

Woman Of The Week: LINDA ANDERSON

Linda S. Anderson, MA, MCC/Getting Clear President, Attention Deficit Disorder Association, Business and Personal Coach, speaks to Marilyn Russell

By Marilyn Russell

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Out of necessity, we've become a society of multi-taskers, juggling family, work, committees, and more, facing head-on the challenges of our every day life. Frankly, it's no wonder we all get a little unorganized...even more so when the tasks mount, and the struggle becomes simply knowing where to begin. Very soon, we'll be adding on holiday activities and have even more balls in the air at once. How many times have you looked at a co-worker, family member or spouse and stated:

"the ADD has really kicked in today?" I admit I've done it - used it as an excuse in a very casual light-hearted manner, and yet, the reality is more than 7 million people in America are diagnosed with ADD. Symptoms include making careless mistakes, not listening, not finishing tasks, not following directions, and being easily distracted. That basically sounds like any given day at my house, so I thought it'd be a good idea to get to know Linda Anderson, President of Getting Clear and the Attention Deficit Disorder Association, whose been nominated for Woman of the Week.



WOTW: How and why did you start Getting Clear?

Linda: During a transition period in my life, for a few years I worked as a professional organizer. I soon discovered that many of my clients struggled with similar challenges. It wasn't just that they had problems with organization. Many of them had difficulty prioritizing, managing time, projects and their lives at home and at work, and they asked me to help. I realized that I had a sensitivity and a gift for working with these adults, many of whom who were creative, bright, had great potential or respectable careers, but they were struggling. I had met the world of ADD. Today, the clinically accepted term is AD/HD, although most people are more familiar with the term ADD. They are interchangeable.

I was immediately drawn into learning more about my clients and ADD. I researched, attended seminars and networked with experts in the field. Soon, I was leading seminars at national conferences, sharing what I was learning about how to sort clutter externally and internally, how to create change when change was difficult. I was talking about how to break challenges into doable parts, build on personal strengths, develop personalized strategies and create rewards. I

had quite naturally discovered the world of coaching. When I learned that there was such a profession, I sought out training.

In training to be a coach, my past work experience as an educator, administrator and trainer along with my hands-on experience as an organizer fired by a passion for understanding more about AD/HD, led me into the specialty area in which I work, today. In 2002, I achieved master coach certification through the International Coach Federation. I've been coaching for 10 years now.

This unexplainable draw toward understanding more about AD/HD and my clients, led me over those same years to participate in an organization called the Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) - the leading organization for adults with AD/HD, which first formed in 1989. So, many of the people involved in ADDA, doctors, professionals and leaders in the world of AD/HD, were my teachers over the years. Today, I am proud to serve as president of this organization, which has 13,000 associate members coming to its website for information – www.add.org - and coming to national and regional events to seek information and connect with others who have AD/HD.

WOTW: How many jobs did you have prior to the one you have now? What was the worst of the lot?

Linda: I had four jobs before becoming a coach. Three of them were in early childhood education. When I worked at my fourth job, as a professional organizer, I faced some very unusual and challenging situations. On several occasions, I walked unaware into major clutter and hoarding challenges. On one such occasion, I was brought in as “the expert.” The clients, who were close relatives, had seen me on TV. They told me they just knew that I was an angel of mercy coming to help them.

When I walked in the door, I realized the magnitude of the problem. This was, of course, way over my abilities to change. I thought, “I am never going home, again. I'm going to be mummified and put in the corner of the living room behind the five foot high stacks of newspapers.” The stacks filled the living room and every room in the house. I speak with humor about this, but it is a very debilitating state for those who suffer from this kind of obsessive-compulsive need to collect, hating to live with its restraints, at the same time unwilling to let it go.

WOTW: Linda, what would you say is the best thing about your position?

Linda: I'm my own boss. I connect with most of my clients via telephone, who live across the United States, across the ocean, and yet we can talk intimately about their goals, desires and problems. The work I do as a coach with my clients is very tangible, practical and sometimes magical. I enjoy working with a variety of clients each with a different talent or expertise and accompanying AD/HD challenges. Daily, I am a coach, but I am also a student. As president of the Attention Deficit Disorder Association, I get the opportunity to educate, to represent ADDA and to participate on a board with individuals who are connected passionately with the mission of making the lives of those with AD/HD better. It's a really great thing to be connected to passion.

WOTW: What is the hardest thing to accomplish?

Linda: Balance! I need a coach to keep me balanced in my responsibilities as board president, entrepreneur, wife and parent. Life is full of diversions, distractions and too much stuff, even when you don't have AD/HD. We all live in a kind of ADD-like culture. There is just too much on each of our plates and we pile more on.

WOTW: Of what are you most proud?

Linda: Being president of a national organization, the Attention Deficit Disorder Association, gives me great pride. I am also proud of being a master certified coach, a leader in my field and the originator of my own business. Silly as this may sound, I am proud of one more thing. I go to the gym! I was never an athlete in my school years. I have learned how good it feels to find my own rhythm and routine at the gym, and I have gone to the gym for a few years now. This accomplishment represents to me that sometimes you really can make an 180° change in direction.

WOTW: Describe your philosophy and how you utilize it with your responsibilities at work.

Linda: I call my coaching business Getting Clear, because I believe that is what we continually strive to do in our lives. We seek to move from some level of confusion, procrastination and chaos toward design, action and fulfillment. Even when we don't have AD/HD to further complicate the path, life continually throws us disorder and confusion as we strive toward clarity. Clarity feels good. Chaos rarely feels good, but it can be the uncomfortable birthing place of creative possibilities. We all need tools, strategies, resources and help to move toward our goals and our challenges. We don't have to do it alone. In fact, the better we are at building a team, finding mentors and coaches, the more successful we can be.

WOTW: What is one thing you've always wanted to do?

Linda: To speak Spanish fluently.

WOTW: What (if any) is your guilty pleasure?

Linda: I can sometimes sneak away to my kitchen to fix and eat lunch, when the soap, "Days of our Lives" is playing. Every week I catch about 15 minutes of it. I get a disconnected taste of the storyline, but there is a certain dependability still there. The bad characters keep doing bad things, someone will always harbor a major secret, sooner or later they will all end up in the hospital or on an island, and the writers will absolutely find a way to get bare-chested men into the scenes.

WOTW: What's next for you?

Linda: Writing and growing AD/HD awareness in every way possible.

If you've got questions, Linda has answers and you can reach her at www.add.org. If you'd like to nominate someone for WOTW, please email me at: marilyn@phillynews.com, or mrussellpr@hotmail.com.