

It Just Happened!

by Mykaylla Vederoff

"THINK BEFORE YOU ACT." Common advice for young people. These words drive me crazy.



Mykaylla and her dog Zeus

Devoted to real life testimonies of coping with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, *The Lived Experience* welcomes your stories of living with AD/HD. Email submissions to attention@chadd.org.

Impulsive, rash, reckless, hasty, spontaneous. All of these words have been used to describe me. No matter how impulsive, rash, reckless, or hasty an action may seem to others, there is never a time when I act before thinking. My mind is always active, and so is everyone else's. It is always thinking about something. Sometimes, my mind goes into a state of wandering attention. Part of my mind will be focusing on something, but the other parts will constantly shift, like sand in the desert, never staying still for too long, a string of tangents. It happens all the time.

My mom was giving one of her lectures on "Organization" and I was taking it all in, like the dutiful daughter I am. My eyes wandered for a second, and then settled on the miniature rose sitting on the counter. That rose started it all. It reminded me of *Beauty and the Beast* because there were fallen rose petals sitting in the pot. As I thought about *Beauty and the Beast*, I suddenly remembered that sitting on the shelf, right next to *Beauty and the Beast*, was *101 Dalmatians*, and thinking about all those cute dogs reminded me of how cute, cuddly, and adorable my dog is. And then, I thought of how soft my dog, Zeus, is and that reminded me of my stuffed cat who has fur that feels like velvet. I then remembered that my stuffed cat has a white spot at the tip of her tail, but that it has some sort of blue paint on it. The blue paint made me think of the room next to my bedroom that is painted blue, and thinking of that room made me think of the pretty

carpet in there. And then I got to thinking about how the carpet in my room needs to be moved back because the corner is curling up. Just as I was moving on to something else, my eyes snapped back into focus, and I realized that my mom was staring at me. She looked rather amused. Apparently she had stopped talking a while ago. During this whole thought process, I had never stopped once to think about what was going on. I had just jumped hastily from thought to thought, like a frog from lily pad to lily pad.

I was being impulsive, but not through my actions. This is what happens before I do something. Except, the thought process is in a circle, and there are not as many thoughts involved, but it gets so complicated that I just go with the thought that screams the loudest. But, never do I do anything without thinking.

Impulsivity is the urge to say the first thing that throws open the front door of my brain, and lets the doorknob crash into the wall. Sometimes I let it speak its mind, and then let it go on its way. Other times, I push it right back out that door and let it pound on the door for a while before it goes away. I am, by nature, an impulsive person. Often, my impulsivity gets me into trouble. Like the time when mom was making cookies. They had just come out of the oven, and they smelled heavenly. Of course, I just *had* to have one, right there and then. So, I reached out my hand and snagged a cookie off the tray and put a large piece of it into my mouth. About three seconds later, my hand was burning hot, and so was my mouth. I had actually caused myself physical harm, not to mention mom was really mad that a cookie was missing. In this situation, I was the only one who was hurt, but it does not always turn out that way.

Mykaylla Vederoff

will be entering the tenth grade at Lakeside Upper School in Washington state. She wrote this essay about how AD/HD affects her for her eighth-grade English class, when she was fourteen years old.

In my first house, a family that lived next door to us had two daughters. One, Laura, was older than I was, and the other one, Stacy, was about my age. Stacy and I were playing in their backyard, which had an awesome swing set. The swing itself was made of a heavy wooden board. On this particular day, Stacy had just gotten off the swing and was standing in front of it. I was holding the board, and standing way back directly in front of the fence. As I was about to get on, Stacy told me to come over where she was and look at something. So I let go of the swing, and started to run around the swing set. Unfortunately, the swing got there first, and smacked her on the forehead. In this situation, my impulsivity caused physical harm to someone else. I felt awful about it, and I still do. Of course, you have to understand, I was about three-and-a-half at the time.

Rashness is the desire just to get moving. I do not feel like I have time to sit around and listen to directions, speeches, warnings, or advice before jumping right into the middle of whatever project or job I am doing. More often than not, this behavior results in a mistake being made, and time wasted in trying to remedy the mistake. Rashness is opening a model airplane kit, dumping all the parts on the floor, and gluing together pieces that *might* go together without looking at the instructions to see if they actually do.

Recklessness is the throwing of caution to the wind; and then have it come flying back at me and smacking me in the face. Of course my sense of vigilance returns after I have already “taken the plunge” as they say. Have you ever had the urge to jump into a big mud puddle? You know, when you are a little kid, and you are walking along the street, and there is a big puddle. It just cannot be avoided. I did that all the time. Afterwards, when the bottoms of my pants were soaking wet, and my socks were damp and my shoes were dirty, I would think, “Wow... *that was stupid.*”

When I was a little kid, about four, I made a best friend, Kaitie. During recess, we would run outside and play in the sandbox. After recess was over, we would brush the sand off our clothes, and run back inside. On the days when it rained, Kaitie and I would go outside and play in the sandbox. Sometimes, it would be really muddy. We would be up to our waists in mud. It was the most fun we ever had. When recess was over, we would get out of the sandbox, and sit in class all muddy and wet. Sure, we had regrets, but we always did it again. I remember having to throw away a pair of pants because they were so muddy that mom could not get them clean. She said to me, “Don’t you ever learn?” and I hung my head and said very quietly, “No.” And I never did learn.

When one performs an action, there is a whole complicated process of logical thinking, reasoning, decision making, and intense thought.

All of this happens within a few moments. After it is all done, it is almost impossible to describe to anyone else what happened in those few moments. But, because I am writing about this topic, I will attempt to describe it anyway.

Running through my mind are possibilities of what to say or do. Sometimes it feels like they run through my mind too fast to grab them and consider them. Other times it feels like they are all scrambled up and there is no time to unscramble them in time to figure out what they are. In short, it is utter chaos. My mind is like a flipbook, each page with at least one or two solutions, ideas, and other thoughts. Each page passes so quickly, I only get a little piece here and there, never quite being able to get a full thought or idea in before being interrupted by another one. Once I finally settle on a decision, everything seems to make perfect sense, and my choice is crystal clear. Unfortunately, sometimes only after a decision is made, does the voice of reason appear.

My mind is always active, and so is everyone else’s. It is always thinking about something. Sometimes, my mind goes into a state of wandering attention. Part of my mind will be focusing on something, but the other parts will constantly shift, like sand in the desert, never staying still for long, a string of tangents. It happens all the time.

I will have all of you readers know that this whole essay was an impulse. It is a bunch of thoughts that are closely or distantly related to the topic of impulsivity. It is a whirlwind of ideas and contemplations. I was going to write my essay on something else, when this idea popped in my head, and I decided I would go with it. ●

