

Is It Just Me?

Talking About ADHD and Other Neurodiversity

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whois robl

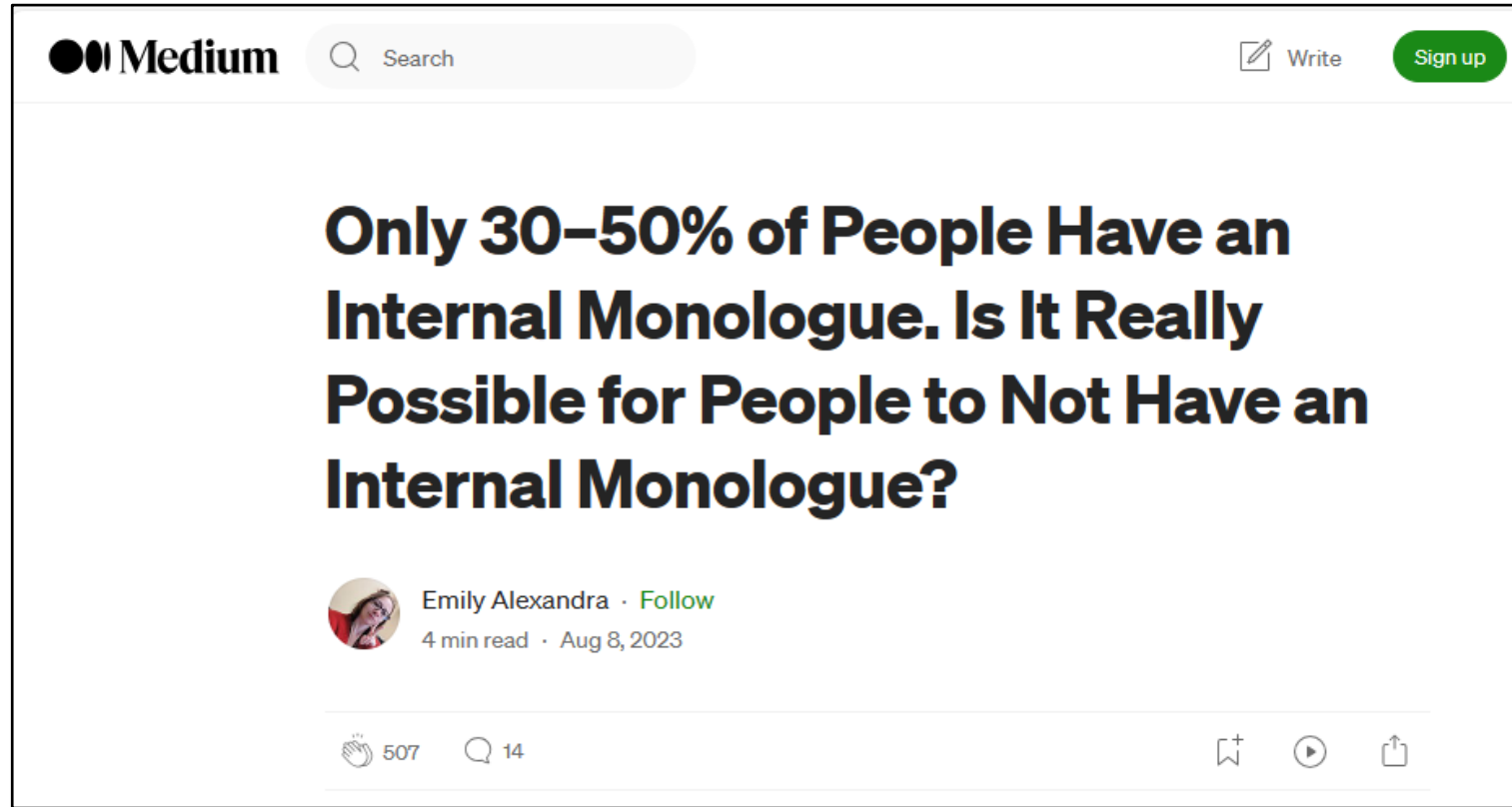
- Various jobs in Support, IT, Networks for the past 30 (!!) years
- Based in London
- Currently Senior Network Engineer* at LONAP since 2012

- (...This is my first presentation at a RIPE meeting)

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* Generic job title which means basically everything....

