

The Aspie Code

by James A. Marusek

I. INTRODUCTION

An Aspie is a person with Asperger's Syndrome (AS), which almost fits the same description as a High Functioning Autistic (HFA). A textbook description of this condition might read:

Asperger's Syndrome is a form of autism, which is a lifelong disability that affects how a person makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to other people. Autism is often described as a 'spectrum disorder' because the condition affects people in many different ways and to varying degrees. AS affects between 0.03 to 4.84 in every 1,000 people. It affects males around four times as often as females.

The first thing I would do is to draw a line through the word ~~disability~~. I do not see it as a disability. I do not know what word to put in its place, but disability is not one of them. I would compare an Aspie with a two-sided coin. An Aspie is a blessing and a curse. The individual has two sides. On one side of the coin is the great exceptionalism displayed by these individuals. They have within them the capacity to make great advances to civilization and are sometimes respectively referred to by the word "genius". On the other side of the coin is an individual that finds it very difficult to conform to normal. They are in a way two separate people – a **normal** person and a **different normal** person wrapped into the same body. You do **not** want to trade one of these persons for the other by destroying that particular aspect of this individual, but rather develop the best qualities of both.

I visualize myself in a small auditorium filled with parents whose kids have Asperger's Syndrome desperately looking for answers, for a way to help their gifted child.

I would begin the lecture by saying "It is thought that many of the great advances in science, literature, music, and the arts were produced by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome. This probably goes back to the beginning of civilization with the invention of making fire."

Now I need to ask an important question: "**How many of you would like your child to grow up to become a genius, someone like the next Einstein?**"

I raise my hand up and then several parents follow suit and raise their hands.

"Good, (and then after a short pause) but that was a trick question."

In 1955, Einstein passed away. A decade later in his memorial lecture delivered on 13 December 1965, at UNESCO headquarters, nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer summarized his impression of Einstein as a person: "He was almost wholly without sophistication and wholly without worldliness ... There was always with him a *wonderful purity at once childlike and profoundly stubborn.*"

When Einstein's marriage began to break down he presented his wife with the following contract that detailed what he expected of her if the relationship was to continue:

CONDITIONS:

1. You will make sure
 - that my clothes and laundry are kept in good order;
 - that I will receive my three meals regularly in my room;
 - that my bedroom and study are kept neat, and especially that my desk is left for my use only.
2. You will renounce all personal relations with me insofar as they are not completely necessary for social reasons. Specifically, you will forego
 - my sitting at home with you;
 - my going out or traveling with you.
3. You will obey the following points in your relations with me:
 - you will not expect any intimacy from me, nor will you reproach me in any way;
 - you will stop talking to me if I request it;
 - you will leave my bedroom or study immediately without protest if I request it.
4. You will undertake not to belittle me in front of our children, either through words or behavior.

Einstein's son Eduard struggled with mental illness and attempted suicide, eventually dying in a psychiatric hospital. Einstein had not visited Eduard for more than thirty years prior to his son's death. His other son, Hans Albert, is quoted as saying, "Probably the only project he ever gave up on was **me**."

Let me repeat the question: **"How many of you would like your child to grow up to become a genius, someone like the next Einstein?"**

I look around the auditorium and observe a few parents still raise their hands up. And (after a pause), I raise my hand. "Good (looking at my hand), that is the correct answer."

When I was a child, I use to enjoy reading comic books and one of my favorites was Superman. A *normal* [neurotypical] child lives only one life. But a *different normal* [Aspie or High Functioning Autistic] lives two lives. Think of Superman. During the day he works as Clark Kent, a *normal* newspaper crime reporter for the Daily Planet. But in his other life he is Superman who is almost indestructible and uses his powers to stop devious plots and catch villains. He lives two lives. To be truly successful, an Aspie must succeed in both lives; his **normal** life and his **different normal** life. He must not sacrifice one life for the other but excel at both.

This doesn't mean that an Aspie has a split personality. They just have two sides like a coin, their **different normal** side, with their exceptional abilities (Superman), and the other **normal** side that they mask as (Clark Kent). Superman needs to be able to hide his real true identity and blend into society.



This is a dog.
It is **not** a defective cat.
It is very happy being a dog.
It is loyal and intelligent.
Just don't abuse him or try to change him into a cat.



This is my dog again
when he is disguised as a cat.
He is a very remarkable dog.
At times his disguise is so good
that the other cats do not even realize
they are really playing with my dog.

II. ASPERGER'S SYNDROME ANALYSIS

A couple months ago, I came across the term Asperger's Syndrome. As a result, I quickly read many different articles on the Aspie traits and realized I was an Aspie. I was not professionally diagnosed as someone with Asperger's Syndrome. But if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck. I took an on-line test and scored 38 out of a possible 50 on the Autism Spectrum Quotient self test. [Scores in the 33-50 ranges indicate significant Autistic traits (Autism).]

The following list provides my characteristics that match those commonly associated with Asperger's Syndrome.

Exhibited Traits

- * shy and introvert
- * feel isolated through most of their childhood and into adulthood.
- * avoidance of social contact or events, and may experience heightened anxiety in social situations
- * seek out time alone when overloaded by other people (need to decompress after stress)
- * despite a desire for friends, difficulty in initiating or maintaining close relationships
- * perceived to be cold-hearted and self-centered, unfriendly
- * socially awkward (inability to socialize) (severe impairment in reciprocal social interaction)
- * difficulty with nonverbal communication (hand gestures, facial expression, body language, eye-to-eye gaze)
- * does not understand conventional social rules (have problems with following social conventions such as respecting another person's physical space, speaking loudly in quiet places)
- * does not understand the use of gestures or sarcasm (may not understand the subtleties of language, such as irony and humor)
- * shows a lack of empathy (difficulty understanding others' feelings, difficulty communicating feelings)
- * unaware of others' thoughts, feelings, desires, intentions or perceptions resulting in inadvertently appearing rude or inconsiderate
- * may not understand the give-and-take nature of a conversation (they do not engage family members in true two-way conversation. Instead, there is limited or awkward turn-taking, and the natural "give and take" in the conversation is missing.)
- * dislikes group conversations but effective in communicating in simple one-on-one conversations
- * struggles to make eye contact
- * seems unengaged in a conversation (seeming aloof, arrogant and uninterested)
- * being "in their own world"
- * formal style of speaking; often called "little professor," verbose
- * tendency to discuss self rather than others (one-sided conversations)
- * average to superior intelligence, brilliant
- * may be exceptionally skilled in math, computer science, and music.
- * proficient in knowledge categories of information (highly-focused interests)
- * a remarkable ability for intense focus is a common trait, becoming an expert in a single object or topic to the exclusion of all others
- * the capacity to persevere in specific interests without being swayed by others' opinions

- * activities usually involve collecting, numbering, or listing (often likes to collect categories of things)
- * obsessed with order (an innate need to make order out of apparent chaos)
- * frequently a target for bullying and teasing
- * extremely hard-headed
- * tenacity
- * impulsive
- * the ability to work independently
- * strong self discipline
- * the recognition of patterns that may be missed by others,
- * an original way of thinking. (outside the box) [or even better yet – What Box!]
- * have rigid routines, may prefer sameness and have difficulties with transitions or changes
- * repetitive behavior, such as repetitive eating habits, listening to the same song over and over again.
- * likes to wear the same clothes for days/weeks
- * inability to deceive or to understand deception
- * righteousness, deeply compassionate and easily outraged by injustices (renowned for being honest, having a strong sense of social justice and keeping to the rules. They strongly believe in moral and ethical principles)
- * trustworthy (my word is my bond)
- * open book (when comfortable completely open and honest), blunt and direct
- * fearless and risk taker - "seem to have no sense of guilt or of danger"
- * face blind (prosopagnosia)
- * prefers hands-on learning experiences
- * double check to make sure the door is locked and the lights are turned off.
- * child-like imagination
- * limitless curiosity
- * inattentive to grooming and personal hygiene, awkward appearance
- * strong dislike of being interrupted when talking (It short-circuits the train of thought)
- * remembers very early childhood events.
- * perfectionist
- * difficulty accepting mistakes
- * difficulty making friends
- * difficulty taking advice
- * difficulty managing anger
- * pattern of black and white thinking
- * as a young child - bossy; a little older - tattletale
- * calm in a crisis
- * dislikes multitasking
- * when young, exhibited self-stimulatory behavior: stimming (thumb-sucking)

Aspies not only exhibit negative traits but also some very good ones. Table 1 lists some of the **positive traits** that are characteristic of adults with Aspergers. They perfectly match my traits.

When talking about yourself – always put your best foot forward. The reason why I identified this as a table was because if you ever decide to share the fact that you are an Aspie with someone else – always start the discussion with Table 1.

Table 1. Positive Aspie Traits

- * They are usually loyal and dependable. Competing to get ahead is less important than solving problems and meeting challenges. Conscientiousness, faithfulness and devotion to duty matter more than ambition, especially if that ambition would cause others to suffer.
- * Adults with Aspergers pursue ideas they believe in without being deterred by what others say. They are not easily swayed by others' opinions, nor do they give up because someone tries to convince them otherwise.
- * They are good at recognizing patterns and in classifying things. They are comfortable with order, precision and categorization, which make them successful in following rules, allocating resources and solving problems.
- * They tend to be sincere, positive and genuine, which make them loyal and dependable friends.
- * Speaking their minds regardless of the social context is true of many adults with Aspergers. They are much more interested in someone's skills and expertise than whether that person is viewed favorably by others.
- * Adults with Aspergers are especially good at noting and recalling details. They are helpful at work that requires knowledge of facts, details, and memory. They are often exceptional at the recall of details forgotten or disregarded by others. They have a passion for gathering and cataloging information on a topic of interest.
- * An acute sensitivity to specific sensory experiences and stimuli, including touch, vision, and smell is common and having such unusual sensory experiences gives them a different perspective on the world.
- * Adults with Aspergers tend to be trusting of others, even charmingly naïve. They are compassionate and caring, and many maintain the belief in the possibility of positive relationships.
- * They are often direct, speak their mind and are honest. Many have a strong sense of social justice.
- * Because they don't mind being alone, they are often willing to engage in solitary work that others avoid, which puts them in the position of making tremendous contributions at work and school.
- * They are able to comprehend multiple levels of meanings of words and ideas and can form connections that others miss.
- * They are persistent, and when they set their minds to something or make a promise they can usually be trusted to follow through.
- * A relationship with someone who has Aspergers tends to be free from bias and discrimination based on race, gender, age or other differences. They judge people based on their behavior not the color of their skin, socioeconomic status or political influence.
- * They are not inclined to be bullies, con artists or social manipulators.
- * "Most of the major advances in science and the arts have been made by people with Asperger's"

III. ANALYSIS OF ANOMALIES

Quest for Understanding Anomalies

When I was a kid, I developed a quirky type of mathematics called Pattern Mathematics. I could never figure out any practical application for this type of mathematics unless maybe man begins to travel at relativistic (near light speed). Decades later I developed an analytical tool, which I called Delta Analysis. This tool allowed me to statistically analyze aging degradation in components that were from non-homogeneous populations. It was very useful.

At work, when I analyze data for trends, I utilize different type of statistical analysis tools. Often times some of the data was corrupted or were considered outliers or anomalies. Most analysts would identify and remove this data from the analysis and throw it away. The reason why is because the anomalies often are so extreme, they would warp and skew the statistical analysis to such a degree that the final analysis would be useless. But that was never my approach. I would separate out the outliers and spend almost as much time studying the anomalies as I did with the normal data. I would analyze the normal data using one set of statistical analysis tools. But then I took the anomalies and applied a different set of tools in order to determine why they were so different. And it always paid off. One cannot truly learn about anything unless they understand why the anomalies are different – what make them tick!

So I began by collecting my anomalous traits. These are:

Non –Exhibited Traits

- A. May have motor-skill delays and appear clumsy or awkward.
- B. Lack of imagination.
- C. Lack of humor.
- D. Immature or unusual grasp for handwriting and other fine hand movements.
- E. Overly sensitive to touch, sounds, tastes, smells, and sights.
- F. Lack of common sense.
- G. Terrible sense of direction.
- H. Pessimism.
- I. Speak in a pedantic way often with a monotone voice.
- J. Have gastrointestinal problems.

A. Clumsy and Awkward

I do not completely identify with this trait. Therefore this is an anomaly that needs further analysis.

When I took gymnastics in my first year of high school, I was almost top of my class. In my 30's, I thought nothing of walking across a downed tree to reach the other side of a swollen raging river during a flood. I have exceptional balance even today at age 70. When I took wrestling in my first year of high school, I did very well in my weight class. In college, I took fencing and was near the top of my class in that endeavor. I found all these (gymnastics, wrestling, and fencing) to be fairly enjoyable.

When I was very young, sometimes my classmates would trip me, especially if I was carrying something like a lunch tray in the cafeteria. I would lose my balance and fall to the ground and the contents of what I was carrying would scatter on the floor and create a big mess. Other students would gather round to see what happened and begin to laugh. Someone would call me a klutz. At a young age, I didn't even mind that they laughed. So I might act goofy later just to make them laugh at my expense, because I liked inclusion into my peer group. This was similar to the motivation in becoming a class clown.

But there was a sinister dark side that I didn't fully comprehend at the time. It was really the first stage of the bullying process. It provided historical and confirmational evidence that I was clumsy and accident prone. Thus if at some later point in time, I was physically attacked by a bully and the bully was brought to authorities (teacher, principal's office). All the bully had to say was that the black eye, or the broken nose was really my fault. It was due to my clumsiness. That I had ran into a doorknob or slipped and fell down a flight of stairs and then he would deny ever laying a finger on me. Nine times out of ten, he would then be off the hook.

I might not have even recognized this dark sinister side except I had seen it played out in films so many times since.

So as far as accepting this trait blindly, it might be good to step back and figure out how much of this trait is real and how much of it is peer group driven and the direct result of abuse. Try not to jump to conclusions too quickly with this multifaceted trait.

From my perspective, there may be a thread of truth in describing the trait as a lack of motor coordination. For the life of me, I cannot dance. I am always out of sync. When someone is moving in one direction, I am a few seconds behind moving in the exact opposite direction. I have a problem mirroring the postures, gestures, or movements of others.

When I was young, perhaps around the age of 8, I tried out for Little League baseball. But I wasn't very good at it. Eventually when I took a fast ball directly to the eye, I had enough and twisted my father's arm into letting me drop out. [Perhaps this black eye was intentional - The other kids might have perceived that I was not an asset to their team and this was one approach to thinning out the herd.] I think dropping out of Little League really hurt my dad because he wanted to see his son play ball. It seemed like one of his great passions that he wanted to pass onto his son.

B. Lack of Imagination

This Aspie characteristic does not strike true. I have a very vivid sense of imagination. I operate on 5 or 6 planes at once and seamlessly move between them. The best that I can make out is that they are referring to social imagination, such as trying to figure out what someone is feeling or thinking. If that is what they are describing, then I fit that particular definition.

C. Lack of Humor

I have developed a quirky sense of humor. My family complains that I lack humor but that is simply untrue. The main reason is that humor is very dangerous. Humor can be weaponized. Let me give you an example.

One day when I was in the hallway of my 6th grade school, I was surrounded by a group of boys. They asked me what my nationality was. I sensed danger and said nothing. They looked at me. I was small and had large ears. They decided I was Japanese. I said nothing.

For the next three years, I was told every Japanese joke ever invented. Whenever they threw a joke my way, I maintained a stone cold face. That was a little hard to do sometimes because I wasn't Japanese and a few of the jokes were actually a little funny. But if I showed any emotion, the jig was up.

To this day, if they are still alive, I wonder if they remember the little Japanese boy that went to their school. And I am still chuckling deep inside. That is my quirky sense of humor.

Now if I were Japanese, every one of their jokes would have been a dagger to the heart. And it also made me somewhat immune to any other criticisms they leveled in my direction. If they called me stupid, an idiot, a klutz, an imbecile; I knew deep inside I really wasn't because I was pulling the wool right over their eyes and they didn't even realize it. This almost made me bulletproof from psychological abuse.

Why does an Aspie hide facial expressions or withdraw into spells of silence? This is an Aspie's invisible shield. It is built in and it is a gift. It protects them from psychological abuse. So I essentially learned how to use an internal survival skill.

