

THE
DR RUSSELL
BARKLEY
INTERVIEW
COLLECTION



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Excavating the Aha! Daily



About the Collection

In the last decade, I have interviewed dozens of ADHD thought leaders around the globe, producing over 500 episodes of Attention Talk Radio, plus more than 300 episodes of Attention Talk Video. In that time, I have found the single greatest source of knowledge was Dr. Russell Barkley. His insights and constructs revolutionized my ability to coach those with ADHD and helped me understand the core fundamental issues that manifest in behavior for those with ADHD.

In short, ADHD is not a deficit of attention, but without Dr. Barkley's insight, it looks like it is. The reality is that ADHD is an issue of self-regulation with a working memory challenge.

In this collection, I share edited versions of my most impactful interviews with ADHD genius, Dr. Russell Barkley.

I encourage you to read and reread the content to fully absorb and digest the knowledge that can help you understand ADHD. One thing we have learned about those with ADHD is that they often know what to do, but they struggle to execute what they know to do. At DIG Coaching, we specialize in helping those with ADHD apply the principal understandings based on constructs I have developed over the years from ADHD thought leaders such as Dr. Barkley.

Warmly,

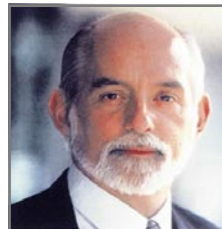
Jeff Copper,

Your ADHD and Attention Coach

Who are Dr. Russell Barkley and Jeff Copper?

Russell A. Barkley, PhD, is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the Virginia Treatment Center for Children and Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center. He holds a diplomate in clinical psychology, clinical child and adolescent psychology, and clinical neuropsychology. He has been featured in seven award-winning DVDs, has presented more than 800 invited addresses internationally, and has appeared on national television programs and radio programs, such as 60 Minutes, The Today Show, Good Morning America, CBS Sunday Morning, and CNN. He has received numerous awards for his contributions to ADHD research and clinical practice. His publications include 22 books, six rating scales and clinical manuals, and more than 300 scientific articles and book chapters on the nature, assessment, and treatment of ADHD.

A complete bio and other facts on Dr. Barkley's extensive credentials are also available on his website at www.russellbarkley.org where his many other publications are also available.



**RUSSELL A.
BARKLEY,
PHD**



**JEFF
COPPER**
MBA, PCC, PCAC,
CPCC, ACG

Jeff Copper is an attention coach and expert on attention issues, more commonly referred to as attention deficit disorder or ADD/ADHD. As founder of DIG Coaching Practice LLC and the host and founder of Attention Talk Radio (www.attentiontalkradio.com) and Attention Talk Video (www.attentiontalkvideo.com), Jeff coaches individuals and entrepreneurs with ADD/ADHD symptoms who are seeking to improve their personal and business results. Jeff is a frequent speaker and thought leader in the ADHD community. He serves on the Marketing Committee of Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity

Disorder (CHADD) and on the Editorial Advisory Board of CHADD's Attention Magazine. He is a member of the Professional Advisory Board for the Professional Association for ADHD Coaches (PAAC).

To learn more about Jeff and his coaching practice, and to access his podcasts on Attention Talk Radio and Attention Talk Video, visit his website at www.digcoaching.com.



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ADHD, Executive Function, and Self-Regulation

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ADHD, Executive Function, and Self-Regulation

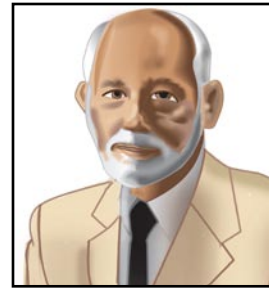


Jeff: At the 2010 CHADD conference, Dr. Russell Barkley did a presentation entitled “The Nature of Executive Functioning in ADHD: Implications and Assessment for Management.” And then at the 2011 CHADD conference, he did a presentation titled, “Assessment and Treatment of Executive Function Deficits in Adults with ADHD.” In both presentations, he spoke about the ambiguity of the term “executive function” and the numerous components as currently presented in neuropsychological literature.

“ If we’re defining the wrong thing, then we’re likely dealing with the wrong treatments and assessments.

As he walked us through the history of the term, which as I understand it is one of the most frequently used terms in neuropsychology, it was clear that there was no consensus definition of executive function. And with no precise or operational definition, it was really kind of an anything goes free-for-all. He went on to point out that the way we assess and treat things is really based off the definition. And if we really have no definition, anything goes, and further, if we’re defining the wrong thing, then we’re likely dealing with the wrong treatments and assessments.

And so, daring to go where nobody had gone before, Dr. Barkley took on the task of trying to define this construct to bring some specificity to the definition with the idea of defining executive function in a way he could use... I think his term was as a Swiss army knife...



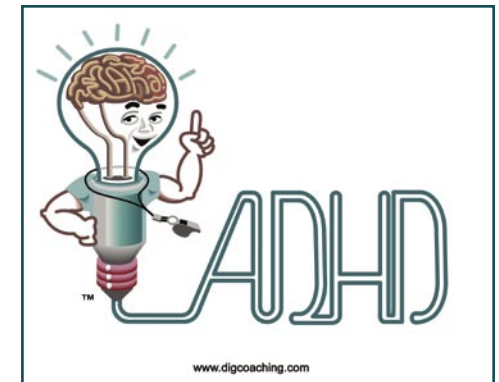
An interview with ADHD Genius,
**DR. RUSSELL
BARKLEY**

to cut through the ambiguity and clearly define what is considered executive function and what’s not.

And with the definition in hand, he shared his theories on executive function and its role in the nature of ADHD, the nature of executive neuropsychological function in a multi-level medical construct, its contribution to self-regulation across time to support individuals’ long-term welfare, and the implications on assessment and treatment.

As I listened to both presentations, and subsequently studied both presentations, I overlaid my experience coaching those with ADHD and found that so much of what he presented seemed to clearly explain the nature of ADHD. It explained to an extent some of the results I had been observing in coaching.

And so, our purpose of today is to give Dr. Barkley a stage upon which to share these new constructs with me and all our listeners who are diagnosed with ADHD to simplify this so we can understand it and evaluate it to see what makes sense. And so, Dr. Barkley, welcome to the show.



Dr. Barkley: Thank you so much, Jeff. I really appreciate the invitation, and especially to talk about this subject, which is, as you know, very near and dear to my heart at this time, given that I have a new theoretical book that's about to come out later this spring on this very topic. So, thanks so much for having me on.