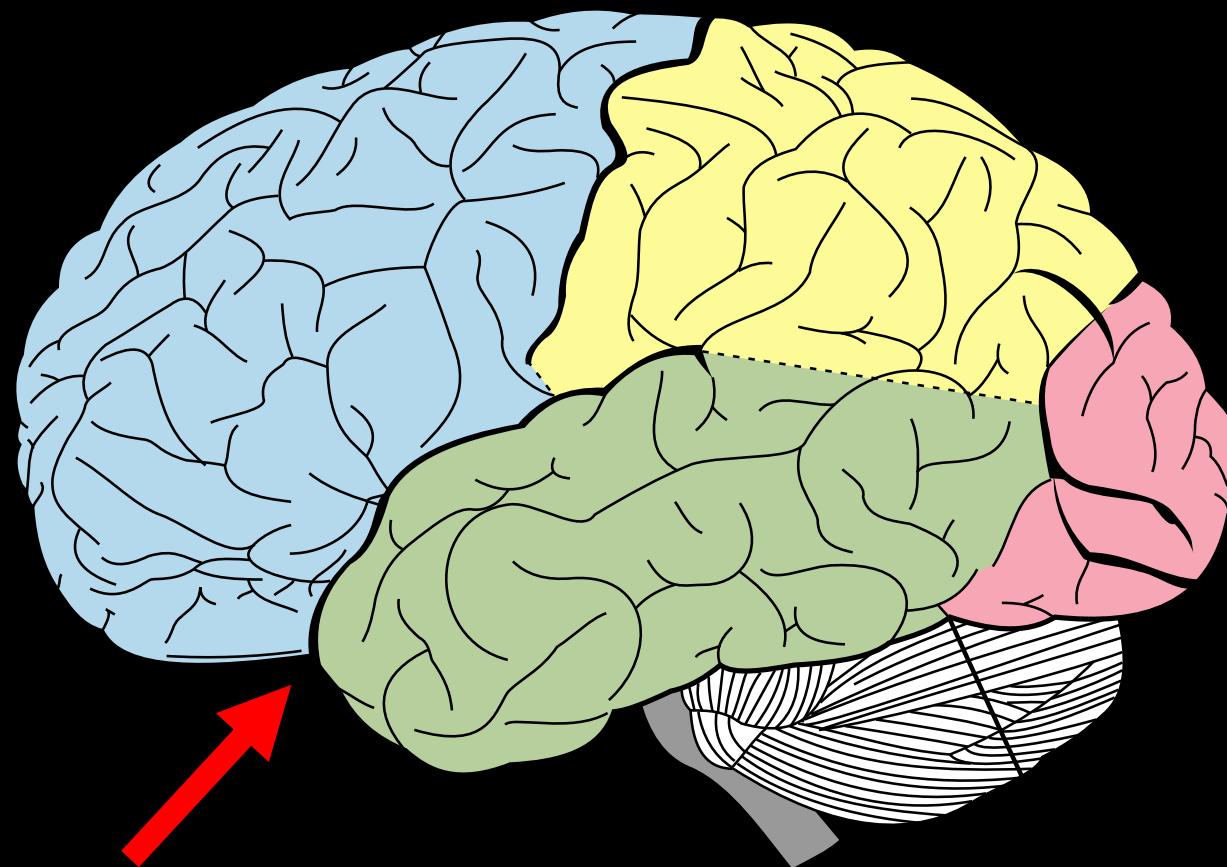
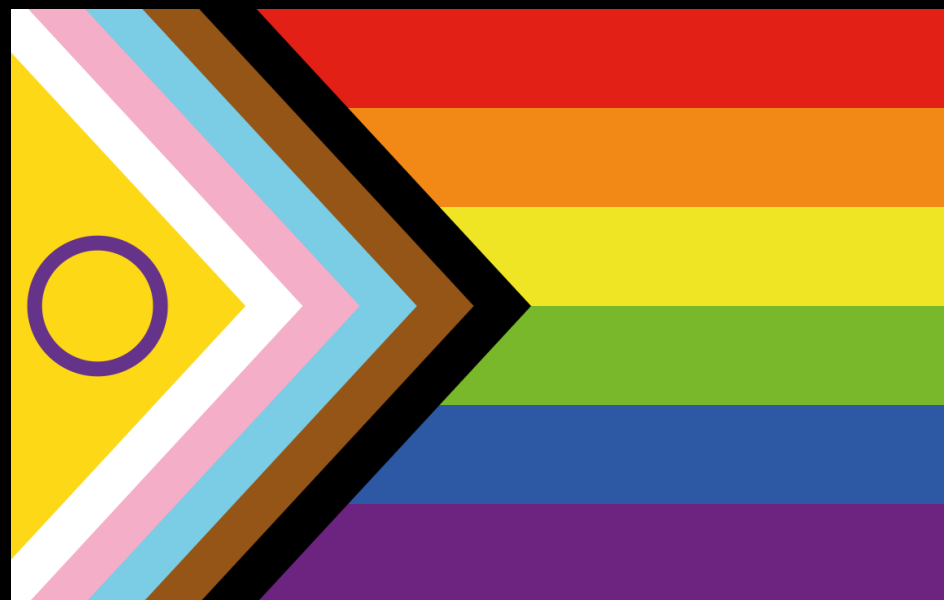
Inner Voices...



