

# Impact of Not Taking ADHD Medications

Brought to you by

**DIG** Coaching

*Excavating the Aha! Daily*

# Impact of Not Taking ADHD Medications



## *Introduction*

There are a lot of intense conversations centered around the use of ADHD stimulant medications. In an over-generalization, the media tends to demonize medications. Whenever medications are being used or abused, the media is quick to point out that stimulants are used to treat attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) as if to imply the meds are widely abused by those with the diagnosis. As a result, there's a lot of stigma around taking these medications, as well as reluctance to take the meds largely based on fear and misinformation.

A few years ago, I had interviewed Rick Green when he was at *Totally ADD*. He had produced a documentary about stimulant medications, and there were a few things about what he did that caught my eye. He said he's not pro medication, but he's anti-suffering. He also looked at not just the long-term implications of taking medications, but also at the long-term implications of not taking the meds.

Honestly, I did not fact-check his research in detail because his argument carried a strong level of merit. The more important consideration is to make an informed choice by evaluating not only the long-term impact of taking the meds, but also at the long term consequences of not taking the meds.

Yes, there is a significant cost to not getting treatment for ADHD—years of negativity (“Sit down”; “Stop doing that”; “You’re lazy and unmotivated”; “Why can’t you be like everyone else?”), poor performance at school or work, failed businesses, failed relationships, and an increased likelihood of a disability. All of these factors can contribute to a potentially shorter life expectancy.



**Jeff Copper**

*ADHD and Attention Coach*

MBA, PCC, PCAC, CPCC, ACG



In fact, this link between ADHD and a potentially shorter life expectancy for those with ADHD is addressed by Dr. Russell Barkley, perhaps the foremost expert on ADHD worldwide, in another DIG Coaching eBook, *ADHD, Self-Regulation and Life Expectancy: A Public Health Problem*.

The bottom line is this. Realistically, we don't want to take any substance or medication unless it can have a direct impact on our quality of life over the long term. This eBook and interview with Rick articulates the potential long-term impact of not taking meds so you can make an informed personal decision.

Substances impact everyone individually. My hope is that you gain the knowledge you need and listen to your body to make the best decision for yourself! Hope you enjoy the interview.



## *Interview:*

*Jeff Copper:* Our topic is **“ADHD Medication: Straight Answers to Big Questions.”** And with us in our virtual studio is the Rick Green from *Totally ADD*. This is a little different because Rick produced a video called **“Straight Answers to Big Questions about Medications.”** The reason it's different is that it's five hours of video programming, but it's really about the information.

*And what I like about it, Rick, is that you guys paid attention to medications and to what people are paying attention to and what they're not paying attention to. I think it's awesome.*

*Rick Green is the award-winning producer, director, writer, and comic performer who made hundreds of innovative television radio shows. I'm going to skip to the chase. They produced **“Totally ADD & Loving It?!”** I remember seeing it on global TV back in 2007 or 2008 and instantly sent him an email and said this is a game changer.*

*They subsequently made **“ADD and Mastering It.”** Rick wrote and performed in **“The Rick Green Show”** that ran on PBS for about 15 years. Since that time, they've created an amazing community called **TotallyADD.com**. I encourage you to go there. There's all kinds of stuff and almost 450 interviews. But with all that said, Rick, welcome.*

*Rick Green:* Thank you, sir. Good to hear your voice again and connect with you. It's been awhile. But, yeah, well, I guess it was when we did our Christmas webinar and what did we have? I think we had 12 guests in two hours. It was quite exciting.

*Jeff Copper:* *It was a lot of fun. Dealing with gobs of analogy.*

*Rick Green:* Technically, it was a mess because, when I was on with you and Dr. Ari Tuckman and Dr. Roberto Olivardia, I got kicked off and couldn't get back on, and the three of you just ran with it. It was hilarious.

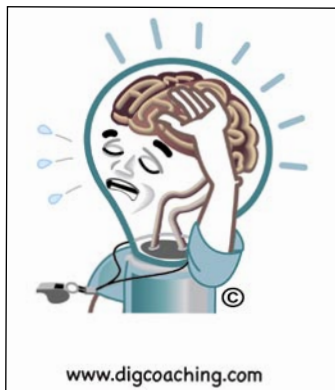
Jeff Copper: *It was a good time to be there, so now we've got a lot of fish to fry. This video that we're talking about, "ADHD Medication: Straight Answers to Big Questions," is a five-video set that you can get on Totally ADD and it's all about ADHD medications.*

*And there's probably what? Dozens of professionals in there, and you cover everything across the board. But one of the things that just grabbed me by the throat is at the beginning of it where you said, "Let's make this clear. I don't want you to use medication." Where did that come from?*

Rick Green: **Well, it was actually, "I don't want you to have to take medication."** And it came from me growing up. Most of my friends drank fairly heavily in high school. I suspect all of them did some drugs, and some took it to the extreme. And one or two are no longer with us, but I did none of that. So, for most of my life, I didn't drink; I hadn't smoked anything... legal or otherwise.