Jeff: *This is fascinating to me because this is really a new way of dealing with ADHD and, if it's spot on, can really change the way we go about it. Do you sense that or is it really just a small deviation?*

“ *It's a major if not a tectonic shift in the plates here of how we think about executive functioning and by implication, how we think about ADHD.* ”



Dr. Barkley: Well, no, I think it's a major if not a tectonic shift in the plates here of how we think about executive functioning and by implication, how we think about ADHD. You see, as you pointed out for years, we've had a situation where the term executive functioning, which is very fashionable and glitzy right now, has been used a great deal, but there is no consensus definition of it.

“ *When we get that sloppy and anything goes, then we're not going to make major advances in understanding either the executive functions of the brain or people who have disorders of executive functioning.* ”

There are more than 40 to 50 definitions in the literature as I mention in my book, and also there are more than 33 different mental abilities that have been said to be under this tent or umbrella of the term “executive functioning.” And that just can't be the case. When we get that sloppy and anything goes, then we're not going to make major advances in understanding either the executive functions of the brain or people who have disorders of executive functioning, like those with ADHD or other disorders.

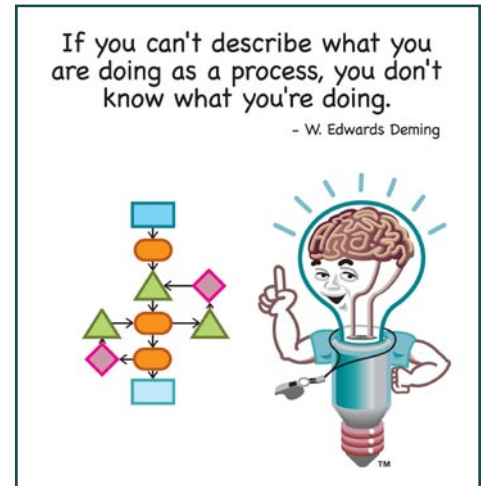
I think it's very important. I've actually spent the last 17 years of my career trying to develop and further amend this theory of ADHD and executive functioning. So, it's a pleasure to be able to talk about it.

Jeff: *And one of the things I always say is what's obvious is a function*

of what you're paying attention to, and shifting the way we look at this can revolutionize some things. In listening to your last CHADD conference presentation, I was in the back room with Dr. Charles Parker. We had interviewed him earlier for two shows talking about meds and stuff, but the two of us were just sitting there, and it was obvious that we could sense how what you were saying could revolutionize things.

So, I guess let's jump into it because we've got a lot of fish to fry in a short period of time. Can you talk about the definition of executive function that you came up with and how you got there?

Dr. Barkley: Yes, I can. Well, first of all, I began with executive functioning is self-regulation. And the reason I started there is that, in a survey of major experts in



neuropsychology who work in this field, that was the number one construct they thought was most likely to fit under the term “executive functioning.” And then they named other things like working memory and inhibition and planning, but self-regulation appeared to be a central feature of this. So, I started with that because we have a very clear definition in psychology of self-control, of what self-regulation is. And so, I wanted to start with that as the basic template and build upon it. So, if I might, let me just quickly go through what self-regulation is defined as, and then we’ll back into executive functioning. Is that okay?



Jeff: Yeah.

3 Steps of Self-Regulation

1. Direct an action back on yourself
2. To change your behavior
3. To change the future

Dr. Barkley: Okay. Well, self-regulation comprises three steps. First, we direct some action back at ourselves, not at the world around us immediately, but at us. The second thing is that we’re doing this in order to change our behavior from what it otherwise would have been had we just gone

on and behaved automatically in that situation. So, we’re directing an action at ourselves in order to change ourselves.

Now why would we want to modify our own behavior? Because we’re doing this in order to change the likelihood of a later consequence.

Self-regulation is all about changing yourself in order to alter your future. And it may involve actually turning away from the seductions of the moment and denying yourself certain kinds of immediate smaller gratifications or rewards in order to pursue larger fish to fry, so to speak, larger consequences, because we know in our lives, especially in social life, later consequences are often much more important, more compelling than immediate consequences.



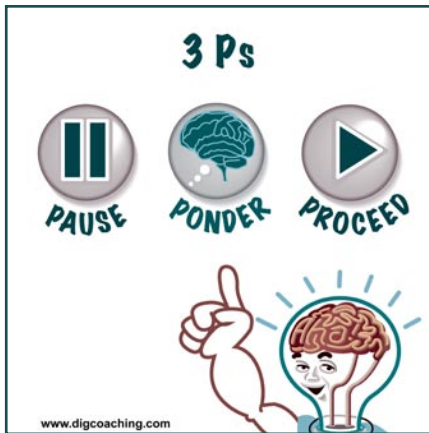
Self-regulation is all about changing your future for the better, for your long-term welfare.

And so, we always have an eye out for the future and not just for the moment of what we’re doing. And so self-regulation is all about changing your future for the better, for your long-term welfare. So, you can take these three steps and action it to self, design to change what you’re doing in order to make your future better to maximize your gains later on. Now, if that’s what self-control is, all I did was make the connection back to executive functioning.

Executive functions are the specific things you do to yourself to change yourself. And there isn’t just one thing that humans do to themselves. There are six, and that’s where I came up with the metaphor of the Swiss army knife, that the executive functions are sort of six different mind tools that we use, like a Swiss army knife, in order to manage our behavior so as to pursue our goals and improve our future. And so, we can talk about each of the six of these, because I think by looking at each of them, we can begin to get some idea of what people with ADHD are struggling with, because they’re not struggling with just one thing, such as self-control. They’re struggling with all six of these things. And it really gives, I think, a richer and a broader appreciation for the swath of cognitive problems that people with this disorder struggle with.

Jeff: *I love what you’re saying here. And as I had said at the beginning, it was interesting because in listening to this, I started to look at the coaching model and what I learned. And one of the things that we do working with those with ADHD is help them learn to pause, to stop what they’re doing and ask themselves something simple, like, “How is this serving me?” And in that moment that they actually pause, they*





have the opportunity to make a conscious decision to change, to regulate their actions.

You and I did a show last year, talking about the impact of emotion on ADHD, and towards the end of that, we talked about the same thing, to notice those times where emotion is going to come into play, and either avoid them or learn how to down-regulate them.

And again, what I like about this model is it fits. One of the things I see as a coach is that we practically teach those we work with how to notice and how to pause to change the self-directed action.