<https://irisreading.com/is-it-normal-to-not-have-an-internal-monologue/>

<https://eccentricemmie.medium.com/only-30-50-of-people-have-an-internal-monologue-b75125ca5694>

Coming out...



Brain: Model "B"

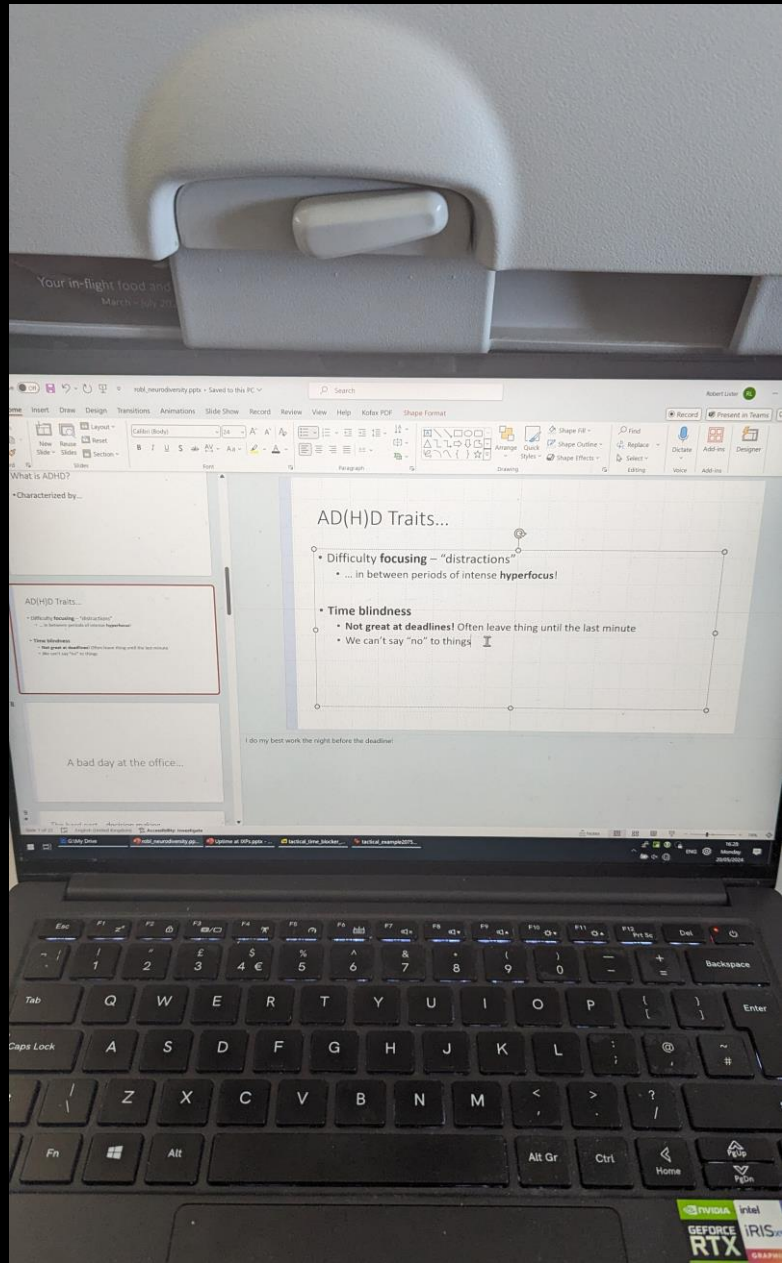
ADHD...

