

ADHD Coaching Considerations:
Impulsivity: Take 24

By David Giwerc, MCC

There are very few situations that require anyone to make a decision on the spot. Because of the impulsive nature of ADHD, it's important for us to pause and reflect on the choices we have in any given situation.

We live in a world that demands quick feedback and even quicker decisions from us. It's almost a game-show mentality: we have to give the "correct" answer on the spot or we lose. This type of "rapid reaction mentality" exacerbates the impulsive nature of ADHD. Quick responses to important questions, when our brains may be racing like Ferrari engines at high speed, do not serve us well.

Instead, we need to find ways to slow the velocity of our brains when they're attempting to process a myriad of ideas and thoughts. This sense of our brains feeling bombarded only increases when we're asked to respond to multiple requests in a variety of situations.

It's rarely necessary to provide instantaneous answers to requests, although we often feel that we have to.

We **DON'T**.

Instead, think of this the next time you're asked to make a major decision:

Whenever possible, take at least 24 hours to make a decision about something important.

Instead of simply reacting to a question, pause to ponder it. You can even ask the person to repeat the question to give you time to process the meaning of what's being asked. You can also ask yourself, "How will my answer or response to this question or request serve my best interests?"

Mull this question for 24 hours, giving yourself permission to "respond" rather than "react." You'll thank yourself for remembering that you have the *right* to think first before responding to any important request that's made of you. You can simply **Take 24**.

There's another technique you can use if the decision or response you need to make is less consequential. Because the ADHD mind is usually jumping from here to there, we often feel compelled to express our thoughts quickly before we forget what we want to say. As a result, we tend to interrupt people before they've finished saying what *they* want to say.

To avoid cutting a speaker short while retaining your own thoughts, try this:

Carry a small rubber ball with you and squeeze it while another person is talking to slow your mind and occupy your energy. Then jot down a key word or words to remind you of what you want to say when it's your turn to speak.

Squeezing the rubber ball gives you time to “pause and process.” It allows you to absorb the meaning of what others are saying and stops you from impulsively interrupting them.

In order to think clearly, the ADHD mind needs time to settle itself down. Don't feel pressured by others to decide things quickly. If you want to make sound, thoughtful decisions, then be sure to “Take 24” and to “pause and process.”

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