

12 Core Strategies for ADULT ADHD & Executive Function (tips...

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

S Seth Perler 00:00

What is up, parents and teachers? It's me, Seth, with SethPerler.com. In today's video, I'm going to talk about the 12 core strategies in brief about adult executive function, adult executive function in ADHD. Now usually I work with kids, usually middle school or high school or college. But I've worked with a lot of adults over the years. And I get a ton of emails and requests about if I can speak more to adults. Now I've done this a little bit before, but here, I'm going to do it. I'm going to give you 12 core principles. These are excellent, these are well thought out, and they will help you if you want to watch this.

S Seth Perler 00:39

So, the problem with this video is I'm not going to be very nice in it. I'm not going to sugarcoat things for you, I'm not going to be my usual self. And part of the reason for that is I just found out that I had two, I was a teacher for a long time, and two of my former students, I just found out, tragically passed away. And that's definitely got me a bit somber and serious. And in making this video for you, adults, I don't have a lot of patience for the BS that adults often do. You, me. And I am someone who walks the walk, I walk & the talk, I do what I talk about, what I'm going to discuss here. But I have so many people, parents, friends, people that I've worked with in the past, that are so stuck, and I'm just really not having it today. You got this precious life, don't squander it. Yes, it's hard. But anyhow, here are the, I just want to preface that before you hear, and notice that I have a different tone and sort of what that's about today.

S Seth Perler 01:41

Alright, so what's the problem here? Why are so many people emailing me saying, "Seth, can you talk to me about being an adult with ADHD or an adult with executive function struggles? I'm a teacher, I'm a therapist, I'm a parent," and yada, yada. Well, first thing I want to mention is that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. So you know, there is a lot of evidence that there's a lot of genetics involved in this stuff. So when people are seeing that their child is going through something, a lot of times parents start looking into my work, and they start going, "Oh, my gosh, that was me. What's going on with my kid? Now I understand this differently."

And that's what I experienced. So that's part of what's going on. I don't talk about this much with adults, first of all, because my life is focused on serving kids. But also, like I said, before, a lot of times adults act like babies about this stuff. It's funny, because the adults oftentimes are more resistant than the kids, you know, we have better developed BS. And we are very good at projecting, meaning that we look at the kid and say, "Oh, that kid's got this problem, that problem," and it's often a reflection of what we're going through. It's very frustrating to work with adults who are so resistant and they want to help their kids, but they really for themselves do want an easy fix. They do want quick and easy magic bullets, and they don't want to do the work. They have a lot of excuses. And they like to think that they're different. I mean, I'm not special. I'm not trying to say that I'm different. I mean, I've had my struggles, otherwise, I wouldn't be here doing the work I do. But I went through the same things like thinking, "Oh, I'm special, I'm different, you don't understand my case is different. I'm resistant because of this, I can't start because of this, I can't change because of this," this victim mentality. I guess you know, since I've gone through that, and have worked around that and did very hard work around it, I don't have a lot of sympathy for adults who are stuck. Kids, I have all the sympathy and patience in the world. But for you adults, this is not going to fix itself, you're not different, you're not special, you're not some special snowflake that has some excuse that nobody else experiences. So you can do this, that's the positive about this. So this is not only for the quality of life for the kid, this is for your quality of life, our quality of life.

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So, and what we do, a lot of times we minimize our problems, you know, we avoid them, we don't look at them. And I think what happens is a lot of times parents and teachers are seeing these problems in their students or their children. And when they see them it becomes more glaringly obvious what they're going through. I think it's more difficult for people to minimize the stuff because it's so in their face and they're they're being more honest with themselves, which is a great thing. So and as far as quality of life, you know, this stuff, executive function, ADHD, this stuff can affect your and my relationships with friends, with family, with with people that we work with. It can affect our careers, it can affect our family life, it can affect our relationships with ourselves, it can affect our finances. I can't tell you, you know, it started too early for me with like late fees for library books, you know. And God knows how much we have spent on late fees for things. It can affect our finances, it can affect our mental health, our overwhelm, our stress, our anxiety, our depression. So this is no joke. So that's why I'm here to tell you these 12 things. That was a big introduction. But if you're still with me, five minutes in, here we go.