Here's the thing, Jeff. I think I suspected early on my brain was different. I assumed it was malfunctioning, and I figured I'm going to need every single neuron I can get to get through life, because I'd look at my school marks and I'd look at my brothers' school marks. I was in the C's and they were in the A's. I bought into those ads that alcohol and drugs may damage your brain. And I think I also suspected I had an addictive personality; that's an ADHD thing.

*I bought into those ads that alcohol and drugs may damage your brain. And I think I also suspected I had an addictive personality; that's an ADHD thing.*



Because I was heavily into caffeinated cola, caffeine, caffeine, caffeine, and I picked a career that is adrenaline, adrenaline, adrenaline. Show business, on stage, acting. I found I was calmer on stage in front of 500 people or 3,000 people than I was sitting down, having to do paperwork.

**So, medication for me was something I rarely took, if ever. I bought into all the mythology that had been built up over the years surrounding ADHD medication by people who were attacking psychiatry, wanting to discredit psychiatry. And the easiest way to do that was to claim that drug companies were turning children into zombies.**

But when my child was diagnosed and I started learning about medication, I later



said to Patrick McKenna... He and his wife are the feature story in “ADD and Loving It?!”... I wanted to call this program, “Everything I know about ADHD Was Wrong, Especially around ADHD Medication.”

And so, part of me was relieved or surprised, and part of me was angry, because, when I finally tried medication and saw the difference it made for me... I was 47 or 48 at the time, and I think a lot of people with ADHD go through this, even just getting the diagnosis... it was, “Dang!” Only in stronger words than “dang.”

It was, “If only I had known this sooner, what would my marks have been in university if I’d had this ability to focus? What could I have gotten done in terms of work?” Because I could see it didn’t impact my creativity. But I was able to stick with stuff. I actually got my taxes done for the first time in my life. It was astounding to me the difference it made.

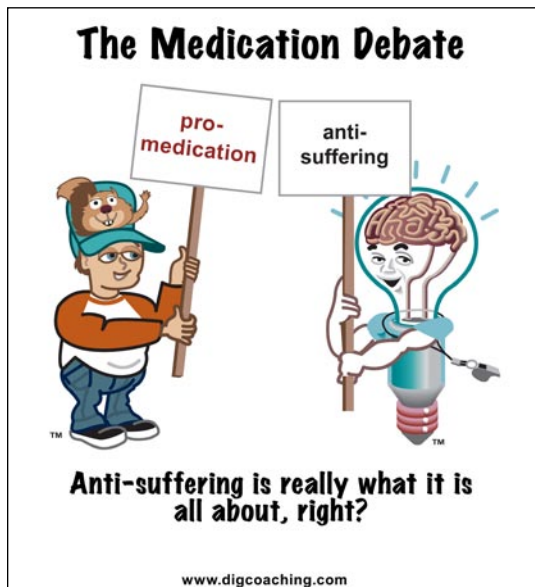
Now that said, I’m one of the lucky 20 to 30 percent who have a very dramatic turnaround. But what I think it did the most for me was that it allowed me to put in place all of the other things... exercise and yoga and structure and filing systems and so on... that I needed to run my life and manage it.

“If only I had known this sooner, what would my marks have been in university if I’d had this ability to focus? What could I have gotten done in terms of work?” Because I could see it didn’t impact my creativity. But I was able to stick with stuff. I actually got my taxes done for the first time in my life. It was astounding to me the difference it made.

Jeff Copper: *What’s profound about that statement is... and I’m quoting you, “I don’t want you to have to take medications,” at the end of the day, I don’t want you to take medications. I don’t want to take high blood pressure medication. I don’t want to take thyroid medication. I don’t want to take any of that stuff. But the vital line is, if I’m suffering, I’m suffering. And if it improves my quality of life, it’s something to consider.*

Rick Green: **Exactly. I’d rather you took a pill that boosted the level of dopamine that’s available in the synapses, in the neurons of your brain, rather than see you with seven times the rate of multiple car accidents compared to people who do not have ADHD... three to five times the rate of parental divorce or separation, two to three times the rate of STDs, of unplanned pregnancies.**

Jeff Copper: *We’re going to talk about these meds not working for some people, and we’re going to get to that. I assure*



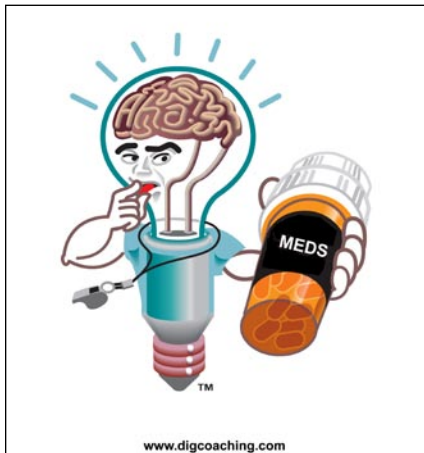
you we're going to have a balanced program here, but coming out of the gate, we don't want you to have to take meds. **And as you said, I'm not pro-drugs; I'm anti-suffering.** And for that crowd out there who's suffering, it's something to be considered. And I think that the media has demonized this so much.

And there was a quote in the video that said, **"Do you have to be on Skid Row before you actually take these medications?" It just really doesn't make sense.**

And there's a lot of people that can have some help as a result of it, but there's voodoo out there that everybody's afraid to go to because they don't have the education. And again, I told everybody, I don't do infomercials, but we've got five hours. Tell me where you can find five hours?

