



RESULTS from the SURVEY

“Who Drives Your ADHD Brain?”

Survey created and summarized May, 2015

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PURPOSE of the SURVEY: To use a creative approach in determining what aspect of your brain or personality is “in control” much of the time, in order to offer the kinds of training and solutions that are most needed among ADHD Adults.

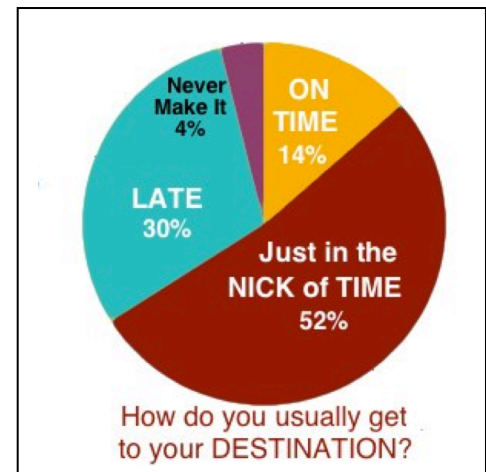
WHO WAS SURVEYED: The survey was sent to people on the [Thrive with ADD](#) mailing list of ADD / ADHD Adults, and posted on the [Thrive with ADD Facebook Page](#). The survey responses were anonymous.

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Q: Consider your tasks, projects and ideas as “DESTINATIONS” that you need to drive to.

Which statement best describes how you reach your destination most of the time?

- 52% I usually get there **just in the nick of time**, but have cut a few corners and gotten some dents along the way.
- 30% I usually get there **late**, and sometimes find the place has closed by the time I arrive.
- 14% I usually get there **on time**.
- 4% I usually **never make it** to my destination.



BONNIE'S COMMENTS: If you thought you were the only one living in chaos, you have a lot of company!

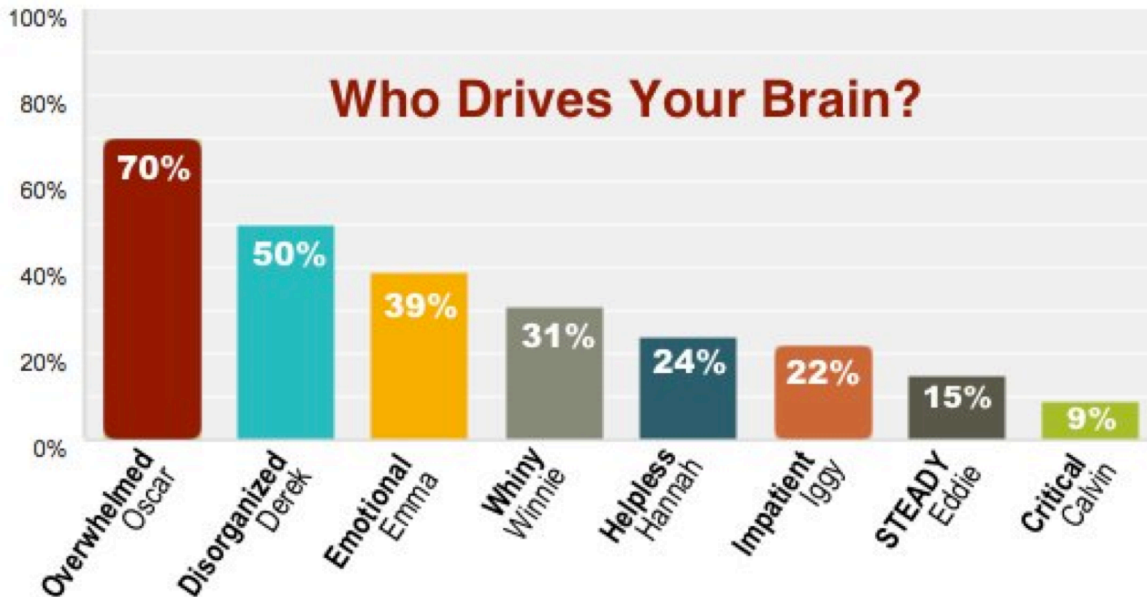
The good news is that over half the respondents do seem to make their deadlines. The bad news is, they are stressed out and living on adrenaline. The worse news is that almost a third are late, meaning they have missed a deadline altogether.