Attention **Deficit** Hyperactivity **Disorder**

:(

ADHD Traits...

- **Short attention span** and being easily **distracted**
 - Hard to settle on one task
 - “Butterfly mind” full of **random/unconnected** thoughts...
- **Hyperfocus**
 - **Focus can be excellent...** (but often not on the **right** task. 😞)
- **Disorganisation**
 - **Time blindness** – we are not great at deadlines!
 - Often **leave things until the last minute**
- **Forgetful - Terrible working memory!**



S: [Twitter.com/lolasalehu](https://twitter.com/lolasalehu)



Artform.
@LolaSalehu

I can do anything, as long as there's a looming deadline and serious consequences.

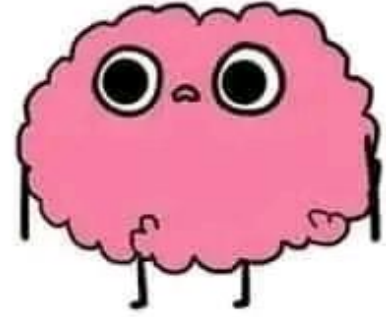
ADHD Traits...

- **Fidgeting, restlessness, problems sleeping...**
- **Can have difficulty reading long-form text**
 - A “5 minute read” might take half an hour.
 - (Even then I’ll have to read it several times.)
- **People pleasers**
 - **We can’t say no to things** and tend to take on too much...
- **‘Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria’**

Let's be productive!



No.



Oh, a day of relaxing it is!



NO RELAXING!
ONLY GUILT!



VIAKAVISH

Posted in r/meirl



ADHD Traits – the good...

- **Being calm in a crisis**
- **Creativity**
 - Natural **problem-solvers**
 - ‘Think outside the box’
 - **Insightful connections** between previously unconnected things
- **Energy**
 - Capable of delivering **work to a very high standard**

ADHD Traits – the good...

- **Authenticity**

- Motivated by passion and purpose
- Great '**social justice** warriors'

