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ADHD Explained Using Comics



Dani Donovan

@danidonovan · February 26, 2019

ADHD can be difficult to explain, and even harder to talk about. We're creative, friendly, and misunderstood by a lot of people. My hope is to help people with #ADHD feel understood and seen, and be able to share their experiences with others.

3,726 Likes



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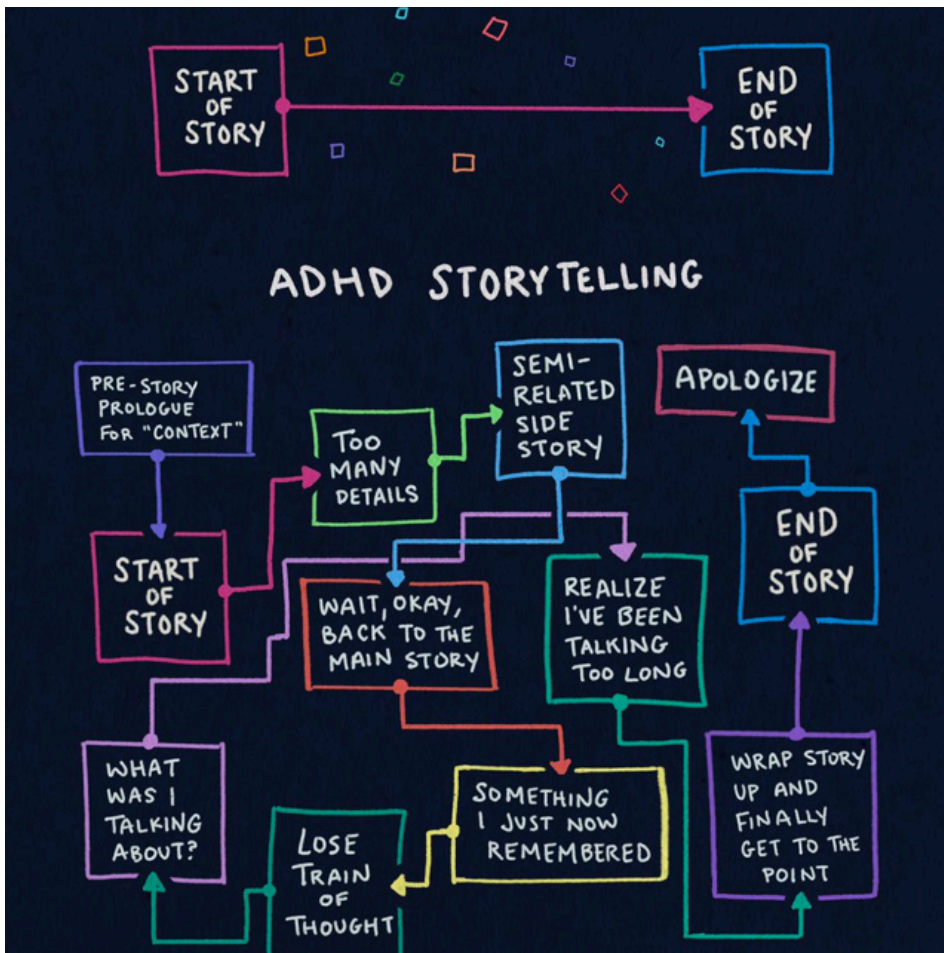
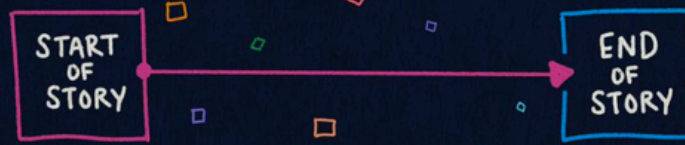
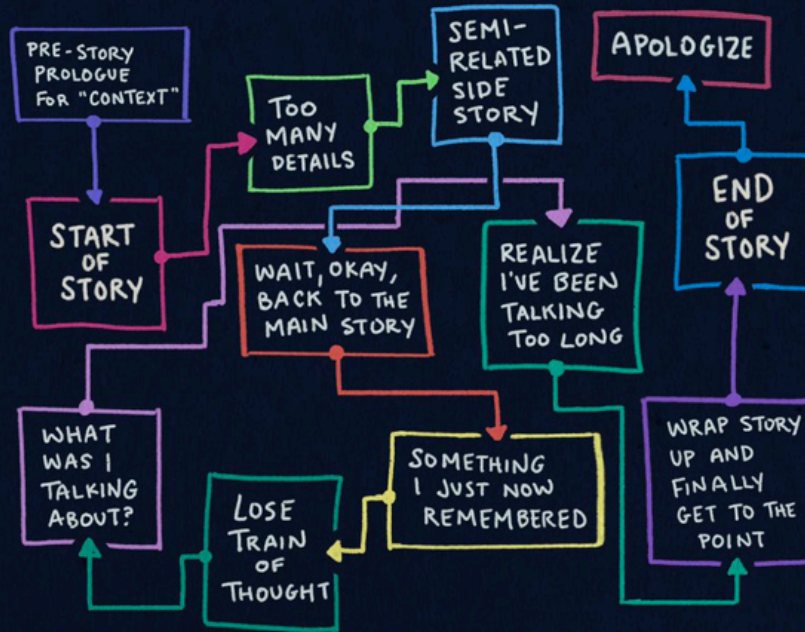