D. Poor Handwriting

I have good handwriting and typing skills. So this characteristic does not ring true. But perhaps I have learned to correct any deficiencies in this area. In the military, I learned the military style of handwriting using all capital letters because it is the cleanest and clearest. This style goes back to the days of early teletypes machines, which had a limited numbers of characters and as a result did not use lowercase letters. I rarely use cursive except for writing my name and I write either in All Upper Case, Normal Lower Case or sometimes Upper Case with the first letter of each word slightly larger than the rest. Generally I receive compliments on my handwriting.

When I was in school I took a course in typing. It turned out to be one of the most useful classes I took in high school. This is because an Aspie's weakness is verbal communications and their great strength is written communications. I consider typing to be a quintessential task and almost a mandatory class for an Aspie. I think I can still type at around 60 words per minute. In today's world, this type of course might be referred to as keyboarding. I find many of the modern keyboards to be unworkable because they often produced double strikes or no strikes. So I bought a special keyboard called a Das Keyboard Model S Professional for my Mac computer because it gives an audible click every time a key is depressed, similar to a typewriter. This keyboard provides outstanding tactile and audible feedback.

E. Overly Sensitive to Senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch)

I do not relate to this trait. I have a type of enhanced tactile sensitivity. It is not that I hate touch or tactile experience, but rather the opposite. I love to touch everything. I love the feel of things; everything from engine oil to mud. When I shop for clothes, I touch each fabric. I like the way some fabrics' feels, the stiffness or the flow of fabrics, the texture of a fabric. I have heightened touch and tactile sensitivity but it is not painful but quite the opposite, it is quite pleasurable. When I was in First Grade, one of my favorite lessons was finger painting. [When I was a young adult and worked in the post office sorting trays of mail. I could instinctively tell if a letter was a small fraction over one ounce and required extra postage. I would just pick the letter up and would know. I would check it with a postal scale and I was rarely ever wrong. My wife and my daughter said **NO!** that is a learned skill.] I guess I have one other peculiarity – I love to walk around the inside of my house barefoot – no shoes, no stockings, no sandals, no slippers, just barefoot. It drives my wife crazy, but it feels good. After all, a man's home is his castle. And also when a small object falls on the floor, I tend to pick it up with my feet like an orangutan rather than bending down and picking it up by hand. That also drives my wife nuts. It is probably undignified for a 70-year old man to do that but it feels good.

Tony Attwood said that an email from Carolyn read, “With fluorescent lights it's not only the glare that gets me, it's the flicker as well. It produces 'shadows' in my vision (which were very scary when I was young) and long exposure can lead to confusion and dizziness often resulting in migraine.” In my case, long exposure to fluorescent lighting caused me to have migraines but exposure to incandescent lighting, natural lighting or LED lighting do not. A migraine episode would begin with seeing stars around my peripheral vision. Over the next half hour, these sparkling stars would work their way towards the center of my vision, after which my eyesight was obscured by fields of flickering stars and I was effectively blind and then a severe headache would soon follow. This is a specific type of migraine called an ocular migraine. So perhaps the attribute that some Aspies report of not seeing something right before their eyes may in reality be describing the prelude to an ocular migraine headache attack. For me walking out into natural lighting at the start of an episode would minimize the intensity of the migraine headache.

Many individuals in the Autistic Spectrum appear to experience visual processing problems. Scotopic sensitivity syndrome, also known as Irlen Syndrome, is said to be a visual-perceptual defect related to difficulties with light source, glare, luminance, wavelength and black/white contrast. As a result, some autistics have turned to wearing special filter glasses or contact lenses the filter out specific light frequencies. Maybe the reason why light sensitivity does not affect me to a great degree is because my brain is wired a little differently than other Autistics. I have another physical anomaly that might cancel out this sensitivity. I have a severe form of color blindness, protanomaly, a type of red-green color blindness where the red cones in the eye do not detect enough red light, but instead respond more to green light.

When I was young, I was a thumb sucker. This is a type of stimming. I think stimming provides comfort and is a way of relieving stress. My mom was constantly scolding me to stop this habit before I started school. So I must have been 5 or 6 when I stopped. She bought me a Davey Crockett western jacket with fringes. So I stopped thumb sucking and transitioned into chewing and sucking on the leather fringes of the jacket. After a couple years, I ate off all the fringes, mom threw the jacket away and I transitioned into biting my fingernails.

I love peace and quiet. That is why I built our home in a small forest. Some loud sounds can interfere with my thought process. But other than that, I do not feel I am overly sensitive to senses.

F. Lack of Common Sense

I feel that I have real good common sense but the problem I display is with logic dilemmas. So let me give a short story to explain the difference.

Let me tell you a fictitious story about a boy named Johnny and his dad Max. Johnny loved his dad and Max loved his Aspie son. Johnny was in third grade and his dad took him along to the parent-teacher conference at his school. When Max entered the classroom, his teacher pulled Max aside and informed him that she would like to speak with Max alone. So Max knelt down and said to Johnny “Look into my eyes, I want you to stay here, its really important. I will come back and get you when I am done.” Max then left the room and followed the teacher down the hallway. The fire alarm suddenly tripped off. Johnny didn’t know what to do. His dad loved him and told him to wait there. It was an order because he made a point of looking him straight in the eyes. But then the hallway began to fill with smoke. Johnny thought my dad will come for me, but he starts to consider other possibilities, thousands of options. But none of them contained an option for leaving the room. Meanwhile Max evacuated the building along with hundreds of other students, teachers and parents. Max furiously look through the crowd trying to find his small son believing that he left the building. Now Johnny has a major dilemma. He now saw flames of fire and knew he will die but his dad told him to stay put and his dad loves him and would never hurt him. The entire school is now engulfed in flames and there is no way for Max to return to the classroom and rescue his son. Johnny tries as hard as he could to figure a way out of this dilemma. The wheels in his mind are whirling around faster and faster until they become a blur. Johnny finally selects a solution that came the closest to solving the dilemma. Before he dies, he springs into action.

Fire trucks show up on the scene and it is a world of chaos as firemen go to work extinguishing the blaze. Max is in the middle of this chaos frantically searching for his son. Hours later the body of a dead boy is pulled from the rubble of the burnt out structure clutching something. Some kids passing by make fun of Johnny saying he sure was “one dumb kid”. He had “no common sense”. When they finally pulled the object he was clutching as he died, they discovered it was the remains of a fire extinguisher.

The main point is that it is really important to teach an Aspie child the “exceptions to the rule”. And there always are exceptions to the rule. Conflicts of this type create a major impasse in the logic stream.

G. Terrible Sense of Direction

One of the traits listed as typical of Aspies is “a terrible sense of direction”. But that trait does not describe me **at all**; rather it is quite the opposite. So it appears on the surface to be “an exception to the rule”. So it needs further analysis.

Hansel and Gretel is a well-known fairy tale. They are children of a poor woodcutter. When a great famine settles over the land, the woodcutter's wife decides that the children should be taken deep into the woods and left to fend for themselves. But Hansel overheard the plot and gathers a pocket full of white pebbles to protect himself and his sister. The next day when the woodcutter led the children deep into the woods, Hansel individually drops those pebbles one at a time along the way to mark a path, which allows the two children to find their way back home. The woodcutter's wife is furious and the next day the children are again taken into the deep woods and abandoned. This time Hansel leaves a trail of breadcrumbs but the birds eat the crumbs and Hansel and Gretel are totally and utterly lost.

The world can be a very scary place if you get lost and cannot find your way back home. In my case, I generally employ redundant navigations tools and I rarely get lost and even if I get lost I can always find my way home. I feel why some Aspies have a terrible sense of direction has more to do with a lack of proper training than to any deficit on their part. I suspect that they are even more capable than normal children to finding their way home.

I learned my first navigations skill by myself at an early age around 5 or 6 years old. I would often go into dense dark forest alone and wander around for hours and hours exploring. A dense forest is a magical place. The tall trees provide a canopy of leaves that filter out the sunlight so it is dark and cool even on the hottest day. The lack of sunlight keeps the weeds at bay. It is a silent place with just forest sounds. It was a grand adventure. And then when I wanted to go home, I could easily find my way back. I made a few simple observations. Our home was located in a valley between two mountains. The mountains were covered with trees. There was a main road that went down the center of the valley. So if I ever wanted to return home, I generally followed a stream downhill. I would find a path home or make my way to the main road and follow it home. It didn't take a degree in rocket science or even map reading skills. It was a built in feature.

Then later I discovered something called maps that charted the great unknown. I quickly learned how to use this fabulous tool. This life skill gave me great freedom. With an up-to-date detailed street map, I can navigate anywhere within the area of the map. This is the second navigation tool that I employ. Map reading is a quintessential life skill that should be taught. Just like performing addition/subtraction/multiplication/division is taught to a child before they are allowed to touch a calculator at school; every child should be taught map reading before they can touch a GPS system. Map reading is a critical essential life skill for an Aspie.

The third navigation tool that I use is mirror reversal. If I go anywhere, generally I can always return to my starting point if I travel in the reverse direction. It is similar to the Hansel and Gretel story except I do not need pebbles or breadcrumbs. It is built-in feature whether I am driving on a road or walking through the deep forest. But to use this tool, I must travel the exact same route, no deviations, or side trips back to the starting point.

The fourth navigation tool that I use doesn't really have a name; maybe I would call it being street smart. It generally is self-taught and requires basic algebra and a few self taught tricks. Since it probably cannot be found in books or on the Internet, I will describe it. In my late teens, I moved to Los Angeles, California. The metropolitan area of Los Angeles stretches from the Pacific Ocean at Santa Monica on the west side to San Bernardino on the east side, a distance of

approximately 80 miles. It stretches from the San Fernando Valley on the north side to Mission Viejo on the south side, a distance of around 80 miles. It is a gigantic maze of continuous houses tied together by hundreds of thousands of streets. Yet I found it easy to navigate using the following rules.

1. I memorized the freeway system. This included not only the name of the freeway (such as the Santa Monica freeway) but also its designator (Interstate 10 or I-10). Committing the freeway system to memory allows me to find my way home from anywhere in metropolitan area of Los Angeles without a map. If I ever got lost, I would just travel in a straight line and after a few minutes I would run into one of many freeways and then I could easily figure my way home.
2. Streets within cities are generally laid out like X/Y graphs with a main horizontal and vertical axis. The center of town is like the point of origin (0, 0). If the street that travels north/south along the vertical axis were called Main street, then one city block North would have a street address like 100 North Main street. One city block south of the vertical axis would be 100 South Main street. If the street along the horizontal axis were called Walnut street, then two city blocks west on Walnut street would be 200 West Walnut street. The further you drive from the origin (city center), the further you move up or down the axis and the larger the street address numbers become.

- Exception to the rule. Streets are only approximately north and south or east and west rather than true north/south or true east/west. Sometimes streets will meander about. In X/Y graphs, normally the grids are perfect squares. But in cities, the city blocks tend to be a long rectangle.

3. The street addresses use even numbers on one side of the road and use odd numbers on the other. As a result, find one house or building along the way with a street address number on your destination road, and this will tell you which side of the road your destination is on; the right or left side.
4. Just like the numbering system on an X/Y graph; if you find the 2600 block of West Magnolia street and the next street to the north is Daisy street, then generally one street to the north is the 2600 block of West Daisy street.

The fifth navigation tool is landmarks. When I moved out into the countryside, I was forced to utilize a different navigation system. This is because generally in the countryside, the streets do not have street signs, there are no maps and there were not even street addresses. In the country we used Rural Routes and Box numbers in place of street addresses. The routes were the routes that a particular postman took in delivering mail and the box numbers represented the various stops along his route. It was only recently when our county adopted 911 emergency calling that the county upgraded to street mapping systems in the countryside. So how do you navigate without maps, street signs and street addresses. It is basically by landmarks. So I would ask an old timer where my desired destination was located. He would say, “go to Blue Barn Hill and make a right, go two miles, make a left, go three blocks cross a bridge and then turn right and it’s the second driveway on your left. The main problem with this navigation system was that Blue Barn Hill was named after the blue barn at the bottom of a hill. But the blue barn burned down 20 years ago, and the old timer failed to mention that fact.

But after living in the country for many years, I got the knack for remembering subtle landmarks along the way. And I will use them to guide me. If I travel the same way several times, I will commit it to memory along with its landmarks. The primary main route I store even a little more detail and information. The region where I live is filled with hills and valleys, which means there are many curves and dips on the road. So the main route home, I feel the angular

momentum as I make turns. It is like I can feel the shape of the road in three-dimensional space. I remember the sheer drop-offs along the way. And even when I am traveling in a blizzard with white out conditions and snow completely covering the road, I have some sense of the road beneath and where the danger lies. It is still dangerous, but I have a tool that can roughly guide me.

In large cities, such as London, New York and Washington D.C., I will sometimes use another navigation tool. These cities have subway systems. I commit the subway lines (such as the Yellow line, the Blue line, the Red line) to memory. So all you need to travel the city by foot is to find your way from home to the subway system, learn which line to take and which exit to leave the subway train, and then walk from the subway exit to your destination. It is a very simple approach.

Another navigation tool is the GPS receiver. I do not find this system very useful when driving. I need to be very focused on driving and not be interrupted by a machine screaming incoherent instructions to me, like “recalculating, recalculating, recalculating”. It is hard for me to fully concentrate on driving when I have a GPS unit yelling at me. But these systems are improving. My daughter bought me a new model. I told her if she bought one I needed one that wouldn’t constantly interrupt and squeal at me. She asked to select the type of voice. I said I would like the voice of a young woman with a British accent. She pushed a couple buttons and poof that is what the GPS became almost like magic. Now the only problem is that more times than not, she will tell me to go the long way around to my destination. Since I know where I am and where I need to go, I will physically yell back at the machine “You are wrong!” It drives my wife crazy when I yell at a machine but it does relieve a little stress, it’s a lot of fun to yell at a machine, and also I am almost always right. But like I said GPS systems are improving. They can tell you if there is an accident or traffic jam ahead and reroute you a better way. They can lead you to the nearest Starbucks in real time. A cup of Starbucks coffee is a great stress reliever for my wife. So GPS is another navigation tool and many people find very useful. Just not me, I prefer the old fashion way – maps!

When I drive I avoid distractions. I am singularly focused – no thoughtful conversations, no cell phones, and no distracting GPS system yelling at me; but maybe a little music.

Tony Attwood wrote that, “I have also known boys, but rarely girls, with Asperger’s syndrome who have a remarkable memory for directions and places they have been.” So am I just an exception to the rule? Or are Aspies that have a terrible sense of direction, just Aspies that need a little extra navigation life skills training?

The approach I employ to navigate is to use redundant overlapping navigation tools. I feel map reading is a critical essential life skill that all Aspies should master. It can be very stressful to become lost and Aspies need to shed stress. Everyone, like Hansel and Gretel, needs to be able to find their way home.

H. Pessimism

I am not a pessimist, but rather I am very much an optimist. After reading a few descriptions of this trait, perhaps what they are referring to is a sense of dread when starting a *new* task – I might fit that definition

I. Pedantic Speaking with Monotonic Voice

I do not currently have any speech impediments. But I am an old Aspie and had an entire lifetime to self-correct any speech impediments such as prosody speech patterns. So this general Aspie trait is not displayed. Maybe the reason why this trait is not evident is because the problem was corrected early at school. In the third grade the teacher saw a problem with the way I spoke. I thought it was due to my two large buckteeth. But anyways, I was sent to Special Class. Three days a week, special students along with myself were collected from their respective classroom and led to a secret hidden room off of the main school cafeteria. This happened while I was in the 3rd & 4th grade. The hidden room had a beautiful conference room table and very nice soft leather chairs. It was such a nice hidden room that I really didn't mind being there. Our strange assignment during the hour we were in special class was to recite tongue twisters very fast and yet very distinctly. I thought it was a strange thing to do, but who am I to dispute a teacher. I remember the two types of tongue twisters that we recited. These were:

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
then how many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?*

*Sally sells seashells by the seashore.
The shells Sally sells are surely from the sea.*

I remember that it took great concentration to recite tongue twisters accurately. And you really had to work at it in order to say them fast.

If I did have a prosody speech pattern (such as unusual aspects of pitch, stress and rhythm, the prosody of speech, problems of speech volume, monotone or flat quality, unusual stress patterns, or over-precise diction with stress on almost every syllable), then perhaps this special class was a valuable tool towards correcting those types of anomalies.

This recalls another type of special education that I received. When I was growing up, I never enjoyed reading for reading sake. I only associated reading with schoolwork. The only exception to the rule was comic books. But when I entered high school, the requirement to read efficiently became extremely important. My school must have recognized my limitation and placed me in a strange type of special class during my freshman high school year. The training was a type of reading comprehension training. The closest I could describe this was a class in Speed Reading. They would flash a paragraph or two of information for a very brief period of time and then measure my comprehension. They tried to teach me tricks on absorbing written material quickly and effectively.

