

## Media Critique on Disability Discussion

Source: McCabe, J. (2017). Failing at Normal: ADHD Success Story.

TEDx Talks. Retrieved on March 5, 2021

from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiwZQNYlGQI>Links to an external site.

In the story “Failing at Normal: An ADHD Success Story”, Jessica McCabe describes a life very similar to Joshua from the LD and Life Stories book. She describes being very intellectually smart at an early age, but was unable to stay organized and was socially awkward and had little friends. She describes trying extremely hard at small tasks that seemed easy for normal people but took great effort and still could not get to where she wanted to be. When Jessica was in middle school she realized she could no longer get by with being intellectually smart, but had to be independent and be able to get from class to class and remember to do homework. Although this may seem like the easy part in middle school, she describes it extremely challenging and could not stay focused enough to do the common school activities that did not involve academics. She had a hard time making friends as many people with ADHD describe in their younger years. It is also because of her social struggles growing up, she was able to relate how others feel and empathize with their difficulties. This led her to create her own YouTube Channel “How to ADHD”, where she could reach out to others with ADHD who shared the same experiences. Documenting what she experienced and had learned through research, she was able to make a career where she was finally able to use her ADHD in a way that made her feel like she was finally at a point in her life where she was truly happy. For years she kept feeling like a failure and could not understand why she struggled with simple tasks; but by building a connection and reaching out to others with similar stories, she was able to help herself and others realize that they are not alone.

As Jessica describes in her video, there is a lot of educational material pertaining to ADHD although it is very technical and geared towards teachers and researchers. Unfortunately, this does not help the common person since it is mainly about how to deal with someone that has ADHD and not for people that actually have it. I believe one of the strongest mechanisms for helping people with ADHD is support groups and to let them know that they are not alone. Even with medications like Jessica had, there are still other

aspects that are not fixed such as how to deal with failure and how to channel your energy in school or handle social situations. I do think that research is getting better on understanding what ADHD is and how learning can be different. Statistics show that 5-8 % of people in the world are diagnosed with ADHD, although I believe that number is much higher. Because many people in society view people with ADHD, as lazy or stupid, many are afraid of receiving the help they need and are embarrassed to talk about their condition. I believe if there were more support groups and people weren't afraid of being labeled than more people would open up and find the help that they need like Jessica did. She refused to let ADHD interfere with her life and found a way to cope with her disability and realized that she was not alone. Jessica mentions the quote "If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid... If you spend your whole time trying to get a fish to climb a tree, then you will never see how far it can swim". Many people in society tend to focus on the negatives of people ADHD, and do not realize the potential they can have with the right support. Depending on the type of support system a person with ADHD has it can lead to them either excelling in life, or continuing in a cycle of disappointment and failure.

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