

Postscript – One Size Does Not Fit All:

The books below illustrate the idea that what works for one person (or community, or economic sector, or culture) may not work for another.

What worked for Annie, who is probably ADHD – book 14 below – although never diagnosed, may not work for you. The second book – book 15 below – introduces scientists to the idea that Western thought may have over-emphasized the rational.

Other books are works of comparative culture, psychology, and physics, for the general reader. Annie encountered different cultures and different disciplines early in life. This postscript is a reading list inviting interested individuals to ponder on the human condition:

Exploring What May be Essentially Human

If you have been diagnosed ADD or ADHD, you might like this book:

14. The ADHD Advantage: What You Thought was a Diagnosis May be Your Greatest Strength

Dale Archer, MD, Penguin Random House, 2015

Archer discusses this particular personality type. Most notably, he suggests that people with this personality are “allergic to boredom.” So, attention to detail and the mundane is lacking, but rising to a challenge and staying cool under pressure is present in spades.

One of the luckiest events of Annie’s childhood was a scholarship to a sophisticated English school that challenged and did not bore her, so that she did well in school and never knew she had ADHD, until now.

She does not accept that she alone is responsible for her feelings, behavior, and the atmosphere around her. As a woman, her perspective is different from that of the male authors of many respectable books, including most of the books on her reading list. They are leaders or teachers, accustomed to being heard. She is a follower, accustomed to receiving disrespect if she dares to disagree with a leader.

Disagreement is not the same as insubordination. A leader is responsible for a healthy environment, including (usually) open debate and boundaries on authority. Some authority figures shut down challenges, enlisting the group’s support against the offender. One successful tactic against a great power was Mahatma Gandhi’s “non-violent resistance,” in pursuit of India’s independence. Eventually the British Government stepped down. It did not have to do that.

(The above remarks are at least in accordance with the movie, “Gandhi.” Annie understands, from a personal conversation, that some former residents of India were not happy with the way the British handled the partition of India. Since the movie “Gandhi” represents that India was partitioned partly because Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs could not work out their differences, the matter likely is complex.)

If you are a scientist, you might be interested in the following book:

15. Ten Philosophical Mistakes: Basic Errors in Modern Thought – How They Came About, Their Consequences, and How to Avoid Them

Mortimer J. Adler, MacMillan, 1985

Compared with the detail-oriented, empirical books of today, this book looks like armchair philosophizing. Nevertheless, Professor Adler shows how some popular philosophical beliefs came about,

why they don't make sense, and why many of them were retained - with the addition of complications that were supposed to plug the loopholes but didn't - rather than abandoned.

If you have been diagnosed an addict, you might be interested in this book:

16. Refuge Recovery

Noah Levine

Noah Levine describes how Buddhist methods and teachings can be helpful, even in the Western world, to heal addicts and the pain that leads to addiction.

If challenging personalities run in your family, you might like this book:

17. It Didn't Start with You: How Inherited Family Trauma Shapes Who We Are and How to End the Cycle

Mark Wolynn, The Penguin Group, 2009.

Wolynn has worked with many individuals who are not at peace with themselves or others. The way someone feels after a loss, a death, or a betrayal, for example, can become embedded in the way his or her descendants respond to the world. But these types of changes can be reversed, so that a jumpy, aggressive, or overly passive pre-disposition need not be a permanent aspect of personality. Wolynn offers ways to uncover family trauma, if it exists, and to make peace with it and its past victim.

Annie was lucky to observe, when young, that she would sometimes pick up another person's feelings from the atmosphere around her. She learned to notice which feelings were her own (generated within), and which derived from someone else (i.e., fed into her emotions from the outside).