Also about my first year of high school, I became hooked on reading The Hardy Boys books. I would pick a book from the series and I couldn't put it down until I finally arrived at the end of the last page. It was very enjoyable. Luke Jackson [in *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome* by Tony Attwood] described a trick he used to learn how to read proficiently. The trick was to read the material aloud. Most normal people learn to read silently whereas an Aspie learns to read by reading aloud. Attwood theorized that, "Saying what you are reading can facilitate comprehension." I believe this to be true. Many times even today when I am reading something that I really want to understand and to remember, I will either read it aloud or read it silently just moving my lips.

So perhaps these approaches, **reciting tongue twisters**, **speed reading** and **reading material aloud** might independently be included in the Aspie training toolkit.

J. Gastrointestinal Problems

This is an interesting anomaly. If it is common for Aspies to experience gastrointestinal problems, then why do I not have these symptoms? What makes me different? I have a cast iron stomach and I eat anything (definitely the opposite of a picky eater). There are three things that come to mind. These are *Helicobacter Pylori Infection*, *Vitamin/Mineral Deficiency*, and *Healthy Immune System*.

Helicobacter Pylori Infection

The first thing I did was a little research. What specifically does gastrointestinal problems mean? [The relationship between gastrointestinal problems and Asperger's (high functioning autism) is unclear, because most studies have not examined representative groups of kids with Asperger's compared with appropriate controls. Surveys published in the gastroenterology literature have stated that gastrointestinal problems (e.g., constipation, diarrhea) occur in 46% to 85% of Asperger's kids. Lower rates in the range of 17% to 24% have been reported in other population-based studies.]

Then a light bulb lit up, this problem might be related to ulcers. Five years ago I had gastric bypass surgery. One of the many problems faced by those that underwent this type of surgery was nausea and vomiting. I recalled:

*Nausea and vomiting are the most common complaints after bariatric surgery, and they are typically associated with inappropriate diet and noncompliance with a gastroplasty diet (i.e., eat undisturbed, chew meticulously, never drink with meals, and wait 2 hours before drinking after solid food is consumed). If these symptoms are associated with epigastric pain, significant dehydration, or not explained by dietary indiscretions, an alternative diagnosis must be explored. One of the most common complications causing nausea and vomiting in gastric bypass patients is anastomotic ulcers, with and without stomal stenosis. Ulceration or stenosis at the gastrojejunostomy of the gastric bypass has a reported incidence of 3% to 20%. Although no unifying explanation for the etiology of anastomotic ulcers exists, most experts agree that the pathogenesis is likely multifactorial. These ulcers are thought to be due to a combination of preserved acid secretion in the pouch, tension from the Roux limb, ischemia from the operation, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) use, and perhaps **Helicobacter pylori***

infection. *Evidence suggests that little acid is secreted in the gastric bypass pouch; however, staple line dehiscence may lead to excessive acid bathing of the anastomosis. Treatment for both marginal ulcers and stomal ulcers should include avoidance of NSAIDs, antisecretory therapy with proton-pump inhibitors, and/or sucralfate. In addition, **H pylori infection should be identified and treated, if present.***

What are the symptoms associated with Helicobacter pylori infection? A little more research provide the following list:

- * abdominal pain,
- * nausea and vomiting that may include vomiting blood,
- * **passing dark or tarry like stools,**
- * fatigue,
- * low red blood cell count (anemia),
- * decreased appetite,
- * **diarrhea,**
- * peptic ulcers,
- * heartburn, and
- * bad breath.

Some common approaches to reduce pain of stomach ulcers are:

- * Reduce or stop alcohol consumption and quit smoking.
- * Avoid use of NSAIDs,
- * Avoid caffeine.
- * **Avoid or reduce stress**

About 50 percent of the worlds population is infected with this bacteria. Most display few symptoms. So this infection lays dormant in most people but it can manifest under extreme stress. A chronic infection with H. pylori weakens the natural defenses of the stomach so most individuals with symptoms need to be treated to prevent ulceration formation.

State Hypothesis: Gastrointestinal problems observed in Aspies and also perhaps the entire spectrum of Autistics may be due to the following two elements:

1. A common pre-existing bacterial infection called Helicobacter pylori infection.
2. The infection can be triggered by extreme stress. From personal experience I know that Aspies experience periods of extreme stress, it is almost their middle name.

So one word of wisdom is – Aspies should be tested for Helicobacter pylori infection and if present then treat that bacterial infection.

Breath and stool tests are better at detecting active H. pylori infections than is a blood test. Also note that this type of infection is fairly antibiotic resistant. It may take several rounds of different antibiotic cocktails to successfully treat this infection and kill it.

Vitamin/Mineral Deficiency

Another difference between myself and other Aspies is that I was never a picky eater. I ate almost anything and developed a cast iron stomach. I love to eat with my fingers instead of a

fork. Do you know how hard is it to eat pizza with a fork and knife! One of the traits exhibited by a large percentage of Aspies is that they can be very picky eaters. And this trait can rob essential nutrients from their body and brain during their childhood development. Research points in the direction that some Aspie and Autistic traits may be the result of deficiencies in vitamins, minerals, amino acids and anti-oxidants. These deficiencies may produce gastrointestinal problems and other types of symptoms over time.

[https://live-autismaspergers-research-program.ws.asu.edu/sites/default/files/vitamin_mineral_supplements_for_children_and_adults_with_autism.pdf]

So another word of wisdom is that especially during their childhood growth spurt, picky eaters (autistics and neurotypicals alike) should receive additional vitamin/mineral supplements.

Healthy Immune System

In the Charlie Brown comics, I am the character known as “Pig-Pen”. I loved to play in the dirt, the mud, and the sandbox. “Dirt” is almost my middle name. Finger painting was my first introduction to art in school and I loved it. On the opposite end of this extreme is David Vetter, a young boy from Texas, who lived out in the real world - in a plastic bubble and as a result was nicknamed "Bubble Boy". David was born in 1971 with severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), and was forced to live in a specially constructed sterile plastic bubble from birth until he died at age 12. So part of growing up in my early life in the country was coming in contact with all kinds of bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites and everything else out there in the real world. As a result my bodies built up a strong immune system and a cast iron stomach. But nowadays, the world is filled with antibacterial soaps, body washes, and cleaning products. And someone who is in their growth phase must be exposed to a variety of bacteria and other critters in order to construct a healthy immune system. Even today, my definition of taking a bath is a once per year event. But this is abnormal from my wife’s perspective, so every time she says “take a bath”; I listen to her words of wisdom because she is in charge in the social dimension.

One of the things I noticed about my oldest daughter is she hated being dirty. As an infant, when she was eating and spilled a little food on herself, she immediately started waving her hands up in the air so my wife would come over and immediately clean her off. She hated finger painting almost to the degree of a phobia and she just happened to conveniently contract chicken pox the week finger painting was taught in school.

We are a generation obsessed with cleanliness. Parts of the world [less industrialized nations] tend to have lower levels of autoimmune disease. This and other observations have led to the hygiene hypothesis, which posits that the ultra-clean, super-hygienic setting of the developed world may be responsible for the rise of chronic conditions such as allergies and asthma. In theory, some health conditions that involve dysregulation of the immune system, making the patient less hygienic might treat especially out-of-control inflammation.

Let me state this in another way. Within an organism, let us say the human, specifically focusing on the human gut. There is a homeostasis, a relatively stable equilibrium between independent elements, the microbiota that includes the bacteria, archaea, protist, fungi and viruses. This microbiota is crucial for immunological stability. It is the synergy of these various elements that

keep the organism viable and healthy. Depriving the body from absorbing part of this microbiota can produce within the gut an unhealthy state that can lead to gastrointestinal problems.

For example, an article in *Immunity* [Huttenhower, C., Kostic, A. D. & Xavier, R. J. Inflammatory bowel disease as a model for translating the microbiome. *Immunity* **40**, 843–854 (2014)] states inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) is associated with an altered gut microbiota composition (i.e., dysbiosis) characterized by a loss of members belonging to the Firmicutes and Bacteroidetes phyla and an expansion of Proteobacteria.

*So another word of wisdom, is try **not** to place your children in a sanitized plastic bubble and please let them get dirty once and a while when they are young and get exposed to common germs in order to build up and strengthen their natural immune systems.*

After I finished up this section on anomalies, I realized there was a type of Easter egg buried in this analysis.

Postscript: I did figure out one use for Pattern Mathematics. It was to create the largest known number. I asked three of my grandkids to come up with a name for this number. Their eyes lit up and they began debating names. The littlest one thought it was **goofy** and so that became the basis of the name and then the older ones began debating the proper ending for such a new word. They finally settled on the name “**Goofillillian**”.

So is a googleplex really the largest number? [The largest number that has a commonly-known specific name is a "googleplex", which is the **digit 1** followed by a googol number of **zeros**; where a "googol" is the **digit 1** followed by 100 **zeros**. But a larger number exist, it is called a “Goofillillion”. A Goofillillion is a “(googleplex minus 1) squared”. Written out in ordinary decimal notation, you would begin by putting down a (googol -1) number of the **digit 9’s** and then add the single **digit 8** and then add a (googol -1) number of **zero’s**, followed by the last **digit 1**. It is an exact number.

IV. THE 7-HABITS

One of the characteristics of an Aspies is that they are out-of-box thinkers. But it really goes far beyond that. A much better description is WHAT BOX! I was once required to take a course at work called The Steven Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. One of the principles taught within the class was:

Instead of reacting to or worrying about conditions over which an individual has little or no control, proactive people focus their time and energy on things they can control.

The problems, challenges, and opportunities we face fall into two areas--**Circle of Concern** and **Circle of Influence**.

Proactive people focus their efforts on their Circle of Influence. They work on the things they can do something about: health, children, and problems at work. Reactive people focus their efforts in the Circle of Concern--things over which they have little or no control: the national debt, terrorism, and the weather.

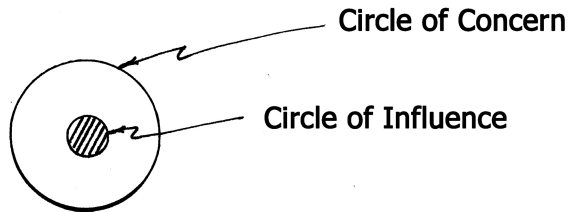
But they didn't take into account that an Aspie can have a simply huge Circle of Influence. Refer to Figure 1. A well-developed Aspie's Circle of Influence can even extend well beyond their Circle of Concern. As a result their proactive region is simply gigantic.

The example that they used during the course to describe a problem within the Circle of Concern but beyond our ability to do anything about was an asteroid impact. We have no control so it is not worth spending your time and energy on. The funny thing was that a few weeks before, I had produced an Asteroid Impact Disaster Preparedness Plan. [I presented 3 papers on the subject at the 2nd International Planetary Defense Conference held at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. on 5-8 March 2007]

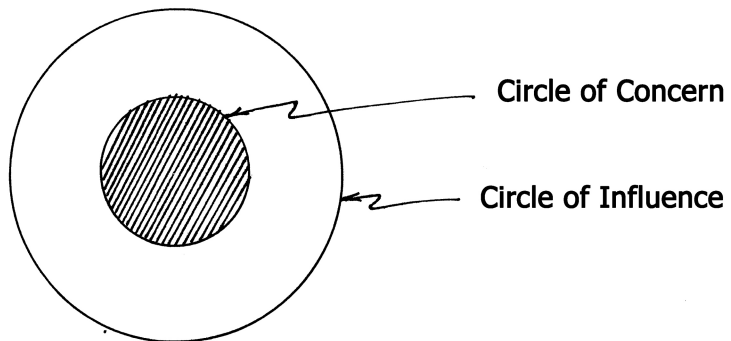
These papers were titled:

- Comet and Asteroid Threat Impact Analysis
- Comet Threat Mitigation Approaches & Challenges
- Impact Disaster Preparedness Planning

Figure 1. Proactive Region



Neurotypical Individual



Fully Developed Aspie

V. PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

When I entered into supervision and management I was exposed to tools that would optimize employee performance.



This tool was similar to a child's toy called the Shape Sorter Toy. It teaches children to sort the proper shaped object into the proper hole. Generally it is impossible to put a square peg in a round hole. In a way that is what the Myers-Briggs personality test teaches managers. You want to use the right person to perform the right tasks. This tool sorts individuals into 16 different personality types. Therefore by assigning the right individual to perform a task that the individual is well suited to perform, you create a very efficient workforce.

The Myers-Briggs personality tests sorts individual into 16 different personality types. These are determined by binary combinations of 4 letter types. These are dichotomies (a bipolar dimension where each pole represents a different preference – a dominant preference). These combinations types are Extrovert (E) vs. Introvert (I), Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N), Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F), and Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P).

The first criterion, **Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I)**, signifies the source and direction of a person's energy expression. An extravert's source and direction of energy expression is mainly in the external world, while an introvert has a source of energy mainly in their own internal world.

The second criterion, **Sensing (S) – Intuition (N)**, represents the method by which someone perceives information. Sensing means that a person mainly

believes information he or she receives directly from the external world. Intuition means that a person believes mainly information he or she receives from the internal or imaginative world.

The third criterion, **Thinking (T) – Feeling (F)**, represents how a person processes information. Thinking means that a person makes a decision mainly through logic. Feeling means that, as a rule, he or she makes a decision based on emotion, i.e. based on what they feel they should do.

The fourth criterion, **Judging (J) – Perceiving (P)**, reflects how a person implements the information he or she has processed. Judging means that a person organizes all of his life events and, as a rule, sticks to his plans. Perceiving means that he or she is inclined to improvise and explore alternative options.

All possible permutations of preferences in the 4 dichotomies above yield 16 different combinations, or personality types, representing which of the two poles in each of the four dichotomies dominates in a person, thus defining 16 different personality types. Each personality type can be assigned a 4-letter acronym of the corresponding combination of preferences.

There appears to be some evidence supporting a relationship between type INTP and Asperger's. Most individuals have multiple personality traits – a primary and a secondary. In my case, I was originally evaluated as an INTP when my work was primarily statistical analysis but as I entered supervision and management I seamlessly evolved into an INTJ, which I find much more enjoyable. I suspect that Aspies occupy both personality types. [The goal of treatment for children with Asperger's is to change the child's behaviors to match social norms. *But does this really make sense?* What do type practitioners have to say about raising children of any personality type? Unanimously authors and researchers agree that parents should support and nourish the development of a child's type-based traits rather than attempt to mold them into other types.]

Think of it in terms of Nikola Tesla (most likely an INTJ) and Albert Einstein (most likely an INTP). Tesla thought up extraordinary new technologies, but the real test was whether or not those inventions actually worked. Einstein, on the other hand, saw patterns in the outside world and mulled over them using their unique perspective and vigorous intellect. Tesla could point to the invention. Einstein had to point to the math.

Nikola Tesla was an inventor, electrical engineer, mechanical engineer, physicist and futurist who contributed to the design of the modern alternating current (A/C) electrical supply system. Every time I look around my house, I see his great legacy. Every time I flip a light switch, or pull some food from the refrigerator, or put a load of laundry in the washing machine, or watch television or even turn on my computer, I see his genius in action because all these inventions are powered by A/C electricity. He helped usher in the modern world.

To outsiders, INTJs may appear to project an aura of "definiteness", of self-confidence. This self-confidence, sometimes mistaken for simple arrogance by the less decisive, is actually of a very specific rather than a general nature; its source lies in the specialized knowledge systems that most INTJs start building at an early age. When it comes to their own areas of expertise --

and INTJs can have several -- they will be able to tell you almost immediately whether or not they can help you, and if so, how. INTJs know what they know, and perhaps still more importantly, they know what they don't know.

INTJs are perfectionists, with a seemingly endless capacity for improving upon anything that takes their interest. What prevents them from becoming chronically bogged down in this pursuit of perfection is the pragmatism so characteristic of the type: INTJs apply (often ruthlessly) the criterion "Does it work?" to everything from their own research efforts to the prevailing social norms. This in turn produces an unusual independence of mind, freeing the INTJ from the constraints of authority, convention, or sentiment for its own sake.

