



# FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

# ON ADHD

## Find Your Strength in the Workplace and Dispel the Myths Along Your Path



### FOCUS ON | THE WORKPLACE

by Michelle Raz, MEd, BCC, CSS

**I**F YOU HAVE ADHD, you've probably been told to look for a job that will accommodate your ADHD weaknesses.

Over and over, people tell you to become a firefighter, a hairdresser, or join the military. "You'll do great because these jobs will let you move around a lot. You won't have to sit still! They're better for someone who has ADHD."

There's nothing at all wrong with these jobs.

But are they *really* right for *you*?

Many people have found careers they love that are different than those said to be "right" for someone with ADHD. You're one of a kind. Having ADHD is only one facet to consider when choosing a career. You don't belong in a box!

One thing I have found with people with ADHD is that they are consistently inconsistent and break the mold in all areas of their life. The unpredictable nature can lead to incredible surprises in their life and careers. Given the right resources and support, people are breaking many myths out there about the perfect job for someone with ADHD.

### **1** The myth of business ownership

An example I hear a lot: "All people with ADHD are creative and should own a business."

Not true! But it is entirely possible.

While many people with ADHD are great idea generators, they often lack the organizational skills needed to sustain a successful business. Without the structures and systems in place to help run the day to day tasks, you may find it overwhelming to get the business actually started.

I don't discourage you from turning your big idea into a successful business. You may be creative and a risk taker. Those qualities make you a perfect candidate to start a business, but be aware you may need help instead of trying to do it alone.

Create the structure in which both you and your business can succeed. Choose your business model wisely and set up the business using all the resources available to you.

A good business coach who helps clients with ADHD can help you to create systems, processes, tools, and structures that will work with your strengths and ADHD qualities and keep you moving toward your goals.

## 2 The myth of detailed work

You may also have been told: “A job that has a lot of detailed work would not be a good fit for someone with ADHD.”

But yes, you *can* do detailed work—that interests you.

Do you ever get so lost in doing something you love that time flies? You don’t hear people who are calling your name, and you even forget to eat.

If you already know you can concentrate for long periods of time on something you find interesting, your ability to hyperfocus can help you excel. So if you love crunching numbers, and you don’t give up until you find the right answer, you might be an excellent mathematician or accountant.

Or, your ability to focus and solve technical problems may make the fields of computer science or networking consultant a great fit for you.

Steven, who loved the sciences and mathematical problem-solving tasks, had a hard time focusing during high school in classes he found boring. He earned poor grades, limiting his college choices. So, he decided to enter a community college to learn better study skills before transferring to a four-year college. He loaded up his classes with science and math. He needed help with organizational skills and follow-through in the subjects he did not enjoy. The results were nearly straight As. He is now pursuing a medical degree in orthopedics, which requires intense schooling, high concentration levels, and precise skills in a fast-paced environment. I have full confidence he found his niche.

The ability to hyperfocus on something that interests and stimulates you is a strength that can pay off and will provide clues to a rewarding job.

## 3 The myth of conquering your weaknesses to get hired

Advice given to many people with ADHD: “Identify your weaknesses, then work to improve them.”

Ignore that advice.

Instead, develop your strengths and find ways to work around your weaknesses with support and systems in place. Not only will you feel happier, you’ll achieve more by focusing on your strengths.

Albert Einstein displayed many traits of having ADHD. He was forgetful and disorganized. Yet his ability to focus, to look at problems differently, and to ask creative questions made him one of the most famous scientists in history.

But can you imagine if he’d chosen to focus on his weaknesses instead of his strengths? I’m not sure anyone would be as excited about Einstein the amazing organizer.

**Do not skip past careers that you would love because you believe your ADHD means you can’t do them. It’s time to ditch limiting beliefs and go for what you want.**

So, if you love science but don’t have organizational skills due to your ADHD, you could still be a science superachiever with a good mindset and the right resources in place to support you.

## 4 The myth that people with ADHD don’t get things done

Technology can be your best friend. When a system is in place and a good routine is established, people with ADHD can achieve monumental tasks.

People with ADHD often tell me their main goals for self-improvement are time management, organization, and accountability. Technology is a tool that many of my clients rely on for day-to-day tasks. Once they find a system that works for them, their productivity soars.

