

The Five C's and the Power of Completion Adrenaline Junkies and Paper Woolly Mammoths

Adrenaline is a beautiful thing. Within our own bodies resides a serum that elevates awareness and heightens our senses. We become hunters with razor sharp focus and quickened responses. All we have to do is summon the stuff, create the right scenario to allow it to course through our bodies. Historically, adrenaline served a great purpose to elevate awareness during times of crisis. Often referred to as the “fight or flight” response, adrenaline came in handy when confronted by a woolly mammoth or another large predator.

Fast forward to the present. No more woolly mammoths but adrenaline is still available put to good use in times of danger and crisis. In our fast paced deadline-oriented work world, professionals have been using adrenaline to help slay the modern version of a woolly mammoth: the report due at the end of the fiscal quarter, the important presentation, filing taxes, etc. Even in our personal lives, we wait for others to be irritated before getting into action on a promised task. We count on the urgency of birthday and holiday deadlines to do our part. Workers skillfully draw upon adrenaline to allow them to sharpen their senses and complete tasks.

Individuals with ADHD can rely on the adrenaline response for actions other than the truly urgent. Important actions that are not urgent, what Steven Covey refers to as Quad II actions, are dressed up as woolly mammoths to illicit the adrenaline response or worse, languish on a to do list never urgent enough to show up on one's radar. Tapping this hormone too much can have grave consequences and contribute to [additional health challenges](#) including higher levels of the hormone cortisol. Higher levels of cortisol can lead to higher levels of stress which in turn increases worry and anxiety. A key piece of managing ADHD is managing stress and this is done when one effectively manages their sense of urgency.

The Five C's

A deadline specialist is someone who uses urgency as the primary motivator to get things done. Making a start to replace urgency with the Five C's is a good first step. Urgency is used to prioritize but also limit choice and creativity. The idea behind the Five C's is to reintroduce curiosity, creativity and choice and emphasize completing the task. When we acknowledge accomplishments a more beneficial chemical response occurs in the body. Serotonin plays an important role in the regulation of body temperature, mood, sleep, and appetite. Researchers have found that when a person enjoys high self-esteem, physical fitness, and authentic accomplishment, the brain releases serotonin, a powerful mood regulator.

1. **Curiosity.** This is where it all begins. The main tool here is asking simple open ended questions. What do I want to have happen? Who can I access as a resource?

2. **Choice.** Make this a powerful tool. Choose the completion carefully and be clear about the first step.
3. **Creativity.** Tap into what's already there. People with ADHD are highly creative. Don't try harder (more discipline), try doing it differently. Creativity only shows up when we make space for it. Make space by making time. Working on actions early in the day, early in the process (not up against the deadline) will guarantee creativity and choice.
4. **Completion.** Focus on identifying and completing a step. Each step counts as a completion. Not to be confused with finishing. Enjoy the deep satisfaction of surprising others by being prepared ahead of time.
5. **Celebration.** Acknowledge the accomplishment. In our rush to move to the next thing we can forget this important step. Celebration also helps bookmark the action-we remember how it was left.

The Five C's are only possible when one sets aside time and space (and energy) to address the task. Making room for time and space requires trust – trusting that the time will be well spent.