INTJs are known as the "Systems Builders" of the types, perhaps in part because they possess the unusual trait combination of imagination and reliability. Whatever system an INTJ happens to be working on is for them the equivalent of a moral cause; both perfectionism and disregard for authority may come into play, as INTJs can be unsparing of both themselves and the others on the project. Anyone considered to be "slacking," including superiors, will lose their respect -- and will generally be made aware of this; INTJs have also been known to take it upon themselves to implement critical decisions without consulting their supervisors or co-workers. On the other hand, they do tend to be scrupulous and even-handed about recognizing the individual contributions that have gone into a project, and have a gift for seizing opportunities, which others might not even notice.

Personal relationships, particularly romantic ones, can be the INTJ's Achilles heel. While they are capable of caring deeply for others (usually a select few), and are willing to spend a great deal of time and effort on a relationship, the knowledge and self-confidence that make them so successful in other areas can suddenly abandon or mislead them in interpersonal situations.

This happens in part because many INTJs do not readily grasp the social rituals; for instance, they tend to have little patience and less understanding of such things as small talk and flirtation (which most types consider half the fun of a relationship). To complicate matters, INTJs are usually extremely private people, and can often be naturally impassive as well, which makes them easy to misread and misunderstand. Perhaps the most fundamental problem, however, is that INTJs really want people to make sense. This sometimes results in a peculiar naïveté' in a romantic relationship, the INTJ will expect inexhaustible reasonability and directness.

Probably the strongest INTJ assets in the interpersonal area are their intuitive abilities and their willingness to "work at" a relationship. Their intuitive function can often act as a good substitute by synthesizing the probable meanings behind such things as tone of voice, turn of phrase, and facial expression. This ability can then be honed and directed by consistent, repeated efforts to understand and support those they care about, and those relationships, which ultimately do become established with an INTJ tend to be characterized by their robustness, stability, and good communications.

Myers-Briggs personality tests – INTP types make their headway in fields that rely on soundness of argumentation, proof, and cold hard logic, regardless of what apparent experts tend to think, because we see that experts are pressured by society to appeal to the latest findings of a popular source of information, to reveal a consensus. **INTP's are rare making up around 2.5 percent of the population.** INTP's focus on independent computation and, as a result, produce "radical"

theories that push scientific fields past their preexisting limitations.] [According to Albert Einstein's biography, one can infer that, as an INTP, Albert Einstein was a creative thinker, he valued knowledge highly, and he was driven by theories and ideas.]

INTJs are one of the rarest personality types, accounting for approximately 1.5 percent of the population. Some INTJs describe themselves in the following way “We choose to be ourselves and not care what others think. Intellectually being an INTJ is fun as hell! When presented with relevant, challenging, and coherent problems/books/ideas then we go crazy theorizing! In some ways the INTJ is a mixture between a seasoned professor and a observant fun-loving child.” “our logic is almost never wrong” “If suddenly something captures our attention, we just have to know each and everything about it.” “We are self confident individuals who know our strengths and weaknesses.” “Ideas are our forte. We identify with our ideas.” “INTJs can usually be quite good at accepting constructive criticism, if the INTJ respects the person giving the criticism.” “Things like authority, rank, and seniority mean little to most INTJs. For better or for worse, if I think someone is wrong, I will say so, whether they be a colleague, a teacher, or the CEO of the company. What matters most to many INTJs is getting the correct solution; it doesn't matter who produces it.” “ I prepare thoroughly before giving a formal presentation.” “utter earnestness, sincerity, and thoroughness. And a systems-oriented, big-picture mind.” “We usually see things from a million perspectives.” “We can stay alone for a loooong time: because there is a party going on inside our heads. A 100 voices talking, debating with each other about the best course of action around something.” “I felt very alone and ostracized as a child and youth because I didn't value the same things other kids did, didn't act the way they did, was consistently at the top of any scored intellectual activity (which always makes you less popular), didn't know how to gain the acceptance of my peers and didn't quite have a language to describe these feelings to my parents or others.” “Super Human Analytical Skills. I rely on this instinct often and it serves me well. Usually my snap decisions and judgments are spot on and brutally harsh.” “I learn quickly, sometimes intuitively. I can ride a motorcycle, go to sleep, play a computer game or otherwise ‘turn off’ active thinking, and come back and sit down and know exactly how to solve extremely complex problems. It's not that I didn't think about it, but instead my mind thought about it for me.” “ I’m hardly ever bored, because there are worlds, inside worlds, inside worlds in my own head.” “I am also an intensely private person. Most of the time even my closest friends and family don't know exactly what I'm thinking about or feeling because I prefer to keep it to myself.”

So although I can operate as an INTP personality type, I find it to be a whole lot more fun being an INTJ. And that is where my superpower lies.

VI. HOW DOES A PARENT HELP THEIR ASPIE CHILD?



me

What does your child need? I feel that if parents can help their child in 4 areas, most of the other problems, your child will be smart enough to resolve on their own. What are these four areas? They are: teach them how to combat teasing & bullying, teach them the rules of romance & marriage, help them optimize career choices, and finally protect them from kryptonite.

VII. TEASING AND BULLYING

I am probably a little different than most Aspies because my bullying didn't really begin in earnest until I entered the 6th grade. The reason why the delay I suspect was due to the sheer numbers of different schools I attended. My family moved around a lot and in the 6th grade I was entering my fourth school. I suspect the bullying for most Aspies begin at an earlier age.

Teasing and Bullying – Those terms are very understated. The term teasing and bullying are terms developed to protect the abusers. They minimize the offense. A more accurate phrase is cruel and relentless torture. In adult society, the terms used are physical abuse, psychological abuse, and assault and they are criminal offenses.

Bullies are very adept at what they do. It is almost like they took a course in the subject.

They instinctively recognize those that are weak, alone and defenseless, venerable individuals.

They know where in the playground or inside the school, they can strike outside the view of authorities

They know how to inflict the maximum amount of pain without leaving visible marks as evidence [such as a jab to the ribcage, a kick to the nuts, or a chokehold].

Many times they operate as a group, a gang.

They know about the unwritten rules such as the “Code of Silence” and the “Never Snitch”. They enforce these rules to silence witnesses.

My Story

I attended a Catholic School in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois between the 6th - 8th grades. It was there that I became intimately familiar with child abuse from my peer group. I was probably in my “Pleasing Four” stage of child development. One day in the hallway, several boys approached me and asked, “What nationality are you?” I sensed danger and said nothing. They stared at my features and decided, “he has slanty eyes, large buck teeth and large ears; he must be Japanese”. I said nothing. For the next three years all I heard was a constant stream of Japanese jokes.

I must have been told every Japanese joke ever invented. Whenever they threw a joke my way, I maintained a stone cold face. That was a little hard to do sometimes because I wasn't Japanese and a few of the jokes were actually a little funny. But if I showed any emotion, I knew the jig was up.

This is my 7th grade class photograph.



You should easily be able to spot me. See if you can find me. I have a smile on my face. The reason why I have a smile was because I finally figured out a coping mechanism to one type of physical assault and successfully employed it.

The psychological abuse quickly escalated into physical attacks in the hallway. Students at the school were required to meet a certain dress code. Boys had to wear a white shirt and a tie. But a tie is a type of weapon, a noose around my neck. Each day for over a year, I was surrounded by a group of bullies. They grabbed me by the tie and almost choked me to the point of unconsciousness. After a while, I thought out-of-the-box and arrived at a workable solution. I began wearing a clip-on bow tie. I remember the look on the bully's face when he tried to pull off my bow tie and it pulled right off. It was a look of great surprise. So I successfully foiled this type of attack.

[Side note: Notice the different hand/arm postures displayed in this photograph. It might even be possible to identify those individuals who were being bullied by this trait.]

After I solved the strangulation form of attack, I was subjected to three new types of assault. These assaults were designed to inflict no visible marks. These were:

- * a painful kick in the balls
- * a jab to the ribcage.
- * a chokehold from behind.

The location of the attacks moved from the hallway to the playground and the intensity of the physical attacks moved up a notch. I tried to be a good Catholic boy. I was very small, the smallest in my class. Due to my size and the fact that I never fought back, I was assaulted regularly on a daily basis. This generally occurred during the one-hour recess. The school had a very large asphalt parking lot that substituted as a playground. I felt like I had not a friend in the whole world. I was a complete outcast.

But there was another dimension that was also playing out. If there is one authority that dwarfs the authority given to parents, it was the authority of God. One had to obey the rules “The Ten Commandments” and breaking those rules were “Mortal Sins” which could be punished by spending the rest of your existence after you died in the *Fiery Pits of Hell*. So every school day we were led to Confession to confess our sins. And then I was taught that there were lesser sins called “Venial Sins”. They were like small versions of “Mortal Sins” and if you broke those rules, it meant that you might have to spend time in *Purgatory*, which was like receiving a “Time Out”. These “Venial Sins” were like outgrowths of the “Mortal Sins”. So if a “Mortal Sin” was “Thou shall not kill” then a “Venial Sin” was “Thou shall not fight”. And this rule was even more strict because if you let the thought of anger, or revenge enter your heart, that was the same as “Thou shall not fight”.

After several years, the physical assaults began to take their toll. I never fought back. I never so much raise a finger in my defense. I simply morphed into a punching bag. I began to feel real “rage” and instinctively knew it was a sin. It was beyond anger and anger was a “Venial Sin”. It took all my strength and every ounce of self-will that I could muster to contain it. I hated going to school, being tortured each and every day. Why didn’t the other kids understand the sins they were committing? Why was I the only one that saw this? Why must I forgive them like it never really happened at all? This was so very, very hard to do. Night after night, I knelt down and prayed. I asked for God’s help and I forgave those boys who were inflicting so much pain on me. I prayed so much that the calluses on my knees became as thick as soles of my feet.

One day when the bullies had me in a chokehold, I heard a loud crack. Like he succeeded in breaking my neck. It was so loud that even the bully heard it too and it startled him and scared him. So he instinctively released his hold and he and his gang simply walked away.

That night I prayed and prayed especially long that night, probably for over 2 hours. I said to God, “For 3 years I have endured torture, if you want that my life be taken, I am willing to become a martyr. I give you my life willingly.” And then suddenly He spoke to me for the first time and said, “I didn’t say you couldn’t defend others.” This was so far out of left field; I didn’t know what it meant. I thought if I wanted to die, this was sure a good way to do it – by confronting a bully. But then again I thought maybe there are others like me on the playground - other kids being bullied. I did say I was willing to become a martyr. So what is the worst that can happen! At least I can die helping others.

I turned that over and over again in my mind. I wanted a solution that would help me, that would stop the bullying that I was experiencing. But in the end I figured if He wanted me to do this, I should probably try even if it meant I would die in the process.

So during recess on the playground, I looked around and saw on the other side of the playground a fat kid. A bully walked up to him and his gang of boys closely followed. Normally the bully begins with a verbal attack that then escalates into a physical attack. A crowd of children (spectators) then formed around them. I casually walked over to the other side of the playground and went up to the bully and said “Stop, leave him alone.” The bully turned towards me and said something like “You and who else!” He then made the mistake of trying to hit me. My arms began to move so fast that they became a blur. Most of the punches missed but one or two struck home and he was flat on the ground. Everyone in his gang never saw a bully being bullied. They were frozen, dumbstruck. I simply walked away.

Later I was approached by the gang of boys of the bully that normally used me as his punching bag. Then the gang began their verbal assault and then a minute or two later my bully made his appearance. Then something very strange and inexplicable happened. He told his gang to stop. He said, “He’s crazy”. They stopped and walked away and I was never bullied again.

I have played this over and over again in my mind trying to make some sense of it all. Now decades later I feel like I understand some key points.

In general, bullies are cowards and rarely fight fair.

They form into groups with lieutenants and soldiers.

In a conflict it is always about the one (the victim) verses the many (the gang).

You show up armed only with your fists to protect yourself, while they might show up armed to the teeth. Any fight is rarely fought on a level playing field and the conclusions are rarely left up to chance.

And in the aftermath of the physical and verbal attack, it is always the word of the many (the gang), combined with the silence of the eyewitnesses (unwritten code of silence) against the word of the one (the victim).

In retrospect, the approach that occurred had several merits.

* Bullies are cowards.

* Bullies choose to torment individuals away from the eyes of authorities. So the location of this particular fight was well hidden – not only by location they had chosen but also by the crowd of spectators that formed.

* Bullies are stratified by grade grouping. They normally don’t attack individuals from another grade. Since the bully I confronted was from another grade or two lower than mine, my small stature (I was the smallest boy in my class) more closely matched the size of this bully. Also this bully and his gang had no idea who I was and the fact that I had a history of being bullied. I was someone new and totally unknown.

* Bullies also have to live up to the unwritten rules of “Code of Silence” and “Never Snitch”. So in addition to being unobserved it was also not reported.

* Bullies don’t attack crazy people because crazy people are unpredictable and quite dangerous.

At the end of the 8th grade the students held a party. I didn't attend. During this graduation party, I was voted "the least likely to succeed."

When I entered high school, my problems with bullying dissolved away and life became bearable. But even almost 60 years later, I still carry those invisible battle scars.

Probably the reason why I selected wrestling in my first year of high school was to learn how to get out of a chokehold. Actually I found wrestling to be very enjoyable. One of the techniques I liked the most was called the fireman's carry. And I was very good at that technique. Some day if I grew up and became a fireman, I knew the exact tool to employ to help a man named Max and his son Johnny who were trapped in a burning building and carry them to safety.

High school was a new world, a wonderful world, a place I could grow into. I recently attended my 50th year graduation high school class reunion. What they remembered about me was that I was a math genius and they wondered whatever became of me.

Approach

"How do you help an Aspie child deal with bullying and teasing?" might be the same logic flow path as "How does an Aspie parent help to raise their child?" Hey, I know the answer to the last question. All that I had to do was look deep inside me and see what different steps I took in raising my children. So what special things did I do?

- * I fashioned a coat of invisible armor for each of my daughters from the time they were wee little lassies who just began to learn how to walk and talk, to protect them always.
- * I didn't ask them to discard their built-in invisible shield, because it helps to deflect blows.
- * I taught them the many "Exceptions to the Rule".
- * If they experienced physical attacks, I would make sure they informed me and I would provide them my expert guidance.

That is what I did and my children turned out fine, maybe even better than fine. They are now proud parents and have children of their own. Are they Aspie? Who knows and who cares! These tools work for Aspies and Normals alike. I cannot detect any anomalies in them except they are brilliant and happy.

How do you fashion a coat of invisible armor? From the time my daughters began to walk and talk, my wife and I relentlessly began to teach them Life Skills.

Consider this, most children start with the same box [Asperger and neurotypical]. But every time an Asperger's child is ridiculed, they are told they have no common sense, every time they are told they are stupid or worthless, an idiot, their box gets a little bit smaller. If the box gets compressed too small, the box breaks and explodes. The goal is to help your child expand their box, to be everything possible that they can be. One approach to expand their box is to give them skills, your skills, hands on skills, life skills.

Every time an individual learns a new life task successfully, the individual becomes more confident, feels greater self worth and value, is better able to withstand non-constructive criticism and psychological abuse. Essentially, the individual is expanding their box.

Life tasks are normal tasks that individuals (such as parents) use in their normal life. Life skills can be almost anything. They can be making a scrambled egg, or making a sunny side up egg, or driving a nail into a board, changing a flat tire, washing the dishes, balancing a checkbook, using a cookbook, making cherry jubilee, ironing their clothes, fixing a broken dishwasher, answering the phone, unclogging a toilet, changing a light bulb, making a cup of coffee or grinding coffee beans by hand, coloring Easter eggs the old fashion way or finding Easter eggs buried inside or at the end of a movie, grinding grains of wheat to make flour and then using the flour to make a loaf of bread, creating a spreadsheet or sweeping a floor. These life skills can be a mundane or very intricate task. There are millions of life skills that can be learned. They can be outdoor survival skills taught in boy scouts or girl scouts. Every skill makes their armor a little bit stronger against psychological abuse. When my daughters stepped into the classroom for the first time; they had a thousand real life skills under their belt.

My youngest daughter was around 3 or 4 years old when she learned how to write the letter of the alphabet. My wife taught her relentlessly. One day when my wife was working in the garden and my daughter was alone in the house, there was a phone call. My daughter could climb like a little monkey. She climbed up the cabinets to reach the phone and picked it up. The woman said, "Can I speak with your mom." My daughter answered, "She is outside at the moment, can I take a message?" The woman gave her name. My daughter said, "Can you spell that?" When my wife finally returned home, there was a mysterious written message with a name and phone number and she couldn't figure out who wrote it.