Photo via @danidonovan

NON-ADHD STORYTELLING



ADHD STORYTELLING



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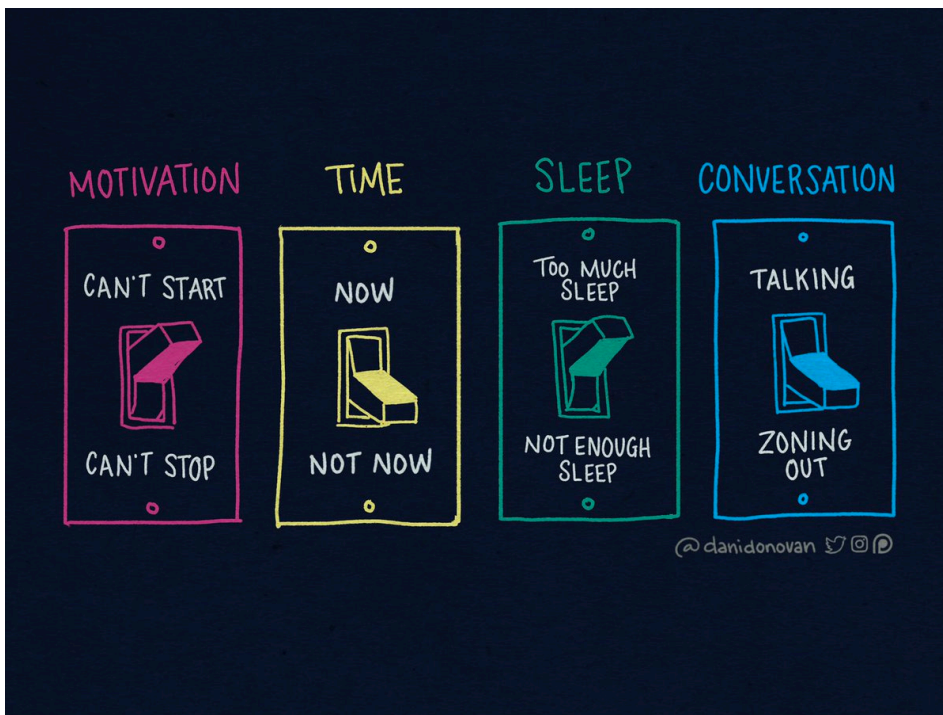
Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 15

6.3K 13K

Here's a fixed version of my flowchart with a watermark.

It will never be as popular as the bastardized one on FB—but if you're reading this, you are the special few who know the original artist 😊

RT to support crediting artists and not watering down the #ADHD community ❤️



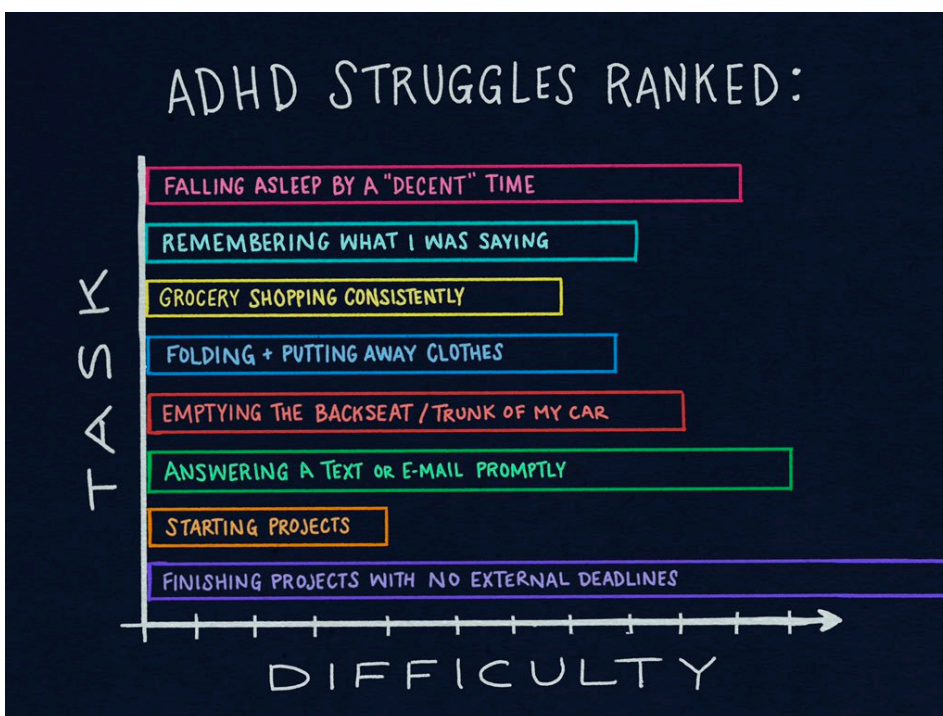
Dani Donovan @danidonovan · 17 Dec 2018

↻ 2.6K ❤️ 6.4K ▼

All or nothing.

For me, #ADHD results in a lot of black-or-white thinking. Anything less than perfect feels like a total failure. Breaking even ONE DAY of a streak immediately results in falling off the wagon.

I am 100% or 0%, and have a hard time accepting anything in between.



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · 13 Dec 2018

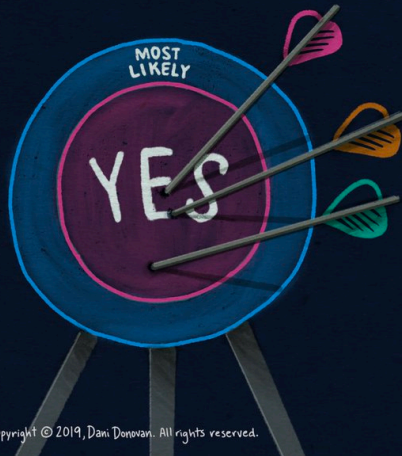
↻ 3.0K ❤️ 7.5K ▼

- "You just need to try harder!"
- "Don't be lazy."
- "Nobody likes doing that stuff."
- "Just make a plan & stick to it."
- "Set a reminder in your phone."
- "It's not that difficult. Grow up."

Those with #ADHD know how it feels to struggle with basic habits that come easy to other people:

"ARE THEY MAD AT ME?"

