

Awakening - Association for Understanding ADHD

**HYPERACTIVE**  
DREAMERS

Authors: Marko Ferek, Nikolina Ferek

# About us

*Awakening - Association for understanding ADHD became active in March 2005. Its main objective is to show the positive sides and hidden gifts found in inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive minds. Due to their lack of self-confidence, these children's potential is rarely recognized in schools and they eventually become a problem to society and to themselves. This is why we have founded this organization. In times when more and more children are diagnosed with ADHD, we want to make it clear that these people do not suffer from a deficit or a disorder. They actually have a different way of thinking, understanding of the world and reacting to it. With lectures, workshops, dialogues with teachers, parents and through other activities, we provide these children with what they really need: an environment that accepts them for being different.*

## ...about us

The Chairman of the Association, Marko Ferek, B.Sc. (RIT), personally with ADHD traits, consequently experienced many problems in his childhood, causing him to have low self-esteem. His life changed as soon as he learned about ADHD and exposed his personal positive and negative ADHD traits. Creativity, hyperfocus, and emotional passion are just some of them. The main activities of the Association are conducting lectures and workshops about ADHD. In two years of activities, lecturer Marko Ferek has conducted more than 80 lectures and workshops at professional meetings, many primary schools, hospitals, universities, centers for development and education, which involved more than 4500 parents, teachers, professors, psychologists, defectologists and many others. Based on feedback, his entire approach and his personal experience makes his lectures and workshops special and valuable.

# Marko Ferek



*Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Service Management, ACMT – American College of Management and Technology (2003). Division of RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology).*

*Marko Ferek, based on his own experience, has held more than 100 lectures and workshops throughout Croatia. He collaborated with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Education and teacher training agency, Croatian Academy for developmental habilitation, Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation and many other institutions. He is the author of the book „Hyperactive dreamers – different, worse, better“, one of the best selling books in this field in Croatia. He has made appearances in many radio and TV shows and newspapers.*

# ...Marko Ferek

## *Lectures that we would like to highlight:*

*Lecture within «The Neurobiology of ADHD syndrome» course (06.-07. 05. 2005.) that was organized by the Academy for Developmental Habilitation. Lecturers were Paolo Curatolo, MD/PhD – Professor of Child Neurology and Psychiatry, Pediatric Neurosciences; MD President, International Child Neurology Association and Marko Ferek, Awakening Association chairman.*

*Lecturing at the professional meeting in Rijeka for educators, teachers, tutors, and specialists associates with the theme: "Children and youth with hyperactive disorder and attention deficit at school and in the family" that was organized by Education and Teacher Training Agency of Croatia, Rijeka Office (04.-05. 11. 2005.). Marko Ferek gave a lecture on "Understanding ADHD".*

*10. 11. 2005. Lecturing at the symposium organized by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports "The Croatian National Educational Standard and schoolchildren with special educational needs".*

*Lectures and workshops at professional meetings "Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder" organized by the Education and Teacher Training Agency of Croatia. (13.-14. 12. 2005. Zagreb, 4. 1. 2006. Osijek, 21. 4. 2006. Varaždin).*

*Lecture to students of the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation (05.03.2007.)*

*Lectures and workshops within the project "Hyperactive dreamers - accept differences" sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (Sep.-Dec. 2007.)*



# Nikolina Ferek



*M.Sc. in Computer  
Science, Department of  
Mathematics,  
University of Zagreb  
(2005.)*

*Employment:  
Elementary school  
teacher (mathematics,  
computer science)*

*In the last two years, Nikolina Ferek has been the coordinator and manager of all activities of Awakening Association. She maintains the Association's web page that is source of information for ADHD and all activities of the Association. Together with Marko Ferek, her husband, she conducts workshops „Hyperactive dreamers – personal experience“. She also works with hyperactive children.*

# Hyperactive dreamers

You probably know children that are hyperactive, inattentive, and that daydream. These children are often described as lazy, stubborn, disobedient or wicked. As an explanation, the ADHD syndrome is often given and attached to them. On the other hand, these children can shine and surprise with their abilities. How much of it is disorder or deficit and how much of it is giftedness and above average creativity, is a question that not only confuses educators and parents, but also some professionals.

Today, characteristics like inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity are negatively observed as something that needs to be removed. On the contrary, thanks to these traits, some people are creative, curious, imaginative, sensitive and passionate. However, they do not show these positive abilities and their potential is wasted because of the non motivating environment in which they have to perform. They get a wrong picture about themselves and lose their self-confidence.

The reason their potential is not recognized and nourished is the uneducated environment that leads to wrong expectations. Watching these people only through educational systems or through the ADHD syndrome, we will not see all their abilities, nor will we realize that their difference is not a deficit or disorder, but a gift.



# Bird and a cat

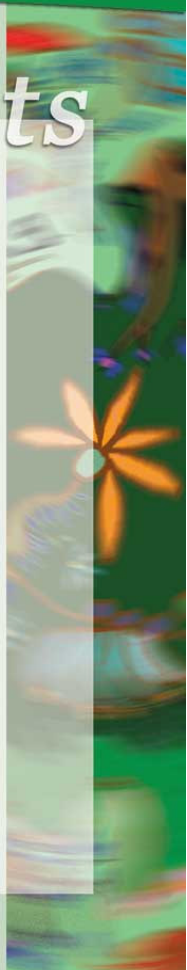
*If we train a bird to run, will it run as fast as a cat?*

