

## “You Don’t *Look* Like You Have ADHD.”







Oh, Trust Me — You Just Don’t See My Brain.

If I earned a R10 every time someone said, “*You don’t look like you have ADHD,*” I’d finally be able to afford a full-time executive-function assistant - because let’s be honest, I clearly need one.

That phrase sounds harmless, but it reveals how misunderstood ADHD truly is. You can’t *see* ADHD. You can’t detect it in someone’s facial expressions, neat handwriting, or calm demeanor. What you see on the outside is usually the carefully curated, socially acceptable version - not the inner mental theme park that never closes.

INSIDE MY ADHD BRAIN? IT’S PURE, UNFILTERED CHAOS (WITH A DASH OF BRILLIANCE):

Disclaimer : I may have “borrowed” this from a fellow ADHDer... and by borrowed, I mean *completely swiped it* because it was too accurate not to.

-  **Dory (Finding Nemo):** My working memory. Constantly resetting mid-thought. “Wait... what was I doing again? Oh right - coffee. No, email. No... why am I in the kitchen?”
  -  **Scrat (Ice Age):** My hyperfocus. Locked onto one idea, obsession, or hobby like it’s the last acorn on earth. You couldn’t pry me away with a crowbar - until *poof*, interest gone.
  -  **Donkey (Shrek):** My internal dialogue. Loud, enthusiastic, and endlessly chatty. I’m the friend who interrupts my own stories because my thoughts just spawned three new tangents.
  -  **Mater (Cars):** My verbal overflow. Talking too fast, too much, or too soon - not because I don’t care, but because my brain is juggling fifteen ideas and they’re all fighting for airtime.
  -  **Heihei (Moana):** My executive functioning. The one that was supposed to manage priorities, plans, and paperwork? Yeah, he’s usually wandering off in the wrong direction, confused but optimistic.
  -  **Sid (Ice Age):** My distractibility. Every noise, every thought, every emotion - a potential detour. “Ooh, a notification! ...Wait, what were we talking about again?”
- From the outside, it might look like I’m just “quirky” or “energetic.” But beneath the surface is a constant balancing act - trying to stay organized, appear composed, and not let the chaos leak through.

**ADHD isn’t about looking distracted. It’s about *feeling* like your mind is running a hundred browser tabs at once, all playing different songs.**

So when someone says, “You don’t look like you have ADHD,” I smile and think: You don’t *see* the mental gymnastics it takes to appear functional. You don’t see the exhaustion after masking all day, or the hours lost to hyperfocus and forgetfulness.

Because ADHD doesn’t have a *look*. It has layers — noise, colour, creativity, overwhelm, compassion, and brilliance — all spinning together inside a brain that refuses to sit still.

So maybe next time someone says that, I’ll just hand them a “VIP pass” and say: “Welcome to the ADHD Experience. Buckle up - it’s loud, it’s fast, it’s funny, and it never stops. But it’s mine - and I’m learning how to steer it.”