MY BRAIN



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REALITY



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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 4

↻ 2.1K ❤️ 5.3K ▼

My deep-seated anxiety of annoying others is at the core of my low self-esteem. I can read into anything and everything. A one-word e-mail from my boss? He must be pissed at me. People whispering just out of earshot? They must be talking about me. The list goes on and on. #ADHD

COSTS OF ADHD

FORGOTTEN SLIMY VEGETABLES
IN THE DRAWER I NEVER LOOK IN..... \$14.35

CAVITIES FROM NOT SCHEDULING
A DENTIST APPOINTMENT..... \$283.41

LUNCH I DIDN'T EAT BECAUSE
MY MEDS KILLED MY APPETITE..... \$16.49

THING I WAS GOING TO TAKE BACK
TO THE STORE, BUT IT'S BEEN 30 DAYS.... \$81.77

LATE PAYMENT /OVERDRAFT FEES.... \$15.00

BOOKS I NEVER EVEN STARTED.....\$35.78

ABANDONED HOBBIES..... \$241.03

FAST FOOD SINCE I CAN'T GET
MYSELF TO GROCERY SHOP OR COOK.... \$12.18

IMPULSIVE PURCHASES..... \$320.42

FOOD I FORGOT I LEFT OUT
ON THE COUNTER..... \$7.80

TOTAL: I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT

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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 3

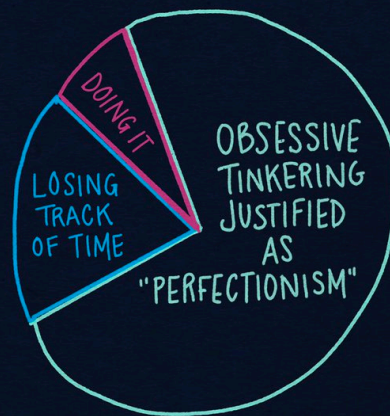
652 2.3K

Money management is something I've struggled with for years. The impulsive purchases, fast food, and difficulty sticking to a budget are costly. Toss in a bit of forgetfulness, procrastination, and avoidance into the mix... the bill can add up before you know it. #ADHD

NOT HYPERFOCUSED



HYPERFOCUSED



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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · 28 Dec 2018

↻ 1.0K ❤️ 3.2K ▼

Hyperfocus is the #ADHD opposite of distractibility, often masquerading as "productivity." It's easy to get stuck on one task far too long.

Poor attention regulation can go both ways, y'all.

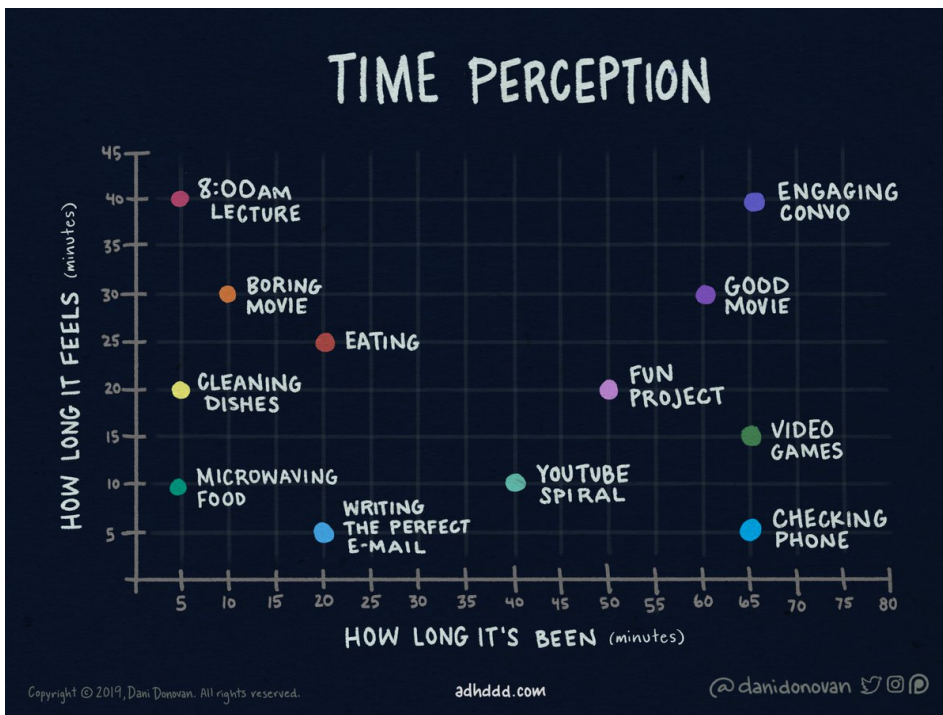
Good luck trying to tear me away from something I'm interested in...



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 26

↻ 946 ❤️ 2.6K ▼

"I can't ___ until I ___" is the #1 reason I struggle to get things done. I start off with great intentions, but it always turns into this cycle. Whatever the distraction, it feels extremely important in the moment! But I lose track of time, and before I know it... 🤪 #ADHD



