

Zoë Kessler

SPECIALIST: WOMEN AND ADHD

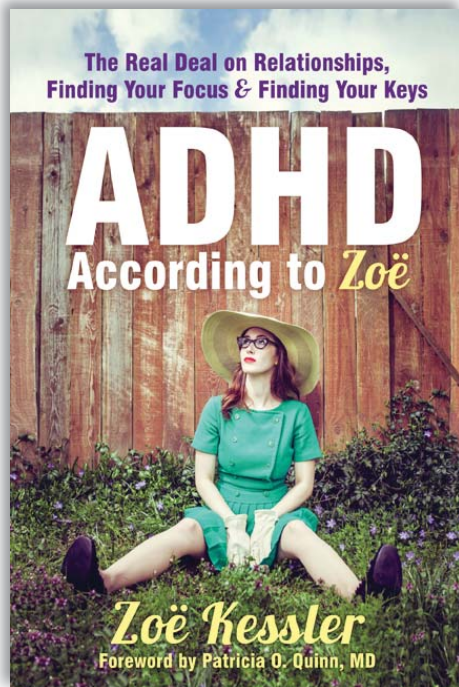


About
Zoë

ZOË KESSLER, B.A., B.ED., is an author, journalist, and motivational speaker and noted authority on women and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD / ADD).

Her presentations are described as exhilarating, motivating, and entertaining. Kessler has worked with a wide variety of organizations, including corporate and not-for-profit, bringing her special blend of energy, knowledge, and insight to every event.

A top blogger at Psych Central.com, Kessler's popular blog, ADHD from A to Zoë has garnered a loyal readership around the globe. Kessler is a frequent contributor to ADDitude Magazine, and has created radio documentary and standup comedy about being a woman living with ADHD. She's written guest blogs, been interviewed on international radio, and has been featured in magazine articles, documentaries, and books on the topic of women and ADHD.

