

Turning Your Weaknesses Into Strengths

The word weakness is not one of my all time favorites, and I'll bet it's most likely not one of yours. When we hear it, we generally think of flaws, disadvantages, and limitations. But what if I told you that, like all other things in life, you can only truly be limited by what you allow. You make the rules for your own life and the only person who has the power to stop you is *you!*

It's All Comes Down to Perspective

If I were to create a list of common weaknesses and limitations, it could be almost unending. Ask any one person what they believe their main limitation to be, and most wouldn't even have to hesitate before rattling off three or four.

What's on your list? You may feel you are a poor communicator. You may have a physical limitation or were diagnosed with a learning disability. Maybe you feel limited by your circumstances, your upbringing, your lack of education, or your financial situation. Everyone has a list of roadblocks or reasons why they are disadvantaged. I'm not here to tell you they don't exist. Instead I'd like to shed some much needed light on weaknesses, and hopefully change the way you view them.

One Weakness I Can Relate To

ADD/ADHD. That's an arrangement of letters most people wouldn't want to tack onto the end of their name on a business card. But, I could tack them on mine. Sounds pretty bad, doesn't it? Well, that depends on where you're standing.

Let's take a look at some of the characteristics a child diagnosed with ADD/ADHD may have:

Trouble focusing. Easily distracted. Daydreaming. Spaces out for prolonged periods of time. Always on the go, as if driven by a motor. These are a few of the symptoms taken from the *American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, and are the criteria a doctor would use to diagnose your child with ADD/ADHD.

According to conventional wisdom, the traits of attention deficit disorder (ADD and ADHD) are considered to be limitations. But that's not what Thomas Edison, Michael Jordan, Michael Phelps, Terry Bradshaw, Mozart, John D. Rockefeller, Christopher Columbus, Walt Disney, Beethoven, Bill Cosby, and a host of others would say. Yes, they all have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. Looking at that impressive list of overachievers and geniuses, adding that string of initials to the end of my business card doesn't look so bad does it? This is what I mean by perspective.

Changing Your Perspective

My attitude is that if you push me towards something you think is a weakness, then I will turn that perceived weakness into a strength. -- Michael Jordan

Having the proper perspective will cause you to see situations with clarity. So, how do you develop and nurture a positive perspective? One of the ways is by doing what we just did in the above paragraph. I gave you a list of people who are using the perceived weakness of ADD/ADHD to their advantage. Sometimes, and with some things, you'll have to stand alone with what you believe. Sometimes you'll be the one called to blaze a new trail, but often you'll be able to find others, like we just did, who have paved the way before you.

Another way to change your perspective and benefit from perceived weaknesses is by making a list of the advantages your "disability" or "weakness" gives you. Depending on your situation, your list will look different, but here's a few of the documented ADD/ADHD advantages:

The Ability to Hyperfocus - If something sparks the interest of a person with ADD/ADHD traits, hours of full engagement and concentration are possible. This fact sheds new light on the daydreamer mentality, mentioned earlier. The ability to hyperfocus is extremely valuable to inventors, entrepreneurs, athletes, composers, and anyone who works in a field or niche that they love.

Rapid Fire Mind & High Energy Level - The ability to complete tasks in thirty minutes that may take others hours. Need to work 12 hour days? No problem, as long as it's interesting.

Highly Creative - Individuals with ADD/ADHD are known for daydreaming or "spacing out for long periods." Originally thought to be an inability to pay attention, this is not true. Actually, it's just the opposite. According to Dr. Bonnie Cramond, ADHD researcher and author of *The Coincidence of ADHD*, the ADD/ADHD mind is highly creative and possesses a keen ability to think outside the box and come up with multiple solutions to a problem, especially when daydreaming. Need ideas? Find someone with ADD/ADHD tendencies.

- Robert Frost was dropped from school for daydreaming.
- Frank Lloyd Wright daydreamed so intensely that his uncle had to shout to snap him to reality.
- Thomas Edison was described by his teachers as "*frequently confused and unable to think clearly*" because of his excessive daydreaming in class.

Risk Taker - Perfect for the entrepreneur. Paul Orfalea, founder of Kindo's and David Neeleman, billionaire Jetblue CEO, both attribute ADD/ADHD with their ability to think creatively and take calculated business risks.

For me, ADD/ADHD tendencies provided me with the drive and focus to thrive in the financial services industry, even when I was faced with some hard choices. I first entered the industry as a financial advisor and quickly became aware of the conflicts of interest and games that were being played. What I thought was a service designed to assist the investor in a relationship built on trust, was not. The deeper I looked, the more disappointed I became. I saw financial advisors who were nothing more than smooth talking salespeople, pushing unnecessary financial products to earn commissions, and nothing more.

The fact that I had a risk taker mentality and was able to think outside the box, led me to what I'm doing now. I decided to stand my ground and warn investors, instead of just leaving the industry altogether. Is there a way to prudently invest, minimize risk, and cut out hidden fees? Of course there is, and I made it my personal mission to show investors how it's done. It has been one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Success On Your Own Terms

So, what does this mean for you? The bottom line here is pretty simple. You may not have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. That's just my personal story. But whatever your weaknesses or perceived limitations are, I invite you to break out of the parameters that want to box you in. Not only can you overcome any weaknesses you are facing, but you can use those weaknesses to your advantage. That's when they become strengths!

No one will do it for you. It's up to you to find your own personal sweet spot and to thrive in your own unique situation.

In the words of the fiercely ambitious Henry Ford, "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal."

Henry Ford was dyslexic.

Is it time for a change of perspective for you? Throw off your self-imposed limitations and make the decision to thrive! What kind of limitations and weaknesses have you turned around? Leave a comment and let us know.

For more information on avoiding the hidden agendas and pitfalls when it comes to investing, listen to my free audio series: [7 Deadly Traps of Investing](#).