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 10

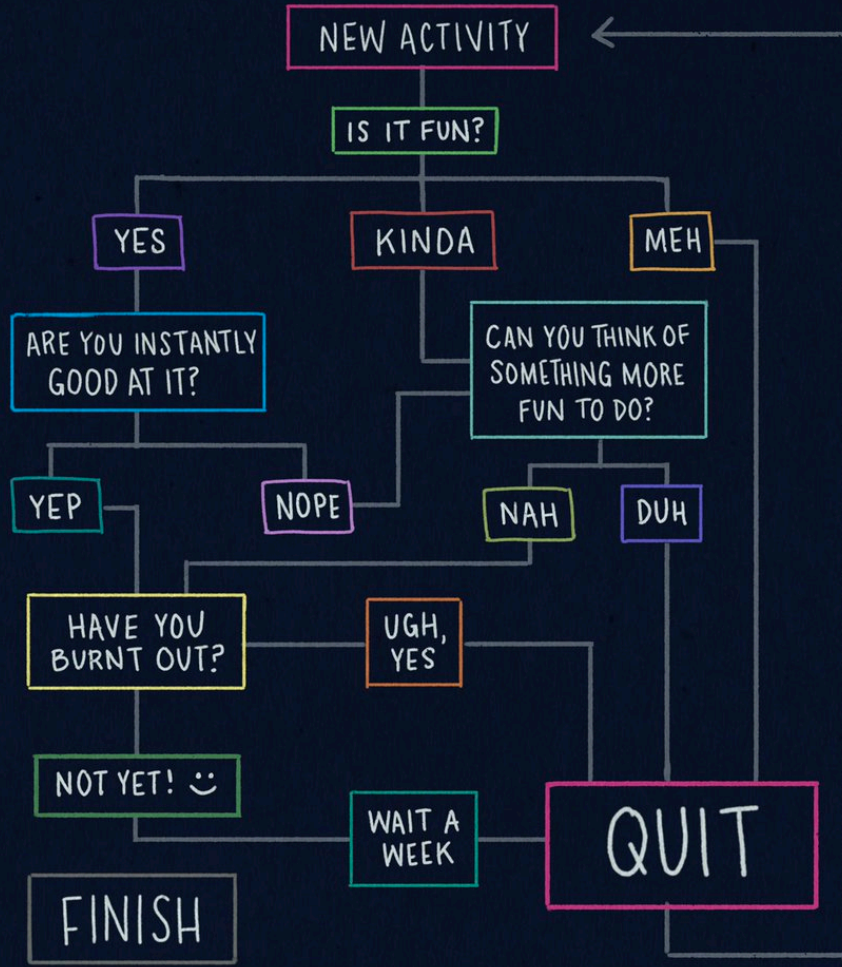
↻ 603 ❤️ 2.2K ▼

Time flies when you have #ADHD... or it crawls.

The inability to judge the duration of time passing has been a lifelong problem. I lose myself in the moment during interesting tasks, and get impatient/restless during boring ones.

Biggest lie I tell myself? "One more minute!"

THE NEVER-ENDING CYCLE



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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Jan 2

↻ 1.1K ❤️ 3.1K ▼

The #ADHD Guide to Project Completion 🧠



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Jan 14

↻ 805 ❤️ 2.7K ▼

Forgive yourself.

#ADHD comes with so much shame and guilt. I'm quick to forgive others, but never show myself the same compassion.

Quick reminder: No one is 100% perfect, 100% of the time.

THE CYCLE OF PROCRASTINATION



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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Jan 15

480 2.0K

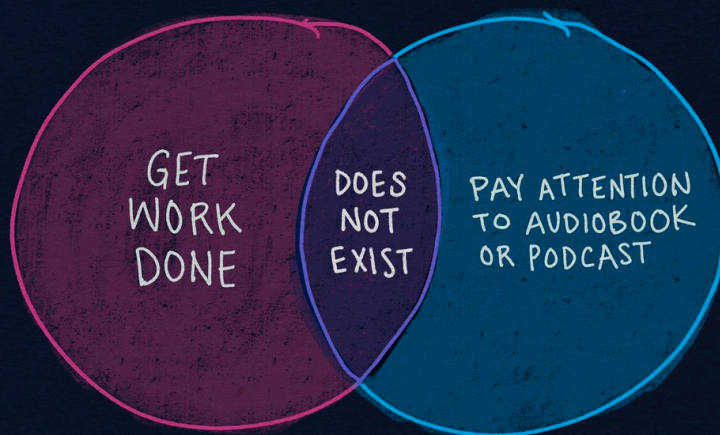
"I Will, Just Not Right Now."

I'm good at self-rationalizing. "I can't do that right now—I'm too hungry/tired/busy."

🚫 SPOILER ALERT: I am NEVER going to feel like it. 🚫

(Inspired by a tweet from @ADHDublin) #ADHD

MULTI-TASKING



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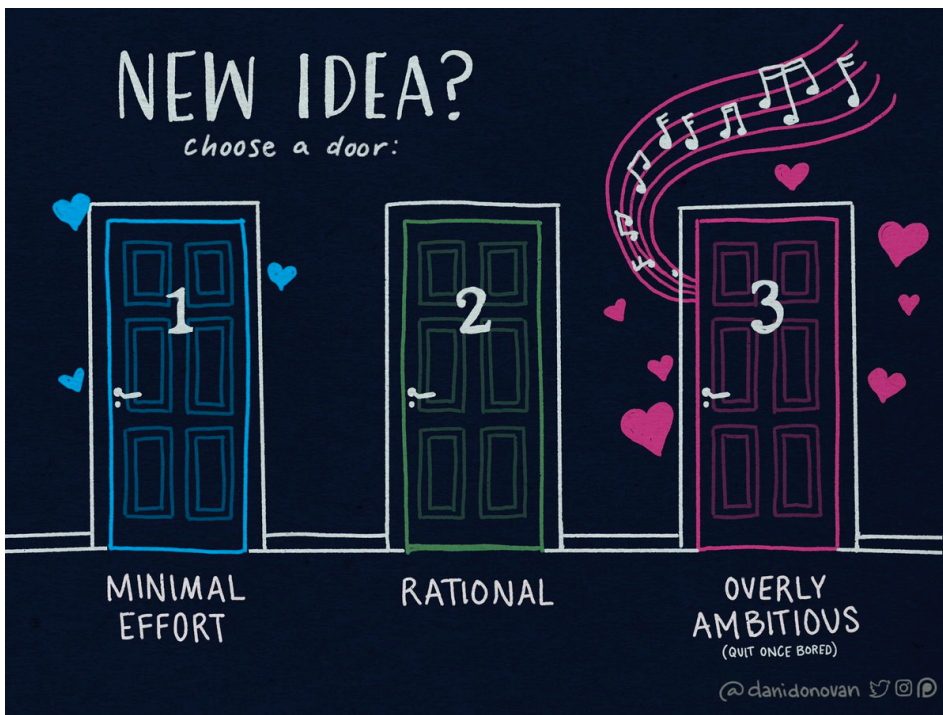
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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Jan 24

353 2.0K

My brain can only handle one input/output at a time.