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1. Number one, core principle number one I want to convey to you. Core principle number one I want to convey to you. This principle I want to convey to you, or strategy, or whatever you want to call it for number one is principles. Not principals of school, principles, P R I N C I P L E S, principles. When you are saying, "Oh, I really like Seth's work or other experts work, and this is really interesting to me, and this is what's going on with my kid, but they're talking about something that, I don't know, I don't need this kid's, you know, academic planner," or what have you. Look, look for the principles behind what I'm teaching or what anybody's teaching, look for the principles. Because there are common core principles that you need, you do need a reliable planner, you do need organization, you do need to use certain files. What you don't want to do when you're looking for principles is think of me or anybody as some guru who's saying, "Oh, this is the best book on the subject. This is the best planner on the subject, this is the best organization," that is complete BS in that there are no gurus in this.

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2. And that brings me to number two. So the first one was look for the principles. So when you're looking at other stuff, there's a principle behind it. So if it doesn't totally resonate with you, look at the principle. Number two is called

'Frankenstudy.' This is just a term I use, long story behind that. But the gist is, when I'm working with kids, I want them to Frankenstudy, I don't want them to say "Oh, Seth has the best way of organizing papers and blah, blah, and schoolwork." No, I want to help the kids come up with their own Frankenstudy, their own frankensteined, customized, personalized tailored systems that work for them. Okay, so you should trust yourself. You probably have come up with tons of great strategies, and you will get pressure from family members or other people who really do have strong executive function, or books, or YouTube videos, or whatever. And they're again, going back to the guru syndrome, they're gonna say "This works. Do it this way." Well, you know what, that may not work for you. Trust yourself, try a bunch of different things. It's okay if they don't work, but you're ultimately going to personalize systems for yourself. You know, when I'm making this video for your adults, the people who are asking me this are asking because they're suffering. They really want answers. They're not asking because, you know, they're just like asking some random question. People take the time to ask because they're suffering. So I'm telling you that you have pride, I'm telling you this because you have probably been invalidated many times in your life when you could have trusted yourself in terms of the systems you were developing. So Frankenstudy, trust yourself, create your own systems.

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3. Number three is mindsets. Mindset, mindset. Number three is mindset. Look, let me be honest with you. You and me and every human on Earth, we are dysfunctional. We're maladaptive, we make bad decisions, we have what's called 'cognitive distortions' that enable us to resist doing the thing we really need to do for ourselves in favor of something that's easier, more fun, or that's avoiding the hard work, whatever. So my thoughts to you and to me is stop whining. I'm done. I want to live a good life. I'm done whining about this stuff and being a victim. And so I just have some thoughts about mindset. That is the first one. Stop whining. We are not victims. Number two, we can ask our kids, ask our children, "Hey, do you have any ideas for me? Do you have any ideas around my ADHD, executive function, how I am in this world? What do you think?" Ask your friends, ask them for honest feedback. Say, "Can I have 100% honest feedback, you're not gonna hurt my feelings? How can I do with my resistance? What do you notice about me?" Mindset. Ask a therapist. You know, for Pete's sake, we have these people who work their lives to help people like you and I. Use them, get a therapist to have them help you with your mindset. Do your own deep heart inner work, your skeletons in the closet, your dysfunction, your journaling, your whatever, prayer, your support groups, whatever it is, doesn't matter if it sounds cheesy. Do it. Like have the mindset 'you deserve this,' have the mindset. You deserve this. with mindset be okay with a struggle. It's cool. No, it's not fun. Yes, it's frustrating. We frustrate ourselves. But it's okay. We're not special. We're not the only ones here on this planet struggling, this is the human condition, it's cool. We're not special. Okay? Next with mindset, figure out your values in this precious life. What are you spending your time doing? What are you squandering? I was sick and tired of wasting time on certain things in my life with my executive function struggles. And I really, really examine my values. What is most important to me? How do I want to spend my time and my energy during this precious lifetime? What doing here on this planet? You know, what are you here for? Figure it out. It's precious. So and as I said before with the tragic loss of a couple of former students who left this planet before their time, you and I, we have an opportunity to live today right now. We're here. Like, let's use this, you know. Don't squander it. So those are my thoughts on mindset. Number three.