Dr. Barkley: Absolutely. Well, you've hit upon the first of the six executive functions, which is self-restraint, which is directing inhibition at ourselves. This is conscious; this is effortful; this takes energy to do this.



Executive Functions (Mind Tools)

1. Self-restraint (inhibition)
2. Self-awareness
3. Visual imagery
4. Talking to yourself
5. Manipulating your emotions
6. Playing in your mind

And so, this ability to inhibit your actions, to build in a pause, and to give yourself a little time for the other five executive functions to inform what you're about to do, because if you don't stop, if you don't wait, then the rest of the executive system gets no traction. It has no chance to change you because you've already acted in the situation. And the most you're going to have is a lot of regret at what you did impulsively.

So, we can begin with that then. The first of these executive functions is this ability to inhibit, to consciously inhibit your automatic reactions to the environment around you.

Now, it'll help to think about the brain as a two-level system. There's an automatic level called "system one" by some people, or "pre-executive" in my model, and then there's level two, which people call "system two" or the "executive system." This is the deliberate system. This one takes energy. It takes time. It's got a limited pool of resources that it can use, but this is the one where the executive functions are located.

Build in a pause, show some self-restraint, bite your tongue, sit on your hands, whatever you have to do to give yourself a few seconds so that your executive system can gear up and be able to guide you into what would be more appropriate to do.

So, what you want to do is to be able to inhibit this automatic level of the brain that we go about in our day, because a lot of what we do is rather automatic anyway, and to be able to engage that executive system. And you can't do that if you don't stop the automatic system.

And that's where your comment fits about building in a pause, showing some self-restraint, biting your tongue, sitting on your hands, whatever you have to do to just give yourself a few seconds so that your executive system can gear up and be able to guide you into what would be more appropriate to do.

We talked about there being six executive functions, which are six ways that people try to change their behavior in order to improve their future. And this self-change for the future is what executive functioning is all about.

Now, we talked about the first one, which is inhibition, self-restraint. That actually is part of two others, and the three of these form a unity. They are the first three to develop. They develop simultaneously, we believe. And so, it pays to think of them as the core executive functions.

Now, inhibition is the first one. The second one is self-



awareness, the mind's mirror, so to speak, the ability to direct your attention on yourself and what you're doing. Obviously, you can't inhibit your automatic level of responding to the world if you're not monitoring that. And that's where self-awareness comes in. But self-awareness doesn't do you any good if you can't stop the automatic level. So, you see how the two of

those go together and neither makes sense without the other.

So, we've got self-restraint, or inhibition. We've got self-awareness, which is basically attending to yourself. And then the third one that goes with these two grows out of that self-awareness, and it's the ability to engage in visual imagery, specifically, and sensing to yourself more generally. We literally, as people, recede to ourselves.

We have a past and we can activate images of that past in order to guide us. And we call that hindsight, the ability to look back, and literally it is looking back. You're recalling images of prior situations that are relevant to this particular moment that you're in, and you're going to use those earlier relevant moments to guide you.

It's a visual image of a map of the terrain, and it's showing you where you're going, where you've been, and it gives you a sense of the future that's coming at you.

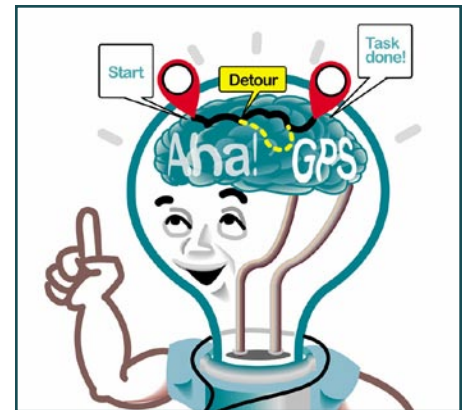
It's like a GPS of the mind is how I think of it. You know how you've got your GPS in your car and it's a visual image of a map of the terrain; it's showing you where you're going, where you've been, and it gives you a sense of the future that's coming at you. Well, that's exactly what this part of the brain is doing. The visual imagery system of the brain brings up the past, and out of it, we pull what's relevant.

And like a GPS, we create an image of what we hope to do. And we hold that image in mind, and we use it to guide ourselves forward, just like we use a GPS to drive ourselves through foreign territory.

Jeff: Great analogy.

Dr. Barkley: Those three go together, and they're very, very important executive abilities. And then the other three will build upon them, but these, I think of as the foundational executive abilities.

Jeff: And you said you believe that these three developed, more or less, simultaneously; right?



So, hindsight leads to foresight, and you don't get the foresight if you don't stop and think about your past a little bit and use the images of the past.

Dr. Barkley: Yes, I do. They start around three months of age although they're very primitive and rudimentary, but they can be measured. And then they take about a decade or more to begin to reach their maturity. Usually, by the early adolescent years, you'll see these things beginning to reach their nearly adult levels of development. And from then on, the other three are developing, and they'll take a little bit longer to go through it.

But I think it helps to keep in mind, the ability to stop yourself, the ability to be aware of what you're doing, and then the ability to imagine your past, to re-visualize that, because out of that past is going to come your sense of what's coming next. So, hindsight leads to foresight, and you don't get the foresight if you don't stop and think about your past a little bit and use

the images of the past. So, those are the first three. Now, shall I talk about the other three?

Jeff: Yeah. Before we do... it's interesting because again, in coaching, when we're working with people, if we can get them to pause for a second, and many times we mirror back to them some stuff that they do. So, last year when we were talking about emotions, if I'm working with somebody who gets in these situations, I say, "So, what I'm hearing is that you get real emotional in those types of situations, and then it snaps and you lose it."

Over a period of time, they start to become aware of that situation, and they're looking for it, which enables them to pause and either not get into that situation or know they're going to go into it and have strategies to down-regulate it. Again, what I love so much about this model is some of the things that we're doing in coaching that works. It just fits what we're trying to do... in sync with what you're describing to us.

The other thing, in getting into the other three, is this notion that your brain is developing in a hierarchy, and this is layered, these next couple of levels, right?

Dr. Barkley: Yeah, they are. They're layered on top of these first three, and so they're going to develop in stages. As we watch children develop, you'll see the first three coming online relatively early, usually by the elementary school years, and then maturing from that point on. And then you're going to see the next one start to get layered on. So, the fourth one that's going to come next is the ability to talk to yourself, so to speak.