“ There are lots of books talking about the drugs and all that kind of stuff, but we're talking about the end use, how it hits the pavement, five hours of information. I can tell you right now, you're not going to watch it in five hours. You're going to watch this over two or three weeks to be able to absorb it because there's a lot impacted here.

There are lots of books talking about the drugs and all that kind of stuff, but we're talking about the end use, how it hits the pavement, five hours of information. I can tell you right now, you're not going to watch it in five hours. You're going to watch this over two or three weeks to be able to absorb it because there's a lot impacted here.



Rick Green: Just watch it again and again, especially if you're like me. You're already taking medication but you take vacations or you've taken breaks over the years and started and stopped. And it's really about understanding what it can and cannot do. And I think that's huge. The phrase that's in there that I came up with was that it levels the playing field. It can level the playing field. The problem is it's just a playing field. You still have to go out on the playing field and play.

And so, it was interesting because when I started on medication, I didn't feel any different. I didn't notice anything. And that may be partly me just not being all that self-aware. But I saw all that tax paperwork and I attacked it. I got a year's worth done and it was 15 months behind. I sat down in one day, did a year's worth, and I was amazed that I could do this now; I could stick with it.

What was interesting though was a year later, I was a year and a quarter behind because I didn't put any structure in place. I still didn't create a place for bills, envelopes. I had no system. And so that's the danger in some ways. When medication works, people think, well, that's all I need now. No, you still need a system to track your appointments. You still need whatever it is.

**And, of course, the biggest joke is you now have to create an extra system, one to remind yourself to take the medication.**

In the video, I think it's Laurie Dupar who talks about the fact that it takes her between four to six weeks before her clients are remembering to regularly take the medication. And she says, "That's a sign they're not addictive."

**And I laugh because nobody I know who smokes or is a heavy caffeine user gets to three in the afternoon and goes, "Normally, I have half a pack. Did I have any cigarettes?"**

We'll talk a little bit about this later, about other ways to medicate, and the side effects of those are ten times worse.

Jeff Copper: *There was a profound quote that you had in the fifth video: "The medications help you focus, but they don't tell you what to focus on." Of course, that's a big deal in my world because I'm an attention coach. My job is to help you figure out what to pay attention to.*

**Also, congratulations to you, Rick; you were inducted into the Order of Ontario, which is the highest honor you can get for leading work in Canada. So, Rick's doing a really good job. So, I'm doing a hail-to-the-chief type of thing.**

*And, Rick, you made a statement that by adulthood, anybody with ADHD is self-medicating. What do you mean by that?*

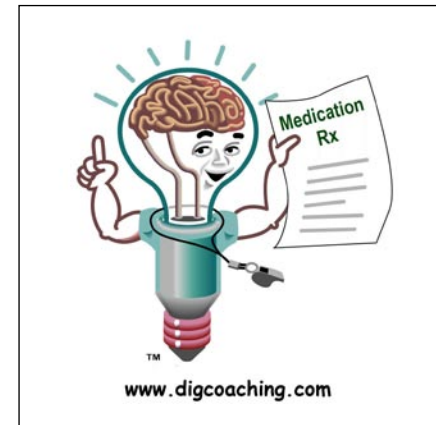
**Rick Green: I'll explain what the five videos are. The first one is called simply "Medication is a Tool." In other words, it's not a big deal.**

If it works, it works. If it doesn't, it doesn't. And you hear from 18 different adults who appear through all five videos. **Ordinary, regular folks who have taken ADHD medication, have ADHD, were diagnosed properly, were taking medication, and have had a range of experiences from amazing to disaster.** But I had to stop. Well, not a disaster, but I didn't like how it felt and I stopped. So, there's a real range.

And then in the second video, we talk about the cost that no one sees. This is unmedicated or undertreated ADHD. Un-treated or undertreated ADHD puts you at risk for some really horrible outcomes. And having been through a marriage, having had numerous car accidents, always at low speed because I'm a great driver at high speed, and a dozen other things, I can tell you the damage it wreaks on marriage, on relationships, on friendships, and on careers.

And then in the third one, we talk about finding the right medication. How do you figure it out? What's out there? How do they work? Why do they work?

Then on the fourth video, we get into all of the safety and side effects and every question and concern that I had



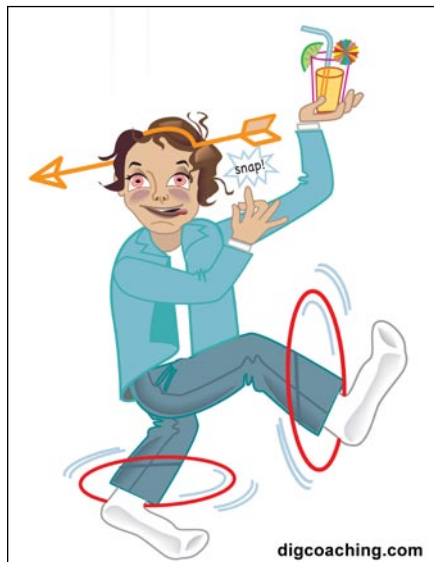
going in. As I say, I was really reluctant to try something because I was afraid I'd lose my creativity and then that would be it.

