

Writing about a day in the life of ADHD is a tricky thing. I don't think any two ADHD days look the same, from person to person or even from day to day; chaos and adventure are our constant companions.

But I tried to capture what most ADHD days contain:

A rollercoaster of successes and failures; moments of genius and what can feel like stupidity; both distractibility and hyperfocus; good intentions gone off the rails; the little wounds we suffer being judged by the outside world (and by judging ourselves); and the healing we experience simply by being understood and accepted for who we are.

Hope this piece helps with that understanding.

### [My Morning Scramble](#)

I wake up suddenly, search for my phone — what time is it??

Oh, okay. Still early.

It takes me awhile to fall back asleep -- restless legs -- but as soon as I do, the alarm goes off. The snooze button and I trade punches until my fiancé turns it off.

I jolt awake — what time is it??

I scramble for my phone. 11 am.

Oh SHOOT. Totally missed my morning yoga class, and now there's not even time to shower. I growl "why did you turn off the alarm???" at my fiancé and stumble toward the dryer for clean clothes...which are still in the washer. I start a new cycle then dig through the hamper, literally sniffing for something wearable.

I throw on semi-decent clothes, deodorant, mascara, take my meds — I'm almost out, SHOOT, gotta make an appointment to get another prescription — grab a Fiber One bar on the way out the door --

-- I run back inside, grab my phone. 11:15. YES! I'll still make it to my meeting!

With time to spare, I run upstairs to kiss my fiancé goodbye and apologize for my morning crankiness. And I'm out the door! Woot!

I run back inside to grab my keys. 11:19. STILL GOOD!

### [The Part Where I Wish Time Machines Were a Thing](#)

As I jump on the freeway, I remember to call my psychiatrist -- also that I forgot to charge my phone last night. Gotta decide between my headphones or my charger (thanks, iPhone 7). 4% battery? Charger wins. I wish wireless headphones were an option, but I have a hard enough time not losing regular headphones. And technically, they're on a leash.

I try using speakerphone but it's too noisy on the freeway, so I hold the phone up to my ear as I call. The receptionist says there's only one appointment available before my meds run out — do I want it? “Um...let me check my calendar...”

Shoot. It's the same time as “coffee with Anna.” This would be the second time in a row I've canceled on her...not much choice though. I'll make it up to her, I vow...somehow.

I bring the phone back to my ear and see police lights in my rear-view. I panic and wonder how long they've been following me. The receptionist is halfway through confirming my appointment -- I hang up and pull over.

One policeman eyes the dirty plates on my passenger-side floor (I call these my “car dishes”) as the other hands me a ticket. As soon as they turn away, I start bawling. But I'm very aware I deserved it and weirdly grateful for being called out -- I'll definitely drive safer from now on.

Wait, 11:35?!

I get back on the road and check Waze obsessively to see whether I can make up for lost time. I drive faster, but Waze is annoyingly accurate: 8 minutes late as predicted. Well, not terrible... you don't really need to call unless you'll be more than 15 minutes late, right?

Except I still needed to park...and fix my mascara...and walk over...

12:17. Ugh, I should have called. “SO sorry I'm late!”

My friend is unfazed. I can't decide if I'm grateful he isn't annoyed or depressed that he expected it.

I tell him that, half joking, but he takes me seriously and says, “I used to have trouble with that, too. So now I just leave early.”

But this is what I hear -- I can do it, why can't you?

I don't know. I try. It never seems to work out. I don't get it either.

He starts pitching an Internet project he wants me to write, and I'm having trouble focusing. I'm doing a good job of pretending, though. I've got the thoughtful nod down.

Plus, my meds should kick in soon --

Seriously though, does he have to talk that slow?

I see a server hand someone a check and I wonder how much my ticket was for. When do I have to pay it by? Do I have to pay by check? Do I even HAVE checks anymore? Wait, did I set up autopay for my new credit card?

I've missed half of what he's saying. Oops. I start playing with my spinner ring to ground my attention. Focusing gets easier, but this doesn't look as good as the thoughtful nod. I can tell he's wondering if I'm listening now. Ah, the irony.