What we say to ourselves begins to guide what we do. And then what happens, which is rather amazing, I think, is we begin to make this self-talk private. We're able to develop the ability to just do it in our mind and not do it publicly.

We start directing language back at ourselves. This starts around three to four years of age, but it doesn't do as much good at that

point. But over time, it begins to get traction. What we say to ourselves begins to guide what we do. And then what happens, which is rather amazing I think, is we begin to make this self-talk private. We're able to develop the ability to just do it in our mind and not do it publicly.

But whether you do it in your head, or you do it on paper, the fact is you're talking to yourself and you're doing that as a form of self-control.

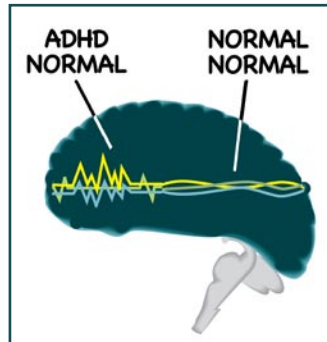
And so, we use our language to talk to ourselves in order to think, ask questions, recall our past, but more importantly, give ourselves instructions to do. Now, sometimes we do say these things out loud, even adults, if they're alone in a room, may start to talk out loud when nobody's around. Also, we may, in fact, begin to write down these instructions to ourselves, so that they are even more powerful at controlling what we're about to do. We all have do-lists, and schedules, and calendars, and sticky notes, and that's simply a way of making external this private speech that you're using to yourself. But whether you do it in your head, or you do it on paper, the fact is you're talking to yourself and you're doing that as a form of self-control. So, that's a very powerful fourth tool that is now, I think, scaffolded on top of the three.

A lot of times I'm working with people and they struggle. They're stuck many times if they're not verbalizing it. And as they start to verbalize it, many times it looks like a conversation, but they're just thinking out loud.

Jeff: What's really cool about this is that in the presentations you talked about Lev Vygotsky's model. You can observe this in children. Literally, you can see them just saying words, they're just words. And then after a while they talk and play, and then they're talking in private when they're playing, and then that voice moves into their head. And in the coaching world, there's a lot of times where I'm working with people and they struggle. They're stuck many times if they're not verbalizing it. And as they start to verbalize it, many times it

looks like a conversation, but they're just thinking out loud and then they arrive at the solution.

And some I've worked with actually learn things that they don't understand by trying to find somebody to teach it to them, because it's that process of verbalization. So, is what I am seeing matching up here a little bit?



at controlling us than things that you just say in our minds.

The probability is that those with ADHD are more apt to be in blue collar-type things where they're doing stuff with their hands and they're dealing with their external world as opposed to the internal world.

Jeff: And to build on this, we had Dr. Timothy Williams on last week talking about the transition of adolescent to adult, but he was also at the last CHADD conference, and part of his presentation was talking about the probabilities of those with ADHD that they're more apt to be in blue collar-type things where they're doing stuff with their hands and they're dealing with their external world as opposed to the internal world. Which again, it's just another thing and all of a sudden, it just fits in a model and makes a lot of sense.

Dr. Barkley: I think it does. Especially when we get to the sixth executive function. You're going to see why I think you might see them drifting more into the manual trades, what we think of as the blue collar trades. But let me just finish up then and get to the fifth one.

ADHD is associated with serious problems with impulsive emotion and with difficulties regulating your emotions to make them more mature, acceptable, and consistent with your goals.

The fifth executive ability, which again, is a type of action that you're using with yourself, actually it comes out of the other four, and that is the ability to regulate your emotions, to control your emotional state. And you and I did a whole program on this earlier, where we talked about ADHD is associated with serious problems with impulsive emotion, and with difficulties regulating your emotions to make them more mature, acceptable, and consistent with your goals.

ADHD delays the development of these executive abilities by about 30 to 40 percent behind the schedule that we see in normal individuals.

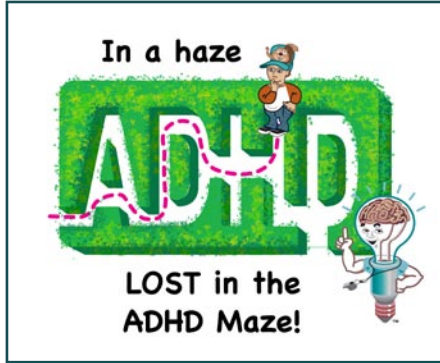
Dr. Barkley: Yeah. Because you brought up an issue, I think, that is very important, and that is to understand that ADHD delays the development of these executive abilities by about 30 to 40 percent behind the schedule that we see in normal individuals. And so, it's not surprising to see young adults with ADHD who are struggling to use this mind's voice, as I call it, because it's delayed. They're back at a stage that's about 30 to 40 percent earlier in development.

Helping people with ADHD sometimes means having them stop and talk out loud to themselves.

So, it's not as effective. They're still talking out loud when other people talk in their mind. And even when they are able to talk to themselves, it's not as powerful. It doesn't have as much of a controlling influence as it appears to have in other people. So, you're absolutely right. Helping people with ADHD sometimes means having them stop and talk out loud to themselves, not just visualize the past. That's a good thing to do, but also talk about the past. Talk about what you're about to do, put this into words, because we know that external words are more potent

“ *It’s like your mother telling you to count to 10 and go to your happy place when you’re angry*

And so, that’s this fifth executive ability. It’s the ability to quell strong emotion, to be able to soothe yourself, calm yourself down, to be able to reevaluate and reappraise the emotion. Are things as important as you seem to feel they are? And then to be able to substitute a better emotion, maybe a more moderate one, or even an alternative emotion in its place. It’s like your mother telling you to count to 10 and go to your happy place when you’re angry, but she’s right. That’s exactly what you do.



You buy time, you inhibit the strong emotion, you visualize an alternative situation, and that helps to calm yourself down. And then you can start to evaluate more rationally what’s going on around you, and whether it’s worth getting this upset and spending a lot of social cash, if you will, with other people, because you’re so angry, you’re so frustrated. Emotional self-control is the fifth one.

Jeff: I have a question here. This is totally just an observation, so I’m probably out to lunch here. But some people with ADHD, they struggle more with emotions than others, and it’s like this fight or flight thing. And it’s almost sometimes that they just love the adrenaline rush of it and they go off on it. And it seems to me that that adrenaline rush stimulates their brain. Would that make them predisposed to bring more drama in their life because it medicates the brain, or am I off on a tangent?