And then the final and fifth part is making the most of medication. Like I said, it levels the playing field. Now what? And that really deals with the holistic approach, which medication can be a part of.

So, I would agree with this statement... it's actually something a doctor said, and I can't for the life of me remember who said it, but talking about medication and he said, **"By adulthood, every adult with ADHD is... even if they don't know they have ADHD... has found things that wake them up, that give them a substitute."**

*“Untreated or undertreated ADHD puts you at risk for some really horrible outcomes. And having been through a marriage, having had numerous car accidents, always at low speed because I'm a great driver at high speed, and a dozen other things, I can tell you the damage it wreaks on marriage, on relationships, on friendships, and on careers.”*

Perhaps it's adrenaline instead of dopamine, perhaps it's extra dopamine or serotonin or whatever. And they have found a way through, and I talk about myself, caffeine, and a career that was high stimulation and constantly changing, risk-tasking, because I was getting up in front of audiences. I mean, the list goes on and on.



**I love when people tell me they would never take stimulant medication, and I know they drink coffee. I know that some of them smoke.** It's like, "Well, how does medication work?" And I say, "You ever had a really good cup of coffee? Remember what it was like before when you got to work and then you had that coffee and how you were 20 minutes later? That's the potential."

The difference is that, with the ADHD medication, it was the best cup of coffee for me because my hands didn't tremble. I could control the dose and on and on and on. And then the other thing, of course, that happens is beyond the things like alcohol and cannabis. **Cannabis is hugely popular and people swear it works. And what it actually does is not help with the ADHD, but it really lowers the anxiety, and it's a little easier to focus on what's going on around you if you're not anxious.**

But cocaine, you've talked to Alan Brown and we have as well, and he tells his story. That's a huge issue. But then, there's the other thing, which are the addictive behaviors and the adrenaline rush. And for me, as I say, it was getting up on stage. There are a thousand different things. Gambling and risk-taking and sex and any of these addictions.

This week I found out actually, and it broke my heart, I was crying earlier this week because on “**The Rick Green Show**,” when I left to do another TV series called “**History Bites**,” which I was producing and writing and directing, my role as Bill got taken over by a really wonderful guy named Joel Harris, a stuntman who came in to do stunts and ended up taking over the role. He was just amazed and thrilled to be given a chance. And he was great. He was the most interesting guy. He could leap off a first-story roof of 10 or 20 feet up into a garbage can, roll it over, and come up standing just fine, not hurt. He was just physically in depth.

But like a lot of stunt people and people in those kinds of fields, he was an adrenaline junkie. We talked about ADHD. He was really sure he had it. He had so many of the symptoms including a problem reading and dyslexia and so on, but he never dealt with it. And I found out that he died in October. He was killed at doing what they call base jumping where you jump off of cliffs and buildings and radio antennas. And on his page, a couple of people wrote, “He died doing what he loved.” And I thought to myself, you know what? He could have just done what he loved and not died.

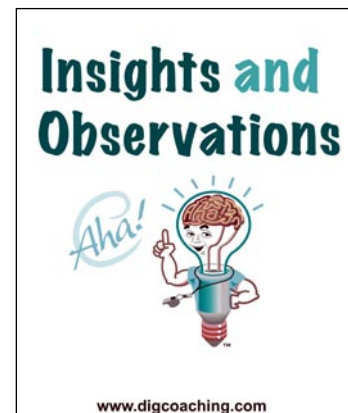
If he’d had medication or if he’d had at least some kind of treatment or understanding and had taken it on, maybe he wouldn’t have needed ever-increasing doses of adrenaline because his body gets used to it. Jumping off the roof into a garbage can, easy to do now. There’s all this damage happening.

“ If he’d had medication or if he’d had at least some kind of treatment or understanding and had taken it on, maybe he wouldn’t have needed ever-increasing doses of adrenaline because his body gets used to it. Jumping off the roof into a garbage can, easy to do now. There’s all this damage happening.

*Jeff Copper: Just to string this stuff together, we did an interview a couple of years ago, it was really profound, with Dr. Kenneth Blum, who coined the phrase, “the reward deficit syndrome.” And in the interview, Rick, when interviewing somebody and you ask that question that’s never been asked before, you love it. I said, “Dr. Blum, for people in general, actually, are we addicted to drugs or are we addicted to dopamine?”*

*And he goes, “That’s a really good question. I’ve never been asked that, but you’re quite correct. **We’re actually addicted to dopamine, because it’s the reward neurotransmitter. The drugs that we’re addicted to are the ones that impact that.**” And he said, “like chocoholics, sex, drugs, and rock and roll.”*

*So, when you begin to talk about that, we begin to see that **tobacco, gambling, sex addiction, cocaine, caffeine, nicotine... all that type of stuff increases that level of dopamine, which goes to the question, by adulthood, those with ADHD, if they’re not taking medications, they’re self-medicating***



*in some way or another. And I can't help but point out that you've had Rob Tudisco on your show and Rob's got ADD, and Rob will tell you, he runs marathons to raise money for the ADHD community, but he'll tell you that he runs to self-medicate. I mean, he knows that's his pill of choice.*

Rick Green: Yeah. And we have a number of people talking about what are the positive ways, positive addictions, although after a while, even long distance running can really damage your body. So, I just love the idea of someone being able to still do the things they love, but not need to push it to the extreme. And I wonder if my friend Joel could have done that.

