The Truth is…people with A.D.D. can be very successful when they have learned how to "harness their energy" and are doing something in which they are interested.

I have A.D.D. and I don't think I am a failure. In fact, so many people with A.D.D. have been successful that Thom Hartmann has written a couple of books Attention Deficit Disorder: A Different Perception (1993) which describes the benefits of A.D.D. and another called Success Stories (1995), which tells true stories about people with A.D.D. who have experienced success.

However, having A.D.D. CAN make life a little challenging – both for the person who has it and the people who are trying to parent or live with them!!! It is important for the ADDer to understand how s/he learns and works best. Many adults with A.D.D. have become very successful entrepreneurs – when they have learned how to "harness their energy". They can have boundless enthusiasm and can show a great deal of creativity in their areas of interest.

Hartmann (1993) proposed that people with A.D.D. have many talents, but often feel like "hunters" who are caught in a "farmer-like" environment. These concepts are illustrated by the cartoons of the "hunter" and the "farmer" on the next two pages.

If you are a hunter in a "hunter situation" which requires lots of energy and the ability to think and act quickly in response to a number of different demands, that's great. If someone you know is like a farmer in a "farmer situation" that requires a focussed, single-minded step-by-step approach, then they are fortunate, too. But if you are an ADDer who feels like a hunter and you find yourself in a situation with farmer-like demands, you may be feeling quite frustrated!

My hope is that we can become aware of the qualities that are needed in different kinds of environments and learn to match people's natural abilities with work and school environments which allow them to develop to their full potential!

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Figure 1.0 - The "Successful" Hunter

This hunter was successful because of his ability to notice things like the rabbit hiding in it's burrow and the bird flying overhead. Should those behaviors be considered ***distractible or observant*****?** What if the hunter was not a quick-decision-maker and took several minutes to make the decision to shoot the bird? The bird would have been gone! Shall we call that ***impulsive or quick-decision-making*****?** Finally, when the hunter runs home to feed his family, is that being ***hyperactive*** or simply a sign of being ***energetic***? These qualities of being observant, making quick decisions and having lots of energy contributed to the success of this hunter in this environment.

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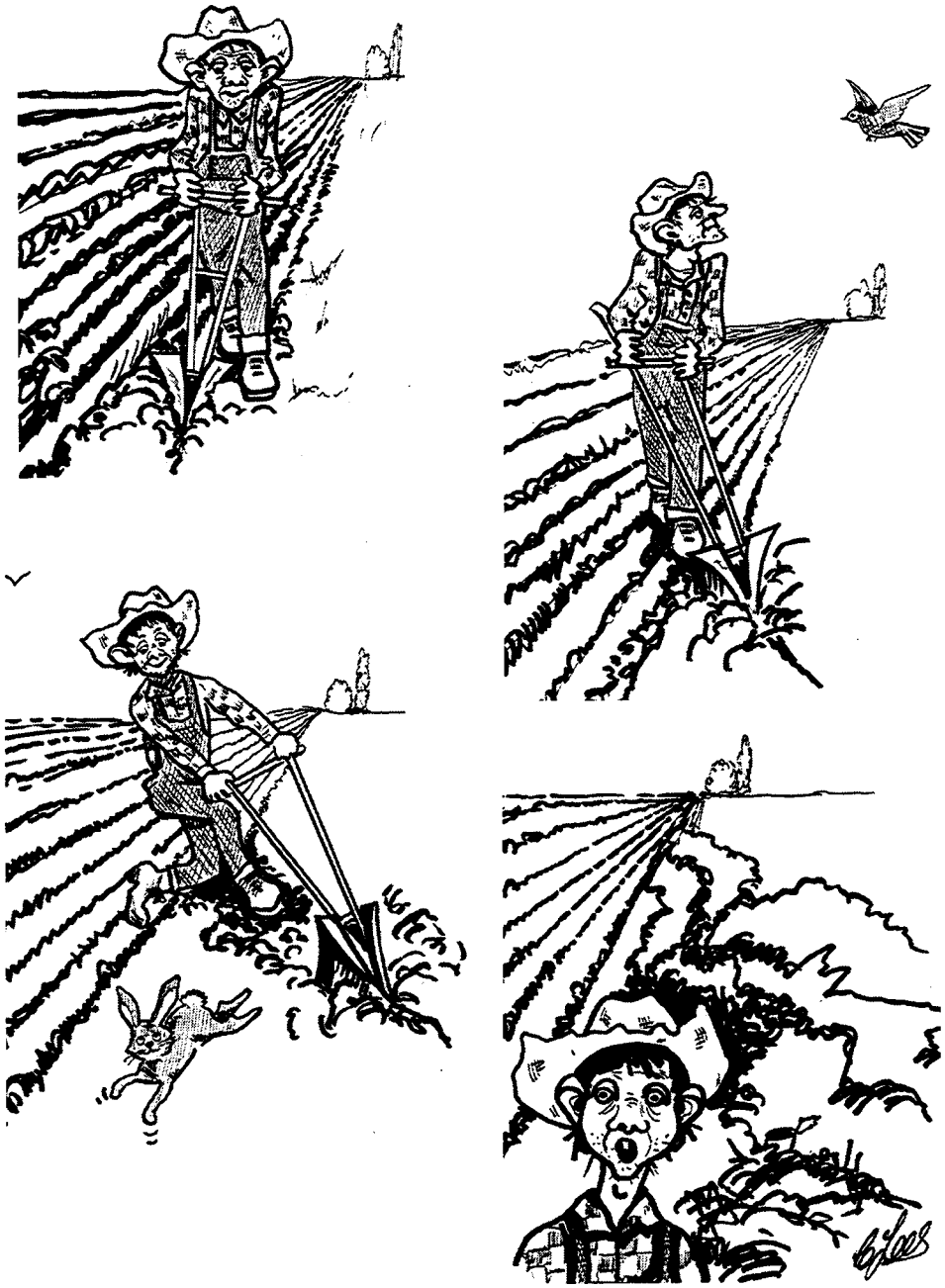
Figure 2.0 The "Not-So-Successful" Farmer



Do you notice how the farmer starts off very well, but then gets ***"distracted"***. His plow gets off track when he notices the bird and then he ends up playing with the rabbit and forgetting about what he was supposed to doing! The result is a plowing job that is ***messy and incomplete***. Isn't that how it feels to many of us, when we find ourselves in environments that don't make the best use of our uniqueness?

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