“ *If your emotional buttons are pushed so quickly and so often, that really annoys other people, and they’re going to start to withdraw from you, and they’re going to start to view you as being way too dramatic in your emotions.*

Dr. Barkley: Well, no. I think there’s some merit to the tangent, but I think it helps to understand that first of all, they’re showing a lot more primary emotions that the rest of us feel but inhibit. We don’t show it because we know that it’s going to come off looking like a drama queen. If your emotional buttons are pushed so quickly and so often, that really annoys other people, and they’re going to start to withdraw from you, and they’re going to start to view you as being way too dramatic in your emotions. You need to be able to quell these, moderate them, be more reasonable about them, and then develop the emotions that are both consistent with what you’re trying to do here with your goals, and also consistent with sustaining your friendships and your relationships with other people.

So, this fifth executive ability is very important, because we’ve found that this emotional difficulty predicts a lot of things about ADHD that we didn’t understand to begin with, like why are adults with ADHD fired more often than other people from employment?

It doesn’t have to do with their inattentiveness. It doesn’t have to do with their bad time management. That just means they’re less productive at work, but if you blow up at people or if you get very emotional very quickly, that’s going to cost you in social relationships, and in the workplace, and in your marriage as well. So, that’s number five.



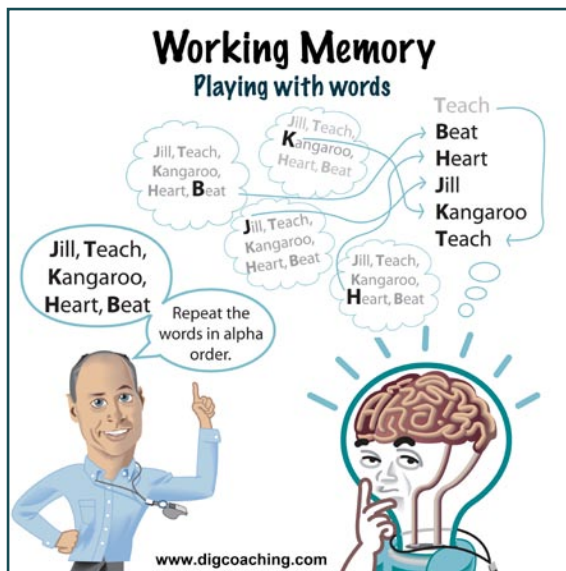
“ *One of the more important of these six, and that is because it’s related to problem solving, is the ability to play in your mind with information.*

Now, number six, which is the last to mature, but I think one of the more important of these six, and that is because it's related to problem solving, is the ability to play in your mind with information. And I refer to it as simply self-directed play, but it begins actually in children's manual play. And when children start out, they learn to take apart their world and they play with various combinations of the parts of their world. And we see children do this all day long when they're playing. And then they try to imagine new scenarios and new ways of doing things. And eventually, this play goes from being manual to becoming mental. We're actually able to manipulate images and words in our mind, in order to look for novel combinations that might help us out of a problem or solve a current situation that we have.

So, this mental play is founded on external play, and it's very important. In fact, research shows it is critical to adult problem solving that children go through these stages of play, because if they don't, like autistic children, then they wind up being very deficient in problem solving abilities as adults. So, let me just quickly go back over it for our listeners.

The six executive abilities are all things we do to ourselves, and they are self-restraint or inhibition, self-awareness, which is attending to ourselves. Then there's visual imagery, which is seeing our past to ourselves at the moment. And then the fourth one is talking to ourselves, and all of those lead to the fifth, which is the ability to manipulate our emotions and to control them more appropriately.

And then the last one is the ability to play in our mind with information, which is the problem-solving piece.



And those six, when you put them together by adulthood, are a very powerful suite of mind tools to help us with self-control and to maximize our future over just the moment.

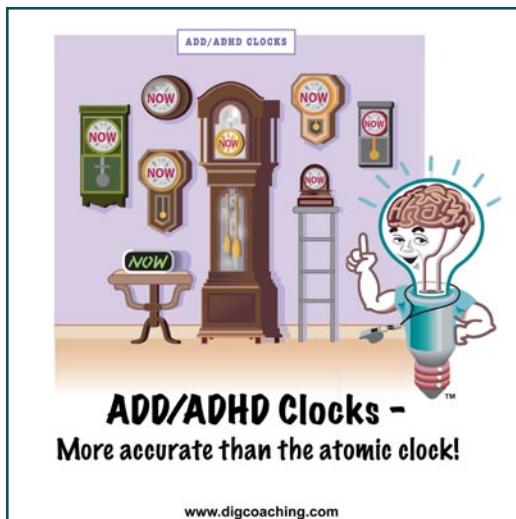
Jeff: And the thing about this construct is they develop sequentially. It's almost like they build upon each other, so those with ADHD, if they're not developing on time or at that level, each level has an impact on the next level as the brain matures. Is that right?

“ People with ADHD talk out loud more than others because they're delayed in internalizing their language. Why do they have to touch everything in sight? Why do they drift into more of the manual professions? Because it's easier for them to drop down to the stage of manual play with information than it is to manipulate that information mentally.”

Dr. Barkley: Yes. And so, they're going to be 30 to 40 percent behind in each of these levels. Now, that begins to help us understand things. We already said one, why do people with ADHD talk out loud more than others? Because they're delayed in internalizing their language. Why do they have to touch everything in sight? Why do they drift into more of the manual professions? Because it's easier for them to drop down to the stage of manual play with information, than it is to manipulate that information mentally. So, they'll actually be better off if problems can be made manual in nature rather than mental in nature.

“ They can wind up losing a lot of relationships and jobs as a result of this living in the now rather than living for the later, which is what they struggle to do.”

This also helps to explain why they often act without regard to hindsight and foresight. They seem to live in the now. All that seems to control them is what's happen-



ing now. And they don't seem to act with regard to their past and what it would do to inform them and therefore with regard to their future. They seem to be pre-occupied with maximizing the moment rather than maximizing what's coming next.

And that can be an exciting and, as you said, dramatic way to live, but it can also be a very costly way to live.

And they can wind up losing a lot of relationships and jobs as a result of this living in the now rather than living for the later, which is what they struggle to do.

