



Quotes by Famous People with Learning Disabilities or ADHD

plus other equally inspiring quotes

“The looks, the stares, the giggles . . . I wanted to show everybody that I could do better and also that I could read.”

- *Magic Johnson*

“I had to train myself to focus my attention. I became very visual and learned how to create mental images in order to comprehend what I read.”

- *Tom Cruise*

“You should prefer a good scientist without literary abilities than a literate one without scientific skills.”

- *Leonardo da Vinci*

“Having made a strenuous effort to understand the symbols he could make nothing of, he wept giant tears. . . .”

- *Caroline Commanville, on her uncle, Gustave Flaubert*

“I, myself, was always recognized . . . as the "slow one" in the family. It was quite true, and I knew it and accepted it. Writing and spelling were always terribly difficult for me. My letters were without originality. I was . . . an extraordinarily bad speller and have remained so until this day.”

- *Agatha Christie*

“I couldn't read. I just scraped by. My solution back then was to read classic comic books because I could figure them out from the context of the pictures. Now I listen to books on tape.”

- *Charles Schwab*

“I hated school One of the reasons was a learning disability, dyslexia, which no one understood at the time. I still can't spell”

- *Loretta Young*

“I was one of the 'puzzle children' myself -- a dyslexic And I still have a hard time reading today. Accept the fact that you have a problem. Refuse to feel sorry for yourself. You have a challenge; never quit!”

- *Nelson Rockefeller*

"I never read in school. I got really bad grades--D's and F's and C's in some classes, and A's and B's in other classes. In the second week of the 11th grade, I just quit. When I was in school, it was really difficult. Almost everything I learned, I had to learn by listening. My report cards always said that I was not living up to my potential."

- *Cher*

"When I had dyslexia, they didn't diagnose it as that. It was frustrating and embarrassing. I could tell you a lot of horror stories about what you feel like on the inside."

- *Nolan Ryan*

"I was, on the whole, considerably discouraged by my school days. It was not pleasant to feel oneself so completely outclassed and left behind at the beginning of the race."

- *Winston Churchill*

"Willie was sent to lessons in spelling and grammar, but he never learned to spell. To the end of his life he produced highly idiosyncratic versions of words."

- *Biographer A. Norman Jeffares on William Butler Yeats*

"My father was an angry and impatient teacher and flung the reading book at my head."

- *W.B. Yeats*

"My teachers say I'm addled . . . my father thought I was stupid, and I almost decided I must be a dunce."

- *Thomas Edison*

"Since I was the stupidest kid in my class, it never occurred to me to try and be perfect, so I've always been happy as a writer just to entertain myself. That's an easier place to start."

- *Stephen J. Cannell, screenwriter, producer, & director*

"He told me that his teachers reported that . . . he was mentally slow, unsociable, and adrift forever in his foolish dreams."

- *Hans Albert Einstein, on his father, Albert Einstein*

"Kids made fun of me because I was dark skinned, had a wide nose, and was dyslexic. Even as an actor, it took me a long time to realize why words and letters got jumbled in my mind and came out differently."

- *Danny Glover, actor*

"I just barely got through school. The problem was a learning disability, at a time when there was nowhere to get help."

- *Bruce Jenner, Olympic gold medalist*

"I grew up in a school system . . . where nobody understood the meaning of learning disorder. In the West Indies, I was constantly being physically abused because the whipping of students was permitted."

- *Harry Belafonte*

"I barely made it through school. I read real slow. But I like to find things that nobody else has found, like a dinosaur egg that has an embryo inside. Well, there are 36 of them in the world, and I found 35."

- *Dr. John R. Horner, American paleontologist*

"Young George . . . although he was bright and intelligent and bursting with energy, he was unable to read and write. Patton's wife corrected his spelling, his punctuation, and his grammar."

- *Biographer Martin Blumenson on General George Patton*

"I am, myself, a very poor visualizer and find that I can seldom call to mind even a single letter of the alphabet in purely retinal terms. I must trace the letter by running my mental eye over its contour in order that the image of it shall leave any distinctness at all."

- *William James, psychologist and philosopher*

"My problem was reading very slowly. My parents said "Take as long as you need. As long as you're going to read, just keep at it." We didn't know about learning disabilities back then."

- *Roger Wilkins, head of the Pulitzer Prize Board*

"As a child, I was called stupid and lazy. On the SAT I got 159 out of 800 in math. My parents had no idea that I had a learning disability."

- *Henry Winkler, actor*

"Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds."

- *Albert Einstein*

"A teacher sent the following note home with a six-year-old boy: "He is too stupid to learn." That boy was Thomas A. Edison."

- *Thomas Edison*

"Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere."

- *Albert Einstein*

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“If you can dream it, you can do it.”

