ADHD and Optimism—by Mason Puzara

As an individual with the condition known to many by its acronym (ADHD), I've had to learn to stay positive, in spite of all its burdens, because the truth is, as annoying as it can be at times, my ADHD actually does come with quite a few pros. Had I just resented my condition, I think that I would be an unhappy person. Optimism, for me, is one of the key things I use to navigate through life with ADHD. Admittedly, it has been a bumpy road, but I strive forward knowing that if I find a way to recognize and sometimes adapt to my cons, then I can use my pros to my advantage in the coming years. That is the kind of optimism which I thrive on.

For as long as I can remember, my ADHD has found itself embedded into my brain. I have endured the challenges that have come with it from the youngest age that I can recall, yet my grandmother and my mother both made sure that I knew that I wasn't just an unlucky kid with a mental disorder; rather, I had this special thing in my head that made me different, but in many spectacular ways. Optimism is about looking at the positive and thinking forward with a bright perspective. Over the years, many have commended me for my very cohesive memory. I went to Washington, D.C., in 2017, and by the time I came back, I could name all of the US presidents in order. Could I memorize all that without ADHD, at least in that quick of a time frame? I think not.

In public school, back when I didn't have many friends, I kept my chin up hoping that the best would eventually come. ADHD isn't an impenetrable barrier from making friends, and I knew that. Time passed, and I developed a better sense of social skills, and it was thanks to the values of optimism, which provided me with the chance to see past all the troubles in my life and believe that there could be a better tomorrow. It was times like these in which being an optimist made my life much happier.

Many people throughout history were ADHDers, and they overcame many obstacles to get to where they got. Among these names, in both history and the present day, include Albert Einstein, Agatha Christie, Johnny Depp,

Justin Timberlake, Thomas Edison, and Alexander Graham Bell, amongst countless additional achievers. Einstein's teachers considered him to be stupid because he wasn't engaged in the lessons, when in fact, he was calculating revolutionary equations. Iconic swimmer Michael Phelps was diagnosed quite young, and his mother was his biggest cheerleader, teaching him to think from an optimistic standpoint and appropriately handle ADHD. He would go on to become the most decorated Olympic athlete of all time. That ability to look at the bright side and hope for a good future kept these people from accepting defeat. Their perseverance shows how far someone with ADHD can go with just the right sense of optimism.

Lots of people completely misunderstand the concept of being neurodivergent. They think it means intelligence, competence, and attention which is inferior to that of the average neurotypical person's. As a result of these people's ignorance, men and women with ADHD have been treated like lesser beings, with people only focusing on inattentiveness and hyperactivity. If we do a better job educating society about the complex wiring of ADHD and its effect in the brain, we can help eliminate these harmful stigmatizations and make life easier for the people that it affects. In the climate of this world, which can be quite hard for the ADHD community, optimism, and the hope that these generalizations will eventually be seen as incorrect, lights the spirits of all these people who have to put up with these assumptions day after day. If in our society people focus on what someone can do versus what they cannot, it blows open many doors. Being optimistic about the potential of others is important to self-confidence, self-worth and a happier society.

In conclusion, with ADHD, although it comes with many challenges, it is just a thing that differentiates some people from the general mass. Understanding that many aspects of it are good, and you could make a case that it's more so a blessing than curse. Using that optimism, we, the group who experience it in our everyday lives, can lead long, happy, and fulfilling lives, not allowing its negatives to make us miserable. For as long as we keep believing in a better future, our spirits will remain vivid and

flowing, injecting our brains with a growth mindset that is focused on a fulfilling future.