I can't even concentrate on work if I'm listening to music with lyrics 🧑🏻 #ADHD

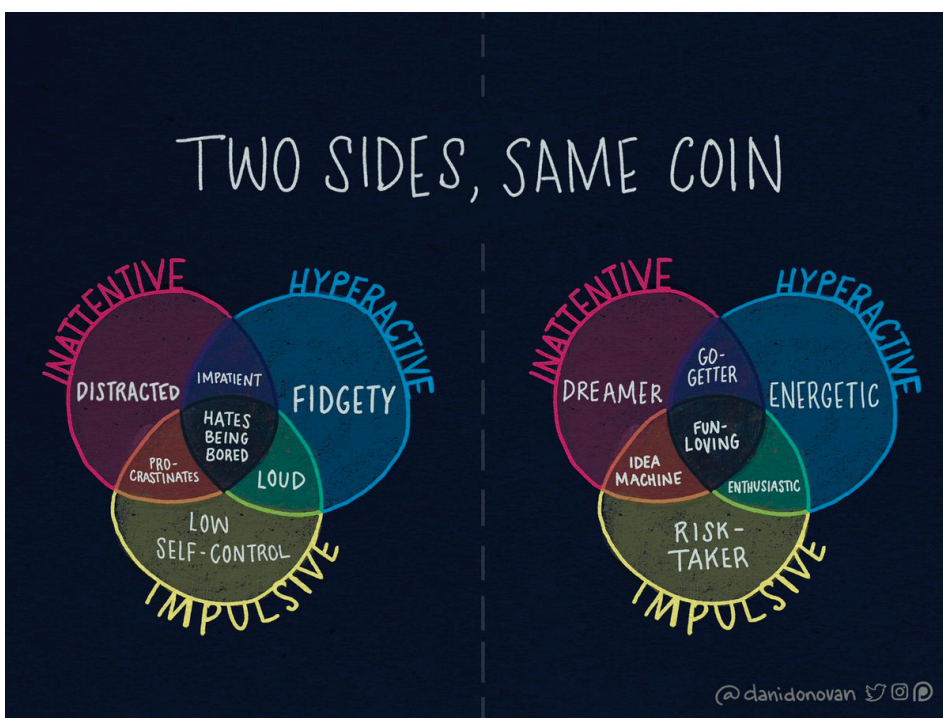


Dani Donovan @danidonovan · 19 Dec 2018

↻ 462 ❤️ 2.2K ▼

Why can't I finish what I start?

Set unrealistic expectations. Start project. Burn out. Abandon ship. Half-read books, failed exercise plans, unfinished projects & an inner voice that says "Why bother? You can't finish anything" since all I do is break promises I make to myself.



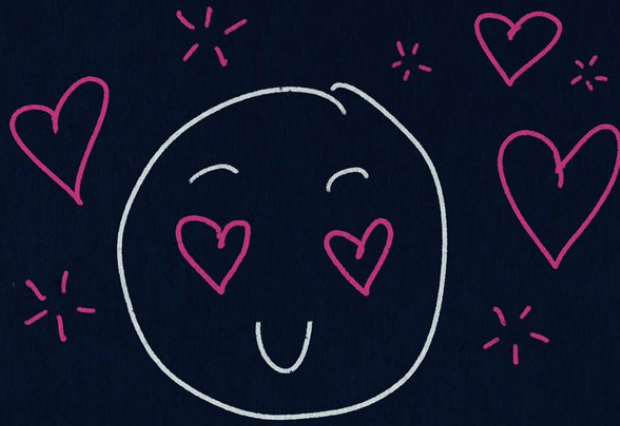
Dani Donovan @danidonovan · 16 Dec 2018

↻ 1.0K ❤️ 3.3K ▼

#ADHD: It all depends on how you look at it.

"You are not weird. You are not stupid. You do not need to try harder. You are not a failed version of normal. You are different. You are beautiful. And you are not alone."

— Jessica McCabe, @HowtoADHD



HOPELESS ROMANTIC

- + Dislikes being alone
- + Falls fast & hard
- + Passionate /romantic
- + Overly forgiving
- + Difficulty moving on

THE FACES OF ADHD (1/9)

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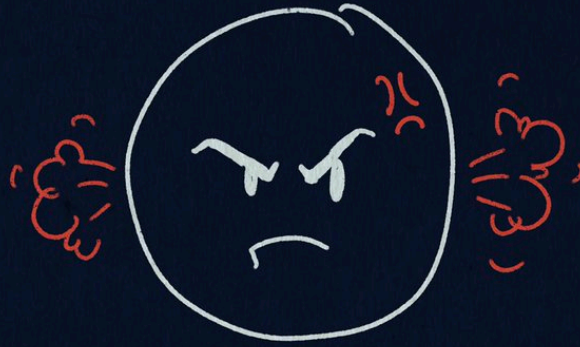
Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 6

↻ 177 ❤️ 1.0K ▼

The first individual write-up of my Faces of #ADHD series!

“Hopeless Romantic” me is passionate and adventurous. When I fall for someone, I fall hard. But I have a hard time getting over being broken up with, because it takes me longer than most to recover from rejection.

(1/9)



HOT HEAD

- + Needs to express self
- + Defensive
- + Firm beliefs
- + Sensitive to criticism
- + Low tolerance for frustration

THE FACES OF ADHD (2/9)

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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 10

↻ 193 ❤️ 1.0K ▼

As a child with undiagnosed #ADHD, I got in trouble for “talking back” to my parents/teachers due to poor emotional control & authority issues.

Now, I get stress build-up, frustrated with myself over perceived shortcomings, and stubborn/argumentative without realizing it.

(2/9)



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 12

↻ 230 ❤️ 1.2K ▼

Despite my #ADHD, I was labeled “gifted” in school. I was ahead of my peers but got frustrated with the slow pace of the curriculum.

It's often referred to as “twice exceptional child syndrome” and was the reason I never got treated—despite lack of organizational/social skills.



Dani Donovan

@danidonovan · Feb 12

↻ 146 ❤️ 1.0K ▼

Twice-exceptional students can be broken into 3 categories:

- 1: Students who excel but later show signs of disability
- 2: Students with diagnosed disabilities who show exceptional gifts in some areas
- 3: Highly intelligent students who seem average because they



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 13

↻ 212 ❤️ 1.1K ▼

"I could have done better" plays on repeat in my brain, even after I've already turned something in.

