recognizing what are the right kind of expectations to have. So it brings me then to a quote that I keep, this is like my new favorite quote that I use in all my presentations. And it's from Rick Green, the Awesome Rick Green from ADD and Loving It and totallyadd.com. So he had this great line where he says, I used to suffer from ADHD, now I just have it. And I think it's so great because the one doesn't have to mean the other, right? That you're still going to have ADHD. That part won't change. But my hope is that from this presentation, the other awesome stuff going on at the conference, that there's going to be a lot less suffering, right? Like, your life will be better, it'll be more interesting and more meaningful. So thank you for joining me for this TADD Talk. I look forward to seeing you either in person in Baltimore or online. And, you know, check out all the other awesome speakers who are doing these TADD talks. Thanks a lot.