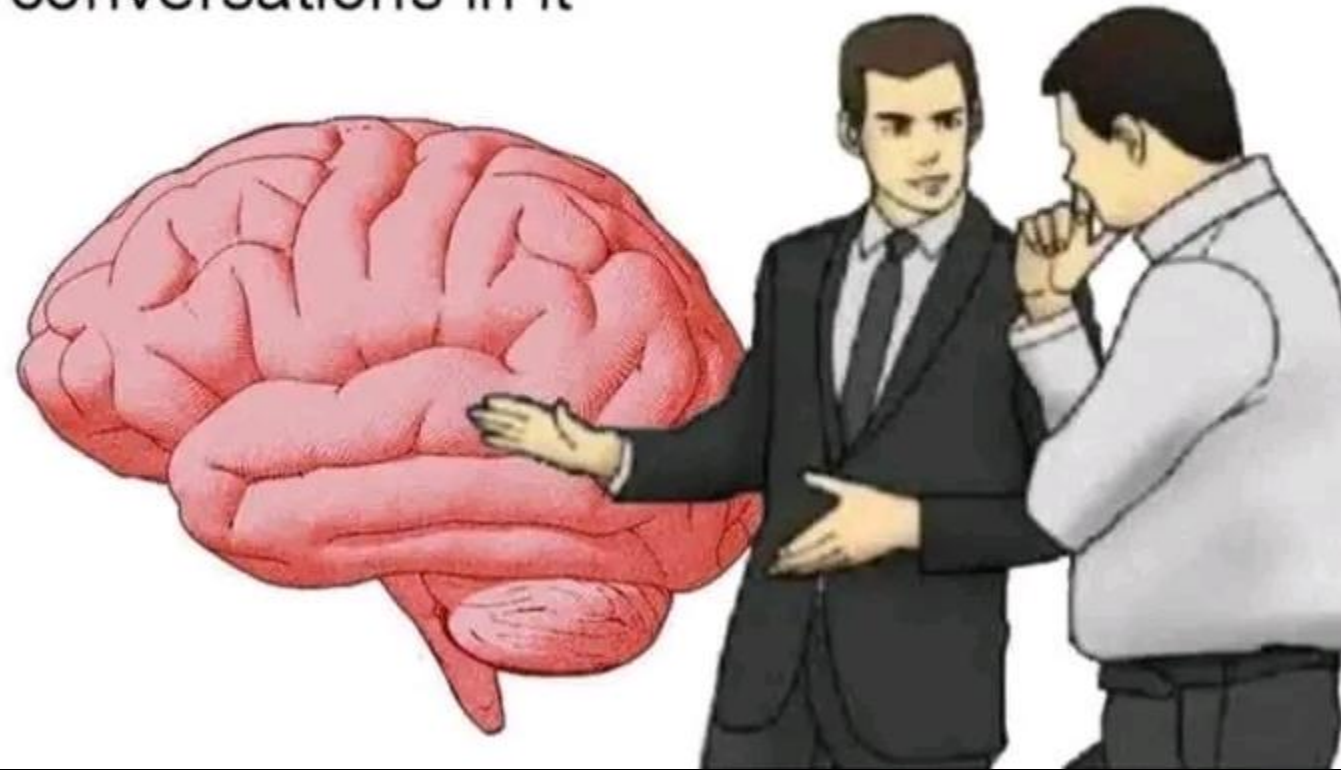
- **Kind-heartedness and compassion**

- We generally care about others a great deal
- **Sensitive** and **empathetic** to others

- **Bravery**

- Fearless, in decision making, risk-taking and choices

car salesman: *slaps roof of ADHD brain*
this bad boy can fit so many hypothetical
conversations in it



Communication – a mixed bag!

Me when
I don't talk



Wait...am I boring?

Me when
I talk



Wait...am I annoying?

- **You'll probably hear all about my current hyperfixation/project/random thoughts...**
- Plus all the back-story...
- ...and three tangents
- Oh, here's another thing I thought was important for you to know.
- (Some other **bonus content** in brackets)
- ...Wait. What was your name, again?

Experiences

- **Unhelpful “advice”**
 - “Have you tried making a TODO list?”
 - “Just do the thing...”
 - ADHD isn’t a real thing - **It’s just an excuse...**
- Slow to think in conversations - **often left behind in the conversation**
- Concise thinking and getting to the point isn't a strong point!
- **We like to tell a story** and give lots of context...
People find this incredibly annoying! *“Just get to the point”*
- People talking over me

So what?



People choose to wear the sunflower to discreetly indicate that they have an invisible disability and may need help, assistance or simply more time.



- 1. Ask if you can help**
- 2. Be kind**
- 3. Listen closely**
- 4. Have patience**
- 5. Do not judge**
- 6. Show respect**



<https://hdsunflower.com>



Accommodations....

