

Tips for living with a person with ADD (Attention Difference Difficulty)

- From my wife, writer Peggy Payne (peggypayne.com)

—If you want him or her to move piles of stuff, suggest an alternative that meets the same need that the current location does. For example, storing things on the stairs or in the doorway makes something visible — so if you want those piles moved, help arrange another place that is equally visible, but more to your own liking.

—Any time the person's clutter is driving you mad and there's no changing it for the moment, find some of your own stuff that's also a mess and make that look better.

—Remember that his or her repeated and seemingly frivolous delays! in getting out the door to go anywhere/do anything are not pointed attempts to ruin your life. Remember ways that he or she is tolerant of your peculiarities.

—When he/she gets frustrated, stay cool. Remember not to get drawn into his/her irritation or agitation. Be sure not to be sarcastic either; stay calm, and if this is impossible, go for a walk or focus on some other activity. Putting on some calming music might help him/her and you.

—Make sure not to become a doormat or valet. When you're out of town, this person is able to function without you. Just because you happen to be around doesn't mean you're responsible for finding all/any temporarily misplaced objects....

—Negotiate. Talk with your person about various aspects of the situation that are frustrating to you so he or she can consider options & choices for discovering some other ways of handling that particular thing.

—If you're talking and the person is on a jag of interrupting you to the point that you're naturally frustrated/angry, let them know. It beats seething and building resentment, and lets them know both who you are, and the consequences of their behavior.

—Enjoy: 1) the excitement and enthusiasm and creativity that frequently accompany the darting attention, and 2) the positive possibilities of their times of hyper-focusing.

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