*It won't, because birds and cats are different. No matter how much time we spend training the bird, it will never run with as much speed and precision as a cat. The reason is neither a deficit nor disorder, but a difference. Actually, by giving the bird the freedom it needs, adapting to it, and giving it a chance to show who it really is, we could witness its beautiful, mighty wings. Then, I'll realize that the deficit I thought that bird had was not in her, but in my observation of the bird.*



# Traits

- *As children, they had strong interests for specific things (probably not understood by others) – fixations*
- *They make careless mistakes, not mistakes connected to knowledge*
- *They are strongly focused when doing something that they are interested in, and are doing it very well*
- *They talk, sing and whisper to themselves*
- *They are not consistent; today they can, tomorrow they can't*
- *Sometimes they have problems expressing their thoughts in logical and understandable ways*
- *Very good perception, great power of observing*
- *Very curious, they are not satisfied with shallow explanations*
- *Risk takers*
- *In adulthood, they are not motivated by money and awards, but their interests*



# ...traits

## EMOTIONAL PASSION

- Experiencing (thinking) what they are doing with their whole being
- They become obsessive and passionate in their interests, they show great curiosity about certain things
- They function poorly in activities that are not of their interests
- They maintain a child-like state of wondering
- During emotional passion (strong interests), they enter hyperfocus – experiencing something on a higher level which results in better, faster and clearer understanding

## HYPERACTIVITY

- Hyperactivity is a part of their nature
- Playing with a pencil, walking in a room, fidgeting or some other movement helps them to think and concentrate easier
- Hyperactivity can serve as a fuel to their interests

# ...traits

## CONCEPTUAL THINKING

- They do not think in a classic linear way, they use a universal (global) or a conceptual way of thinking once they begin to produce universal images and then they get hold of the details
- Their thoughts are shaped by concepts, images (they visualize comprehension)
- Problem with comprehension of what they have read
- They often explain their thoughts by picturesque examples

## DAYDREAMING

- „Dreaming awake“ - the person's thinking doesn't happen willfully; it is left to the person's subconscious world
- The wandering mind provides them with the opportunity to look at the problem from another perspective and, in this way, they develop creative and uncommon solutions



# ADHD *attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder*

## **INATTENTION**

- Often becoming easily distracted by irrelevant sights and sounds
- Often failing to pay attention to details and making careless mistakes
- Rarely following instructions carefully and completely
- Losing or forgetting things like toys, or pencils, books, and tools needed for a task
- Often skipping from one uncompleted activity to another

## **HYPERACTIVITY**

- Often fidget with their hands or feet or squirm in their seat
- Often leave their seat in the classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
- Often run about or climb excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate
- Often have difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly

## **IMPULSIVITY**

- Blurting out answers before hearing the whole question
- Having difficulty waiting in line or taking turns

...but

**INATTENTION** ➡ **IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY**

*A mind full of ideas and imagination is hard to direct to something monotonous and dull, which does not mean it has difficulties with attention.*

**HYPERACTIVITY** ➡ **SOURCE OF ENERGY**

*When they work on something which interests them, the energy excess begins to serve as fuel and becomes an inexhaustible energy for the activities they perform.*

**IMPULSIVITY** ➡ **DETERMINATION**

*Very often people don't initiate something due to too much analysis, addition and subtraction. Some things can be performed and accomplished no matter what statistics say. Their impulsiveness and impatience often pushes them forward.*



# Side-effects

*...are a result of not accepting them for who they are.*

- *Low self-confidence*
- *Depression*
- *Social isolation*
- *Fear from learning new things*
- *Abuse of alcohol and drugs*
- *Deviant behavior resulted by growth of frustrations*
- *Feeling not to give their maximum*
- *Mask*

# Mask

*Because of a lack of adequate help, wrong expectations, and not being understood by others in school, they unconsciously start to build a mask to hide their negative sides as they don't understand why they are like that. During this time, the mask becomes a part of their personality and they start to change and distance themselves from their true potential. By not knowing their true selves and believing that the mask represents them, they start to harm themselves and the environment. The older they get, the more problems they have. As a result, there is an increase in frustrations and other negative side effects. Therefore, the goal is preventing the creation of a mask by allowing them to recognize and accept themselves. If the mask has already been created, help can be achieved by removing the mask. This can be very stressful and becoming oneself can last for several years.*



# Activities

- The Association's activities comprise of conducting lectures and workshops for parents, teachers, professionals and all others that deal with children and youth.
- Our web pages [www.budenje.hr](http://www.budenje.hr) and [www.hyperactivedreamers.com](http://www.hyperactivedreamers.com) offer information about the association's activities, dates of lectures and workshops, information about hyperactive dreamers, news related to ADHD and other current issues.





# Lectures

## Lecture outline :

- personal experience of Marko Ferek, the lecturer
- ADHD symptoms
- learning their characteristics (emotional passion, hyperfocus, conceptual thinking, daydreaming, creativity, hyperactivity)
- examples of such people (Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison)
- treatments, flaws of ADHD theory
- how to identify these people's true qualities with a proper view of the world
- side effects (depression, lack of self-confidence)
- bird and a cat



# Workshops

*The workshop consists of three one-hour long exercises that, in an amusing and constructive way, show the mind of a hyperactive dreamer.*



# Book

## *Hyperactive dreamers - different, worse, better* *Review of ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder)*

The book "Hyperactive dreamers - different, worse, better" is based on Marko Ferek's lectures and it covers much more. Diagnosis and treatments of ADHD, importance of self-confidence, the relationship between educational systems and individuals, all traits of these people and examples from everyday life. The book offers a personal story of growing up and a path of a child that hid his personality and wanted to become like others, to a person that realized his potential and became free from the expectations of his surroundings and accepted his differences in which he found a precious gift.

*English version  
coming soon!*



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