- *Walt Disney*

“My mother was the making of me. She was so true, so sure of me and I felt I had someone to live for, someone I must not disappoint.”

- *Thomas Edison*

“Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I learn.
Involve me and I remember.”

- *Benjamin Franklin*

“If, at first, an idea is not absurd, there is no hope for it.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Your brain is much better than you think; just use it!”

- *Leonardo Da Vinci*

“If I wasn’t dyslexic, I probably wouldn’t have won the Games. If I had been a better reader, then that would have come easily, sports would have come easily... and I never would have realized that the way you get ahead in life is hard work.”

- *Bruce Jenner*

“By logic and reason we die hourly. By imagination we live.”

- *William Butler Yeats*

“Before you can do something that you’ve never done, you have to be able to imagine it is possible.”

- *Jean Shinoda Bolen*

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Joy in looking and comprehending is nature’s most beautiful gift.”

- *Albert Einstein*

He did not speak until the age of three and teachers labeled him mentally slow. “Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.”

- *Walt Disney*

“If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.”

- *Thomas Edison*

“When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.”

- *George Washington*

“It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.”

- *Leonardo da Vinci*

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

- *Winston Churchill*

“I felt like an alien. I always felt like I never belonged to any group that I wanted to belong to.”

- *Steven Spielberg*

“If you are dyslexic, your eyes work fine, your brain works fine, but there is a little short circuit in the wire that goes between the eye and the brain. Reading is not a fluid process. ”

- *Bruce Jenner*

“What you are will show in what you do.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“It caused more problems as a young kid, because the simple process of perceiving words on a piece of paper was hard for me. Many people think dyslexic people see things backwards. They don’t see things backwards. ”

- *Bruce Jenner*

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

- *Winston Churchill*

“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“Do you want to know who you are? Don’t ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.”

- *Thomas Jefferson*

“Passion is the great slayer of adversity. Focus on strengths and what you enjoy.”

- *Charles Schwab*

“I never did anything by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident; they came by work.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“My father was an angry and impatient teacher and flung the reading book at my head.”

- *W.B. Yeats*

“Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.”

- *Scott Adams (Cartoonist)*

“Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“I start where the last man left off.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“Many of life’s failures are men who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

- *Thomas Edison*

“The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding.”

-*Leonardo da Vinci*

“It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Difficulties mastered are opportunities won.”

- *Winston Churchill*

“The biggest problem with dyslexic kids is not the perceptual problem; it is their perception of themselves. That was my biggest problem.”

- *Bruce Jenner*

“Be courageous. I have seen many depressions in business. Always America has emerged from these stronger and more prosperous. Be brave as your fathers before you. Have faith! Go forward!”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation. It is better be alone than in bad company.”

-*George Washington*

“Many times I can see a solution to something differently and quicker than other people. I see the end zone and say ‘This is where I want to go.’”

- *Charles Schwab*

“Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius.”

- *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

“History is written by the victors.”

- *Winston Churchill*

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“There is far more opportunity than there is ability.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“There is no expedient to which a man will not go to avoid the labor of thinking.”

-*Thomas A. Edison*

“Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“We should not look back unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dearly bought experience.”

- *George Washington*

“My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her.”

- *George Washington*

“Intellectuals solve problems, geniuses prevent them.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“I was dyslexic before anybody knew what dyslexia was. I was called ‘slow’. It’s an awful feeling to think of yourself as ‘slow’ – it’s horrible.”

- *Robert Benton*

“Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.”

- *Thomas Jefferson*

“I pay no attention whatever to anybody’s praise or blame. I simply follow my own feelings.”

- *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

“I was very active but I was dyslexic and had a really hard time at school.”

- *Ashley Scott*

“I’m a human being, I’m not a machine. I’m 72. I’m dyslexic.”

- *Robert Blake*

“I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.’

- *Thomas Edison*

“Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience.”

- *George Washington*

“I always felt a bit alone and isolated from other people...I did a lot of pretending as a child. It was my way of coping with the fact that I didn’t feel like I fit in.”

- *Keneau Reeves*

“Never lose a holy curiosity.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Failure in school does not mean failure in life.”

- *Steven J. Cannell, TV producer*

“Knowledge of what is does not open the door directly to what should be.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“I never worry about action, but only inaction.”

- *Winston Churchill*

“If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?”

- *Albert Einstein*

“They say President Wilson has blundered. Perhaps he has, but I notice he usually blunders forward.”

- *Thomas A. Edison*

“I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.”

- *Agatha Christie, author*

In reference to his being the class clown: “I didn’t want anyone to know that I didn’t get it.”

- *Tommy Hilfiger*

"I firmly believe that deep in their soul everyone has a champion that can overcome obstacles and do great things."

- *Bruce Jenner*

"My childhood was extremely lonely. I was dyslexic and lots of kids make fun of me. That experience made me tough inside, because you learn to quietly accept ridicule."