Jeff: Again, this is all fascinating. You're talking about the mental play, it's funny, because I've coached a few people that were in white collar jobs, and they needed to do some writing. And the concept is that they like Word, but before computers were around, they would write this stuff out and then they'd have ideas. And what they would do is externalize them, and then order them sequentially so that they could actually organize the flow of their presentation and what they were trying to say, which really makes a lot of sense, because they're trying to externalize it as much as they can so they can manipulate it, because they struggle with doing that in their mind, as somebody who doesn't, which again, goes back and the model really makes a lot of sense.

These six mind tools are mental; you can't see them.

Dr. Barkley: Yes, it does. These are the six things I talked about in

my last book, but what's new in the latest book is that I now take these six executive abilities, and I view this as level one. This is the executive level of the brain. So, we had the automatic level, and then we have this newer evolved executive level. Now, what I've tried to do more recently in my theoretical work is to begin to connect this up with how we act in everyday life. How would we see this all playing out? Because these six mind tools are mental; you can't see them. The person knows that they're doing them, but other people can't witness them. You should think of them as instruments. They're a means to an end, but they're not the end of themselves.

Psychologists refer to this level of our life as adaptive functioning. It's the ability to adapt on a day-to-day level and to care for ourselves.

And so, what I've been working on is, what is the end of executive functioning? Why do we have these six mind tools? What were they meant to do? And so, very briefly, let me just walk you through these next stages, or I think of them as levels of our daily life. So, we've got these mental abilities. Now, how are we going to, first of all, see these things play out in life? We're going to see them in daily self-reliance, the ability to care for yourself, to become a self-determined, self-controlled individual, who doesn't need other people as much. And I mean that in a good way, who is not dependent on other people, but who is able to organize their life, manage their time, solve their own problems, get to their goals, and become a fully-functioning, independent, self-reliant person. Now, psychologists refer to this level of our life as adaptive functioning. It's the ability to adapt on a day-to-day level and to care for ourselves.

It includes such simple things as dressing yourself and bathing yourself and feeding yourself, but it also involves even longer term things, like being less influenced by other people who don't have your interests at heart, less gullible, less persuaded by people around you, being able to think for yourself, determine your own course of action, set your own goals and get



to them. So, daily adaptive functioning is one of the reasons we have these six executive abilities.

So, we begin to develop independence from others, and self-defense, if you will, from others, and then self-determination. So, that's level two in our executive model. Level one are the mental abilities, level two is daily adaptive behavior and self-reliance. Then we get to the next level, level three, and that is where we see the executive abilities being used for social purposes. Because after all, the frontal lobe, the executive brain, evolved for its social purposes.

The first social purpose, beyond becoming independent and self-reliant, is reciprocity. We begin to engage in trading with other people. We share. We take turns. We give up things that we have to get things that other people have, or we loan them things, but we expect to be treated similarly.

It didn't evolve to play chess or to do digits played backward. Although we can use it for that, it evolved for a social purpose. And the first social purpose, beyond becoming independent and self-reliant, is reciprocity. We begin to engage in trading with other people. We share. We take turns. We give up things that we have to get things that other people have, or we loan them things, but we expect to be treated similarly. We expect promises to be kept, debts to be repaid. We do this all day long. This is the beginning of economics of the huge marketplace that we all live in and go about our daily lives, whether it's going into Walmart and buying something and giving money to get something, whether it's simply trading something with your neighbor that you have that he wants, whether it's social etiquette and holding the door open for people but expecting them to do likewise.

All of our social lives are filled with what psychologists call social exchange. Reciprocity, tit for tat, give and take. And we now realize that the executive brain evolved for this purpose. People live in groups.

Language is actually developed so you can manipulate others.

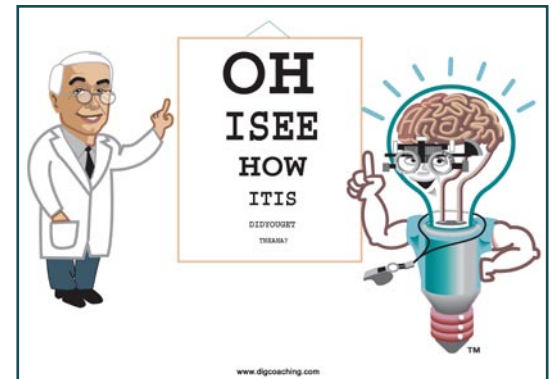
Jeff: *You had said something in the presentation, if I remember correctly, that language is actually developed so you can manipulate others.*

Dr. Barkley: Yes, but both in a good and a bad way. I can use language to persuade you to my way of thinking, but I can also use language to teach you things you don't know, like teachers do in school. And that's to your advantage. So, language is a two-edged sword. We can use it to manipulate other people, just think of all the marketing and ads, like the Superbowl ads that were on earlier. Those are designed to manipulate you, to the marketer's own ends. But we also can talk to ourselves to counteract it.

Jeff: *It's all for social purposes.*

Many of them have an insatiable appetite for learning. They just love to gain the knowledge, but they struggle in the performance or the execution of it.

In the presentation, I remember you talking about a picture of the brain and you had the backside was knowledge and the front side of the prefrontal cortex is really a lot about performance and coaching those with ADHD, I see that many of them have an insatiable appetite for learning. They just love to gain the knowledge, but they struggle in the performance or the execution of it. And it's interesting because the way you've laid this out, it makes some sense.



And when coaching those with ADHD, a lot of times we'll try to go find a template or a place to start that can

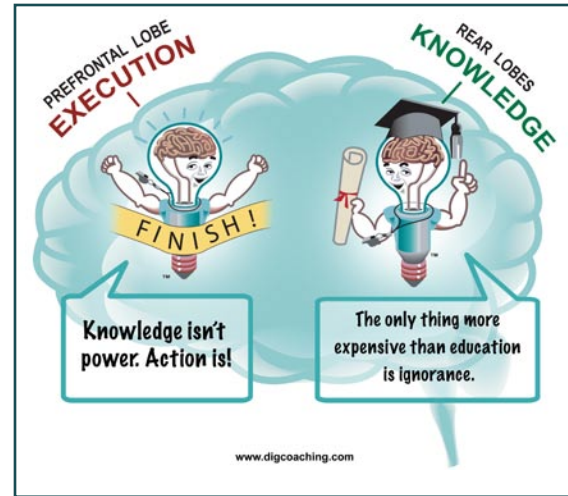
give them a pathway to see what mental play outside on how to get to where they're going, because they struggle in the absence of that. Could you just speak real briefly on that and then we'll move on?

“ When people have executive deficits, whether it's ADHD or frontal lobe injury, we can expect to see all of these levels beginning to suffer.