Jeff Copper: Well, the key is illuminating the awareness, because I don't think people realize that many of those are doing this.

*I do a lot of speaking about ADHD and exercise because exercise is a big deal for me. I was talking to Dr. John Ratey in an interview on his book, **Spark**, and I said, "Dr. Ratey, it's been interesting to me because exercise is incredible. I've coached multiple adults before that were diagnosed, oddly enough, two years after they either got injured or they had an accident in their forties or fifties when they couldn't run anymore. It's like they were able to exercise enough and that kept them at bay. When they no longer could do it, it was a problem."*

*He said, "Oh yeah, yeah. Many people who don't exercise who begin to exercise can either get off the stimulants altogether or reduce those."*

*And my point really is, in the video you talk about, by adulthood, people are self-medicating by using these things. And also in the video, Gene Shapiro also said something that's profound, that smoking is an amazing delivery system to nicotine and actually helps you focus. And I've coached many people who, in order to write, they actually smoke, which is a self-medicating behavior, which actually helps them focus. The problem is it has some very bad long-term consequences.*



*And so, the point of this is, if you're not taking medications, you are likely self-medicating with something else that's not called medication. And in the video, you did a great job of saying here's the cost of not taking medications, in a sense. And I'm just going to reel through these.*

- **You have more stress and chaos in your life; if you take medication, you can prevent likely outcomes.**
- **Like higher rates of school failure in kids. You're less likely to go to college if you're not taking medication, less likely to graduate from college, and more likely to opt for a lesser degree.**
- **You're more likely to be fired, more likely for your business to go under, or to go bankrupt.**
- **You're more likely actually to get hurt.**

*Just the story that you described. You tack on these adrenaline-seeking things to do that. Increased death, which kind of comes along with that. **Failed relationships, higher likelihood of STDs, car accidents, and personal injury. You described that yourself. A lifetime of lower earnings, more unplanned pregnancies, lower job promotions, lower rates of marital happiness, higher rates of divorce, higher rates of incarceration. And as you go through this video, you start looking at these costs. These are significant.***

Rick Green: Absolutely. And if I told you, here's the medication, but you're seven times more likely to have a car accident if you're taking it, you would be outraged. You would think, well, how could they even sell something that increases this risk? And yet people are finding other ways to do it. I've yet to see a cost-to-medication comparison, and this is just my opinion, but I've gone through the list of costs. I looked at them very carefully.

Take car accidents. My son got his license at 16 or 17; two months later he hit a parked car in a parking lot. He wasn't taking medication at the time. And I've had one or two letters from people who, because we use so much humor, were furious. They said, "How dare you make fun of this. I lost my child to this."

And, of course, it's hard to respond to that because **I'm not making fun of their incredible loss. I almost lost someone myself in my life. So, I came very close. I came a phone call away from losing someone. I get it. But I have heard from people who have sons who have been killed in car accidents or who have committed suicide. I mean, you're impulsive, you're more prone to depression, you're easily frustrated, you're overly emotional, all of this stuff going on.**



*I don't even know how many experts are in the video. There are probably 30 experts. I mean, you probably recognize almost all of them. And then there are these 18 adults sharing their stories and they're moving. They're funny. When we interviewed them, there were tears in my eyes sometimes. The girl who is also bipolar talking about what she went through. And there was a lot of stuff that we just didn't include because we didn't want to get into the darkest places of where people were before they got medication.*

Anyway, what I love is there's a quote in there early on... if someone's not going to take medication, I think they can look all the way through this and come away going, "Now I know why I'm not going to." They can make a much better choice.

What I also think will happen is that you've got a couple of parents where one thinks they should try the child on medication and the other one is adamantly opposed. Then, it just becomes the two of them arguing.

I don't even know how many experts are in the video. There are probably 30 experts. I mean, you probably recognize almost all of them. And then there are these 18 adults sharing their stories and they're moving. They're funny.

When we interviewed them, there were tears in my eyes sometimes. The girl who is also bipolar talking about what she went through. And there was a lot of stuff that we just didn't include because we didn't want to get into the darkest places of where people were before they got medication.

*Jeff Copper: **And at the beginning of this, we were talking about we don't want you to take medications. We really don't. If you can figure out a way to manage your ADHD without it, we're all for that. But at the same time, if you're suffering, then why be afraid of it?***

*We really want to say, **"Hey, listen, here's all the negative side effects or the negative consequences of not taking it. And we reeled off a whole bunch. and to me, my gut is, if you add it up statistically, the negative impacts, stimulants can have impacts on your heart, but they also can have issues with substance abuse.***