When an Aspie learns a new task, it is like performing an experiment – he must complete the experiment and measure its success. He is measured on how well he accomplishes a task – has he met the standard to claim proficiency in the life skill task. If he does, he makes himself more useful to the outside world. But accomplishing the task also provides self-worth, expands his box, and his circle of influence. If he fails a task, he tries again and again, learns by changing variables, learning how to accept guidance and constructive criticism, or use out-of-the-box thinking. But he doesn't give up. This approach is germane to his way of thinking.

Each of these tasks should be done with precision, perfection and then scored. The parents should determine if the completed tasks met acceptable standards with a vision for excellence. Once the task is completed successfully, it does not need to be repeated but rather another different task be given. As they grew, I increased the level of difficulty of the tasks. For example I taught my daughters how to bargain shop and determine the cost of a discounted item. This suit of armor was constructed by their exceptional capability to function in the real world. They knew more things, important life skills, than any of the kids in their peer group beginning on the first day they entered school. If anyone ever called them dumb or stupid or worthless, they absolutely knew otherwise.

One of the greatest lessons I learned early in life was "that I could do anything, accomplish anything, so long as I put my mind to it".

One Example of an Exceptional Life

One of the exceptional things that I did in my life was to build my own home. I don't mean pick a design, hire a general contractor and sit back and watch the house be constructed in front of my eyes. I mean that my wife and I built our own home from scratch. We did around 90% of the labor and contracted out the rest. This process actually begun by reading a book titled "From the Ground Up" by John Coile and Charles Wing. The two main takeaways from the book are:

- * Without using an architect or a contractor, without a lot of money, anyone can build for himself the house he wants, be it basic or luxurious.

- * Don't get overwhelmed. A house is built one nail at a time.

In order to build a house, I had to master a large number of skills, such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical, masonry. I suspect the main traits that allowed us to construct our house was my willingness to take risks, confidence that I could complete any tasks and tenacity to finish anything that I started. This is a short list of the skills that were used in the construction of our home (many of these skills we had to self learn and master):

- Use a bulldozer to cut a road and level a building site
- Lay a crushed rock driveway from the main road to the house pad
- Build a bridge over a creek
- Stake out the foundation
- Excavate the foundation
- Pour a concrete foundation
- Install attachments in the concrete foundation
- Pour a slab
- Frame the walls
- Attach the wall frames to the foundation
- Install septic tank and feeder lines
- Route plumbing to septic tank
- Route plumbing lines within the house
- Create archways
- Frame the roof
- Install skylight
- Cover the roof with plywood
- Install the roof vents
- Create vents for sewer gases
- Install the roof shingles
- Wall off the outside of the structure
- Route the electrical cables to the main
- Route the electrical cables from the main to the power pole
- Install the main ground to the electrical pole
- Install the electrical outlets and electrical switches
- Install interior gas lines
- Install liquid propane tank
- Install fiberglass insulation into the walls and attic
- Install sheetrock on walls and ceiling
- Mudding the sheetrock joints
- Paint wall and ceiling with primer coat
- Paint walls and ceiling

- Install acoustic ceiling
- Install inner wooden ceiling and artificial wood beams
- Install light fixtures and ceiling fans
- Install ceramic tile floors
- Install carpeting
- Install doors and windows
- Install artificial stonewalls
- Brick house exterior
- Install exterior lighting
- Install interior stonewalls
- Create fireplaces and wood stove chimney
- Install fireplace mantels and hearth
- Install wood stove
- Install wood burning fireplace insert
- Landscape and erosion control
- Install cabinetry
- Install sinks/toilets/bathtub/shower
- Drill well and install water pump
- Route water pump into house plumbing
- Install trim and baseboards
- Install wallpaper
- Install guttering
- Install garage door
- Install electric garage door opener
- Install decking and deck railing
- Install oven and range
- Install other appliances (Refrigerator, Dishwasher, Washer, Dryer)
- Install water bladder
- Install water heater
- Install water softener
- Install driveway alarm
- Install security alarm systems
- Install curtains and window shades
- Install mailbox

When building a house, don't get overwhelmed by the scope of the project. In essence a house is built just one nail at a time. Drive in the first nail and then the next and the next and the next. In life every great project is completed by many individual small pieces, great determination and fortitude. It is a vast complex puzzle to begin with. And if something doesn't work right just find another piece that will work.

Like me, our house is quite unique. It uses a honeycomb design joining 5 hexagons together. Even though it is now 40 years old, the house is a unique modern design that will never grow old. Because I had mastered several skills prior to starting construction, I knew that I could master them all. I had the confidence to start, the ability to correct any problems along the way and the fortitude to finish what I started.



Another Example of an Exceptional Life

After college and after I found employment I purchased a Hemi Cuda. The Hemi Cuda was a specialized 1970 stock Barracuda with a 426 Hemi engine. It was a stock street-legal muscle car. The car had 2 four-barrel carburetors under a shaker hood. It could go from zero to 135 mph in about 14 seconds. The engine redlined at 6500 rpm but it was stable enough to go 10,000 rpm running 150 mph for a few seconds. It was designed for speed. At 45 mph in a spin, the car would come to a standstill in 20 feet going sideways. It was an exceptionally well-balanced and well-designed machine, maybe one of the best ever made.

It would move like the speed of lightning, like “faster than a speeding bullet”. If I was driving down the road and stepped on the pedal, the car would let out a big roar like some kind of wild beast and then push me back in the seat like in a roller coaster. There was only one itty-bitty problem with driving this car and that was it had a stick shift [a Hurst Shifter] and I didn’t know how to drive a stick shift. This was one of those life skills I had to learn on my own and this was the car I choose to learn it on. And I was very proud of learning this particular skill. I still drive stick shift cars today because in my opinion, they provide a greater degree of control when driving.



So when my daughters reached the driving age I taught them this life skill. After they went through their driver's education course at school and obtained their learner's permit, it was my turn.

I spent a full year teaching each of them how to drive a stick shift. It was brutal training. They didn't even leave the driveway until the end of the first month. Three pedals but only two feet and a stick shift and an emergency brake! It took finesse and seamless footwork to move both feet at the same time. So we spent a couple weeks just working on the footwork with the ignition key off. Then we practiced starting the car and moving the car a few feet and then coming to a dead stop without killing the engine. I taught them how to do a mind meld with the engine to hear the sound the engine made under duress and just before it died.

Then we took the car out on the open road; deserted country roads. I had to teach them how to respond to PANIC. What happens if you are driving down the road at night and a deer suddenly appears in front of your car or if you are driving down a city street and a young child runs out in front of your vehicle. I always taught them to drive with the radio off. We would be driving down a country road and I would suddenly yell out at the top of my lungs "STOP". I expected them to stop instantly without killing the engine. Over and over again we practices this until they could remain calm under panic. It is a life skill. But I also taught them the exception to the rule. [It is O.K. to kill the engine, if a child suddenly jumped out from nowhere.]

I taught them defensive driving techniques. To constantly be aware of everything around them (360° awareness) when they were driving, to look for potential problems, potential accidents in the making! I taught them to always keep a safe distance between their car and the car in front of them [one car length for every 10 miles of speed]. This rule was critical because it provides reaction time to avoid accidents.

Then we went on road trips in order to exercise what they learned. I would fine tweak their driving skills. "You are going too fast". "You are going too slow". "The speed limit is 55."

The final test was to accelerate from a dead stop on a steep hill without rolling so much as an inch backwards and without killing the engine. The secret to this maneuver is to use the emergency brake.

It was a brutal training and sometimes they were almost in tears. But then life itself can be brutal. And I imparted to them a very special life skill – driving a stick shift. I am absolutely certain I would make a simple awful driver’s education instructor, but I felt my children needed the best and that is what I gave them.

One of the interesting sidebars from this approach was that when my daughters went off to college, the boys were absolutely amazed and dumbstruck that these girls could drive a stick shift. It is a skill that few girls and even many boys had never learned to master. It made them someone very unique and special.

They need an invisible shield for Protection

The invisible shield is a mask that sometimes Aspies wear. It was the ability to show a blank expression or mask emotions. When the gang of bullies surrounded me and asked what my nationality was; it was my ability to remain silent. When they told Japanese jokes, it was my ability to not laugh at their jokes. It was a built-in ability to sense danger and mask emotions.

Exception to the Rule

When a normal parent tries to raise an Aspie child, they can become very frustrated almost to the point of pulling their hair out. But what about the converse! How does an Aspie parent raise a normal child? [I consider this a very important introspective question, because the correct answer in the second case is the exact answer to be applied in the first case. How should a normal parent raise an Aspie child.]?

I have two daughters, they were probably normal, and not Aspie, but I didn’t know that. I didn’t even know the term Aspie even existed. It probably wasn’t even in anyone’s vocabulary at that time. So what did I do? I explained to them the exception to the rule.

Before my oldest daughter entered her first year of school I took her aside and explained to her that sometimes kids at school can be very mean and it is O.K. for you to defend yourself if you need to. [This was the exception to the rule.] But even before that, beginning on the day she first started talking and walking, my wife and I began to make her a suit of invisible armor. I taught her every life skill that I knew and I encouraged my wife to do the same. So when she entered school, she knew how to do things, important things that other children didn’t have a clue. If anyone called her stupid or an idiot, she knew she could ignore them because they were lying because she knew what she knew and that was a whole lot more than the person calling her a name. [That was her invisible suit of armor.]

I was the smallest kid in my class and my wife was the smallest kid in her class, so it was natural that our children were the smallest children in their respective classes. When my firstborn daughter was in first or second grade, my wife received a call from the principal’s office at

school. My wife called me at work and I told her I would resolve the issue when I got home. It turns out that she had bitten someone on the playground. I asked my daughter why she had bitten them. She said they were teasing her. [I thought about this for a few seconds – what tools does a wee little one have to protect herself against a much bigger bully. I would have never thought of her teeth.] My wife was frantic. I pulled my daughter aside and told her that what she did was O.K. because she had done what I had instructed her to do but then I told her to try not to do it again. She made it a point to stay away from bullies in the future. [In retrospect, that probably placed her in the class of a little bit crazy in her peer group, and since bullies never attack crazy people, it probably explained why no one ever bullied her again.]

How do you protect your child from physical attacks?

Well we never had a son and since in general boys tend to resort to physical violence more than girls, I can only describe hypotheticals.

Early on, I would make him understand that any physical attacks must be reported to me and me alone (not his teacher, not his principal, but to me). But that doesn't mean that I have to step in to defend my child. Your first instinct is to bring up the matter to the schools administration or teacher. But this may not be the best course of action and it may not solve the problem but only make the problem far worse. Sometimes your child may need to figure out the solution on his own with your wisdom and guidance. Remember there are unwritten rules such as "Never Snitch" in place and breaking them can have adverse consequences for your child. In my opinion, they only come into play as a last resort. One of the characteristics of an Aspie is honesty. So if my child is an Aspie and reports being abuse by his peers, then I accept it as a hard fact. Then I find out specifically how he was assaulted and the exact location where he was assaulted.

So essentially in my case, I needed defensive training, tools, or approaches to protect myself from these four specific forms of attack. I didn't need the entire skill-set of defensive and offensive tools of self-defense (boxing, wrestling, kung fu, karate, tae kwon do, and martial arts training). I needed to be able to respond to four specific types of attacks with great skill and precision. I didn't need my parents to fight my battles for me but I did need their help. But I never knew how to ask them for it. I was essentially on my own as a child.

I was subjected to four types of continuous physical attacks. These were:

- * a painful kick in the balls
- * a jab to the ribs
- * strangulation with a noose.
- * a chokehold from behind.

You can teach him the skills to defend himself and give him permission to defend himself. These are two separate items. This permission is one of the many "Exceptions to the Rule".

Another approach that might work is to request that your child be able to spend his unstructured time (recess or lunch period) in a safe place such as the library instead of the playground or cafeteria when he chooses. This will allow the child to avoid the arena and also keep him under the watchful eye of authority, such as the school librarian.

Sometimes out-of-the-box thinking may come into play – like the method I used to prevent strangulation with a tie.

One of the advantages to living in the modern world is that you can think of something, do a search using the computer and poof someone has already thought of it, built it and is now selling the product. So what if I had an Aspie son, how could I protect him? I would give my son a Kevlar jockstrap to protect the family jewels. A quick search on Amazon showed this type of product is already being built by a company called Nutshellz (sounds like an appropriate name). They make both adult and children sizes. They have two models – the first is made with Kevlar and carbon fiber and is primarily for heavy impact sports such as hockey, baseball, cricket and MMA. This is the type I would select for him. The second type is for police and the military and has a higher strength material at its core called Dyneema – which is half the weight of Kevlar and is twice as strong and will withstand a 22-caliber bullet impact. This type of protective equipment (Jock = Level 1 Cup) would help protect him from one form of attack – a painful one that I experienced on a daily basis – a kick to the balls.

But if he wore this type of protection, he must learn a couple rules first.

1. This must be his secret. No one within the school must know. The bullies must not know he is wearing it; otherwise the jig is up. He must not tell his friends. This may prevent him from using the urinals at school. And he would probably not want to wear it if he has to take a shower after gym class.

2. To keep the secret, if he is kicked in the balls, he must pretend he was hurt and show pain. [Just like I adopted a stone face when Japanese jokes were flung my way – the bullies must think they are inflicting pain or they might intensify the abuse using other methods.] But if he succeeds it could make him bulletproof to one form of attack.

Also it might be prudent to let him receive a few practice hits at home, in order to train him how to fake it. If he is really good at faking it, he might even try acting as a profession.

What about the jab to the ribs? Some lightweight impact resistant vest and jackets such as those using D3O impact protection technology look very promising. Some even look cool. Protection equipment can make him more resistant to physical attacks. But as a parent, you may have to run some interference with his teachers and school administrators, so they are aware of his need to wear this type of gear.



Another bit of technology that has appeared recently is small personal alarms. This is a photograph of a personal alarm by Vigilant. It easily fits in a shirt or pants pocket. It has a ripcord activation system that prevents false alarms. Pull the wrist strap with attached grenade style

activation pin and it generated a piercing 130 dB alarm. To turn off, just insert the pin back into the alarm. If a child is being physically attacked, using this device might call immediate attention to the assault and end it (at least temporarily).

One other point is if your child is part of a group, he is much less vulnerable to bullying. Bullies normally pick on loners. This means that if your child can join after hour activities such as school clubs they will become less likely to be on the receiving side of bullies. But they must become accepted by those groups. So help them become part of some group such as marching band, drama club, singing groups, and school sports – something he can find a niche in which he can succeed in making a few friends.

My youngest daughter did not experience any bullying because she was involved in a wide range of clubs and activities and she was part of a very tight knit group of friends. Generally bullies attack loners.

If the abuse escalates, then you may need for him to receive training in the offensive aspects of self-defense training and give him permission to use it [expanded exception to the rule].

If that doesn't work, then you may begin to document the abuse in writing, including names, times, locations, method of attacks and any physical evidence. Then when you have compiled a sufficient documentation trail bring it to the school authorities. Some schools have video camera surveillance. If your child just happens to stand right in front of a surveillance camera when an assault occurs, critical video evidence of the attack may have been recorded. So you want your child to know where these cameras are for their own protection. What you want to show is a pattern of assaults. One incident of bullying can be easily swept under the rug, but if your child is systematically being abused on a daily basis that is torture, the bully should be put on notice, and permanently expelled from the school if bullying behavior continues.

If you cannot resolve the problem with school officials, and the bullies and their parents, then removing your child from that school might be the only viable option.

You can move your child to another school, but each school has its bullies and they will soon find your child.

You can home school your child during the peak years when bullying is a major problem.

One more perspective, “What doesn't kill you can make you stronger”. Some of my characteristics such as thick skin, tenacity, and high pain threshold derived from the years of abuse I received. These are not all bad characteristics and in part they define me. But the battle scars will never really go away.

Final Thoughts:

A quick bit of research on the Internet revealed:

- * Aspies are bullied much more than their typical peers. Perhaps as much as 95% of male aspies experience bullying in school. This entails physical assaults.

- * Normally bullying peaks during Junior High School for boys.

So if you are going to give your son the skills necessary to defend himself and permission to defend himself, then start early. Don't wait until he is in Junior High because it is then almost too late because it takes time to become proficient in these skills.

Sometimes the first encounter with a bully can set the tone. If he can successfully end the initial encounter with a bully – he might end years of abuse down the road.

Think of a bee. If you get stung once, you might not want to take the chance and be stung again. Remember bullies by nature are cowards.

Your son is not alone. There are other like him; other Aspies or other victims in his school. They may not be in his class but they are there never-the-less. There is always strength in numbers. Your son should be able to spot them. At lunch, he can sit down with them and introduce himself. Some of my best friends in life turned out to be other Aspies.