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4. Number four, reliable planners. You and I, we need a reliable system. Now adults are, my kids are resistant to planners, I have adults who are resistant to using planners, and they say the same thing that kids do. "I'll remember it, I have a to do list, or I have a million to do lists," whatever. So you need a reliable way for planning things. You have to prioritize really creating this. It takes a lot to create a good system of planning, planners, calendars, daily plans, long term planning, all these things. It doesn't come naturally to a lot of us who struggle with this stuff. But yeah, you and I, number four is we do need reliable planners. You need to invest time in really designing a system that works for you.

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5. Number five, oh my gosh, number five, so easy. Use a timer. Use digital timers, use timers on devices, use timers all the time, like we are so resistant, and we need to chunk things down into small bits of time so that we can trick ourselves into getting started. So just buy some timers and put them everywhere, and you use them. They'll help you. I know it sounds like the silliest thing. But if you don't use them already, try them out.

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6. Number six, number six. Number six is very important. This is accountability. You and I resist, and accountability helps us to get moving. I don't care if your accountability partner is your spouse, your best friend, someone you aren't even friends with but who really, you admire the way that they are able to execute. I mean, I have a trainer at the gym that I pay for, and you better believe I'm paying him a lot of money, I'm going to show up to that gym. And without him I don't show up as much. So like that's accountability. There's lots of ways for accountability. So building accountability, you know, it's so important, because we won't to execute without good accountability.

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7. Number seven, number seven. Envision, envision. What does that mean? So, essentially, what you're wanting to do on some levels is to coach yourself. What you can do is literally take some time, close your eyes and envision coaching yourself. Envision. You know, if you envision yourself as a child, what would you coach yourself to do as a child? Write it out, envision what you need. Envisioning and creating mental imagery for me is very important in my process of change. I do it daily, I have a particular way I do it, I have a three page document that I update every once in a while with different areas of my life. I sit down, I read it every morning, I close my eyes and envision that thing. It is so powerful, please don't ignore this number seven. Take time to daily envision things, envision coaching yourself, envision what you need, envision things going really well. You know.

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8. Number eight. Similar to accountability, number eight is called get help. Do not do this alone. We are social creatures, we need other people. Yes, that's the hardest thing in the world to ask for help. As you know, we want our kids to be able to ask for help. Ask for help. It's humility. It's it's the hardest thing, but it's the best thing. We are in this culture where it's like, "Oh, we're not supposed to ask for help." That's complete BS. The strongest, most successful, happiest, most people that I admire, ask for help all the time. That's how they get good at the things that they do. So anyhow, that'll help with accountability, too, is asking for help. Ask people who are good at it, "How do you do that?" I'll give you one quick example. When I started my business in 2010, and before that, for about two years, I asked everybody I knew who had a business if we could grab lunch and to teach me something about business. And I took nuggets from all these different people. I didn't like everything that they said but they helped me absolutely 100% jumpstart my business. Okay, so I asked for help, and that's just in one area. I didn't know how to do it. Ask for help. There are people out there that know how to do whatever you're trying to do.