Obsessive Perfectionist should really be called "hyperfocus on steroids." When I'm in my flow, it's so easy to lose track of time (thanks to chronic tinkering tendencies). #ADHD



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 14

↻ 160 ❤️ 996 ▼

- 1) Have cool idea for new project, career goal or side hustle
- 2) Research
- 3) Get excited
- 4) Buy supplies
- 5) Go hard for a week
- 6) Lose steam
- 7) Find something else to do
- 8) Occasionally remember abandoned goal with twinge of guilt & anger you never finish anything
- 9) Repeat

#ADHD



- + Needs to belong
- + Uses humor as shield
- + Fun to be around
- + Hates feeling lonely
- + Prone to substance abuse

THE FACES OF ADHD (6/9)

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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 17

↻ 142 ❤️ 904 ▼

Fitting in has always played a huge part in my self-esteem. Feeling lonely (and worrying my friends don't actually like me) WRECKS me. I use self-deprecating humor to lighten the mood.

If I'm not fun to be around, I worry people won't want to spend time with me.

👉 (6/9) #ADHD



ANXIOUS WRECK

- + Chronic worrier
- + Uses avoidance to cope
- + Paranoid about what other people think
- + Reflexively overapologizes
- + Guilt + shame-ridden

THE FACES OF ADHD (7/9)

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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 18

↻ 337 ❤️ 1.4K ▼

I care too much about everything, especially making others happy. I feel bad about things that aren't my fault. I worry my friends don't like me. I put off stressful things + hate confrontation. I expect to be fired whenever my boss schedules a "Quick Chat" meeting 😨 (7/9) #ADHD

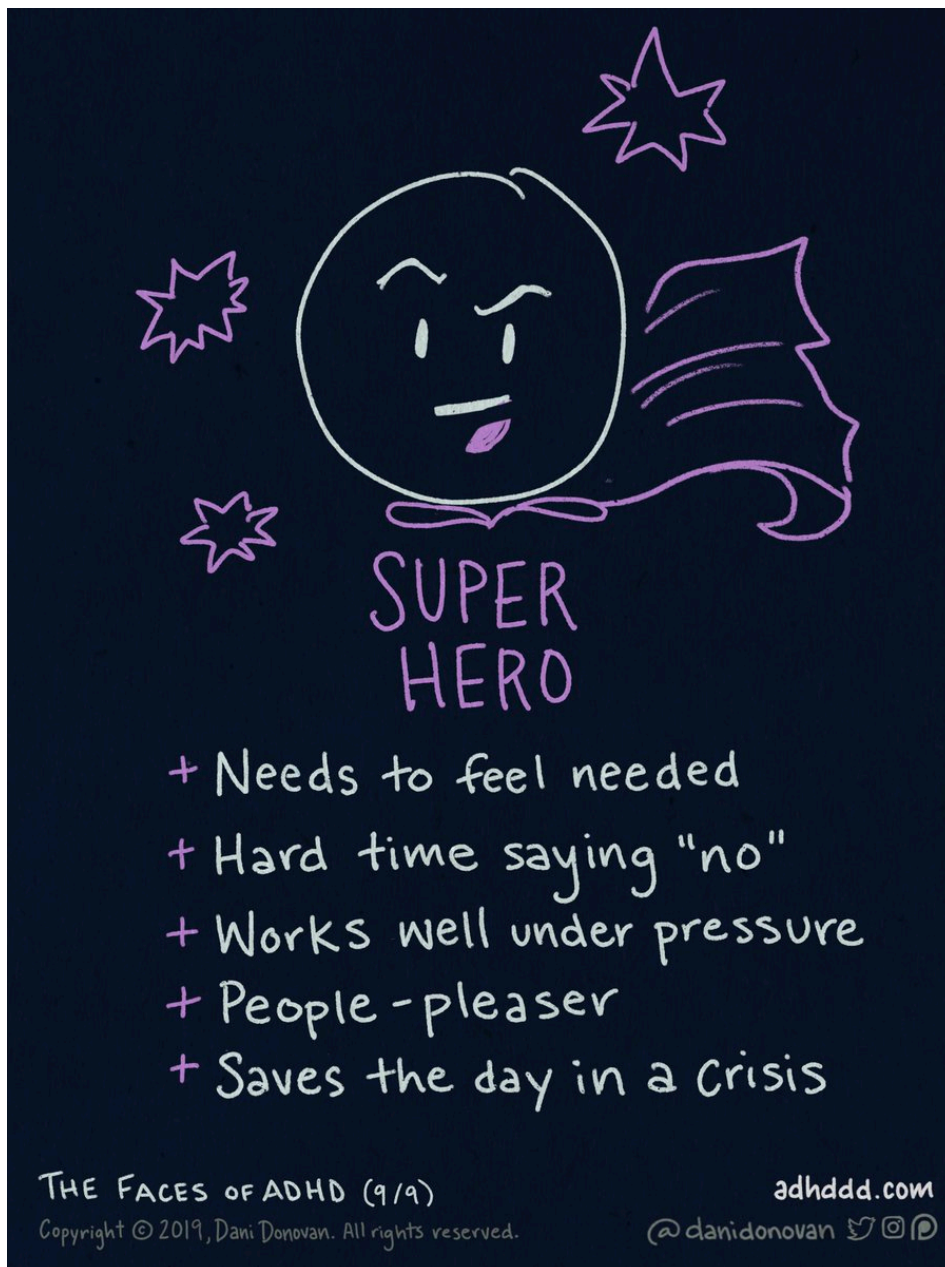


Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 25

↻ 269 ❤️ 1.2K ▼

I walk into a room, open my phone, or start a sentence--only to forget what I was trying to do entirely. People get frustrated reminding me of things ("selective listening"). To-do's that aren't written down get forgotten. If my brain isn't engaged, I'm not there.

🧠 (8/9) #ADHD



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 26

↻ 317 ❤️ 1.5K ▼

Final comic of my "Faces of ADHD" series! ADHD isn't all symptoms/deficiencies. Our generosity shines. Although I can get overwhelmed by overcommitting, I do it because I want to assist everyone who comes to me for help.

👤 (9/9) #ADHD

Full series is on my pinned profile thread!