And if your son and his new found friend can gain some proficiency in defending themselves. They might turn into a hornet's nest. And only a fool steps into a hornet's nest.

VIII. CAREER

There are three components to career. These are schooling (developing a skill-set for a career), summer/part-time work (developing a good work ethic), and finally obtaining a position and transforming it into a career.

A. Schooling

I always thought the purpose of education was training for a career. So from my perspective my career began in Kindergarten. Education provided the tools that I needed for employment.

Maybe my parents didn't understand that I needed guidance in down selecting a proper career field. This would have helped their Aspie son, but nobody even knew the term back in those days, much less about the traits of this type of individual. When I was about to graduation from high school, I had a major decision to make that would affect the entire rest of my life. No one in my family, even my extended family, had ever gone to college. But my grades at the end of high school were high enough that it was an option. I made a snap decision and choose to go to college and earn a degree in Physics. This occurred around March of my senior year, I went to the school councilor and asked her if there were any scholarships available. She said I was a little late, or maybe she said I was way too late, or maybe she said **“Are you crazy, you should have started this 6 months ago”**. She said there was only one scholarship left. It was a Sears scholarship and the application was due tomorrow. I took the application home and filled it out and turned it in the next day and miraculously I received a scholarship for \$400. This may not seem like much, but it paid my entire first year of tuition and books at the University of Texas at Arlington.

It is important to begin to think about your career path early and parents can help in the selection. When my youngest daughter was in second grade, I asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up. This took her by surprise. She thought about it and the next day she came to me and said she wanted to be a doctor. The effects of that decision were interesting to watch as it unfolded. When she went to school, she shared with her friends that she was going to be a doctor when she grew up. That caused her classmates to look inside and select a career path for themselves. Many of her classmates decided they wanted pursue professional degrees. Then they began to realize that in order to be accepted into colleges or universities, they had to perform really well in grade school, junior high and high school. So the entire class became an extremely competitive class. It was a class of very high achievers. They began to realize they had to join clubs and compete and show a track record of performance, so they all joined a variety of clubs and activities

One of the things she did was start taking practice SAT test as soon as she was able. Then when she reached the right age, she took the official SAT every year in order to maximize her end score. When she was a freshman in high school, the senior boy who sat next to her while taking the tests copied her multiple choice answers because she was known as extremely intelligent (When she graduated from high school, she had straight “A’s” the entire 12 years from elementary to high school.) The thing he didn't realize was that there were several versions of the tests and they were distributed in such a manner so that he and my daughter were essentially taking different tests.

She had a goal and she stuck with that goal with great tenacity and is now working as a medical doctor, an anesthesiologist.

One of the concepts of college is to teach independence. So from my perspective developing safe zones in college or special accommodations for Aspie students feels like the wrong approach. If you want your child to become independent, you need to give them the freedom to make decisions on their own, to make mistakes, to fix mistakes and to be there for them if they totally fail. When a child is riding a bicycle and falls down and skins their knee, you wipe off the dirt, clean the wound, kiss the knee and then put them back on the bike.

B. Summer/Part Time Work

I always considered work to be an integral part of preparation for a career. Around the age of 10, I began cutting lawns in the neighborhood. In the winter I shoveled snow from driveways. I also sold garden seeds door-to-door in the springtime. This gave me spending money to pursue my passion at the time, which were comic books. In high school, I worked in a five-and-dime store. It is important for students to work during the summer and after school because it can help establish a good work ethic. In high school and all during college, I worked.

I worked jobs (20 hours per week) whenever I was in school and (40 hours per week) during the summers, the entire time I was in college. During my four years of college, I worked:

- * in the main branch of a bank balancing daily receipts.
- * as a postman in the downtown mail sorting station.
- * as a parking lot attendant.
- * as a warehouseman in a large department store storage facility.
- * as a night shift operator on a cyclotron.
- * with a supercomputer performing heat transport modeling.

I passed this tradition onto my daughters.

My oldest daughter was 13 years old when she started working a summer job detasseling corn. It was very hard manual labor. She was building a strong work ethic. It was important that she learned that without an education; this is the type of unskilled labor and low paying jobs available to her. You can be a ditch digger but do you really want to work that backbreaking profession for the rest of your life?

When my youngest daughter was around 13 years old during the summer she volunteered as a full time hospital volunteer (pink lady) for two summers. She wanted to become a medical doctor and this was good experience. Later she began to work in a store similar to a Wal-Mart. Before she even turned 18, they offered her a management position in the store but she declined because she was going to become a medical doctor.

By the time I entered college; I was like a racehorse. You just set me free and I ran as fast as my little legs would carry me. Stress! What stress! The stress I endured in junior high was many times greater than college. I had built up a tolerance to stress. I was carrying a full credit hour load of college classes. In addition I was commuting 2 ½ hours each day by car and then on top of that I was working 20 hours per week in the Post Office Annex downtown.

In my opinion, many neurotypical (normal) kids had a distinct disadvantage when they travel off to college. They were unable to deal with the greater freedom and they lacked self-discipline. Many students wasted away their educational opportunity by entering a full-time party mode. Many times they had no goal, and many do not even select a major to begin with. Others changed their major so often it was like changing their clothes (every 6 months a different major). Many flunked out after a year or two or three. I studied and worked and then I worked and studied and learned.

For me, I discovered I was a racehorse. I was running a race. I was well focused on my goal and didn't need a vast social life to succeed.

Living Accommodations During College

In general I had no special living accommodations while I attended college. I just muddled my way through.

During my first year at college, I lived at home. Maybe a more accurate way of saying this is that I slept at home. Between college, work, and commuting, and the fact that I did most of my homework at school either in the cafeteria or student union building, I had no spare time. So I was only home to sleep.

My second year, when we moved to Los Angeles, I lived in a Co-op and then got kicked out of the Co-op.

The next 2 years, I boarded in peoples homes. UCLA is located near the city of Bel Air. This area was an exclusive area with many nice homes some of which were occupied by widows who lived alone. They felt more secure by having a nice young man in the house. So they offered free rooms to college students.

Approach for College Electives

In addition to courses in my major, I was required to take various electives. In general, many of these classes are freshman classes (100 series classes). Many of these 100 series classes weed out students. But if you reviewed the lists of college courses offered, many of the 200-400 level courses either required prerequisites **or approval by the professor teaching the course**. So I tried to avoid the lower level courses and targeted the upper level ones. So instead of taking a basic course in sociology, I took a 400 series course in Field Archaeology and spent my Saturday on archaeology digs, like Indiana Jones. It was a lot more fun and I earned far better grades in the process. Instead of some basic English courses, I was taking Shakespeare or Poetry. I would meet with the professor and describe my passion for taking their course, and I received an exemption to the normal prerequisites. I did not like foreign language and foreign language classes did not like me. But I was required to take them. So because I had Spanish and French in high school, I decided to try Russian. During the first week of class, a professor entered the classroom and requested volunteers. He was starting up an experimental course in Russian, a full immersion approach and would guarantee a minimum grade of a "B" for just attending the class and participating. I recognize an opportunity when I see one and my hand shot straight up.

It was a unique approach. As you walked into the classroom, all you spoke was Russian. If you had a question, you had to ask it in Russian. So a word of advice is to explore the options that are available.

C. Obtaining a Position and Transforming it into a Career

Interview

As I was getting close to graduating from UCLA with a degree in nuclear physics, I began going to job interviews. I had created a good resume. So I signed up for a slot to be interviewed at the campus recruitment office and then showed up at the allotted time for the interview. One of my initial interviews was rather interesting to say the least.

One of the questions that the interviewer asked me was

“Why do I want a job?”

I answered him “Because I wanted a job so that I could earn a living and someday raise a family.”

He asked me again “Why do I want a job?”

I repeated my answer.

He said, “Let me ask the question another way, would you accept a job in our company as a janitor sweeping floors?”

I thought about this question for a few seconds and gave him an **honest** answer. “Yes, if it paid enough.”

I can find contentment at performing almost any tasks from sweeping floors to being a nuclear physicist. Nothing is beneath me and nothing is above me.

* So long as I can do the task.

* Do the tasks well.

* And solve any problems that arise along the way.

The recruiter then said, “**You are doing this all wrong!**”

He then took me under his wing and spent the next hour teaching me how to succeed at job interviews. I listened attentively and absorbed all that he had to say.

He said, “One of the first things you need to do even before you come to an interview, is read up on the company that you are interviewing at. Know more about the company, every part of the company and what it does even beyond the knowledge of the recruiter that is conducting the interview.”

Then he said, “You need to figure out how you might fit in with the company. What skills that you possess that make you a valued addition to the company. What particular area within the company is interesting for you, where you can provide value.”

Then he said, “Find several areas that you might fit in, because that particular area that you selected may not have any openings at this time.”

Then he said, “Be flexible. There may be an opening in a new challenging area (leading edge of technology) that is not described in the company’s brochure. Also you might initially get hired outside your dream position and later find an opportunity that allows you to migrate over to your dream job.”

He said, “Sometimes it is important to describe your passion.” [Be careful with this one, you do not want to get bogged down into an hour long dissertation.]

After the interview I thought, “Who would have ever known!”

Career Selection

I am a good fit for many tasks and professions but I am suited for some better than others. This selection is based on my strengths and weaknesses.

- * I am honest but I fail to readily detect dishonesty.
- * I can think out-of-the-box but I am shy and often will not speak up or give my opinion.
- * I am a risk taker but I should make sure that I have good health insurance and life insurance policy.
- * I am a subject matter expert but I find it difficult to communicate orally.

So when I consider jobs that I or other Aspies might gravitate towards as a profession, one might consider (do I have a good skills fit, how do my particular strengths and weakness fit, are there many or few openings in this profession).

For example - I could be a good janitor. It is a rewarding job. There is little stress because I repeat the same tasks day in and day out. Routine is my friend. There are many openings for this career field. But probably the profession doesn’t pay very well and I might find it difficult to support myself and a family.

I could be a teacher – I would be very competent as a subject matter expert but find it difficult to verbally communicate this information and may find it difficult to control the classroom because of my prior experience with being bullied.

I could become a professor at a university – this is a better fit but there are very few openings in this profession and it requires years and years to gain a PhD, perform post doctoral work, and wait for an opening to materialize.

I might make a good soldier but there are times when I will disobey a direct order because sometimes the orders given are dead wrong – my INTJ personality type.

I might make a good scientist, but there are few jobs for scientist unless you become a teacher. You will probably need to have a Master’s degree to work as a lab assistant and a PhD to really be able to call yourself a true scientist and perform research.

I might make a good Superman because I am honest, tenacious, brave, and compassionate towards others. I would first have to fully develop my Clark Kent persona and then use my intellect to:

- create machines so I could fly [already been done.]
- travel faster than a sleeping bullet. [Oh that also has already been done.]
- more powerful than a locomotive [man has created locomotives and I am sure I can build a bigger more powerful locomotives.]
- leap a tall building in a single bound [probably doable but have a hard time figuring out why I would want to – expect maybe rocket man.]
- bend steel in my bare hands. [Man has created machines to bend steel - or even a simple auto mechanic knows how to bend steel with their bare hands provided they wear special heat resistant gloves]
- see through walls. [I guess that has already been created. “The Lobster-Eye X-Ray Device (LEXID) uses X-rays to see through walls.]
- change the course of mighty rivers [Man has developed mighty machines to build huge dams and excavating machines to move earth in order to redirect rivers.
- may have a problem hooking up with Lois Lane, but where there is a will there is always a way but may have to give up my superpowers for a while.

Maybe I could even become a comic book writer and describe a character like Superman. I definitely have an evolved imagination.

I could be an engineer. This is a good fit. Engineers are always in demand. It aligns with my desire to invent and build things. It is a good paying profession.

So consider all the professions and make sure you down select a good fit, before you start your journey in college.

An Aspie contains a normal person and a different normal person blended together seamlessly. Therefore an Aspie’s needs for employment are different than others.

* On one side of the coin, an Aspie desires the same things as any normal person.

A desire for independence and the ability to financially support themselves and their family (housing, food, utilities, entertainment, their child’s education, etc.)

* On the other side of the coin, an Aspie desires what the Aspie desires.

Their passions (collections, research, their inventions)

So an Aspie may require a little more funding than a normal person. But it may not be that much more money. Because an Aspie may be able to stretch each dollar earned by making innovative decisions. [For example, 40 years ago my wife and I built our own home. We did 90% of the labor. The house never had a mortgage – NEVER! We never borrowed a penny to build it. Most people take out a first loan with a 30-year mortgage. Therefore using this approach, I captured the interest portion of a 30-year loan.]

An Aspie’s career does not have to center around their work life. Their passion can explode in their lives outside work. Therefore I could work a mundane job and then pursue my passion when I come home from a hard day’s work. I do not need accolades to feel complete, just the ability to pursue my passions.

Time Management

As an Aspie, I hate multitasking with a passion. I have an inherent need to finish what I start; otherwise I will just spin my wheels and never accomplish anything in life. It is really important for me to not become distracted from the task at hand. I have found the best way of finishing a task that I have started is to focus all my energy on the task until it is completed. But the rest of the world does not work that way. So to become successful in life I need to develop time management skills.

For example, as a nearly financially broke teenager, my car would routinely break down and it would become critical for me to fix it. So I might tear it apart and troubleshoot the problem and find the broken part, go to the auto parts store and order a replacement part which make take several days to arrive and then replace the part and test to make sure that the original diagnosis was correct and the problem is finally fixed. Well if the part was not on the shelf and took several days to arrive at the auto parts store, in a linear mode, I would sit and wait doing nothing productive during those days I waited for the part to come in. This is very inefficient. So it was important for me to learn to multitask.

When I multitask, I do not work on several different items at the same time, rather I fragmentize all the tasks into components, prioritize those individual subtasks, highlight time roadblocks and if the task is really critical, am willing to execute an out-of-the-box solution. One of my Aspie type traits is to develop list. This skill meshes very well with time management skills.

I create to-do lists all the time. It helps to keep me focused. In time management, it is important to break down the individual tasks into their subtasks. It is similar to an outline of a book. There are major headers for each chapter and then there is a breakdown of topics within each chapter. This allows me to identify the subtasks that can become time roadblocks over which I have little control. [For example, waiting for parts to arrive at the auto parts store] As a result, whenever I come across a time impasse in completing a task, I simple switch to the next highest subtask on the list until the impasse is cleared. This subtask may be part of a completely different task. As soon as the time impasse is cleared I return to the original primary task and pick up where I left off. This is an efficient approach.

If all the time impasses are highlighted, it might be possible to try and tackle as many of these as possible up front and take care of them early. Time impasses are generally those subtasks that you have little or no control over.

Not every deadline is fixed in stone. Some deadlines are artificially driven. At times it may become necessary to negotiate a revision to a deadline with realistic timeframes. It is important to have a sense of how hard or soft the deadline really is. For an Aspie who can be easily deceived, this task may be difficult to ascertain. For some customers, every task they have is critical; it is part of their nature. [But in reality, most are not critical.] So it can be important to drill down and seek an honest assessment of what is driving the time criticality. If a deadline has run into a major time roadblock, one of the advantages of an Aspie is their ability to execute out-of-box thinking.

For example, going back to the fixing a broken car. If I finally discovered the root cause of the problem at 10 p.m. at night, I couldn't even visit the auto parts store until the next morning when

the store opens. This is a time impasse on top of a time impasse. There is a whole range of other options available. For example if the part was simple, I might repair or refurbish the part myself. I might Jerry-rig a solution, by taking a similar part and modifying it as a replacement part. In a large city like Los Angeles, there are part stores that are opened 24/7 around the clock. Also there are a number of junkyards where used replacement parts are available. In today's world, I might look up the part on-line and order it over the Internet with priority shipping.

First Line Supervisor

A few years after I was hired as a physicist, my employer decided to change my career into an electronics engineer. I am very versatile. Because I was an exceptional worker, eventually I was offered the position of a first-line supervisor. This required a completely different skill-set than being an effective engineer. So it may be a difficult transition for an Aspie to make. Maybe I should have shown restraint or caution, but since when have I ever shown restraint or caution! Later I became a project manager and then a manager. These positions required additional skill-sets and new challenges.

Many engineers (especially Aspies) find it difficult to make the transition from academic life to employment. The first six months is crucial, or they may become walking rejects.

