



PLEASE HELP
ME...GO AWAY!

The ADHD Relational Paradox

Melissa Orlov and Susan Dillon Tschudi

ADHD Partner Emotions

I love you and want to be there for you but...

- I feel shame
- I get frustrated
- I can feel defensive
- I resent needing assistance or feeling as if I've failed
- I get emotionally dysregulated
- I want to feel respected / appreciated
- I distance myself



Non-ADHD Partner Paradox

I love you and want to be there for you, but...

- Your inconsistency makes me anxious
- I resent feeling I 'have' to get involved
- I communicate as a parent figure
- I get frustrated with your responses and execution issues
- I grieve I don't feel I have a partner
- I feel stressed out...nothing seems to change



Factors that Contribute

- ADHD neurological differences, leading to ADHD symptomatology
- ADHD emotional dysregulation
- Non-ADHD partner's anxiety and choices to 'lean in' to both alleviate anxiety and 'help out'
- Expectations may not take ADHD into account
- Visions of a neurotypical relationship



Conundrum:

Short-term

vs.

Long-term

Stepping in may solve immediate issues:

- Alleviates anxiety
- Gets thing done
- Seems 'good enough' ...at first

But...

- An unimproved skill set for ADHD partner...child-like role
- Too much oversight – parent-like role
- Growing resentment, anger, defiance
- Exhaustion
- Trust erodes, emotional needs aren't met and intimacy diminishes
- Escape vs. engagement



Instead...

Both partners recognize change needed:

- ADHD skill building (reliable enough)
- Expectations right-sized
- Boundaries improved – ‘NOT my job’ ...and what IS
- Commit to develop relationship basics
- TRANSITION to new set of interactions



More on Boundaries

- For oneself, not partner
- What are my values?
- What are my fears?
- How do I wish to behave towards others – aligning with values
- What can I let go of? Hold onto tightly?
- What do I need to own, accept? (grieve?)
- What I won't do/will do in the future?

Boundary Intensity

(Terri Cole)

Deal breakers

Desires

Wants



Questions to Answer

How to manage responses?

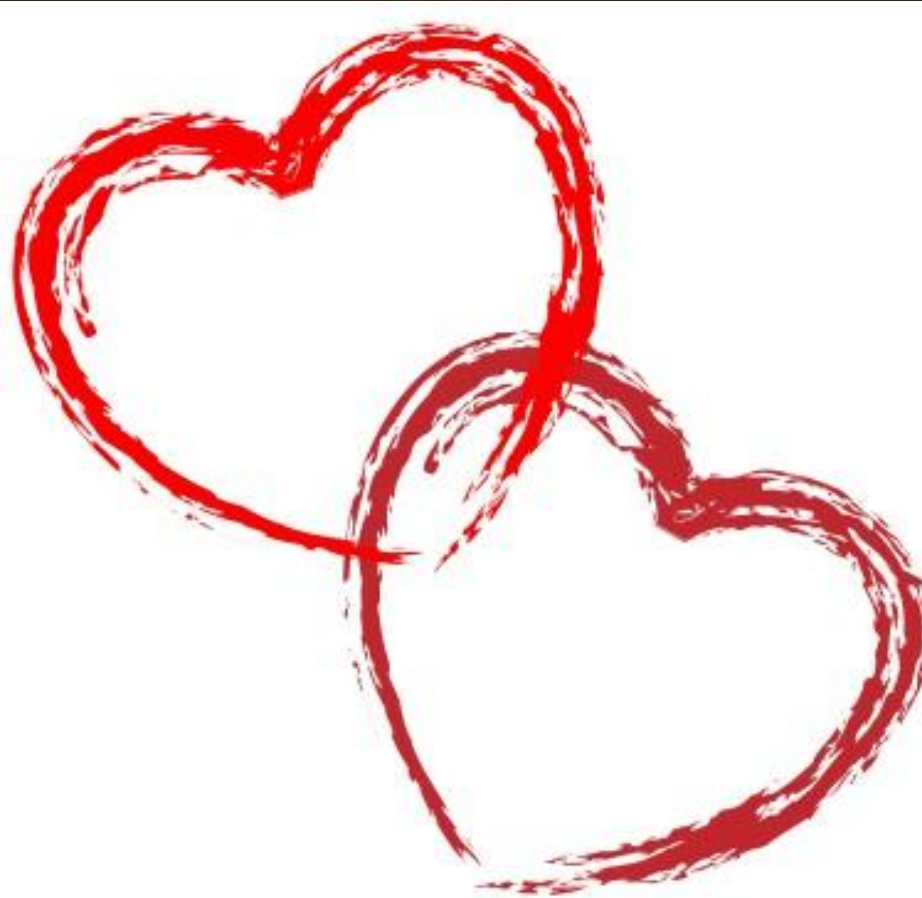
What does the transition look like?

What to do if your partner won't engage?



Helpful Resources

- ADHD coach
- Individual therapy
- Couples therapy
- Medical and other interventions
- Intention Into Action program
- Education:
 - *ADHD Effect on Marriage (Orlov)*
 - *Loving Someone with ADHD (Tschudi)*
 - *Seminars & support groups*

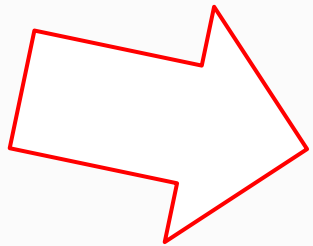


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