

Attention Deficit (hyperactivity) Disorder, and Companion Parrots

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ADHD/ADD, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, and companion parrots are two subjects that are not commonly seen together in aviculture. It's not an issue that the majority face, but it is more common than discussed. As one reader comments, "ADHD is everywhere in the bird world considering the amount of professionals in this industry who have it!" This is impressive information. Furthermore, parrots, the intelligent creatures that they are, seem to share the emotional characteristics that an ADDer may feel. With their silly antics and jovial personalities to their emotional struggles and profound moments, we ADDers feel as if we can connect with them on a more intense level. Thus, I believe that if the ADDer has been able to get through the hard times successfully, he or she can certainly help companion parrots get through similar situations.

Ken Globus, known as the Bird Whisperer, has been a behavior consultant for over twenty years, and has ADHD. His work is truly amazing considering the large number of success stories that stand behind him. Ken has been known to tame even the most aggressive birds within a matter of weeks. What is more impressive than his work, is how he is able to live successfully with such a debilitating disorder.

Ken says, "As people, the only way we are able to get over our fears, is to be exposed to them. Birds need to be exposed to their fears as well." When Ken said this, I immediately thought back to my Sophomore year in High School when I exposed myself to my greatest fear. I was afraid that my other class mates would find out about my ADHD and disown me from their social "cliques." I was also afraid that if teachers found out, they would remove me from the honors classes that

I was taking. A lot of terrible worries would consume my mind. I would think to myself, "No one in the 'real' world that holds any type of credibility has ADHD. I don't have a future."

Well, as time progressed I couldn't keep my emotions inside anymore. I knew I couldn't go on feeling as if everyone else had superiority over me for the rest of my life. So I listened to my inner voice and told my teachers and peers about my ADHD.

Contrary to what I thought, they didn't reject me. Instead, they were so proud of me! I inspired them! The fact that such an ambitious adolescent can work so hard to achieve what he wants is truly remarkable. Well, life only continued to get better and, for once, I felt secure in my own shoes.

Over the past few weeks I've been working with my Cockatiel, King, who has a fear of new people. From my own experiences with my fears, I was able to draw some parallels. I knew exactly how King was feeling. So, I thought it would only be fair to help him out with his quandary. I played a few socialization games by introducing him to new people that were patient and gentle enough to work with him. By the fourth week of our socialization process, King began to step up to other people besides those he knew.

There are many different methods to go about tackling ADHD/ADD so don't be discouraged if you think you have it. A qualified physician can assist you in going about managing your ADHD in the best way. In my experience, medication helps a tremendous amount, but it isn't my only source of treatment. The truth is, once I began to believe in my self, miracles began to unfold.

Our birds deserve our companionship when we are in our best health. It would only be selfish to neglect our feathered friend's needs because of our lack of interest in treating our own chemical imbalances. As abstract as it may seem, ADHD/ADD is very treatable and shouldn't be given up on. Hope is in your reach, so grab it while it's hot! ♦



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