I didn't even know the word Aspie at that time, so this is a retro-analysis of my experience as a front line supervisor. If you think about it, I was an Aspie supervisor with several engineers exhibiting Aspie traits. I was not just their immediate supervisor; I was also their mentor. This was a sort of like being put in charge of running an ad hoc Justice League.

I began forming a team of new engineers. But other teams had problems with some of their new recruits and their supervisors arranged a swap. They were essentially cannibalizing my team. They would pull off one of my better employees and trade them with someone they deemed to be a reject. But then something very strange happened. I would work with those employees and polish their weaknesses and many times it would reveal their hidden superpower. We were becoming known as a truly exceptional team.

I think at work, there are "A" teams. They are the best performing teams and as a result; they outperform the rest and are rewarded with greater access to funding, resources and perks. My team was so far down the totem pole that we didn't even have a letter designator. Maybe we were a band of misfits, but they were my band of misfits and they knew it. I began by slowly unlocking their hidden potential and then bonding them into a team. And right before my eyes they transformed themselves into one of the most dynamic teams within the entire organization.

When one of us scored a major victory on a project, we all celebrated the victory. We normally would clock out of work for a couple hours, travel to a restaurant and share a meal, then return back to work and clock back in. We had no perks. I couldn't even swing any paid time off or have the organization pay for the meal. We individually paid for our own meals. We made it a point to celebrate together as a team. This was a way of honoring the unique members of our team. When we arrived back at work, individuals from the other teams would begin to complain. "Why were we able to take paid time off?" Or "who paid for the meals?" You see we were not

on the clock and we individually paid for our meals. Members of the other teams would look at us and try to figure out what made us special that we received perks and they would grumble and complain. But when management stepped in to investigate, they found out we had done nothing wrong and it was just an unofficial team-building tool. What made us special was that collectively we were very special, we were transforming ourselves into a dynamic work team with a few members (called misfits or rejects), whose talents were strictly off-the-chart. We had each other's backs and would always break when any team member needed special help. We closed ranks and protected our own.

Most good scientist and engineers are by their nature introverts because it takes a special kind of concentration to excel in these career fields. One of the functions of the engineers was to travel to conferences or meetings and provide presentations of their results. For an introvert, standing in front of a large crowd and giving a formal presentation of your work was challenging to say the least.

So I employed the idea of a "Murder Board". It became a right of passage or a type of initiation. Our department had a canned generic presentation about 50 pages long that described our mission, our unique capabilities and our purpose. Back in those days it was a viewgraph presentation, today you might refer to it as a PowerPoint presentation. So any newbie to the group was required to study the presentation and then present it before the "Murder Board". I began the process by gathering up all the newbies into the conference room and giving the presentation myself to walk them through the process.

Since by that time, I had given several hundred presentations throughout my career, I would sometimes impart some personal knowledge that I found useful. When I gave a presentation, I normally use a joke or story to wake up the audience and to make a connection. It is a way of touching their hearts and souls. I would also use a prop, like show and tell. Something tangible and yet related to the product of the presentation!

So then it was their turn. The "Murder Board" consisted of engineers who had given this presentation previously or anyone who was experienced in giving presentations. During the presentation, we would periodically stop the newbie and ask questions to test his subject matter expertise. We would criticize everything and anything. Some of it was fair and some was not. We wanted to make sure the newbie would not break under pressure. If they survived the "Murder Board", any other presentation they gave throughout the rest of their entire career would be a piece of cake. And they always survived! This was a mandatory requirement before they went on travel for the first time.

Sometimes the individual's idiosyncrasies were fairly easy to fix. I received one individual who was not working out from another team. At the time I had a piece of new test equipment that was damaged and everyone I assigned to fix it came back and said it couldn't be done. So I assigned this newbie to take a crack at fixing the equipment and I told him "everyone else said it was impossible". In no time at all, the equipment was back in operation. So from then on anytime I assigned a task to this individual, I always prefaced that task as "an impossible assignment" and he always came through. He became my right hand man. He had only one minor problem, which prevented me from using him for travel. My manager had an interesting quirk about who was eligible to travel to meetings and represent the organization. They had to be able to give a firm handshake. [A weak handshake was indicative of a wishy-washy

personality or someone who was indecisive and would make a poor presenter.] I pulled him into the conference room and I asked him to shake my hand. It was like mush, like oatmeal. So I told him he would have to improve his handshake in order to meet the requirements for travel and his handshake was way too weak. So I had him shake my hands again. I would tell him a little better, let's do it again. We repeated this several times and then the vice grip handshake appeared, the one that crushes bones. I said I think you almost have it but you are in a vice grip mode so ease off a little. We did it a few more times, and he was spot on. And that is all it took, just a few minutes of unique training that enabled him for a lifetime career.

I had one newbie show up who really exhibited an unusual talent. In our organization we would take 100 page performance specifications and transform them into unique specially designed test equipment capable of product evaluation. Often times the fabricated test equipment would fail. This particular employee could take the drawing package (for example 6 sheets of detailed circuitry) and lay them flat onto a table. He would scan the first drawing starting from the left side and working to the right side of the sheet; then he moved onto the next sheet. When he was scanning the 5th sheet, he would suddenly stop in the middle and point to a piece of circuitry and say this is where the problem was. And he was always right. It was in a way a remarkable superpower.

But he had a major weakness that made him incapable of designing any piece of equipment. The way he designed equipment is he would read the first page of the specification and design some circuitry and then the next page of the specification and redesign his initial circuitry. In essence he was patching on top a patch, on top another patch, on top another patch. When he was done, the drawing package was 20 sheets instead of 6, and was so complex that even he was unable to understand why it didn't work when it was finally built. I tried to teach him that he needed to read the entire specification first before he even started drawing the circuitry but he would have none of it. Knowing what I know now, the key to unlocking this individual was to explain to him that there are two types of criticism. Those are constructive criticism and destructive criticism. The advice I was giving him was an example of constructive criticism. That I had his best interest at heart and it was important for him to succeed because his success was our success. All I wanted to do was refine his exceptionalism. But at that time, I didn't even know about the word Aspie and the characteristics of an Aspie.

IX. ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE

One of the areas I was totally unprepared for was in the area of romance and marriage. [Rules of romance, purpose of marriage, rules of marriage, rules of family, children.] It would have been very important for my parents to teach me all these rules before I started this journey. So I will break down this topic into 3 pieces: **A. Sex Education for Aspie Children**, **B. Courtship and Romance**, and **C. Marriage and Family**. I believe parents have a major role to play in each of these areas in the education of their child. So this is my thoughts from the inside looking out. These are not rules set in concrete. Every parent should be in charge of making these rules because the parents have the best intentions for their child at heart.

A. Sex Education for Aspie Children

When I was in grade school, boys would sometimes brag that they “understood the mysteries of life”. It set them apart in the eyes of the other boys, their peers. But they would never share this information to an outcast like me! I was curious what magically set them apart. Well in hindsight what they were saying is that they had reached puberty and they had learned one or more elements of procreation and they were being transformed from a boy into a man.

The subject of sex is normally considered taboo and is only very rarely spoken about if ever by their parents. And then generally only in allegory terms such as *the birds and the bees!* So a child generally learns about this subject from their peers. Since I was an outcast from my peers, I was totally and completely alone in figuring out this vital subject. Perhaps an Aspie needs to be brutally trained on the mechanics and rules guiding sex, romance, and marriage in fine detail by his parents because someone who labels a subject as taboo or hidden invites greater curiosity, especially when their peers refer to it as “the mystery of life”.

For an Aspie with an infinite curiosity, no subject is ever taboo or hidden in his quest to discover the great mysteries of life.

So the following are a few ways that one might broach the subject as your child passes into puberty.

* You might take your child to a horse farm and have them watch the horses or other animals mating. This would allow your child to observe the mechanics of sex and for you to explain what is happening and how it applies to humans. You might arrange to let him see a young horse being born or maybe a film of a young horse being born.

* You might take your child to a farm and watch cows being milked and then a young newborn calf being fed by its mother. This might explain the function of one of the anatomical differences between male and female and one of the natural functions of the breast. You might even let them learn how to milk a cow.

These steps might open the door to discussing the finer details of sex with your child, such as the purpose of sex, conception, the biology of cell division, how it relates to marriage, where babies come from (hint: it has nothing to do with storks – like the book I read said).

In my opinion, it is much better that your child receive sex education from their parents rather than from the public school system or out in the wild, wild, wild West.

As a young adult when I was in the military, I remember visiting a bordello with several of my mates. I was simple just curious. There is courage in numbers, so I was with my mates. Inside they had all the girls stand in a line wearing skimpy almost see-through clothes. The girls were all very beautiful and then my mates and I just simply walked out and left. But one of mates soon returned to the bordello and later came down with the clap (venereal disease). Like I said wild, wild, Wild West!

One of the main functions of marriage is to procreate and have children. So I would also recommend having your child after they reach the age of puberty read a book called “Husband Coached Childbirth” by Robert Bradley, M.D. We had both our children naturally. There are many methods or approaches in the process of childbirth such as a normal hospital birth, Lamaze technique, the Bradley method, and the Leboyer method, at home birth with midwife, and a maze of other approaches. The Bradley method is a very good method because it teaches:

- * the importance of proper prenatal nutrition, diet and vitamins – right from the very beginning of pregnancy
- * useful prenatal exercises
- * inaccuracies in determining due dates
- * proper full-term weight gain goals
- * parental decision making during birthing process
- * the process of labor (bag of water breaking, the 3 stages of labor, labor contractions, the emotional bite your head off stage, the child’s birth, umbilical cord and placenta)
- * the difference between synthetic versus natural oxytocin in expelling the placenta
- * mother/child bonding and father/child bonding
- * the importance of breastfeeding (especially right after giving birth)

As one reviewer on Amazon wrote *“With the second baby we were surprised with how soon she lost her water, and as we live 45 minutes from the hospital. I was reminding her of the instructions in this book while driving. As it was she delivered in the car right in front of my in-laws’ flat and my panicking mother-in-law”*.

Dr. Bradley was born on a farm in Atchison, Kansas. Growing up on the farm provided him with a love of nature that he brought into his medical practice and into this book. Dr. Bradley learned that nature was not something to fight against but something to emulate.

B. Courtship and Romance

Because of my shy and introverted nature, I had very few dates and girlfriends during my life. Almost all my high school years and college years, I was either going to school, studying or working. I had very little time for dating. I figured that would come after college and after I found my first job.

But when I finally met those milestones, I was clueless about the act of courtship and dating. It was like walking from one disaster to the next, and each time my heart would break a little more.

It might have been nice if someone [my parents] taught me the basics.

They can be simple things, such as “On a date, always bring a girl flowers, if you have a romantic inclinations towards her.”

Or a parent could teach their son to be a true gentleman

When I was in college, I had a girl who took pity on me and showed me how to kiss. She was from South America and the girls there are much more adept in that area. She explained to me all the different types of kissing such as the simple kiss, the French kiss, the truly romantic kiss, the kiss that leaves a mark (Hickey Kiss) and we practiced each technique.

But the most important kiss of all was the truly romantic kiss. The secret is that it is all done with the eyes. First you need to be alone and remain perfectly quiet. You need to look deep within their eyes until you can see the shadow of their soul, then you slowly move your faces together without breaking eye contact. And then kiss the girl on her lips. She demonstrated the technique and I could see her point. I would have never known, not in a million years.

After several unsuccessful attempts at dating and romance I almost gave up and resigned my fate to a solitary life of celibacy. In true Aspie fashion I made a lists of the qualities I desired in my perfect wife. I wanted a traditional wife, one who would stand beside me when the storm clouds gathered, one who would cherish children and the home, and someone I could trust with my life.

My list of a perfect wife included:

- Beautiful wife
- A non-smoker
- Honest
- Traditional Values
- A Christian
- Commitment to the Vows of Marriage
- Loves Children

One solution to the problem of courtship

In the very early 1900's while they were still teenagers, my grandparents separately immigrated from part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. A hundred years earlier it was a country called Poland, but Poland had been split into three parts and was ground to dust and the nation no longer existed. My father had always dreamed about a trip to his native country and in the early 1970's his dream came true. During his 2-month trip, he stopped at a coffee shop in Kalwaria, Poland and was chatting with several unsavory men that he had casually met. A young woman, Maria, who worked in an adjacent furniture factory walked into the coffee shop during her break. The men at the table invited Maria to come over and talk to an American who was speaking an ancient dialect of Polish. After several minutes, my dad asked Maria for her address for his son. She asked how old was his son. He immediately thought of my younger brother David and told her his age. Maria said “Too young!” He then told her he had another son who was older. She left to return back to work and left him her address. When my father returned back to the States, he came and visited me. He was very excited. He told me he had met the most beautiful girl in

all of Europe and he had her address if I wanted to write to her. But he said that there was only one small problem. He also had met another girl and took her address and now he had two addresses and he didn't know which one was which.

How to live an extraordinary life.

1. You have to think out-of-the-box and recognize those opportunities that are extraordinary that have suddenly come out of nowhere.
2. You have to seize them and be a major risk taker.
3. You have to have a rock solid focus, drive and tenacity.
4. You have to use your extraordinary skills to fix all the problems that you encounter along the way.

So I rolled this over in my mind. She met the criteria I had listed. So using my mind and less of my heart, I viewed this as an exceptional opportunity.

I wrote to both girls. Only one answered. She was Maria. Communicating by letter was difficult. We found that the system, which worked best, was to have two sets of interpreters. Maria would write in Polish and my interpreter would translate it to English. I would write her in English and her interpreter would translate it into Polish. We corresponded for a year. She invited me for a visit and I accepted. So most of our courtship was by mail.

Poland at the time was behind the Iron Curtain and this was during the Cold War. It was a grand adventure and in some ways it would almost be comparable to traveling into North Korea today.

After 3 weeks together, I proposed to a young girl in a foreign land who spoke not a word of English. I proposed using the Polish/English dictionary. She didn't accept right away. She said that I had to ask permission from her parents. The next day I asked her parents for their daughter's hand in marriage. This was a slow process, translating one word to the next using the language dictionary. I wasn't even able to make the halfway mark before her parents and the entire family was rolling on the floor with laughter. In the end she agreed to marry me provided I could successfully bring her out of Poland. After all how could a marriage even begin if a physical barrier, the Iron Curtain, permanently separated two young lovers!

One of my major weaknesses is language. I tried Spanish, French and Russian in school and barely survived the experience. It was probably my poorest subject. It probably took me several decades to become somewhat proficient in one language – English. So going to a foreign country where English was not spoken was almost out of the question and trying to woo and romance a potential wife who could not speak English was really out of the question. But I took an extraordinary risk and that is what I actually accomplished.

One thing I found most intriguing is that even though we didn't speak a common language, we were very capable of communicating. We quickly evolved our own language. We took a few words of English, French, Russian, Polish, sign language, sound language, drawn pictures and then added a little bit of pure imagination and evolved a common language. Sometimes we used a language dictionary or used an interpreter. But communications was not as big a problem as I originally thought.

When I look back, I can see that my whole life has been defined by knowing my strengths and weaknesses and taking advantages of extraordinary opportunities.

But the wheel of courtship, romance, marriage and family is evolving (for the worst). Dating 101 has been replaced by a hookup culture. These are based on bogus relationship ideals such as:

* *For women, being sexually “liberated” and obsessively self-reliant is better than being emotionally attached to a man.*

* *Casual sex is both normal and good.*

* *You deserve the best. Never settle.*

This is flawed logic. *All of these narratives—combined with social media, the decline in religion, rampant divorce and a transient lifestyle—keep love at bay. They are largely to blame for why more than 50 percent of America is single.*

[<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2018/04/02/dating-101-film-takes-aim-at-america-s-hookup-culture-and-death-courtship.html>]

So since Aspies are already out-of-step with their peer group, teach them to follow the path of their ancestors that have worked well through thousands of generations and approach romance and marriage the old fashion way.

My wife and I once attended a Marriage Encounter. *Marriage Encounter is the largest pro-marriage organization in the world and promotes weekend experiences for couples that want to make their good marriage even better.* Most of the world relies on verbal communications. But marriage encounters provide tools for communicating your most intimate feelings to your spouse in the form of writing. It was like writing love letters to communicate, while being locked away in different rooms. Since one of my strengths was writing (an Aspie trait), I found this approach or tool very valuable.