Dr. Barkley: Yeah, I'd love to Jeff. Let me just finish up that last stage of that last model before we go on, because I'm afraid our listeners are going to call you and say, well, what happened at that final stage? Well, the final stage of executive functioning is the ability to work in groups with other people. What I call the co-operative stage of executive functioning, it's different than trading, it's different than tit for tat, or I'll give you this if you give me that. This is where you and I work together as a team to accomplish a goal that none of us can do alone. And as you know, that is very important to daily human life. Because a lot of our work, a lot of our goals involve working as a group or a team with other people. Now, the end of this story is that when people have executive deficits, whether it's ADHD or frontal lobe injury, we can expect to see all of these levels beginning to suffer.

The first level, we talked about the executive mental level, the second level daily independence from other people, self-determination; the third level, the ability to engage in sharing, trading, turn-taking, simple etiquette, and so on. And then finally, the fourth level, which is the ability to act in groups to accomplish a concerted goal, if you will, using concerted effort that you can't do alone. All of those are in jeopardy when the executive brain begins to suffer as it does in ADHD.

So, I think that paints a much broader picture why we see so many impairments associated with ADHD. Adult ADHD is the most impairing disorder we treat in outpatient, mental health clinics. It's more impairing than anxiety disorders and depression than learning disabilities than mild autism. This is a very serious disorder, but now you can see why it's interfering with one of the most important mental abilities.



Now, the point that I think you're making that I talked about in my workshop is very important. And that is to think about the brain as two halves. The back half is the knowledge brain. It's where we acquire information, but that information doesn't do us any good unless it can

be transferred to the front part of the brain, which is the performance brain, the doing brain. So, we've got a knowing brain and a doing brain. The executive doing brain where what we know gets down to what we do. It's where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, in our life, because you can be a very smart person and you can do stupid things. You've got to be able to use what you know in your daily life with other people in order to maximize its effectiveness for your life. And I think that really helps people understand that people with ADHD, aren't stupid.

They know what other people know. They can be very bright, very intelligent individuals, but it doesn't translate into how they act so that you don't see it in their daily life. They're not able to use the knowledge that they have in order to be more socially and occupationally effective in the life. So, I think that's a very important concept for them.

“ Many of them are especially bright. And some of them do very, very well in school, but they struggle in the school of hard knocks.

Jeff: And it's funny because many that I've coached are especially bright. And some of them do very, very well in school, some

Hard is hard



of them, but they struggle in the school of hard knocks. That's the execution of it. They get all the knowledge, but when they go out and they try to apply it again, now you're in the school of hard knocks and that's many times where they struggle with some of that stuff.

Again, this whole construct makes sense. I can understand why things are as a result of it. Again,

they do very well at regular school getting knowledge, but the school of hard knocks is one that's more difficult for them.

Dr. Barkley: Yeah. It's getting things done in the real world.

Now, the beauty of this new executive view of ADHD is that the executive model tells you that there are six things you have to do to deal with any executive disorder, with any performance disorder that we're talking about here. And you'll understand them as I go through them because they link up with each of the components we've talked about.

You have got to stop relying on internal memory, on working memory, which is part of this visual imagery, self-speak system. Yours isn't very good.

Number one, you have got to stop relying on internal memory, on working memory, which is part of this visual imagery, self-speak system. Yours isn't very good. You can't hold things in mind. So, you've got to find ways to... "externalize" is the word you used... externalize information, whether it's writing it down, whether it's sticky notes, whether it's reminders. The point is external information guides you better than mental information. So learn that and use that to your advantage.

The executive system is where we get our sense of time and time management. Therefore, you're going to need to make time physical because you don't have this mental clock that functions as well as other people. So, you're going to need to become more dependent on external timing devices.

The second thing is that the executive system is where we get our sense of time and time management. And, therefore, you're going to need to make time physical because you don't have this mental clock that functions as well as other people that allows you to manage yourself relative to time the way they do. And we didn't go into all of the reasons why that's the case, but just take my word for it. The executive system is where your ability to understand time and use it to guide your behavior is located. So, you're going to need to become more dependent on external timing devices, whether it's clocks, counters, whether it's the timing timer, that was one of the ads that the commercial break, whether it's the watch minder or any of these other devices, you need to make time physical and make it real because your mental clock is a bit distorted or dysfunctional.

People with ADHD need to arrange for external consequences to occur around them more often than other people do.

Now, the third thing that people have to do is they have to make motivation external. People with ADHD have trouble with self-motivation, and it has to do with that emotional executive component. And again, we don't have time to explain why, but if you can't manage your emotions, you can't manage your motivation either. And, therefore, people with ADHD need to arrange for external consequences to occur around them more often than other people do, whether it's breaking their work down into small chunks and arranging for a little treat like an espresso or a Starbucks or a latte, or a piece of candy or something, but you've got to break your work into smaller chunks.

And then you've got to fill in with these artificial rewards and consequences. You can also do it by making yourself accountable to other people more often, like using

an ADHD coach to check in with you on a daily or every so often basis. That's the kind of external accountability I'm talking about. You need external consequences more than others.

Don't worry about the larger project that can seem overwhelming when you think about it in its totality. Instead, break it down into little pieces that are much more manageable and can be easily done within the day.

Number four, because the executive system is the ability to anticipate the future and prepare for it, they can't do that very well. So, we tell people to break the future into pieces and get piece done a day. Don't worry about the longer goal. Don't worry about the larger project that can seem overwhelming when you think about it in its totality. Instead, break it down into little pieces that are much more manageable and can be easily done within the day. And then you'll get a piece on a day and sort of step by step, brick by brick, you'll build the bridge toward the future goal. But if all you do is think about the goal itself, you're not going to get there. You've got to build a bridge, a brick at a time.

And so, that's why I tell people, break your projects down into very tiny units that don't take very long. You can get a lot of those done, feel a lot more success without worrying about the goal that you're going for that will come and do time, if you do the little steps. Now, the next thing that you have to be able to do, is to try to make problems manual.

This executive ability that we have has a limited fuel tank, a limited pool of energy.

