ForeWord Reviews

SELF-HELP

A.D.D. and Success
Lynn Weiss
Taylor Publishing
978-0-87833-994-5
(Aug 25, 1998)

Through interviews with 15 people who have found success despite having attention deficit disorder (ADD), Dr. Weiss continues the work begun in her last book, Attention Deficit Disorder in Adults. Living with ADD herself and having worked as a psychotherapist for 30 years, Weiss is a champion for those who are newly diagnosed or struggling with trying to cope in a society that places such high value on “normalcy.”

The range of individuals presented here demonstrates the scope of ADD, and its effect not only on those who have it, but also on family members and spouses. Each interviewee describes the struggles and hardships that the disorder has brought, and how they overcame discrimination and frustration. Although these stories can be uplifting, Weiss sometimes turns them into Pollyanna-esque tales.

In no part of the book is a standard definition of ADD given; instead, Weiss delivers angry diatribes about how labeling ADD a “disorder” is unfair, and posits the theory that those who share this “difference” simply have an alternative way of thinking. She goes so far as to credit only those whose minds work the “ADD way” with general traits such as compassion, creativity and “more sensitivity to the feelings of others.”

Weiss? writing is unnecessarily dramatic. In the introduction, she describes how it felt to listen to a doctor who said ADD sufferers should be cured: “I felt my throat constrict. And I felt as if a knife was being plunged into my midsection. By the time he?d finished, I felt as if I?d been beaten up and left for dead.” This style continues into the interviews, as she cajoles and teases her subjects while complimenting them lavishly, giving them attributes that have no basis in what they’ve actually said. As a result, those interviewed seem completely flawless, and the author’s talent for being an ADD spokesperson seems squandered.

Elizabeth Millard