Honestly, this project sounds cool. But something feels off; I don't know what. I have good instincts, but I'm kinda new at this whole "success" thing — I failed pretty regularly the first decade of my adult life. It's weird being successful enough that other people want to work with you. It's even weirder having to decide whether or not they get to.

I awkwardly end the meeting.

### [Back on Schedule -- Let's Try to Keep it That Way](#)

I check my bullet journal -- the only planner I've ever been able to (sort of) stick to -- to see what's next. Research from 2-5, dinner 5-6, writing 6-9, relax 9-11:30, bed by midnight. Totally doable.

My meds are in full effect, my focus is good, so I decide to head back home and start early. I should maybe eat lunch, but I'm not hungry. The table next to me orders fries. Fries sound good.

I eat fries.

On my way home, my friend calls. I don't answer. I tell myself it's because I don't want to get another ticket, but I know it's because I don't want to disappoint him. Maybe I should do his project. It was a cool idea.

Back home, I cuddle up with a soft blanket, start researching — and realize why I didn't want to do the project. I reach for my phone and can't find it. The hunt begins -- and ends with me giving up and using "Find My iPhone." A loud beeping emerges from my blanket.

I call my friend. He answers. Does anyone else find that slightly weird? I almost never answer when people call. Especially if I might not like what they have to say. Call it phone anxiety, but a text to announce a phone call is the only way to get me to (maybe) pick up.

But he answers, so I tell him why I don't want to write his project. "Because YOU should write it!" I explain. I tell him what he said that made me realize that and walk him through how to get started. Now he's excited. I know he'll crush at this. I feel successful for the first time today.

Maybe I do know what I'm doing. Maybe I — I hang up and see what time it is. 3:45.

Oops. I'm supposed to be researching dyslexia for an episode.

I throw myself into the research until my alarm goes off at 5, reminding me to stop for dinner. But there's stuff I still don't understand yet. Eh, I'll just keep going til 6.

It's 7PM and I'm starving. I grab way too much food -- wait -- wait --

I bring the food to my desk and begin typing furiously. ...Turn “reading with dyslexia” into a game...

I write half the episode.

I get a better idea.

I start working on that one -- WAIT — laundry! Not gonna beat me THIS time!

Switching the clothes to the dryer, I realize my workout clothes aren't in there -- argh, I missed today so I have to go tomorrow or I'm not gonna feel good. I grab my yoga pants and a bunch of other clothes off the floor of pretty much every room in the house and start a new load. I remember to set a timer!

I sit back down to write, but the idea doesn't seem as great now.

Or maybe I don't really remember it.

### [ADHD: The After Hours](#)

I can tell my meds are wearing off. It's getting harder to hold all the thoughts in my brain while I work with them. The page in front of me is a random tangle of words. I'm getting frustrated.

The timer goes off. I gotta change the laundry --

-- except the dryer's still going. I set the timer for another 10 minutes and head to the couch to hang upside down and try to get my brain to work.

Upside down, I remember I'm trying to get better about work/life balance and wonder if I should stop even though I haven't gotten much done. But tomorrow's super busy, especially now that I have to work out, and -- BZZZ --

I race back to the laundry room, dump the dry clothes on my bed, switch over the wet ones, start the dryer. I race back and check the clock. 9:48.

Okay, I'll keep working, but I'll stop at 10:30. And fold the laundry. And relax.

10:30 comes and goes. I found a way back into that idea and I'm in a flow. I can't stop. This is hyperfocus, and it's a blessing and a curse for those of us with ADHD. I write, and write, and rewrite, and rewrite until my fiancé comes to check on me and finds me passed out in front of the computer.

He carries me upstairs, sees the pile of clothes on the bed, pushes them aside and tucks me in. I promise to do better tomorrow, to make more time for us. And fold the clothes.

He kisses me and tells me that clothes are just clothes, but the stuff we make lasts forever.

I hug him, hard. And see the time over his shoulder -- it's 3am. I'm gonna have to choose between sleep and yoga. Tomorrow's gonna be another scramble.