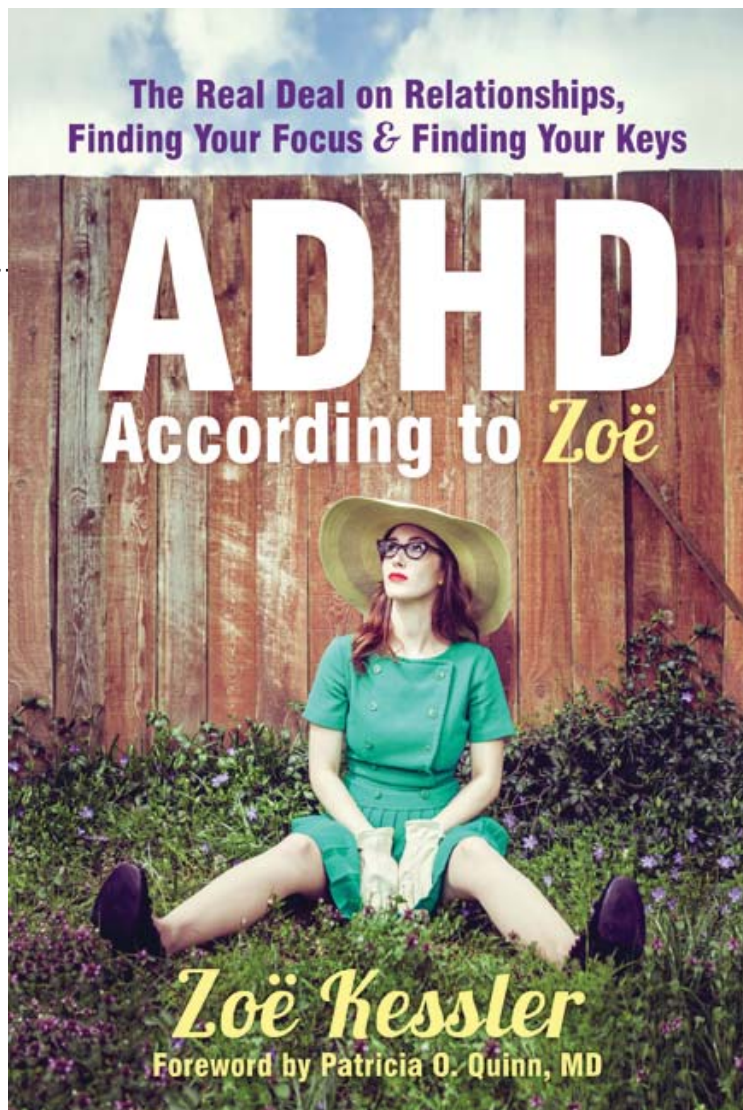


www.zoekessler.com

Foreword writer **Patricia Quinn** is a developmental pediatrician in Washington, D.C. Quinn has worked for more than thirty-five years in the areas of ADHD and learning disabilities. Quinn is the author of twenty books on ADHD for children, adults, and professionals.

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**ADHD According to Zoë: The Real Deal on
Relationships, Finding Your Focus & Finding Your Keys**
Zoë Kessler; Foreword by Patricia O. Quinn, MD
September 2013 / ISBN: 978 1 60882 661 2 / 216 pages / 6 x 9



ADHD According to Zoë

Zoë Kessler

About the Book

Like many women with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), journalist and popular blogger Zoë Kessler was diagnosed late in life—well into adulthood, in fact. But instead of seeing this label as a burden to bear, Kessler decided to use it to gain a better understanding of herself, and to connect with others through her writing.

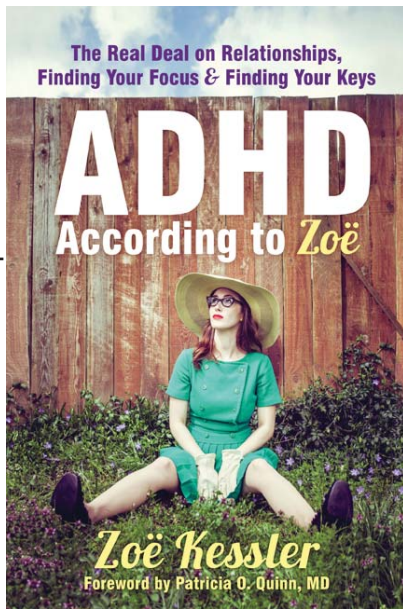
In this unique and engaging memoir, Kessler shares her own stories of living with ADHD in a way that is relatable, but never predictable. Inside, she describes how her impulsive behavior has affected her love life; how being disorganized once stood in the way of landing a job; and how

inattentiveness has caused certain challenges in her relationships. Kessler also offers key coping skills based on her experience; skills that you can use to focus your energy, become more organized, and boost your self-esteem while tapping into creativity and humor.

Kessler's story illustrates how being diagnosed with ADHD late into adulthood can be bewildering, but it also shows what a great opportunity it can be to take stock of your life and make real, lasting changes. Whether you share her diagnosis of ADHD, or just like a good story, ADHD According to Zoë will inspire you and encourage you to embrace your quirks.

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Praise

“With great wisdom and humor, Kessler shows what was going on in there before her ADHD diagnosis, and what remarkable changes happened after. *ADHD According to Zoë* is full of stories you’ll recognize, insights, and great Try this! ideas readers can apply to their own lives. Don’t miss it if you’re still grappling with the What the heck was that?! aspects of ADHD!”

—Melissa Orlov, author of the award-winning *The ADHD Effect on Marriage*

“*ADHD According to Zoë* is a must-read for any woman with ADD or ADHD. Kessler skillfully does what few authors have done for ADHD—she combines great storytelling with accurate facts about the condition. She brings ADHD to life in a real way, and dares to talk about topics that most doctors would shudder to write about. This book will educate you, entertain you, and most importantly, enlighten you about how to live well with the unique brain wiring that is ADHD.”

—Kenny Handelman, MD, psychiatrist, ADHD expert, and author of *Attention Difference Disorder*

“ADHD often leaves women living in shame and isolation, without hope and a fear of being found out. These are the greatest hurdles for women with ADHD. Kessler courageously and openly shares her story in an authentic and authoritative voice. This book is a must-read for anyone with ADHD who wants to end their own internal shame and blame and find understanding, comfort, and hope in their ADHD journey. You are NOT alone! Thank you Zoë!”

