

Pass It On®...

The Tenacity to See the Stars

One of the most often used behavioral descriptors today is Attention Deficit Disorder, which basically means unable to sit still or focus for longer than a few minutes. All parents know that ADD worsens when chores or homework are involved. And if we're honest with ourselves we all suffer from Attention Deficit if the task at hand is something we are not interested in, like say counting the stars in the universe. Most of us would drift off into somnambulism in less than a few minutes of staring upward. But fortunately for us, the heavens were an early fascination for Galileo. He was the Italian engineer, physicist, and father of observational astronomy. That means a lot of night shifts looking up and wondering how things work. He lived and worked in the early 1600s, charting the phases of Venus, the breadth of the Milky Way, Jupiter's moons and even sunspots. Galileo was wont to explore new realities based on science. The universe held his attention and he worked tirelessly to understand it, even after he was convicted of heresy during the Inquisition and put under house arrest for the last 10 years of his life.

Rather than complain about his inability to move about, Galileo turned his attention to what he could do in the confines of his studio. He expanded his research on the motion of objects and the strength of materials. If that sounds boring think about this: you can draw a straight line from Galileo sequestered in his primitive lab to Elon Musk and SpaceX. Galileo stuck with it when his friends abandoned him, when he was confined to his home, when he was feeling the affects of age. He was curious and driven. Elon Musk is equally driven and fearless in his exploration. SpaceX is changing just about everything about space exploration, from reusable rockets, to greater payloads, to radical innovations in spacesuits and parachutes. Musk has a vision of what space holds for the future, and he is sticking to it no matter the obstacles.

Max is a different kind of explorer. He's 6-years-old. His bedroom is littered with battery-powered contraptions that light up, move, rattle, and roll. His first-grade teacher says Max has a hard time paying attention in class, yet Max will work for hours to figure out the electrical circuit between a battery, a motor, and a propeller. He's also building

his own telescope. "I want to see what Jupiter's rings are really made of," he says. Perhaps if Galileo were in school today with his curious nature he would likewise be a little restless. Curious minds are always seeking problems to solve. As we learn to channel our curiosity into actions and finally results, we learn the power of stick-to-itiveness. Tenacity is the result of a challenge we give ourselves, a bigger vision to accomplish. Someday Max will make the connection to what he is learning in school to what he is building in his room, the same way Galileo saw the importance of his research while confined to his house.

So maybe the next time we feel bored with a task or chore we need to look up at the stars...and challenge ourselves to reach for them.

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