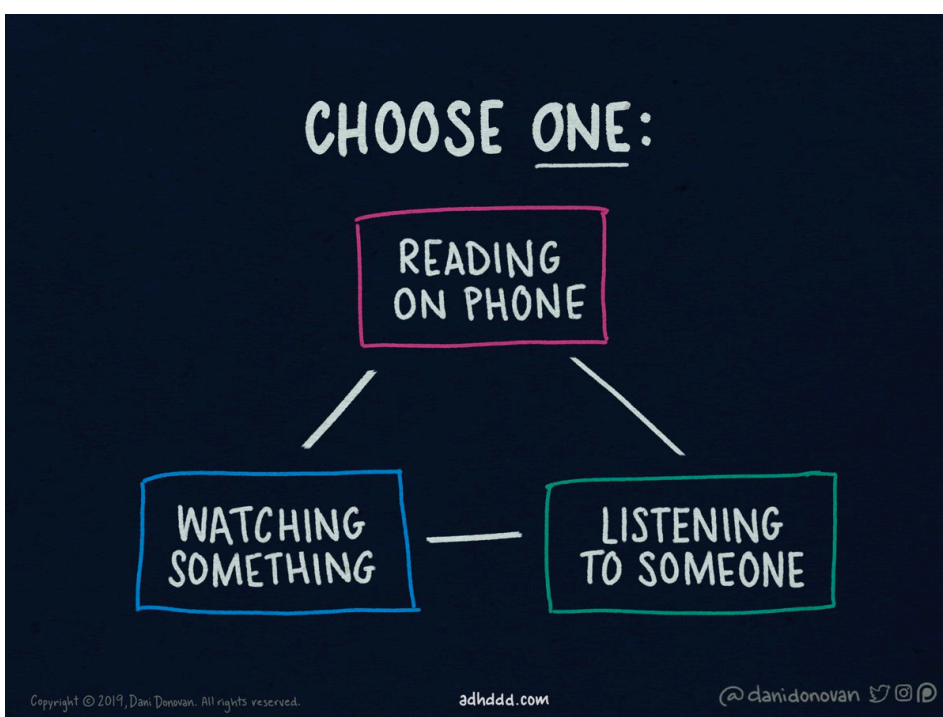


Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Feb 26

↻ 689 ❤️ 2.6K ▼

Sensitivity to criticism—and reading too much into things—is something I've always struggled with. I can take honest feedback about my work, but comments that feel personal (real or imaginary) hit me hard.

Rejection sensitivity + low self-esteem = rumination. #ADHD



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 4

↻ 199 ❤️ 907 ▼

Active listening is difficult. If I'm in the middle of reading and someone starts talking to me, I get angry. If something's playing in the background, I can't focus on a conversation. I have to pause movies if I want to chat. My brain's one-input system at work again! #ADHD



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 12

↻ 1.4K ❤️ 3.8K ▼

“Sorry for the late response!”
 “Thanks for your patience.”
 “I swear I thought I replied!”
 “Shit, completely forgot about this! My bad.”

Anyone who texts/emails/IMs me knows I'll respond immediately, in 2 days, or not at all.

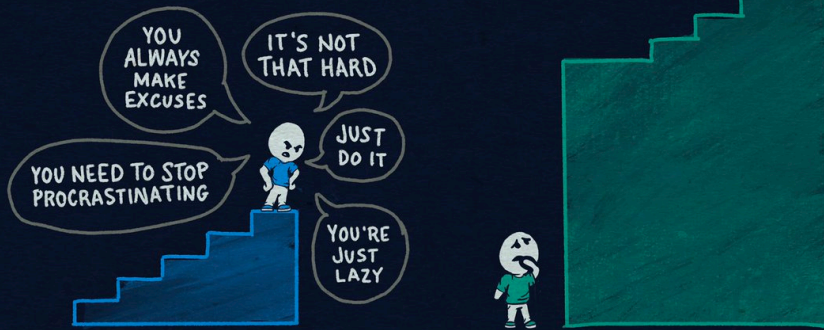
My communication = mental gymnastics. #ADHD

GETTING STARTED

"SIMPLE TASKS"

NON-ADHD

ADHD



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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 19

↻ 4.7K ❤️ 11K ▾

“Why can’t you just—“

I don’t have a procrastination problem. I have a “getting started” problem. The first step is always the hardest.

Getting enough willpower to initiate action is difficult. Constant shaming wrecks my self-esteem, and teaches me to always blame myself. #ADHD

HARD-TO-SWALLOW PILLS

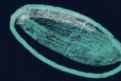
REJECTION SENSITIVITY



YOU CAN'T MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY



ANYONE GOSSIPING ABOUT YOU IS INSECURE ABOUT THEIR OWN LIFE + NEEDS TO FEEL SUPERIOR

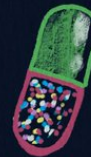


THE RIGHT PEOPLE LOVE YOU



EVERYONE ISN'T MAD AT YOU

PEOPLE AREN'T ANALYZING YOUR EVERY MOVE






YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT TO DESERVE RESPECT



SOME PEOPLE WON'T LIKE YOU, NO MATTER HOW NICE YOU ARE (AND THAT'S OKAY!)

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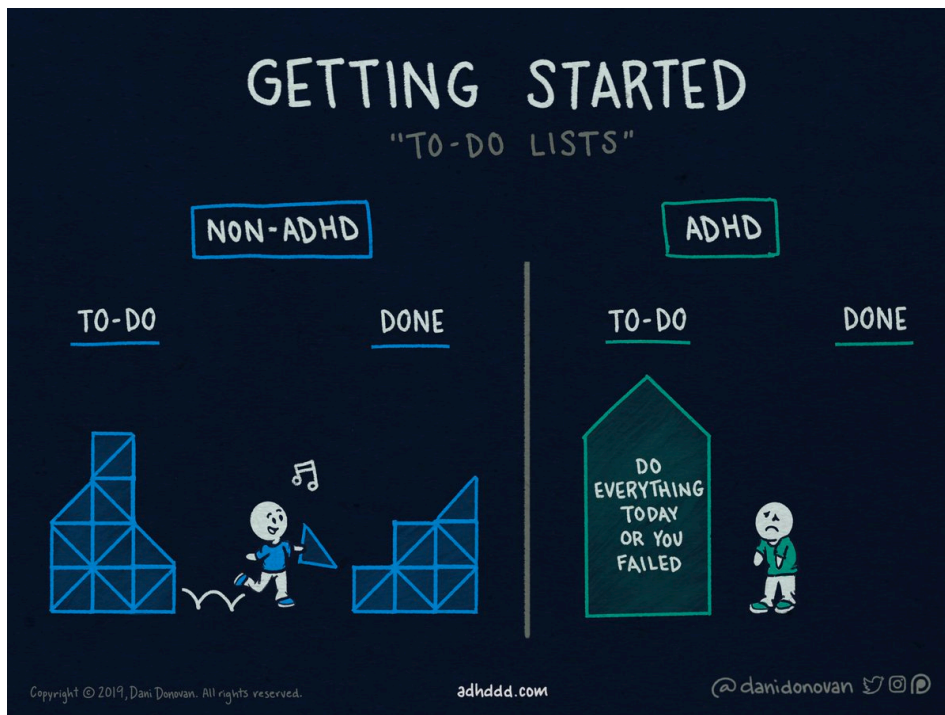
Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 24

