

ADHD/Autism and Stress



By Lori Lite

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Parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience disappointments, sadness, loneliness, exhaustion and tremendous amounts of stress. I felt all of this as I watched the words come out of my doctor's mouth. I watched his lips move as I strained to hear him through the screaming alarms going off in my head. Tears kicked in and blurred my vision. I hoped my husband was listening because I couldn't hear or see a thing.

All families experience stress while raising a child with challenges.

Families dealing with Autism Spectrum/Aspergers have the added challenge of trying to keep their child's world as stress free and frustration free as possible. Minor events can trigger tantrums and

anxiety melt downs. Everyone around the child is affected. It is my hope to inspire you by sharing my personal journey.

I had just spent another 2 hours putting my son to bed. He finally finished jumping on his bed, kicking the walls and decorating every inch of his room with hangers. This was our nightly routine. I was exhausted, stressed and at the end of the day patience was hard to find. I looked down at the bottle of medication in my hand. I couldn't believe that I had become desperate enough to consider giving my child a schedule II narcotic. It didn't feel right.

A quiet voice justified my decision. After all, the doctor diagnosed him with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) with emphasis on the "H". "You're helping him" I told myself. My body started shaking as I watched my three and a half year old swallow the pill. I had told him it was a "vitamin". I was lying. It was Ritalin. I knew about all the possible side effects and I prayed for a safe outcome. It didn't feel right.

It all started when I was told my son could not come back to his preschool next year. Gymnastics gave us our money back mid-session and my husband and I didn't know what a night out was. Our babysitters never came back. We tried time out, sticker

charts and other behavior management strategies. We read all the books, listened to all the tapes and talked to psychiatrists. Nothing worked. I hired a child therapist to follow him at school. She told me everything I already knew with the added information that the children in his class didn't like him. At the advice of the therapist I invited each child in his class over for a play date. Surely I could teach him social cues and play date etiquette. I micro-managed each and every play date. It didn't feel right.

My whole family was impacted. My husband and I were fighting and blaming each other for my son's behavior. My six year old daughter was having stress related night terrors due to the tension in our home. I internalized everything. I was losing weight and had chronic diarrhea. I was doubling over with acute gastritis attacks. I was unable to sleep and I finally realized that I was holding my breath. It didn't feel right.

Miracles are sometimes people in motion. A concerned relative took one look at me and intervened. She put me in her car and drove me straight to a stress consultant that she had been working with. This appointment changed my life. I was introduced to belly breathing also known as diaphragmatic breathing and affirmations. It was brilliant. I started to feel the effects of breathing and affirmations immediately. I became calm and

focused. I started sleeping without guilt. I would release myself by saying “I have done everything I can do for today.” I reminded myself that “I am a good mother.” I did my breathing and I was sleeping for the first time in a long time. This was working. This felt right!

Once I started feeling better, I quickly realized that this could help my child. I had noticed that the right bedtime story could get my son to stay still for a moment. I began to create stories that entertained him while at the same time relaxed his mind and body. The first story was A Boy and a Bear. My son would lie still and his breathing would slow as he heard me read how “the boy loved how the sun felt on his belly as it went up and down. The boy liked the way this felt. So did the bear.” It worked! Next, I tackled his slipping self-esteem. I created The Affirmation Web. Animals of the forest demonstrated the power of positive self-talk. His self-esteem began to rise. This felt right!

The benefits of breathing and affirmations were contagious. The calmness rippled through our house replacing stress and chaos. We all began to “relax, unwind and even see things more clearly.” This shift opened us up to find answers that felt right for our

family. Just like the caterpillar in *The Goodnight Caterpillar*, “the world looked different to us now.”

Finally with the help of holistic health practitioners, we discovered that my child did not have ADHD. What he did have was Candidiasis and a severe yeast allergy. The very behaviors that were classified as ADHD were actually allergic reactions to the yeast in the food he was eating. This felt right!

We started a four day rotation and avoidance diet and within days noticed a decrease in hyperactivity. We worked with concepts from books like, *Is This Your Child?* By Dr. Doris Rapp and *The Yeast Connection* by Dr. William Crook. These books held the answers our family so desperately wanted. The diet allowed my son to stop taking Ritalin. The diet was taxing and stressful for our family. There had to be an easier way to maintain wellness. We searched for alternative ways to address my son’s food allergies. Holistic healing modalities helped alleviate my son’s reactions to most of his food and environmental allergies. Today we are living a normal life.

Now my books are helping children with Autism Spectrum/Aspergers. A letter from a director of the Autism/Aspergers program in Canada let me know how my

stories are in what she calls “rescue kits” for her teachers. A teacher writes how the books help her special needs students deal with transitions and change with less stress and anxiety. A parent tells me she reads her children the stories before tests and bedtime. Another sees her whole family becoming calmer.

This is the gift that can come out of a challenge. My relaxation books are helping children everywhere to manage stress and anxieties. Children are empowered to calm themselves and feel good. Thanks to a little voice that said “it didn’t feel right” and thanks to a little boy that pushed his mother to find answers.

This feels right!

Lori Lite is the creator of the Indigo Dreams CD/audio books series for children and teens. She is a mother of three and a Certified Children’s Meditation Facilitator. Her stress-management books, CDs, Curriculum and other empowering products are available at www.LiteBooks.net.

Author's Bio

Lori Lite is the author of innovative children's books, CDs, curriculum and other empowering products all designed to introduce children and teens to meditation and stress management. Lori is a Certified Children's Meditation Facilitator, teacher, student of meditation and mother of three.

Lori's stories, techniques and products are currently assisting child life specialists, parents, teachers, school counselors, psychologists and yoga instructors across the United States and abroad.

Lori Lite has interviewed and written articles for several media outlets around the country to include interviews with "ABC Radio" "Prevention Magazine" "CBS News", "USA Today Magazine" "Stress Free Living" Magazine and "Evolve" Magazine. She has also been featured in several publications to include "Parents Guide New York", "Atlanta Journal Constitution", "Atlanta Parent Magazine" and "Children of the New Earth".