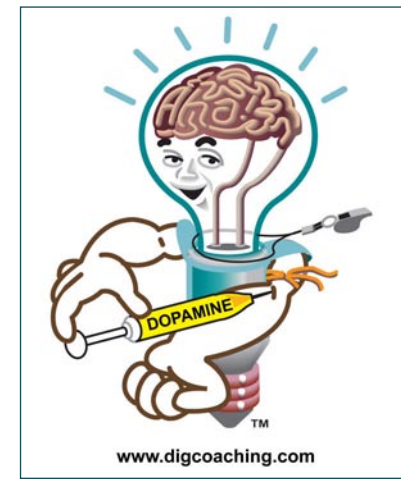
*There are some sleep issues if you're taking it, and then there are STDs and unplanned pregnancies. If you balance out those scales, all of a sudden it doesn't look so lopsided that meds are really that negative. Which brings us to this question: Medications don't really work for everybody; do they, Rick?*

Rick Green: No, they don't. The five videos themselves are invaluable. I mean, to get into any one of these doctors for an hour would be many hundreds of dollars and you're getting five hours. You're getting this wide range of opinions and these 18 people for a \$1,000 value, but the price is very low.

*Jeff Copper: Again, I'm not a promoter of infomercials, but I am a promoter of this information because you can't get this stuff in five hours. Just get some popcorn by the way, and watch, it's entertaining.*

Rick Green: **Yeah, and no pharma money behind it. That's the other thing I love. Pharma didn't pay for this, we did.**

*Jeff Copper: So, medications aren't for everybody because there are some side effects. One of the things is that it can't relate to cardiac issues.*



*I know there are some people with some heart issues as they get older and they literally just can't take it because of that impact.*

Rick Green: Yeah, the stimulant is a problem if you have a heart condition. So, I said to one doctor, "Well, what does it mean? Should I be worried?"

He said, "Has your doctor told you shouldn't be drinking caffeine?"

I said, "No."

He said, "Okay, then you're probably fine."

So, it's somebody with heart problems who's already making lifestyle changes. Especially because these days when you start, if you have a good doctor and we explain how to find one and how to work with it, you start with the lowest dose possible and you gradually work your way up. And for many people, it's nothing, nothing, nothing. And then one day they add that extra whatever, 10 milligrams, the next size up, and bang! Suddenly everything has shifted. Yeah, that's one reason.

*Jeff Copper: I was interviewing a psychiatrist several years ago, actually Dr. Andrew Cutler down in Sarasota. And he brought to my attention, particularly with sports, because I'm big into ADHD and athletics, that stimulant medications actually create a problem for dehydration because, number one, they're like drinking alcohol or caffeine.*

*“When you take stimulants, they dehydrate you. And with ADHD, your executive functions are already taxed to begin with, and so, that dehydration doesn't help you. But the aha that just blew me away is, in addition to that, they suppress your urge to drink.”*

*When you take stimulants, they dehydrate you. And with ADHD, your executive functions are already taxed to begin with, and so, that dehydration doesn't help you. But the aha that just blew me away is, in addition to that, they suppress your urge to drink.*

*So, if you're taking medications, it's going to accelerate your dehydration, particularly in sports, and when you normally would have the urge to drink, because it suppresses your appetite, it also suppresses your urge to drink. And you'll bonk. And for some people that are not self-aware and don't get that the stimulants can actually create a problem because they take you to this area of dehydration. And that in itself is a problem unless you can manage that.*

*And so again, there's no science on this. This is just a Jeff Copper-ism. I've coached a couple people before, literally in the coaching process they had that, "You need to be walking around with a bottle of water and force-feed yourself. Water is not water; it's medication for you. Because if you don't, the rest of it doesn't work."*

Rick Green: It's the oil that keeps everything going, that carries everything around. Now, it's interesting you

say that because for me, I didn't notice that, but I do know a number of people. Dr. Stephanie Sarkis, actually when we interviewed her, was taking frequent drinks and talked about that. I think she mentions it in the video.



A number of the people, the ordinary folks, the regular folks who shared their story, for several of them, that was an issue. A couple of people had appetite suppression, which for most adults, is not a problem. My wife's angry at me because I lose weight way faster than she can.

And in fact, **in the video, Linda Roggli talks about her mom mentioning that, when she took diet pills, and her mom was opposed to the idea of ADHD, but did mention when she took diet pills in the sixties, which were basically ADHD medication, she said, "I got so much housework done," and didn't put the two together. And Linda chuckled and rolled her eyes. "But yeah, Mom, you don't have ADHD."**

Anyway, so, yeah, there are a number of things, and drug interaction's a big one. And this is where you need a good doctor prescribing. You need to go slowly. And one thing one of the doctors said is, "Someone in your family is already taking a particular medication and it's working for them;

maybe that will work for you." My son actually takes something different from what I do.

I'm lucky. I started. It worked. And, when we were making "ADD & Loving it?!" near the end, we did the interview with Patrick McKenna and his wife. We sat down for a whole afternoon and just talked. And I said, "How do you feel about medication?" Because going into it, he was like I was, "I don't need that. I don't want to take that."

And he said, "After having talked to all these experts," because he did a number of the interviews, as well, he said, "I'm really looking forward to trying medication to see if it works because I'd like to experience that calm that everybody else around me knows, that other people have and that I've never known." And I just nodded. I get that one.