↻ 7.1K  13K 

Starting a "Hard to Swallow Pills" series!

I'll be covering various aspects of the #ADHD experience, and hard truths many of us need to remember.

First prescription: Rejection-Sensitive Dysphoria 



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · Mar 26

↻ 662 ❤️ 2.0K ▼

"I could never finish that whole thing today, so why bother getting started?"

Breaking down tasks is hard. I see the whole building, not individual bricks.

1 brick a day > 0 bricks. My brain conveniently forgets this (bc it's not instantly gratifying).

#ADHD #NeurodiverseSquad



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · May 1

↻ 751 ❤️ 2.3K ▼




My obsession with people-pleasing, chronic worry everyone is mad at me, and anxiety about being judged all stem from the same place— low self-esteem and an incredibly critical inner voice. If I've been right about my suspicions once before, confirmation bias kicks in hard. #ADHD

THINGS PEOPLE WITH ADHD ARE USED TO



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Dani Donovan @danidonovan · May 6

↻ 595 ❤️ 1.8K ▼

Here are just a few of my default settings. ⚙️

#ADHD #NeurodiverseSquad #MentalHealthAwarenessMonth



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · May 9

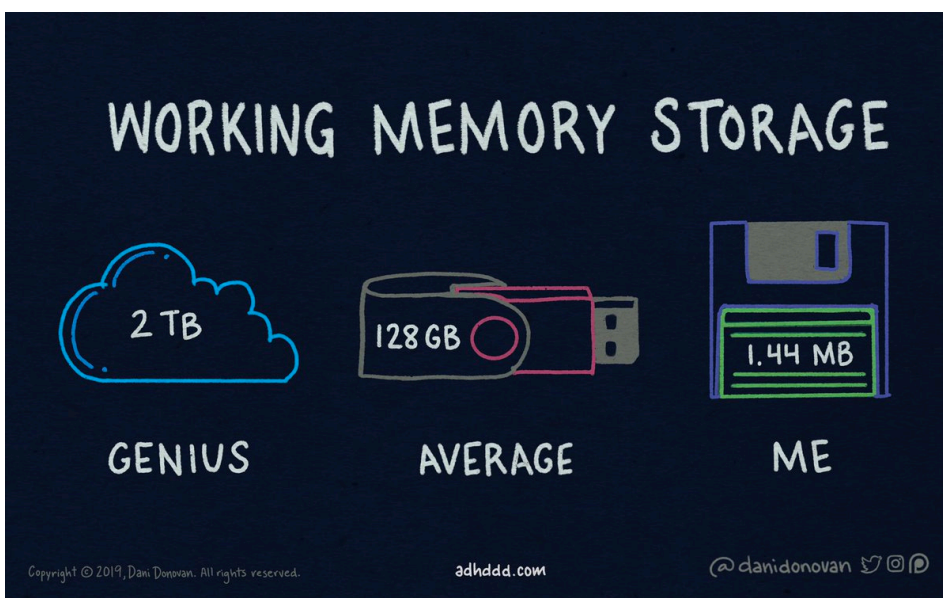
↻ 289 ❤️ 1.1K ▾

Keeping track of belongings has never been my strong suit.

Turns out, “frequently losing things” is an [#ADHD](#) symptom described in the DSM.

Inattention, forgetfulness and disorganization all contribute to my constant cycle of misplacing/replacing.

[#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth](#)



Dani Donovan @danidonovan · May 19

↻ 648 ❤️ 2.0K ▾

“How did you forget already?!”

“Sorry, I had to delete some files. I don’t have a big hard drive.”

[#ADHD](#) can result in difficulty remembering details, following instructions + switching tasks.

The struggle is so, so real.

[#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth](#)



Dani Donovan

@danidonovan · 14 Dec 2018

↻ 106 ❤️ 590 ▾

All right, a few of you have DM'ed asking for the link to my Patreon page, so here you go: patreon.com/danidonovan

I feel weird plugging it, but the less I have to freelance, the more I can work on making comics! Love you guys; still can't believe the support this is getting 😊

Dani Donovan is creating mental health comics | Patreon

Become a patron of Dani Donovan today: Read 66 posts by Dani Donovan and get... patreon.com

More Moments

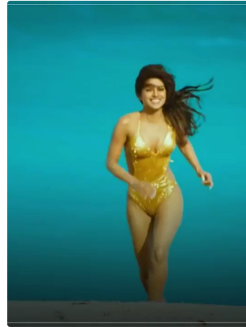


Gwendoline Christie submitted herself for an Emmy nomina...

2019 Emmy Awards · 1 hour ago

The actor, who played Brienne of Tarth in Game of Thrones, was one of the actors who submitted her own nomination for...

14 Likes



Bollywood fraternity sends best wishes to Priyanka Chopra...

Bollywood · 3 hours ago

Chopra turned a year older and the wishes came pouring in for the international star.

10 Likes



At least 25 dead after suspected arson attack at a Japanese...

World news · 20 minutes ago

According to police, at least 25 people are confirmed dead and several dozen are injured from a fire at an animation studio...

13 Likes



Native Hawaiians protest the construction of a large...

US news · This morning

Hundreds of people gathered to demonstrate against the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope in Mauna Kia...

1 Like