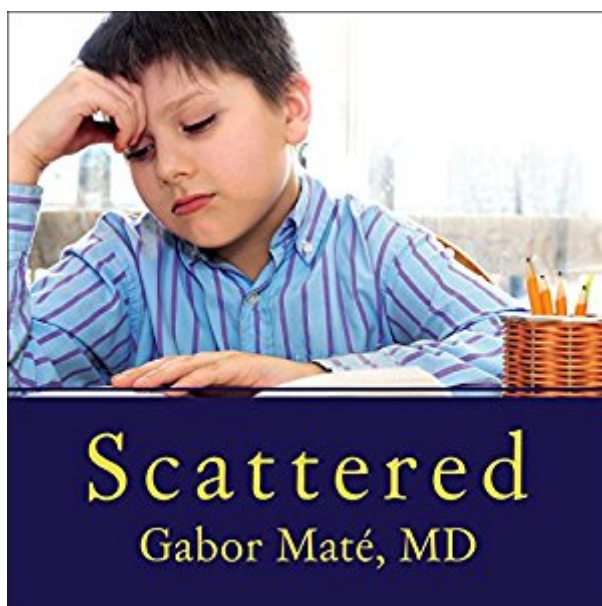


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Scattered: How Attention Deficit Disorder Originates And What You Can Do About It



Synopsis

Attention deficit disorder (ADD) has quickly become a controversial topic in recent years. Whereas other books on the subject describe the condition as inherited, Dr. Gabor Maté[©] believes that our social and emotional environments play a key role in both the cause of and cure for this condition. In *Scattered*, he describes the painful realities of ADD and its effect on children as well as on career and social paths in adults. While acknowledging that genetics may indeed play a part in predisposing a person toward ADD, Dr. Maté[©] moves beyond that to focus on the things we can control: changes in environment, family dynamics, and parenting choices. He draws heavily on his own experience with the disorder as both an ADD sufferer and the parent of three diagnosed children. Providing a thorough overview of ADD and its treatments, *Scattered* is an essential and life-changing guide for the millions of ADD sufferers in North America today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having been in therapy longer than Woody Allen, I practice what Karl Menninger called 'bibliotherapy'-i.e., reading widely and deeply in the field of mental or emotional disorders. Since I'm a voracious reader, and since I've been doing this for twenty years, I sometimes feel there isn't much left for a layman to learn, or at least nothing much that could be called new. But Dr. Maté's book is wonderfully helpful on two fronts: first, it is a "why-you-or-your-child-are-like-this" book, and second, it is a "and-here-is-what-you-can-do-to-alleviate-the-condition"book. Not cure it, mind you,

just make the cards you drew a little easier to play. On the first front, the neurobiology of ADD, Dr. Mate makes his point conclusively: this disorder arises first in the infant, in how he or she is wired-or not-and it occurs in the make-up of the hypersensitive baby, highly aware and from the very beginning suffering at the smallest slings and arrows life offers. Resilient children roll with the punches; ADD kids are flattened by them and get back up more slowly. Momma used to call this type "high-strung" and, boy, was she ever right. Dr. Mate even points out a study done on the vagus nerve of five-month old babies that turns out to be highly predictive of which of them will later, at fourteen months, prove to be "more reactive to maternal separation." In other words, ADD could as well serve as an acronym for Attachment Deficit Disorder. People who are hypersensitive have a disordered attachment to their caretakers that is pre-verbal and pervasive. One had better learn to deal with the fact that the fault is mainly synaptical, not social. My family doctor told me that my then-nine-year-old son suffered from severe separation anxiety because he hadn't been in pre-school or away from his parents enough.

I must say that my opinion regarding Dr. Mate's "Scattered" is... well... "Scattered!" On the one hand, it contains some of the most eloquently poetic descriptions of A.D.D. I've ever seen (some of which come directly from Dr. Mate's patients). One need look no further than the chapter headings to see how beautifully the ambiguity of poetry describes the A.D.D. experience- headings like "So Much Soup and Garbage Can," "Forgetting to Remember the Future," "A Surrealistic Choreography," "Severed Thoughts and Flibbertigibbets," and "My Marshmallow Caught Fire." In fact, on page 43, Dr. Mate offers one of the most poignant metaphors for A.D.D. I've read, in his description of the trees on the shores of Vancouver Island. Passages like this one make "Scattered" a worthwhile book to own, and I've recommended it highly to several people on that basis alone. But while "Scattered" delivers in grand style on the promise of the first part of its title (i.e. "How A.D.D. Originates"), it fails to deliver consistently on the promise of its second (i.e. "What You Can Do About It"). This unrealized expectation is established by the last sentence of the very same page referenced above (p.43), which reads: "Fortunately, as we will see when we come to the chapters on the healing process in ADD, neurological and psychological maturation can take place at any time during the life cycle, even in late adulthood." As well-established as the author's intentions are for the remainder of the book, what unfortunately follows is heavily and disproportionately weighted more towards offering specific advice to parents of A.D.D. children than towards offering practical solutions for the A.D.D. adult.

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