But for my wife who is the editor of the program and the co-producer and so on, she said that was a lightning bolt for her. She said, "To sit there and look at Patrick and think he's never known calm." My wife does yoga, my wife runs, my wife at the moment is basically vegan, semi-vegetarian say. And so for her, she was just so moved by that and surprised by that, that he'd never experienced that.

Later, she realized that and she said, **"My opinion about medication doesn't trump your experience."** Because she was very much opposed to me taking medication. But when she started to get the difference it was going to make, and she saw the difference on days when I did take it, like I'd go on vacations, I'd stop for a year or two or whatever, and she could see the difference it was making. And she had no problem with me drinking coffee. I think she would've had a problem if I smoked.

*Jeff Copper: Just everybody stop... "the calm." Even if you don't have ADHD and you're hearing this, imagine that real hectic day, it's off the charts. You come home and you sit down. You have that glass of wine, or you have that beer, and you feel that calm. Or you come in and you have the smoke and you feel that calm. You come home after a long day and you have a joint and you feel that calm. That's self-medicating. For those with ADHD, that calm, that normal, is that kind of craziness.*

*Which goes back to one of the points that I brought up earlier, which is that you had described in the video that you're self-medicating anyway, but you just don't necessarily know it because you're doing these things to get that calm.*

*Rick, you had talked about being in show business, you get up on stage and you walk around and that adrenaline make you feel that calm.*

**Rick Green: Yep. I'm on stage in a large hall doing a comedy show and the air is like glass around me. Everything's crisp. I can see individual faces. My mind, I'm calm, because it's that comedy that I'm doing and I'm the writer often, I'm adding lines, I'm playing with it, I'm experimenting, I'm milking it or having fun with it, adding an extra reaction, just so focused. Then the next day having to do something else, I'm scattered. Where's my phone? And I am in my head, I'm rushing around, I'm bumping into things, stubbing my toe, whatever.**

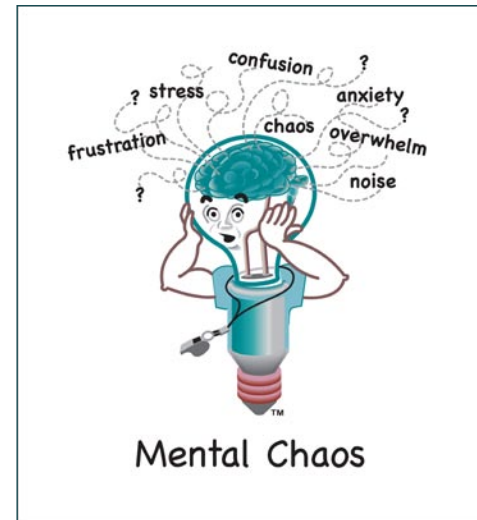
But what the medication has done for me is it's allowed me to start regularly doing yoga. To be able to sit and do the meditation, the mindful exercises. Even on the days I think I don't have time, I've got to get going. It's like the medication allows me to go, you know what, I'll just do five minutes. I'll do 10 minutes of yoga. I'll just... whatever.

And so, I think of ADHD medication, really, you have to look at it as a catalyst that can speed up everything else you're doing if it works for you. For 20 to 30 percent of people... and doctors have different experiences of what it is... it doesn't make a difference or they don't like how it feels or whatever.

Although again, a number of doctors say, wait five days because it levels out. It is disorienting to suddenly be playing on a level playing field.

I have a friend, a writer, he's a great guy and a comedy writer, as well, tried medication and married to an actress. He said he took the pill, and he said a half hour later when it kicked in, he looked over at his wife of 20 years and he burst into tears.

And he said, I suddenly saw her for the first time. I just saw who she was without the noise going on, without the five radio stations playing, I could just see her. And I just fell in love with her again.



“ ADHD medication, really, you have to look at it as a catalyst that can speed up everything else you’re doing if it works for you. For 20 to 30 percent of people... and doctors have different experiences of what it is... it doesn’t make a difference or they don’t like how it feels or whatever. Although again, a number of doctors say, wait five days because it levels out. It is disorienting to suddenly be playing on a level playing field.

And I just thought, that’s the calm. And we all experience this... ADHD or not. There’s that moment when a baby looks up at you and giggles, or you step outdoors and there’s this sunset and for a moment nothing. You stop and you’re just staring at it. And then you go, “Beautiful sunset!” And you start labeling and all of the rest of it and the noise goes away.

*Jeff Copper: But there’s one area that I really want to highlight and that is drug interactions. And ADHD meds don’t play real well with some other drugs, particularly, and other conditions for that matter. So, I just recently interviewed Dr. Roberto Olivardia on bipolar and ADHD. Stimulant medication is typically not 100% friendly, particularly to bipolar.*

“ You start low and you go slow, but some of the side effects can be curved, but for some of them, it’s not worthwhile. Like the rebound effect when you come off it, some people are just so irritable that they just pace the cage, if you will. While the meds are on board, they’re calm for eight hours, but when they come off of it, they’re irritable and they’re just beating everybody up just because they’re irritable. It’s kind of like the ADHD symptoms are magnified. So, not to say it’s for everybody, but it’s there.