We talked about this earlier because you can't do mental problem-solving as well as others. See if you can break the problem down into pieces and do them with your hands or put them in a computer or put them in a word file or write them down on file cards. I remember when I went to the furniture store and the first thing they did was they got out a miniature, a little piece of graph paper with magnets on it, little tiny pieces of furniture. And we started moving those around rather than trying to do it in our mind. Very good thing to do. And then I think

the last thing to do is to understand that this executive ability that we have has a limited fuel tank, a limited pool of energy, and it can be exhausted very quickly in people with ADHD. So, you have to learn to refuel the tank a lot more often than other people do. And there are various ways of refueling this executive fuel tank. By the way, it helps people understand why when they have to work for so long that they're exhausted, they're mentally shot. And that's because you're sort of exhausting your executive fuel system.

It turns out that the frontal lobe, the executive brain, the fuel tank it runs on is blood glucose.

So how do we refuel? Well, there's lots of things. One, regular routine exercise helps to restore and refuel a self-control fuel tank. Also, meditation can help as well. In addition to that, arranging for small rewards can help you. Thinking positive, giving yourself a pep talk before you start into a project can also help to fill up the fuel tank a little bit. Visualize the goals and the rewards you're going to get when you get there. That can help you as well.

And finally, drink glucose containing substances, like lemonade, sports drinks. When you've got hard work to do like you're taking exams or you're working on a very difficult project at work, and you need to use your executive system, keep some sugar containing liquids nearby and sip on them. Lemonade is the one most often used. Because it turns out that the frontal lobe, the executive brain, the fuel tank it runs on is blood glucose. And you've got to keep a lot of glucose up in the frontal lobe if you're going to be using it as often as we try to do. Do those six things, and you'll be doing a lot to help your executive brain.

Jeff: All this makes a lot of sense in hindsight, based off of some of the things that we do in coaching, which is fascinating, Dr. Barkley, we've talked about an awful lot today but we really didn't really touch on attention. It was all about self-regulation. And if we're focused now on it's really a self-regulation issue, it's really not an attention issue, that changes everything and changes

all the assessments to a certain extent, right? And the treatments?

The attention problems that people have are the direct result of these executive deficits.

Dr. Barkley: ADD or ADHD? Forget the A, it's EFDD. The attention problems that people have are the direct result of these executive deficits. So, it would be more accurate to say that ADHD is an executive function deficit disorder, which can lead to these kinds of attention problems, disorganization, forgetfulness, but the root of the problem is not attention. These people pay attention to the now just fine. What they're not paying attention to is the future. And that's the executive aspect of our life. And that's why ADHD really is EFDD.

Jeff: *I say this all the time, what's obvious is a function of what we pay attention to, but also the reverse of it. If the obvious solution isn't working, you're paying attention to the wrong thing. And by shifting this,*

I'm excited because it explains a lot. And it seems to me that this can be so beneficial for those with ADHD, because we've been paying attention to attention. It's really self-regulation; then we're more apt to get to the heart and really help those people out there because now we're paying attention to the right thing. And again, the reason I wanted to have you on was really to showcase this model for others to chew on and

think about because I think it's revolutionary. And from my perspective, just as an experienced coach, there's so much this model makes sense of that was unclear before.



Dr. Barkley: Well, I appreciate you saying so, and I hope your listeners find it useful to reframe ADHD from this executive perspective.

Jeff: *Is there anything else that you'd like to speak to that we haven't covered that won't take three days for us to cover?*

Dr. Barkley: Well, I think people need to understand that the most effective treatments are the ones that address these problems.

Take the medications, the stimulants, for instance, or the non-stimulants for ADHD. What these drugs do is to boost these executive abilities. And that's why they are so useful at helping to manage the symptoms on a day-to-day basis. But they don't lead to any permanent changes like diabetes, like the influence on the diabetics. It helps you that day, but if you stop taking it, you're going to go back to being the inattentive executive deficient person you were previously, but it does help us understand what these medications really were doing in the brain and in the neuropsychology of brain functioning.



The second thing I think people need to keep in mind is that this is the most treatable disorder in psychiatry. We have more treatments for ADHD than for any other disorder. And the treatments that we have are three times more effective than we have for anxiety disorders, than we have for depression or other difficulties. And I'm not talking just about the medication. So that's true for them, too. I'm also talking about the psychological treatments that we have.

We also have a wider variety of psychosocial treatments, like executive function, training and coaching for children and adults with ADHD that can help boost the ef-

facts of medication. So, to me, although the downside of my model is that we're talking about a very impairing and pervasive disorder here, the upside of our science is that this is a highly treatable disorder. And the biggest problem we have is that most people don't know they have the disorder and aren't being properly treated for it.

Jeff: Very well put. So, my last question with you Dr. Barkley is this. If it's really EFDD and everybody's calling it ADHD, how do you get the name changed?

Dr. Barkley: Well, I doubt it will be changed. I know in DSM-5, it won't, but there's a very practical reason for that. It's not because science hasn't shown that this isn't an executive disorder, it is. It's that the term "ADHD" appears in so many laws and regulations and rulings and protections and in school and in the Americans with Disabilities Act, and in the IDEA education act, Social Security Administration, that if you change the name of a disorder, those laws don't apply anymore to the people with the new name. And you can disenfranchise them from a lot of these hard-won protections and the civil liberties and the entitlements that they've won over the last 20 years. So, we don't change names of disorders too quickly because we know that there are legal, political, and just practical side effects for doing so. And we don't want to be too cavalier about that.

Jeff: Well, it's interesting because leading up to this, I thought, if we really have revolutionized the world and it really is more appropriate, how does that take place? And it seems to me to take decades to do that, and you actually brought up really good obstacles that make it difficult to move forward because of some stuff that's in place right now.

I will say this, that one of the reasons I wanted to have you on the show, Dr. Barkley, was to help educate the masses out there, to say to them to download this show and take it to your doctor, let them listen to it. We're not saying it's the right thing. I mean, I'm not saying it's

the right thing or wrong thing, but I'm encouraged by it. I think it really makes a lot of sense.

And some of this is just getting the word out there to say just listen to this way of paying attention to it. Does it make some sense to you? So, maybe follow up on Dr. Barkley's theories and stick in a little bit more detail to see if it makes a bit more sense at a deeper level. So, a lot of this was really just you coming on and letting you share this, Dr. Barkley. It makes a lot of sense, particularly if it can help others. So, thank you so much for coming on the show. This has been very enlightening in my own private little education, I might add, I enjoyed it.

Dr. Barkley: That's great, thank you.

Jeff: A reminder to everybody, you can learn more about Dr. Barkley by going to russellbarkley.org and on that site you can get access to books and a host of presentations and papers you can download, not just the new book.

