

# Coach Sandy Maynard Helps A Cop Go Back to Class

You'd never pick out Jim Schultz\* from a lineup if you were asked to find the guy with AD/HD. The towering 45-year-old police sergeant, a decorated hero, seems as calm and collected as they come.

"I'm at my best when the sky is falling," the affable New York native says. "If there's a hostage situation or a barricade, my thinking is crystal clear."

But it's not so clear when it comes to his newest ambition: finishing college and becoming a lawyer. "School was always a problem," he says of the painful time when no one realized he had AD/HD. "I got a GED because I got kicked out of high school at seventeen."

Now married and the father of two, Schultz is restless for new challenges. But his AD/HD still frustrates him.

"The hardest thing is finding time to study, because I have to read something seven or eight times before I get it," he says. And he procrastinates because, "I have to force myself to sit down."

Finally, there's listening, Jim's self-described "fog factor."

"Some days I just can't do it," he says. "People talk to me, I'll stand there nodding, and I have no idea what they just said."

Jim talked with Sandy Maynard, *ADDitude's* Coach on Call. "It sounds like you're a kinesthetic learner," she said. Kinesthetic learners perform best when physically involved.

"Most schools are designed for verbal learners," Maynard told him. Verbal learning, whether auditory or visual, is arduous for kinesthetic students. Long lectures may be impossible to follow.

Maynard suggested these strategies.

## Make Book Learning a Kinesthetic Experience

"One of my clients had to study for his pilot's license, but he couldn't bring himself to sit down and read," Maynard told Jim. "I had him go outside and pace while he studied."

The client felt invigorated by the movement, which struck a

chord for Jim. "Sometimes I study best in the school cafeteria where there's a lot going on," he said.

So Maynard told Jim to build activity into studying: reading while standing at the kitchen counter or pacing outside.

"Kinesthetic learners should use study buddies," she suggested. "One person reads while the other takes notes and spits back information. Then they reverse roles." Study buddies make studying people-oriented: more stimulating – and more kinesthetic.

## Make Listening Kinesthetic

"You can improve listening skills by becoming actively involved in the exchange," Maynard said. "Repeat some-one's words, respond."

To remember a name, for example, repeat it back in some way. "When someone says her name is Nora, you can say, 'Nora, what a beautiful name; or Nora, I have an aunt named Nora.'" Keep talking to minimize the fog factor. "If someone says, 'I went to see a terrible movie with Dustin Hoffman,' you can say something like, 'Dustin Hoffman in a terrible movie? I'm surprised because he's usually in good movies.'"

## Jim Reports Back,

After two weeks of practicing, Jim declared success.

**Reading while standing at the kitchen counter helps him better retain information.** "I don't know why," he says. "It just goes in and stays."

**Studying in a group also works.** "It's reinforcing: I read it, then I watch people say it, and I hear people say it," he says. "It's like a form of entertainment."

**But kinesthetic listening doesn't work.** "The other day I met two officers on the street. They told me their names and I repeated them back: 'Hi Joe. Hi Sam.' Two minutes later I forgot them."

Jim *did* devise a listening strategy of his own: **Don't sweat the details.** "If I don't focus on the details, just the main points of what someone is saying, I'm more likely to stay engaged and remember what was said."