It seems only 14% get things done on time without drama.

So who is causing all this difficulty? Who is driving?

Q: Think of your brain as a car, and imagine you have a team of drivers at your disposal. These drivers all have different personalities. Particular characters may show up to drive more often, perhaps triggered by specific circumstances.

Over the last few months, which of these characters has grabbed the wheel most often? (Pick no more than 4)



- 70% OVERWHELMED OSCAR** - When faced with too many places to go or directions, stops driving and turns to another activity altogether.
- 50% DISORGANIZED DEREK** - Forgets the directions; loses his drivers' license, keeps the car a mess.
- 39% EMOTIONAL EMMA** - Derailed by shame or fear; goes miles out of the way to avoid an uncomfortable situation. Delayed getting her drivers' license for fear of failing the driving test.
- 31% WHINY WINNIE** - Says, "I don't feel like it" when it comes to getting gas or stopping to check the brake light. Gets in difficult situations due to avoidance of simple maintenance.
- 24% HELPLESS HANNAH** - When lost, drives in circles or wrings her hands and does nothing rather than ask for directions.
- 22% IMPATIENT IGGY** - Doesn't take the time to get the oil changed; tries to take shortcuts, gets speeding tickets.
- 15% STEADY EDDIE** - Drives straight to the destination; obeys traffic signals and speed limit.
- 9% CRITICAL CALVIN** - Reminds everyone of every ticket and driving error, and why they shouldn't go at all.

BONNIE'S COMMENTS:

Unfortunately, only 14% of respondents saw "**Steady Eddie**" in charge of driving their brain much of the time. The rest were more often derailed by bad drivers or stuck for various reasons.

- "**Overwhelmed**" seems to describe most people's state by wide margin! But what other characters contributed to the overwhelmed feeling?
- Half were taken over by "**Disorganized Derek**." Disorganization tends to be a significant factor in creating stress and chaos, keeping people from getting things done on time.
- "**Emotional Emma**" might enter the picture due to shame or fear, or perhaps as a reaction to feeling overwhelmed and not being able to find things.
- SHAME-driven Emma brings out "**Helpless Hannah**" -- who avoids getting help because she is afraid of letting anyone find out that she is stuck. A quarter of the respondents are likely to stay stuck when they don't know what to do, wasting time by not seeking an answer.
- "**Whiny Winnie**" is the procrastinator! When someone simply doesn't feel like doing something, Winnie is like a stubborn two-year-old, refusing to cooperate and crying, "*I don't want to!*"
- "**Impatience**" wasn't identified as a primary driver very often, but in coaching people with ADD / ADHD, I've found that impatience can be a common factor in keeping them from using strategies to get out of overwhelm, or to help them stay organized.
- "**Critical Calvin**" isn't showing as a main player, but he can operate heavily behind the scenes. For many, a tendency to self-criticism and self-blame brings out emotions of SHAME and FEAR of not being perfect. So although the player they are most aware of is "Emotional Emma," Calvin is the one who gets the ball rolling. Operating together, Calvin and Emma create mental paralysis.

COMMENTS from RESPONDENTS:

Individuals identified some additional characters that drove their brains! Here are their comments:

"**Raging Rosie**" - My constant response to irritation at resorting to all of the above!

"**Hibernating Henrietta**" - There is too much going on, can I just go home?

"**Lead Foot Lizzy**" - Always driving fast to avoid being late, drives unnecessary extra miles because she doesn't logistically plan her routes to her many destinations. Low fuel light on, check engine light on, and oil change overdue!

"**Dreamer Doris**" - Has great plans and good intentions to reach destinations, but can't (or doesn't?) put them into action.

“Pressured Penny” - Mixture of too much to do, no time to read map, and desperate to do well.

“Foolish Fran” - Forgets to get car inspected, car is a mess, car needs washing, refuses to use GPS.

**What do you think about the concept of characters
as a way to quickly identify
what tends to lead you astray?**

Please let us know!

Return to the [Thrive with ADD BLOG](http://thrivewithadd.com/adhd-survey-overwhelming-winner/) and add a comment:

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