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9. Nine. Where's nine? Number nine. Very important, very practical. Clean slating. I've worked with people for a long time, we have a lot of clutter. A lot of mental clutter, a lot of physical clutter, a lot of digital clutter. Clean slate, how do you clean slate your life? Two ways I'm going to suggest you, micro-projects and massive action. Micro-projects

and massive action. Massive action means that's when you're gonna say "Okay, I'm sick and tired of this office. I am going to take massive action. I'm going to turn off my phone, shut the door and I'm going to clean this office for an entire weekend, or two weekends in a row, or I'm going to have some really organized friends come over and for two weekends, I'm going to pay him and buy him some food and whatever and we're going to clean this office," massive action. That could be with anything. But these are giant projects that you need to get done. "I'm going to do all my files. This stuff has been bugging me for years. I'm going to do all the files," massive action. Number two, micro-projects. Always be doing micro-projects, tiny projects, tiny little overhauls, decluttering, minimizing, downsizing. I'm telling you people, the clutter interferes with our quality of life, with our relationships, with our ability to be present in life. Start with clean slating.

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10. Number 10, 10, 10, 10. Visual homes, visual homes, visual homes. I create homes for everything because I was so disorganized and now I have homes for everything. And it's very visual. So I have homes for I mean, the simplest homes are things like you'd find the kitchen, it is called a pantry. Where are the plates? Well they're in the home where the plates are, you know, the kitchen is kind of an easy. Where are the forks? Where's the trash can in the kitchen? Those are, even the trash can is the home for trash, right? But how can we apply that to other things, visual homes? What do you need a home for, your hobbies, your electronics, your cables? Like start making visual homes. Your files? What do you need homes for in your life? Like getting organized, just keep it simple. Just make a home for everything, get some boxes, color code, and visual, make it visual. Otherwise, you put things in the wrong place and the cycle continues.

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11. Number 11, 11. You will like number 11. There, now we're getting in a better mood with number 11. Play. Number 11 is play. Play, play, play, connect with the people you love, care about. Have fun and play, joke, laugh, relate to people smile, do things that are fun. Don't forget, is very important. Yes, this is deadly serious that we do all these other things to improve our quality of life, and ADHD and executive function. But we got to remember to play. I know that I'm heavy on this video, but this is not the totality of my life. In fact, after I'm done today, I'm going to play, I'm going hiking. That's something that's play for me. Play, have fun laugh, relate to people.

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12. 12, the last one. I said I was going to save the worst for last. Here's the worst one of all. There's no quick fix. We get in these mindless habits, we're unconscious of what we're doing, we're doing the cognitive distortions that I mentioned before, we run on autopilot. And lots of things can help this. But for me, the number one most powerful thing I've ever done in my entire life, ever to help me with ADHD and executive function, as counterintuitive as the sounds is meditation. Not 'woowoo', meditation. Meditation, sitting, stillness, quiet, focusing on breath. I mean, there's a million ways to do it. I don't really care how you do it. But I'm just telling you, you can do all the other things I told you. The number one most powerful thing in my entire life that has given me a better quality of life has been meditation. If you don't do it, I can't explain to you how it works, and why and all that stuff. You just have to experience it. It's one of those type of things. So I just want to really encourage you. And start simple. You know, one minute in the morning, one minute in the evening, use a timer and just sit still. And breathe and listen. Listen, your thoughts, your emotions, just notice what's going on. That's it. One minute, start with that and go from there.

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Alright, that's it. 12 core concepts for executive function ADHD, for me, Seth Perler at SethPerler.com If you liked my work like it, give it a thumbs up. Leave a comment below. What did I leave out? There a 12 core principles I added. What principles or ideas or strategies do you have that really help you manage your life your ADHD? What's one thing that you do well with it? Share with us, give us some ideas. And the very, very last thing that I want to say is this. Your kids need you, the people in your life need you. And when we have these struggles, it interferes with our ability to be present. They need you, they need time with you. It is so precious. So after you're done with this silly video here, go connect with your kids. Go connect with the people in your life. Have a fantastic day. Thumbs up, leave a comment, subscribe, share the stuff. Peace out, later.