

The Angriest Angel

Foreword

When Chris first told me he was going to write a book on ADHD, I was encouraging--outwardly. Inwardly I had my doubts. I have been a psychiatrist for almost 10 years and have seen over 200 ADHD patients (and counting) and I can tell you, it's a tricky topic. Try an internet search on "Books on ADHD" and you'll see an overwhelming amount of material.

In many ways, Chris epitomizes the ADHD patient, academic struggles and the like, he's very misunderstood, defiant, highly creative, and has an interesting point of view on almost any topic. But what stood out to me was his analysis and observation of the mundane. He seemed to see things that others did not. Things of which you would never consider, such as how honesty can be selfish, or how slow lines don't begin to matter until another one moves faster.

Let me step back and explain something about psychiatry. Psychiatrists are physicians who diagnose and treat problems in brain chemistry which lead to abnormal emotions and behaviors impacting day to day functioning. With the advent of what is called biological psychiatry, there is considerable emphasis on prescribing medications to fix these abnormal emotions and behaviors. As more and more drugs are released into the market, the role of the *psychosocial* aspect of psychiatric disorders is largely forgotten. Psychology of the mind is as important to psychiatry as the neurology of brain.

I did my internship at Harvard and completed the psychiatry residency program at the University of Chicago, two schools which emphasize understanding human behavior and psychosocial aspects of psychiatric disorders. This is an important aspect as it pertains to Chris, because the more he explained his ideas to me, the more I saw that he was on to something.

Then one day Chris came to my office and confessed that as he sat down to write his book on how ADHD affected his life and how it led to these observations, something was missing. He told me, 'you know what Dr. M., I am going to throw it all away. It's just not working.'

But before I could encourage him not to give up, he quickly told me he hadn't. He simply changed it from a non-fiction to fiction. He made it a novel.

'Think of it,' he said. 'The protagonist has ADHD, loosely based off of me, though more of a hard luck case. I'll throw in a couple of my observations and wrap the whole thing in science fiction. What better way to tell my story?'

I was both confused and intrigued, for this had *not* been done before.

I told him I loved the idea, but as interesting as it sounded I still wasn't sure how it would all come together. Little did I know that a few short years later I would be writing the foreword for what turned out to be an astounding series of books!

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is not very well understood by people, in general. Patients suffering from ADHD do not evoke sympathetic responses from others the way patients with depression or other mental health issues do. They suffer internally, because nobody understands how

simple tasks are hard for them and why they miss deadlines and appear not to care or seem irresponsible. ADHD is a *neurodevelopmental* disorder. Unlike a psychological condition, ADHD represents an abnormal physiology in the brain, thus, ADHD sufferers become symptomatic at a very young age. And though many sufferers can live a normal life, their normalcy masks a terrible set of challenges the rest of us will never know. Things like inattentiveness and impatience are no more a choice to sufferers than sneezing is to those with allergies. But unlike allergies, there is no hay fever season for ADHD--it's every minute of every day.

Although this story is a fiction, there are enough facts to do a great service to those suffering from ADHD, and it may just open the eyes of those who do not. The story is deep with feeling, the characters are colorful and insightful, and the ride is pure enjoyment.

Speaking for all of those who continue to work with this intriguing disorder--Thank You, Chris. I shouldn't have doubted that you could do this. Not for a second.

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