- *Tom Cruise*

"From a note signed by this dyslexic and his mother: "If I don't miss one day of school this year I get \$1.00."

- *Nelson A. Rockefeller*

"Be courteous to all, but intimate with few, and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence."

- *George Washington*

"My diary is a disaster...I can't spell at all...I'll spell the same word completely differently in the same sentence."

- *Liv Tyler*

"Life is full of challenges. How you handle these challenges is what builds character. Never be afraid to be who you are."

- *Erin Brockovich*

"I used to love reading when I was little, and then it became difficult and I didn't understand why. I thought, what a bummer, my passion all drained out of me. So when I found out I had dyslexia, it was like, oh, that's what it was."

- *Jewel, singer*

"My learning disabilities pushed me to discover talents that I wasn't aware of having. It has also led me to develop products to help others who struggled through school as I did."

- *Reyn Geyer, inventor of Nerf balls & Twister*

"My mom and I used to go to Hollywood and look at all the rich people. I said then that someday I was going to be somebody. I even practiced signing my autograph."

- *Cher*

"It is not easy to compete when you have LD, but it is possible."

- *Henry Winkler*

"I get stubborn and dig in when people tell me I can't do something and I think I can. It goes back to my childhood when I had problems in school because I have a learning disability. I never wanted to be perceived as handicapped or limited in any way."

- *Ann Bancroft, polar explorer*

"If you read to me I could tell you everything that was read. They didn't know what it was. They knew I wasn't lazy, but what was it?"

- *Whoopi Goldberg*

"One thing about mildly dyslexic people – they're good at setting everything else aside to pursue one goal."

- *Jay Leno*

"When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing positive knowledge."

- *Albert Einstein*

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity"

- *Albert Einstein*

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

- *Albert Einstein*

"Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school."

- *Albert Einstein*

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning."

- *Albert Einstein*

"You never fail until you stop trying."

- *Albert Einstein*

"Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value."

- *Albert Einstein*

"Creativity is intelligence having fun."

- *Albert Einstein*

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“We dance for laughter, we dance for tears, we dance for madness, we dance for fears, we dance for hopes, we dance for screams, we are the dancers, we create the dreams.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them.”

- *Albert Einstein*

“Formal education will make you a living; self-education will make you a fortune.”

- *Jim Rohn*

“When you see a good person, think of becoming like her/him. When you see someone not so good, reflect on your own weak points.”

- *Confucius*

“Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.”

- *Jim Rohn*

“I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen.”

- *Ernest Hemingway*

“Everybody has talent, but ability takes hard work.”

- *Michael Jordan*

“Always dream and shoot higher than you know you can do. Do not bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself.”

- *William Faulkner*

“It’s commonplace to nitpick on minor faults. But to actually improve on those minor faults – that’s just tedious.”

- *Benson Bruno*

“You are essentially who you create yourself to be and all that occurs in your life is the result of your own making.”

- *Stephen Richards*

“As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world - that is the myth of the atomic age - as in being able to remake ourselves.”

- *Mahatma Gandhi*

“To be calm and compassionate you need courage and conviction.”

- *Solange Nicole*

“If you argue and rankle and contradict, you may achieve a victory sometimes; but it will be an empty victory because you will never get your opponent’s good will.”

- *Dale Carnegie*

“I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will.”

- *Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre*

“When you’re different, sometimes you don’t see the millions of people who accept you for what you are. All you notice is the person who doesn’t.”

- *Jodi Picoult, Change of Heart*

“At the center of your being
you have the answer;
you know who you are
and you know what you want.”

- *Lao Tzu*

“Don’t compromise yourself. You’re all you’ve got.”

- *Janis Joplin*

“Part of the problem with the word 'disabilities' is that it immediately suggests an inability to see or hear or walk or do other things that many of us take for granted. But what of people who can't feel? Or talk about their feelings? Or manage their feelings in constructive ways? What of people who aren't able to form close and strong relationships? And people who cannot find fulfillment in their lives, or those who have lost hope, who live in disappointment and bitterness and find in life no joy, no love? These, it seems to me, are the real disabilities.”

- Fred Rogers, *The World According to Mister Rogers: Important Things to Remember*

“You don't need anybody to tell you who you are or what you are. You are what you are!”

- John Lennon

“The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself.”

- Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*

“My friend...care for your psyche...know thyself, for once we know ourselves, we may learn how to care for ourselves.”

- Socrates

“Understanding is the first step to acceptance, and only with acceptance can there be recovery.”

- J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

“Innovation takes time. It is a focused process that comes out of relaxed, secure, and supportive environments that encourage thought and creativity.”

- Debbi Robbins

“Dyslexia is a neurological issue; not a character flaw.”

- James Redford, Director, *The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia*