—Nancy A. Ratey, EdM, strategic life coach and author of *The Disorganized Mind*

“*ADHD According to Zoë* kept me spellbound from the first page to the last. Reading more like a novel than a self-help book, Kessler’s words pull the reader in as we follow her ADHD escapades, from embarrassing blunders at social events to playing air guitar in the middle of the street. Think Pippi Longstocking all grown up! Yet, she awards the readers not only with her humor, but with the life lessons she shares as a woman living with ADHD. I’ll be recommending this one to my clients!”

—Terry Matlen, MSW, ACSW, nationally recognized authority specializing in women with ADHD, author of *Survival Tips for Women with ADHD*, and founder of addconsults.com

“*ADHD According to Zoë* is a refreshing, warm, and inspiring addition to the ADHD world. Women with ADHD are often underdiagnosed, underserved, and misunderstood. Women tend to connect best with other women with ADHD who are brave enough to share their journey. Kessler not only shares her journey, she bares her soul to help you on your ADHD journey!”

—Michele Novotni, PhD, psychologist, ADHD coach, and author of *What Does Everybody Else Know that I Don’t*

“*ADHD According to Zoë* is a must-have, spellbinding portrayal of a woman with ADHD that is also rooted in the latest science. Kessler describes her personal journey, creating a new sense of hope for all women with ADHD so that they may fulfill their potential and reach their dreams. It a wonderful resource book full of helpful, practical tips for living life with ADHD.”

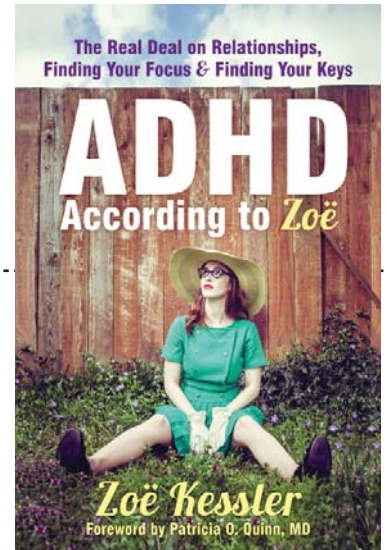
—Tim Bilkey, Hons, BSc, MD, FRCP(C), director at Ontario Bilkey ADHD Clinic

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ADHD According to Zoë

Zoë Kessler



Excerpt

Introduction

First thing this morning I sat in my kitchen and drummed. I haven't done that in over a year. I was filled with joy and energy. A year's worth of reviewing my life with ADHD had ended. Yesterday, I finished writing this book.

As you read through my journey as a woman with ADHD, we'll be visiting some dark places. As I wrote, I relived some of my most painful memories: times when I felt like an alien who'd landed on the wrong planet; times of shame and embarrassment; times of confusion and hopelessness. But this morning, six years after my diagnosis, I was awash with joy. I want you to know that.

Also, know this: Your life with ADHD can get better. After being diagnosed, and with treatment and understanding, you too may find that your life is happier and more peaceful than you ever could have imagined. I admit that the first couple of years after my diagnosis I was scared that maybe nothing would change. That fear was unfounded.

The statistics confirming the consequences of undiagnosed and untreated ADHD are dire. Research results increasingly indicate how urgent it is to recognize ADHD early in girls and provide support and treatment geared to their needs. And even if women aren't diagnosed with ADHD until later in life, as I was, a diagnosis allows them to move forward with a better understanding of themselves and their choices and with more power to create the lives they want. Most of all, a diagnosis allows us to forgive ourselves and rebuild our self-esteem.

Before my diagnosis, I'd prided myself on my self-awareness. As I learned about ADHD and recognized myself in the descriptions, I felt as though a cruel joke had been played on me, with everyone laughing at my expense. I felt devastated. After a lifetime of struggles, now I had a mental illness too? It was too much. Yet it also offered a new view on experiences from my past that had left me feeling ashamed and confused and provided impetus to examine a culture where shame and blame are frequently the response to those who suffer.