Joe is an example of what I call a “Champion To-Doist.” He worked in the construction field, in a supervisory role that required him to answer calls, emails, and follow up with paperwork daily. The pace was fast and the information felt like a superhighway of to-do lists. Every day it seemed like he was going into combat, putting out fires and delegating commands without getting his to-do list completed.

Although he felt his ADHD helped him to multitask, he came home exhausted and feeling defeated. He feared he would lose his job. Through our discussions it was clear that his routine had become reacting to the day rather than responding to it.

Joe created goals and a system he could follow and put it into actionable steps:

- Find a time to focus without disruption.
- Find systems for organizing emails.
- Develop a method to respond to demands.
- Prioritize important items.
- Track daily success.

Once he was able to step back and brainstorm ideas to help him establish a routine, he could embrace his demands. He felt empowered and in charge of his workflow. His worries subsided and he was able to focus on building his leadership skills. He implemented new ideas with better routines for the entire company that increased overall productivity.

He became a Champion To-Doist.

## 5 A credible myth: ADHD can be a powerful gift

True! While ADHD brings a lot of weaknesses, it also brings intense emotions and highly focused areas of interest that I call “the power of ADHD.”

Simone Biles is the most decorated US gymnast in history. She also has ADHD, and has spoken openly about her diagnosis. As she says, it just means her brain works a little differently. Biles refuses to let ADHD limit her achievements. She engaged her supernatural ability to hyperfocus on something and go beyond the norm.

The famous musicians Adam Levine and Justin Timberlake are others who have gone beyond the stereotypes of a person with ADHD. They have learned to harness the out-of-the-box creativity that’s a characteristic of some people with ADHD, and use it to fuel success as a dancer, singer, and songwriter. When you learn to view your ADHD as a powerful tool, you’ll open up many career possibilities you didn’t know were possible.

### Explore the possibilities

Ditch those myths that are limiting beliefs and act on the ones that serve your journey to success.

Everyone has some type of challenge in their life that can hold them back from success. I challenge you to look at your limiting beliefs from a different perspective: What has this challenge brought into your life that can be used as an asset for developing a career that is meant *just for you*?

Do not skip past careers that you would love because you believe your ADHD means you can’t do them. It’s time to ditch limiting beliefs and go for what you want.

I encourage you to take time and explore what interests you. The websites O\*NET OnLine and My Next Move have good information on jobs and their future. You can investigate many different job descriptions, skills needed, educational requirements and pay. Fire up your imagination!

Become a success story of someone who stopped holding back from a career they loved and just went for it. Learn to use ADHD as a strength instead of feeling ashamed of the diagnosis. See where you go next in your career journey. It will change your life.

It’s exciting when you find a way to break through the barriers you thought limited you from achieving your dream career. Explore your possibilities and continue to break the mold! 🎧

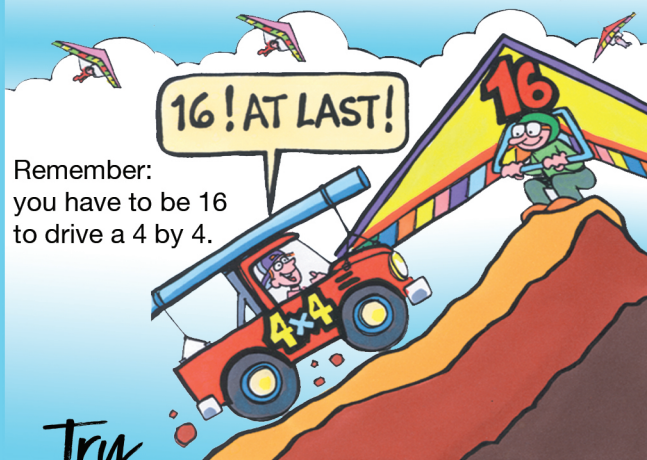
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An ADHD and career services specialist, **Michelle Raz, MEd**, is a board certified coach, blogger, webinar host, and owner of Raz Coaching. She is the author of Happiness + Passion + Purpose: A Step by Step Guide on How to Nourish the Patterns of Your Life Into the Job You Will Love and Land It! (Independent, 2019). Raz is dedicated to helping people work with their unique challenges, find their true passion in life, find a career they will love, and connect the dots to get there.

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