

From Sari's CNN interview on July 22, 2010 with **Kyra PHILLIPS**: All right. Let's get real. For a lot of families out there, the "Leave it to Beaver" lifestyle has been left behind. Couples out there, I know what you can relate to and I know you can relate to me right now but before you throw up your hands up in frustration and think about filing those divorce papers, consider this, you could have a ADHD marriage.

"Well, Sari Solden is a psychotherapist and author. She joins me live from Detroit. Sari, you are about to save a lot of marriages right now. Do you realize that?"

SARI SOLDEN, PSYCHOTHERAPIST: I hope so, just a few anyway.

PHILLIPS: Now, you're married, and you actually deal with this condition, correct?

SOLDEN: I have been married for 25 years, and I do have A.D.D., and the way that many women have wasn't diagnosed until very much later in life.

PHILLIPS: So, when, how did you realize that this was an issue in your marriage and is that what sort of triggered you to write about this?

SOLDEN: Well, what triggered me to write about it was all my experience, my 22 years of experience with men and women and their spouses as a therapist with A.D.D., but maybe I was led to it with my own personal experience with it. I know I fell in love with my husband personally because he organized my car for me. And that was it.

I think that happens to a lot of men and women with A.D.D.. Originally, they are attracted to somebody who is organized and then that works out great at first and then after a while, that spouse gets a little bit frustrated with dealing with all those tasks that he thought you're going to be splitting.

PHILLIPS: Well, of course, you know, we kind of laugh about this because we can all relate but it is a very serious problem and it's leading to a lot of breakups, unfortunately. And you know, there are a lot of misinterpretations about this, right? Because what someone might see as lazy is really another thing?

SOLDEN: And that's the problem with not getting diagnosed, especially if you have the kind of A.D.D. that a lot of women and men have. Well, you're not sitting the stereotype, not every adult has a stereotype of being hyperactive and jumping off the walls. For adults, many of whom have outgrown that hyperactivity or never had it, they are more overwhelmed and confused and distracted, and they might be doing great in other areas of their life.

That's what's so tricky. You might see you wife or your husband doing great at work where they are able to focus narrowly on their area of strength and then at home, which really pools on the A.D.D. with prioritizing, coordinating, sequencing then they fall apart. And it's hard and it's

baffling to the spouse to believe that you really have something serious so they take it pretty personally.

PHILLIPS: All right. So what can we do to prove that we're not lazy or we're not being disrespectful or that we do love that person?

SOLDEN: Well, you know, I always tell my clients, in each marriage, there are two people and in an A.D.D., successful marriage is just like any successful marriage. You have to have mutual respect, good communication, and it has to be a marriage where each person's strengths are supported and each person's challenges are helped.

You know, I tell my clients that you're not the only person in a challenge with a relationship. So whether you have a spouse without A.D.D., who doesn't have any problems now, eventually everybody has some difficulties or differences or disabilities that need help. So a good marriage is where everybody gets help and support each other.

PHILLIPS: All right. Here's where we need more help. As you can imagine, our blog lit up when we asked for specific problems. We got one e-mail question. "How does the non-A.D.D. spouse deal with the A.D.D. spouse's inability to make decisions? Often the A.D.D. affects everything from making dinner to where to send those kids to school. What can I do?"

SOLDEN: Well, of course, and always remember - important to remember, this is neurobiological. This is not a character defect. So whatever your spouse was dealing that was not a character problem, you can have to approach it in that way and learn what's helpful.

For a person with A.D.D., processing out loud, even though husbands don't like to hear this, processing out loud if your wife, for instance, has A.D.D., is so important. A person with A.D.D. has to talk out loud to know what she or he are thinking. So being able to feedback what you hear them saying, limit, maybe scale it down to a few good options and then work with them. But really, scale things down and help them to come up with a decision that's mutually agreeable rather than just one person taking over.

PHILLIPS: So much easier said than done. OK. Here's what Leslie asks, "I'm constantly stressed because my boyfriend of two years who has yet to be diagnosed is always have being mood swings and cannot seem to get his life together. How can we work toward making things go in the right direction for him so our relationship isn't jeopardized?"

SOLDEN: First of all, it's very important to make sure that this is really A.D.D.. Of course, people who have A.D.D. can be very depressed and very anxious and have mood swings. But that can also be a sign of something else. And so the first thing you have to do is make sure what you're dealing with, so getting a diagnosis so you have a mutual understanding, a shared understanding of what the issues are, the first thing. Don't just assume it's A.D.D..

PHILLIPS: Sari Solden confirming that we can all have marital bliss. We all say that with a big smile. Sari, thanks for your time today.

SOLDEN: Thanks.