- Quiet spaces?
- Flexibility with deadlines
- Set clear expectations

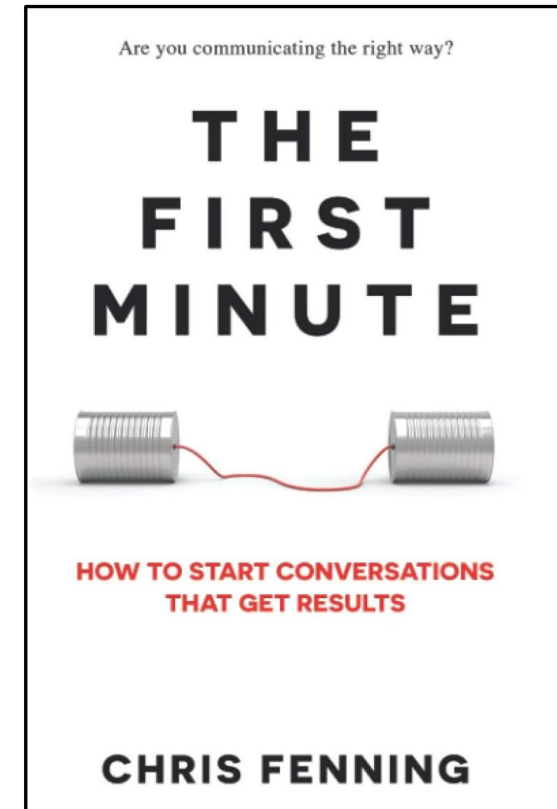
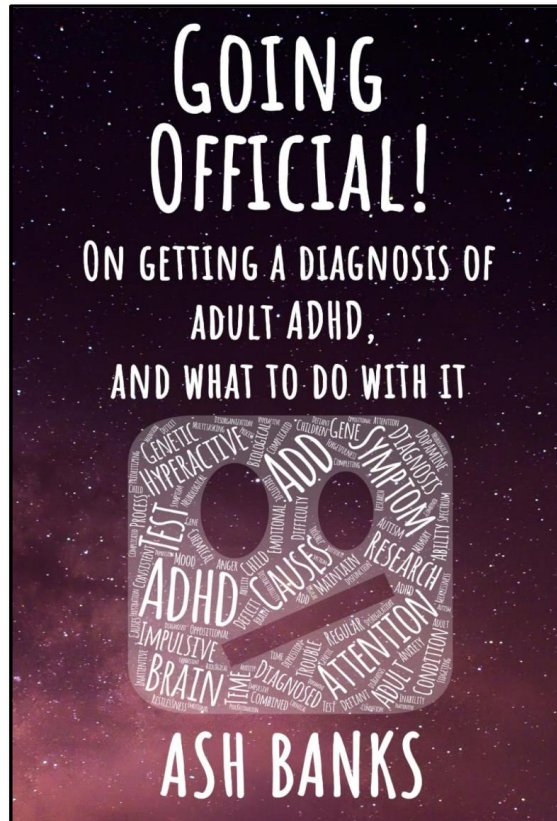
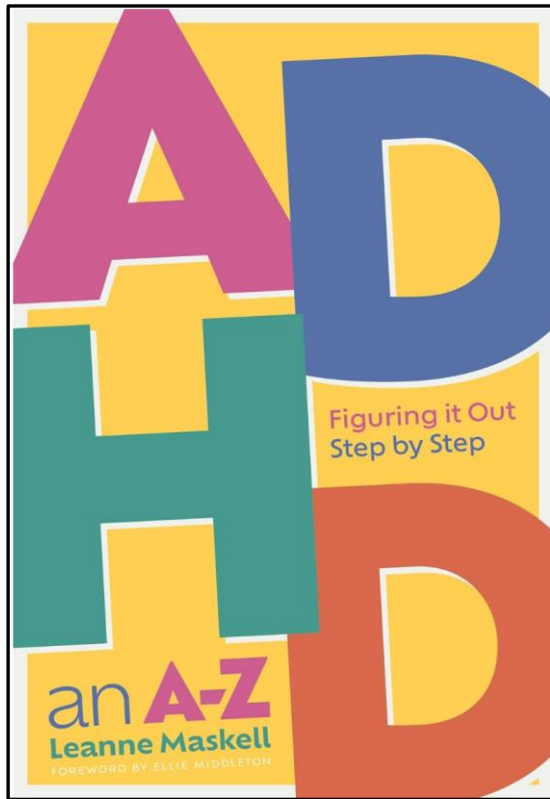
- Patience
- Easier to read fonts and line spacing

- **Keep talking** about it...
- Raising awareness... Removing the stigma

Hidden brains... **brilliant** minds

- Would the Internet ever have happened without amazing diverse minds?
- Celebrate neurodiversity
- **Keep being awesome**

Your brain: Owner's manuals...



ADHD an A-Z: Figuring it Out Step by Step. Leanne Maskell (2022) (ISBN: 978-1839973857)

Going Official! On getting a diagnosis of adult ADHD, and what to do with it. Ash Banks (2021) (ISBN: 979-8592736797)

The First Minute: How to Start Conversations That Get Results. Chris Fenning (2020) (ISBN: 978-1838244002)



Owl! at the Library 🙄 🧙
@SketchesbyBoze



Too many of us have tried to tone down our weirdness for friends or partners, only to later learn that we were suppressing the best things about us. There's no joy like the joy of being your strange self and finding that there are people who love you for it.

Questions? Discussion...