As my postdiagnosis journey began, I read every book on ADHD I could get my hands on. I read the statistics, and they were bleak: more bankruptcies, more unplanned pregnancies, more depression, more jail time, more addictions, more, more, more... Why couldn't it have been more chocolate cake? More fame and fortune? More fun? More inner peace? More love? Yet I couldn't deny it: I had faced it all, personally, firsthand.

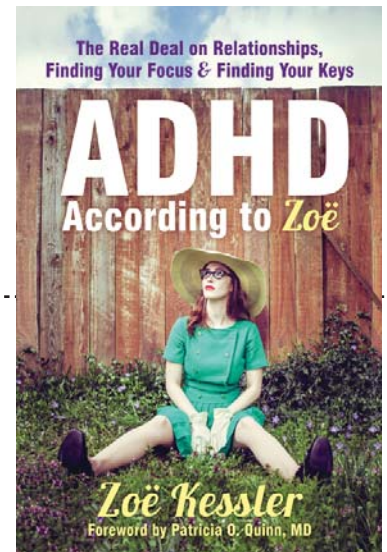
The more I read, the more indignant I became at the lack of research targeted toward the experiences of women and girls with ADHD. I saw injustice, inequity, and a lack of resources for women struggling with ADHD, and I decided to blow the whistle. After settling into my diagnosis and learning all I could, I realized it didn't have to be this way for every woman. That's why I wrote this book. Another reason I wrote this book was that, while the damning statistics are everywhere, the stories behind the stats were missing. There were no faces, no firsthand accounts. I wanted to share what it feels like to live inside those doom-and-gloom statistics. When I was diagnosed, I felt so alone. I knew nothing

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Excerpt
(cont.)

about ADHD, and I certainly didn't know any women with it (that I was aware of).

I hope this book helps validate others' experiences. I don't think we're out of the closet yet, and many women with ADHD are loath to share the real depths of their pain for fear of repercussions. I want my story to give hope to those who are suffering. I also want it to serve as a cautionary tale for other women, especially women who are raising daughters with ADHD. It's important to be aware that ADHD occurs just as often in women as in men—and that it can be addressed successfully.

It's not that my life has been a disaster. It's not that I regret my late diagnosis. (I've taught myself not to play the what-if game.) Any woman who's ever impulsively blurted something inappropriate, unintentionally cruel, or outlandish has certainly walked a mile in my shoes. And if she has ADHD, she's probably gotten lost or wandered off the path more than once or twice, distracted by some flora or fauna off in the distance.

In this book, I'll walk you through my experience of many of the symptoms of ADHD. I hope that by seeing yourself on these pages, by having your pain acknowledged and validated, you'll end up with a lighter heart, more self-acceptance, and an ability to laugh at some of the truly ludicrous situations we find ourselves in—okay, get ourselves into—through our social, emotional, verbal, and mental awkwardness.

Is ADHD a blessing? Hell no! But neither does it have to be a curse. I've always reveled in my creativity, which is common among adults with ADHD. Since my diagnosis, I've also learned to cherish my compassion for others, my sense of solidarity with those who struggle to overcome adversity, and my vitality and passion for life. ADHD has played no small part in that.

Above all, like so many women with ADHD, I always knew I was capable of more. I wasn't given the key to unlock that potential; I had to forge one myself at a late stage in life. This book is an attempt to offer you that key, fashioned from my experiences—at times from the fires of an emotional hell. I offer it with love, hope, and compassion. Perhaps it won't fit perfectly in unlocking your own potential, but it may give you some ideas about how to find your own way out of the many pitfalls of ADHD.

Although we're all different, chances are you'll recognize yourself in these pages. You may also recognize your mother, your daughter, your great-grandma, your best friend, or your boss. If so, I hope this helps you to approach her with support and understanding. But most of all, I hope this book helps you to treat yourself with the respect, kindness, and love you deserve.

Namaste,
Zoë

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