Twitter Thread by Cora #runswithcoffee #ADHD #DREADPirate Adventurer



Cora #runswithcoffee #ADHD #DREADPirate Adventurer
@Cora_Phelan



@matthaig1 1. Thank you for asking! I don't mind sharing, but an important question deserves a full answer and hopefully it will help someone else too. I was "stable", but not ideally so on strattera for several years, it kept me emotionally level, although now I'm off it,

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 2. I realise that it kept me somewhat muted in my emotions. I avoided the extremes, but that included the highs as and the lows. I didn't enjoy watching comedy or listening to music as much for example, but I figured that was worth it at the time, to escape the extreme emotions.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 3 I also found that it wasn't as good as when I was on methylphenidate, at controlling my "primary" ADHD symptoms, such as how to prioritise and actually start tasks. That makes atomoxetine (Strattera) sound rubbish, but it gave me a period of emotional stability over a very

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 4 stressful time and allowed me to function during some very difficult life events, it really was what I needed at the time and it could work for others.
My decision to come off it was kind term and very considered. I was frankly, terrified to do so. I hadn't been unmedicated

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 5 Since my diagnosis almost 10 years ago and my life before that was very different. Very chaotic and basically surviving, desperately feeling like life was so hard and not understanding why, veering from one last minute by my fingernails achievement to another, that never felt

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 6 Like an achievement at all, but more managing to avoid being uncovered as the fraud that I felt I must be. That was what I saw & lived without the benefit of my diagnosis. There are 2 things that changed the course of my life for the better & one of those is my ADHD diagnosis.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 7 The other, & please excuse the tangents, I have ADHD & our stories, even our answers to questions, while interesting, don't come without tangents! The other, was my daughter. I gave birth to her 18 years ago and I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that she saved my life

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 8 Her arrival in my life gave me a drive that I'd never experienced before. She needed me. Relied on me. If I didn't get up and feed her no one would. I was with her father for the first 8 years of her life, another story, but she

needed me.
As a care giver and as an example.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 9 Because of her, I pushed myself to take chances to better myself in the jobs I went for. The idea of a career was not something that existed for me. I'd done almost every entry level menial job, in between attempts to return to education which I loved, but couldn't cope with

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 10 Due to my undiagnosed ADHD. I had completed an access course in life sciences, and was accepted into every local university I applied to, even the Russell Group. Going away, even at 21, honestly didn't enter into my head, but ff back to me at 28 with a new baby and no

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 11. Qualifications, because uni didn't work out. Well I wanted to do better for her. So I somehow managed to get into a call centre, and from there went to work for a government body, but even though I got these good jobs, and did ok in them, even gaining promotions,

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 12 well every day was a struggle, to keep up, to deliver as expected, to function within the normal socially acceptable boundaries, I coped, I existed, I had regular mental health crisis, but I kept going.
This is twitter and already an unreasonably long answer...

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 13 so I'll skip the story of my diagnosis and how that came about and say I was started on Ritalin (methylphenidate), in the first instance and the experience was profound. For the first time in my entire existence my world slowed down.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 14 The rush of my mind was quieted and I could order and structure my thoughts as I wanted and hold onto one thought at a time.
I've heard many people describe this experience as feeling euphoria, but I think it's actually just an ADHD person experiencing calm for the first time

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 15. That's what it felt like to me. I was 35 years old and until that moment I didn't know what calm felt like. I thought I did. I had my own baseline for it, but this was breathtaking. It awed me.
I'd arranged to work from home that day, feeling trepidus of the meds.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 16. I was calm. I sat and wrote up the minutes from a meeting I'd attended and it was so easy. My recall, it all just clicked into place. It's this what it's like I wondered? It was the start of a very long and ongoing journey of understanding my ADHD.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 17. Over the next few months and years, I tried various iterations and does of methylphenidate, but ultimately at the time, I was very much still struggling with anxiety & so the decision was made to move me to atomoxetine. It works differently, similar to an antidepressant.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 18. It helped. Although it actually wasn't great with my core ADHD symptoms, it managed my emotions sufficiently that I could better manage my ADHD symptoms & there i stayed for several years.
I'd wanted to try something else, but in the UK, there were few alternatives.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 19 And I really wanted to wait for a reasonably stress free time in my life to make the change. I wanted a clear baseline.
Ultimately, I found that my ADHD symptoms were really affecting my abilities and performance at work and after several years I decided now was the time.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 20. So I called my ADHD service & asked. I'd mentioned it many times before.
"It's time." I told them.
They called me to counsel me. Reminded me of my treasured stability, & that this would be a leap into the dark. But I'd waited, I'd thought this through & I was determined

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 21 They arranged to see me, appointments are very limited in the pandemic and I started decreasing my atomoxetine dosage right away.
Coming off atomoxetine was difficult.
As the dosage dropped, slowly over 8 weeks or so, my symptoms and my unregulated emotions returned

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 22 I think it was the third week that the panic attacks started and the fourth that I had to go off sick from work, because I just couldn't function. I'd been without the worst of these symptoms for 8 years and here they were, worse than ever and controlling my life once again

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 23 I was very lucky though. My work have been completely supportive & my wonderful friends, old & new have given me the love and support I needed to keep going and to remember to eat!
I couldn't have had better support if they were there in the room holding my hand every step.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 24 so clear of my old meds, blood tests and medical checks clear, I started on Elvanse a few weeks ago.
They are another stimulant medication and work right away. I took my first pill and it made me kind of drowsy, but that was OK. I was sure it would pass and it did.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 25 The first day was amazing. When the drowsiness passed, I was able to set up a list of tasks for the day and complete them easily. I felt that welcome calm again and without the dulling that came from atomoxetine.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 26 It's been a few weeks now and the initial side effects have passed. I take my meds at 5am, go back to sleep for an hour and then start my day. I couldn't shut off easily to sleep at first, but that passed and I'm getting into a good sleep pattern.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 27 With the help of the most wonderful friend, I've built up the structure in my life and its honestly just miraculous the difference this medication is making.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 28 I have done a lot of personal work on myself since my diagnosis. I meditate daily (or try to), I practice mindfulness, have increased my activity levels, doing daily yoga and regular running and all of these things have helped me in managing my mental health & work in tangent

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 29 With my medication and I think that is why I'm finding stimulants more effective this time.
My world and my future look so much brighter now and full of hope and possibilities.

To anyone who stuck around this long, thank you for reading.
I hope it helps someone else.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 30 I also just want to take the time to say how this couldn't have happened without a supportive employer who cares enough to invest in their employees' long term wellbeing.

@salty3y3s @matthaig1 I personally also couldn't have gotten through this without the support of some really wonderful friends who have been there for me in every way I could have needed.
Some beyond what I could have ever asked or imagined. I am so blessed to have you in my life.