*Stimulant medications are really no friend to depressant medications. Stimulant medications are no friend to another class of meds. So, one of the things about this is that, if it doesn’t work for a lot of people, particularly when they have other co-morbid conditions or other types of drug interactions, it can create some real, real, real problems.*

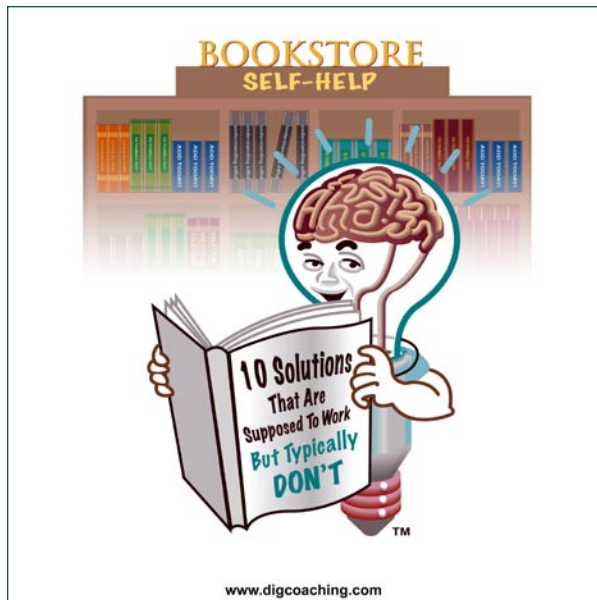
*You start low and you go slow, but some of the side effects can be curved, but for some of them, it’s not worthwhile. Like the rebound effect when you come off it, some people are just so irritable that they just pace the cage, if you will. While the meds are on board, they’re calm for eight hours, but when they come off of it, they’re irritable and they’re just beating everybody up just because they’re irritable. It’s kind of like the ADHD symptoms are magnified. So, not to say it’s for everybody, but it’s there.*

*Rick Green: I think almost everybody in the video, except maybe one or two people, had one or two side effects. I noticed I’m grumpy afterwards. I have a slight rebound. I think it’s Pat who talks about suddenly he has voracious hunger at 8:00 or 9:00 at night and all bets are off and so on. So yeah, I think for everybody, there’s some issue. But what I came back to, and yet every one of them said it’s not enough for them to stop because the benefits still outweigh the side effects. And then for one or two people, it was.*

The biggest one for me I thought was very interesting was Brian, one of the people talking about the fact that he had lost a loved one. And this is what you alluded to earlier when you said it helps you focus, but it doesn't tell you what to focus on. And having lost his girlfriend, that's what he ended up focused on. That became, he says in the video, he talks about the fact that he looked at the balcony and thought, boy, I could just end this by stepping off there. And he didn't. But he immediately called his doctor and said, "I'm having these thoughts."

And the doctor said, "Stop the pills because it's helping you to focus on the wrong thing." You end up ruminating on the wrong things.

And I found for me, when I've stopped taking medication, sometimes I have a headache for a day. Mostly I don't. But when things get hectic again, as they did when we were making this five-video series and had to keep track of 99 different chapters on ADHD medication, holy smokes, 99 short films about ADHD medication, then the medication made a difference in me being able to track and just simply organize. That said, I also used a number of tools including coaching and yoga and ate really well.



*Jeff Copper: Excellent, excellent. So, at the end of the day, I don't want you to have to take meds. Rick doesn't want you to have to take meds. Most therapists, psychologists, none of us, we don't want you to have to take meds. But at the end of the day, if you're not aware of the situation, you're likely self-medicating.*

*And a story that I was going to tell is this. Alan Brown's been on your show, he's been on my show, he's been on a lot of shows, and he tells the story about when he was dealing drugs and the crack epidemic and on and on. He's no longer doing that, but he goes out to the track, and he still jumps on a motorcycle, does 180 miles an hour to get that calm.*

*And he's had a couple accidents as a result of that. Broke a collarbone, really been kind of messed up. **And my point here really is that while he's no longer doing cocaine, he's still self-medicating going 180 miles an hour on a motorcycle.***

**And if you begin to say, "Hey listen, I'm doing this already, is it productive? Is it healthy? Or is it an alternative? Now you're in a choice."**



*As a coach, I could care less what you do as long as you choose the cost and benefits. And my point is that this five hours of video will put you in a situation and will educate you so that you can make a decision as opposed to dealing with the hype and the demonization of the negatives that people are kind of pumping into your brain and actually have a balanced conversation. So, with that, Rick, have I missed anything?*

Rick Green: No, I think that's it. And I think it's not even "decide"; it's "choose."

Decide has the same root as a word as homicide... fratricide... and it's about killing off. And deciding kills off choices. I decided to marry her based on a whole bunch of things or just whatever the reasons are, I "choose" her, or I "choose" him. And you get to choose.

Alan knows now what's going on. He didn't when he was doing drugs, but he gets it and he's made a better choice. It's still risky. He still does something that I wouldn't do. But then that's his choice and it's a free choice and he's aware of it.

And that's what I want for everyone, is to be able to choose and not be driven by this unrecognized, undistinguished, unconsciousness. I felt good doing that. I should do it again and again and again. No, I better do it twice as fast now. Ten times higher because I need the rush.

Jeff Copper: *Absolutely. Absolutely. Thanks for coming on the show.*

