



RESULTS from the SURVEY

“Getting Started Blues”

Survey created and summarized April 2012

by **Bonnie Mincu**, Senior Certified ADHD Coach and founder of “Thrive with ADD”

PURPOSE of the SURVEY: To determine the nature of the problems people with ADD / ADHD have in getting started and getting things done.

WHO WAS SURVEYED: The survey was sent to 17,800+ people on the Thrive with ADD mailing list of ADD / ADHD Adults. The survey responses were anonymous.

SURVEY PROTOCOL: The answers were automatically randomized, presented in random order which varied for each participant. This eliminated undue bias towards answers that were in a particular order.

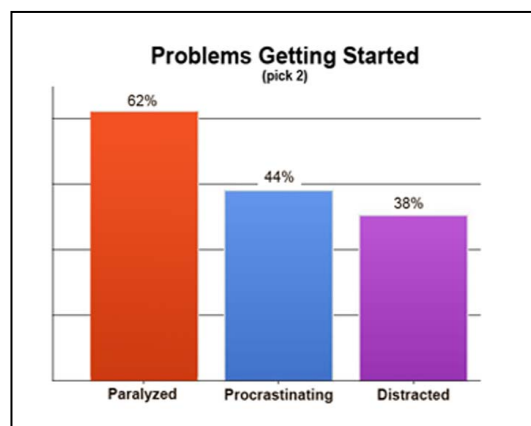
COMMENTS: My thoughts and conclusions follow each question.

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Q: When you’ve had trouble getting started, which of these statements do you relate to the most? (no more than 2)

- 62% I was paralyzed and unable to start
- 44% I procrastinated on starting because of boredom or lack of motivation
- 38% I tried to start but got distracted or interrupted

BONNIE'S COMMENTS: Once each term was defined, it is significant that more than 30% more ADD respondents cited mental paralysis as their main problem than procrastination.



Q: PROCRASTINATION - Simple procrastination is when you just don’t feel like starting; you’re not motivated or interested. Which statement do you relate to most regarding this kind of procrastination?

- 43% I start work at the last minute and often don’t finish on time, or feel I could have done much better if I had started sooner
- 32% I finally get a burst of focus that gets me started, and I finish at the last minute
- 16% If I wait long enough, I never get started and end up never doing it
- 6% Other
- 2% I don’t have much trouble with this kind of procrastination

BONNIE'S COMMENTS: This kind of procrastination is most typically associated with ADD / ADHD. Only 2% say they don't experience procrastination when bored or unmotivated. While a third are able to do well at the last minute due to adrenaline-induced focus, the majority suffer negative consequences from procrastinating.

Q: DISTRACTION - Distraction is when you are pulled off course from interruptions, which can come from others or from your own thoughts and impulses. Which of these seem to happen most often? (no more than 3)

- 65% I feel a sudden need to search online for something unrelated to the task
- 44% My mind drifts off
- 36% I get distracted by stimuli in my environment: sights, sounds, or smells
- 27% I receive e-mail or text notifications
- 24% People interrupt me while I'm working
- 14% Other
- 11% My phone rings
- 3% I don't have many problems getting started due to distraction

BONNIE'S COMMENTS: A whopping 65% of distraction comes from an urge to do something online that is irrelevant to the task at hand. That seems to indicate that we must have a much higher tendency to get distracted now than before technology was ever-present. Also, there are more respondents pulled off course from internal distraction (rust) than from external distractions and interruptions coming from others (blue).

Q: MENTAL PARALYSIS - Which do you most relate to when you feel mentally stuck or paralyzed?

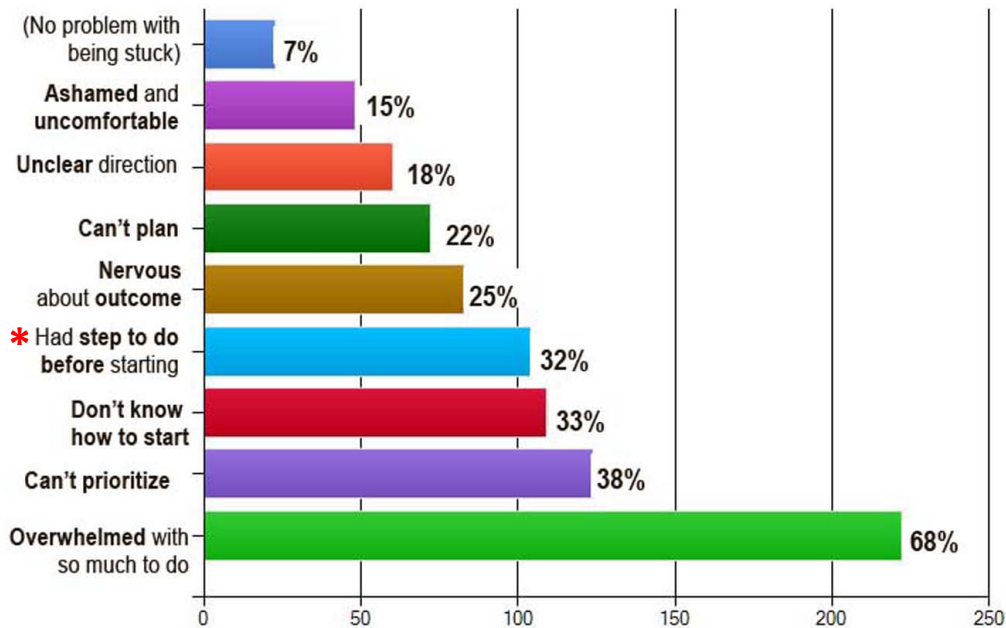
- 68% **I'm overwhelmed by how much there is to do**
- 38% I can't decide how to prioritize or choose between options
- 33% I can't figure out how or where to start
- 32% I can't move forward because there's something else that has to be done first*
- 25% I am nervous about the outcome, which keeps me from starting
- 22% I need to plan out the project and can't figure out the planning
- 18% I'm not sure how to proceed because I'm not clear about the direction, purpose or action steps.
- 15% I'm ashamed, and therefore, uncomfortable about taking the next step
- 7% I am not often prevented from getting started because of paralysis

BONNIE'S COMMENTS: The most paralyzing state by far is the feeling of overwhelm that overtakes people when they perceives there's too much to do. Other significant factors that stop respondents in their tracks are when their ADD affects their brains' executive functioning in ways that keep them from being able to prioritize, plan or begin (rust).

Many respondents are also paralyzed by emotional or anxiety-based response (blue). Ambiguity with not knowing how to proceed is a common cause for anxiety.

What makes you feel the most stuck or mentally paralyzed?

(pick 3)



*Q: When you can't start because something else must be done FIRST, that is most often:

- 47% Information that has to be found or organized
- 34% Steps that should have been performed before you can start
- 10% Information, permission or agreement that must be obtained from someone else
- 9% Other

BONNIE'S COMMENTS: This is where we see how disorganization can affect getting started. Almost half the respondents said they get stopped by having to look for something necessary to moving forward.

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Q: What is keeping you from submitting the past-due tax filing?

BONNIE'S COMMENTS: There's an enormous amount of **anxiety** around past-due taxes. Almost half the respondents said they do not file their late taxes because they are too anxious to deal with it!

"The thought and actuality of looking for and finding all my old information and records is overwhelming, daunting and anxiety provoking."

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no matter what's stopping you...***

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