There is an offshoot called Engagement Encounter, which I believe provides similar training for newly engaged couples and I suspect would be highly beneficial for an Aspie who is about to take the vows of marriage. An Aspie needs to learn how to expose their deepest innermost secret feelings to their soon-to-be spouse. This would probably be a good place to reveal that you are an Aspie. You might begin by discussing Table 1 (the list of good attributes of an Aspie). Put your best foot forward. Then describe how the Aspies evolution through normal childhood development was halted prematurely. Then explain the bad traits and where these traits came from - the list of “Do you know why Aspies ...?” You might even end by explaining the Albert Einstein, Nikolas Tesla and many other famous individuals were probably Aspies.

In some cultures, there are arranged marriages where parents aid in the selection of the bride or groom. For an Aspie, this may be a valid approach.

C. Marriage and Family

I wanted to marry a very beautiful girl. Normally during my school years, I would daydream about dating the most beautiful girl in the class. But this was just a daydream. It was not possible because I was extremely shy and introverted [a different normal]. I was so shy I couldn't even dare ask the girl out on a date. By marrying a beautiful girl, I felt it would validate my being normal. But there was something about this desire that I didn't really understand. In general, a beautiful girl was also a popular girl. A beautiful woman is probably an extrovert and well versed in the social graces. Her strengths balanced my weakness and her weaknesses balanced my strengths and together we made a type of couple that could weather any storm. It was a type of Ying and Yang. Two souls bonded together to make a stronger whole!



Each individual has different strengths and weaknesses. In joining together in marriage, the couple is better capable of dealing with whatever challenges the world throws their way. Combining an Introvert and Extrovert personality is a good fit together. It is trying to capture a trait you do not possess, a trait that will help to make you appear normal, a better version of Clark Kent.

An important observation for parents of an Asperger son! You don't have to teach your son all the social rules for him to succeed. He just needs to marry an extrovert, listen to her closely when he deals with the outside world and always be there for her.

Also my wife is very beautiful but didn't even recognize that she was physically beautiful. This is a good quality. Generally being beautiful is not an actionable skill-set in an agrarian society. One reason is because beauty is fleeting. For a girl, excelling in cooking, sewing, and cleaning is more durable and desirable skill in an agrarian society in times long past.

I underwent a Myers-Briggs personality tests as part of a large group. It told me that I was an extreme introvert. Introverts recharge their batteries by being alone. Other personality types were Extroverts. Extroverts recharge their batteries by being in a group. They talk and bounce from one person to another, each time gaining more energy and vitality. But introverts are not always socially adept. And the extroverts in the group wanted inclusion, they wanted everyone to succeed. So their idea of inclusion was to throw a party and bring everyone to it. [Dumb idea]

A party is the exact place an introvert does not want to be at. We are not broken and we do not need to be fixed. We are just a different normal.

But let us flip this around. Extroverts have a weakness. They are afraid of being completely alone. It causes them great distress. You can help an extrovert by always being there for them. As an Aspie, my word is my bond. I am honest. If I take a marriage vow, I will be with my wife till the end of time. Since an extrovert's greatest fear is being alone, I will always be there for her as long as I live.

I also understood that if my wife is an extrovert, she would need to socialize. It is important for her to be the best she can be. So you need to let and encourage her to socialize. You may go along and sit in a corner, out of the way and just be there for her. That is how marriage works.

I am good at fixing things. I excel at that function. So that is one of the ways I contribute to marriage.

I don't know what matching clothes to wear to make myself appear normal (to be Clark Kent), but my extrovert wife instinctively does, so I let her pick the clothes I wear. She always notices if my hair is a mess or if I have bad breath. Some decisions an extrovert can solve better and some decisions an introvert can solve better. So a matching of souls can become a very strong force.

Perform a strength/weakness assessment to figure out which talents go best with yourself and your other half.

- * I am in charge of repairing everything. That is my job.
- * My wife is in charge of everything that goes on within the house and also landscaping.
- * I am in charge of balancing the checkbook and managing finances.
- * My wife is the social expert and in charge of all social functions.
- * I am in charge of all the big or dangerous equipment such as operating chainsaws, log splitters, tractors, big lawnmowers, come-alongs, and rototillers.
- * My wife is in charge of making me socially acceptable to the outside world.
- * It is my job to always be there for her.

What is marriage?

Two souls who have chosen to join together in the vast regions of time and space who together can weather almost any storm and find great pleasure and joy and also wonder in their children.

There is a big difference between destructive criticism vs. constructive criticism. There are some forms of gentle constructive criticism that is needed in a marriage. – When my wife gives me a gentle elbow to the ribs or a gentle tap, it is a reminder that I am doing something socially wrong and need to immediately take note and correct myself.

There are usually difficulties along the way. Did you ever have a fight with someone that could not speak your language and had a habit of giving you the silent treatment when she got mad? Sometimes it would take two or three days for her to get to the point where she would finally begin to explain the problem. It would almost drive me absolutely insane.

You can teach your Aspie child that people are not perfect (he already probably learned this through the school of hard knocks), that couples are not perfect and will sometimes fight. You can discuss the different ways that couples fight, like the loud screaming fight which results in every dish in the kitchen being broken, or the silent treatment, or name-calling. That the goal of fighting within marriage is to resolve disputes and you can teach your child the techniques to resolve a dispute between couples.

One time shortly after we were married I arrived home from work and my wife was furious with me. We lived a half block from the Pacific Ocean and my wife liked to walk along the sandy beach when I was away at work. My wife was strolling along the beach and she spotted someone that looked a lot like me, almost an exact twin. He was walking along with another girl, hand in hand. When I arrived home she was furious and I hadn't a clue why? So I took out the language dictionary and translated, "What is the problem?" Her response was "I know what you had done!" But I really didn't, I had no clue. I sat through 2 or 3 days of silent treatment, normally when I would arrive home from work she would be withdrawn and you could tell she had been crying. Finally she began to open up a little and explain to me the problem. I told her "It wasn't me, I was at work". I don't think she really believed me but she accepted the explanation with the caveat that "Don't you ever do that again." It wasn't until a couple years later when my wife and I were walking together on the beach that she spotted this man again who was my look-alike twin.

Since my wife was an extrovert she had a great fear of being alone. So when I was not there, I was neglecting her primary need to be there. I had left her alone. But a man has to work to support the family and that meant being away. So I will tell a couple stories that occurred.

My wife is deafly afraid of snakes. I am not. So I protect her from the things she is very afraid of. I think that when I was around age 6 or 7, snakes may have been one of my first hobbies and collectables. I created a hole in the ground and collected snakes with my bare hands and put them in the hole like a pen to keep them. They had many colors and were beautiful. I would hold them and play with them. So snakes don't cause me fear. But my wife is different. Snakes were extremely rare where she grew up and she feared them. One day when I was at work, my wife and small children walked to the mailbox to pick up the mail. On their way back, they passed under a tree and looking up saw a large snake over 6 feet long dangling from a branch directly above their heads. Instant intense fear! My wife immediately ran home and once inside, sat waiting several hours for my return home so she could scream at me for making our home in such a wild place. When I finally arrived home, I could see flames coming out of her eyes and smoke from her mouth. She was absolutely furious. I asked her what happened and she related the story. My response was "what color was the snake?" She said, "black". I said a 6-foot long black snake is a very good snake. It will not harm you and it kills dangerous snakes such as rattlesnakes or copperheads and it also eats mice. That did not ease her mind one bit; it only made her more furious. In hindsight, it was my fault because I should have been there to protect her.

Another time I went off for a week on a business trip. My wife is also very afraid of rats and mice. When she was a child she heard stories of rats that attacked and killed young infants while they slept in their small crib on the floor during the night. These were true stories. Once in a while a small mouse would invade our house. I would set up an elaborate maze of intricate traps and catch the little critters and then get rid of them. That was my job. But I was away that week.

Before I left, I had been experimenting with sticky glue mousetraps. I had one set up and sure enough it caught a small mouse. But I wasn't home to dispose of it. So she took a pair of long pliers and ever so gingerly took the trap outside. She came across our cat along the way and reasoned it would be good to feed the mouse to the cat. The only problem was that when the cat took the mouse, the cat became stuck on the mousetrap too. The mouse was squeaking, the cat was crying. It was sheer chaos for several hours. Again I failed my primary duty to be there and protect her.

One other comment: There is probably no joy greater than holding your child for the first time just after they are born and watching them grow up day by day.

As a parent you might teach your Aspie son, marriage rules.

Marriage Rules:

Rule #1: Always remember the date of your anniversary and the date of her birthday and always remember to give her a card on those dates. Oh, I almost forgot, it is extremely, extremely important to give her a card on Valentines Day, something that really show her the love and affection you feel towards her.

Rule #2: Never, ever show any physical violence towards your wife. Years of physical torture caused me to develop a very thick hide. It is extremely important to realize that others tend to be very vulnerable and sensitive.

Rule #3: In marriage, you make a sacred oath. "I take you, to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part." This is a sacred oath. You must not break this oath.

How can she trust you to hold true to the oath if you are:

Kissing another woman

Flirting with another woman

Making love to another woman

Sleeping with another woman

She will leave you. And it will be your fault because you broke the oath.

Rule #4: That sometimes within a marriage a husband and a wife will have an argument. If you explain to your wife your side of the argument and she is still adamant that you are dead wrong. Then tell her you are sorry, even if you know you are right. It is more important to have peace inside a marriage that to argue about who is right and who is wrong.

Rule #5: Keep your wife happy. I am an extreme introvert and I am happy being an introvert. My wife is an extreme extrovert and she is happy being an extrovert. It is important for me to allow her to be the best extrovert she can be. If I lock her away in a house and restrict her from developing new friendships, I will break her. So it is important for me to encourage and expand her social network. When we moved into a new housing development, none of our new neighbors came by for a visit. I could see that they were all waiting for someone else to break the ice. So when I got home from work each day I would take my wife in tow and walk over to a neighbor and knock on their door and introduce us and invite them over for a cup of coffee. About half of our neighbors were glad to meet us and they immediately invited us in for a chat. They became instant friends. This may sound like a strange thing for an introvert to do. But I am fearless but my wife is not and besides I didn't really need to socialize, I just needed to introduce ourselves and then stand back and let my wife do all the talking.

D. How do I know that this particular approach to marriage was the correct one in my life?

When I went to the other side of the world for the first time and met my potential wife, I took my camera and tripod along. I took one of the first selfies. It was a photograph of me and my future wife standing on a dirt road, high up upon a small mountain just outside her family home. My 35mm camera had a timer built into the camera. I asked the girl to stay. I quickly took the camera, mounted it on a tripod, looked through the viewfinder and framed the scene, set the timer and then quickly joined the girl. I stuck a pose next to her when the camera shutter clicked.

I was proud of this photograph and hung it on the wall of our house.



Years later, what I found was quite remarkable was that when my oldest daughter married, she went to the exact same spot on the other side of the world and took a selfie with her husband. Then when my youngest daughter married she did the exact same thing. All three photographs are mounted together on the wall in our home.

Those photographs from my 2 daughters honor their uniqueness and their heritage so much so that they have essentially been codified it into a family tradition.

X. KRYPTONITE

Drugs such as narcotics and psychedelics drugs along with alcohol are to Aspies like kryptonite is to Superman. They rob an Aspie of their uniqueness, of their unusual senses and their razor sharp logic. They destroy the “different normal” abilities. But they do not make an Aspie normal, only a drug user or an alcoholic.

An article in the *Psychiatric Times* titled *Autism and Schizophrenia* stated, “Systematic studies of COS (childhood-onset **schizophrenia**) show high rates of the disorder being either preceded by or comorbid with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD).” An article in the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website reads, “Some studies have suggested that taking mind-altering drugs during teen years and young adulthood can increase the risk of schizophrenia. A growing body of evidence indicates that smoking marijuana increases the risk of psychotic incidents and the risk of ongoing psychotic experiences. The younger and more frequent the use, the greater the risk. Another study has found that smoking marijuana led to earlier onset of schizophrenia and often preceded the manifestation of the illness.” There is an epidemic of substance abuse that has exploded beginning in the 1970’s. Since the 1970’s the potency of drugs has increased substantially and their usage rates among the general population has skyrocketed.

In an article in *Autism Speaks* reads “studies suggest that **bipolar disorder** may be relatively common among children and adults with autism. Some studies have found that as many as 27 percent of those with autism also have symptoms of bipolar disorder. By contrast, its prevalence in the general population is around 4 percent. An article titled *The Bipolar Subtypes and their Risks of Addiction* reads, “Although not officially symptomatic of each other, a high percentage of people with bipolar disorder struggle with addiction. In fact, a co-occurring substance abuse disorder is so common that many medical professionals perform routine addiction screenings in people who are diagnosed with bipolar disorder.”

The brains of individuals with Asperger’s Syndrome are hardwired very differently than neurotypical individuals. Is it too far of a stretch to consider that because their brains are physically different, that Aspies (and others on the Autistic Spectrum) may be more vulnerable to the effects of narcotics and psychedelics drugs along with alcohol?

XI. CAUSE OF ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

A fleeting thought - you wonder why some individuals are more prone to Asperger's Syndrome than others. The wheels begin to spin. Is it genetics or something else or perhaps it is a combination of elements.

In a recent article titled "Autism Awareness Month: All The Things That Don't Cause Autism" by the American Council on Science and Health, they wrote:

For absolute certain, genetics plays a role in autism. As many as 1,000 genes may be involved. According to a paper in the Annual Review of Public Health, the genetic contribution to autism ranges from 50% to 95%. The tricky thing, however, is that each gene likely plays only a minimal role. A small tweak here, another small tweak there. We will never discover "the autism gene," which makes research incredibly difficult.

Adding another layer of complexity is the role of environmental factors and gene-environment interactions. It is entirely plausible that some environmental exposure X, if in the context of a developing fetus with genetic factor Y, creates an interaction in which autism is more likely to develop.

What sort of environmental exposures are associated with autism? Just like cancer, the research is all over the place, which is a bad sign. If epidemiologists can link just about anything to autism, then we aren't really any closer to finding the biggest causes. All of the following, with varying levels of evidentiary support and taken from the aforementioned paper in Annual Review, have been blamed for autism:

- Parental age*
- Interpregnancy interval*
- Immune factors*
- Medication*
- Preterm birth*
- Maternal diet*
- Air pollution*
- Endocrine disruptors (which, themselves, have been blamed implausibly for everything from cancer to obesity)*
- Pesticides*

While factors like parental age make sense, it is difficult to believe that some of these other factors play a substantial role in the development of autism.

According to the CDC's current data, about 1 in 68 children have been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The ratio males to females Aspies is often cited by professionals as approximately one female to every four males. The ratio of INTP personality types is one female to every four males. The ration of INTJ is approximately one female to every five males.

So is this genetic? My father suffered much of his life with ulcers. He had 8 years of schooling in a one-room schoolhouse, yet he worked his entire life as a professional engineer. He had

several patents to his name. He invented one of the first digital clocks. It was designed using motors and cams. He invented an air-train (U.S. Patent # 5253590 of 10/19/1993). So did I share the same personality traits that he did? Was his ulcer the gastrointestinal problems many Asperger individuals experience?

Or perhaps it came from my mother's side. She was definitely an introvert and extremely stubborn. Or perhaps these traits came from both their genetic lines.

When I was young, I lived on a farm. At a very early age [sometime between the age of 2 and 5 years], I was kicked in the head by a bull that weighed over 1,000 pounds and knocked unconscious. Back in those days, there were no 911 phone calls. My parents just picked up my limp body brought me back into the house and laid me on my bed. I might recover or I might die. Their hearts were broken in dread and fear. But I eventually regained consciousness and recovered without a scratch. My father sold the bull. But perhaps, I didn't recover "without a scratch"!

Current research confirms that a car accident, or even mild head trauma can create enough inflammation and brain damage to cause confusion, memory loss, mood swings, depression and uncharacteristic aggression. Inflammation in the brain as a cause of Autistic Spectrum Disorders is slowly beginning to gain recognition too.

Autopsies of autistic, Asperger's, and normal brains by Margaret Bauman and her colleagues reveal that in both autism and Asperger's there is immature development of the cerebellum, amygdala, and hippocampus. Small cells are packed tightly in these immature parts of the brain, signifying true immature development, not damage or atrophy. Brains from people with autism are more immature in hippocampus development than are Asperger's brains. The situation is reversed for the amygdala, a part of the brain that processes emotion. Here, the Asperger's brain is often more abnormal than the autistic brain.

The British autism researcher Simon Baron-Cohen has done functional MRI studies indicating that normal people activate the amygdala to judge the expression in another person's eyes, but people with Asperger's call on fronto-temporal regions of the brain.

A study by M.M. Haznedar revealed that in the brain of the high-functioning autistic or Asperger's person, the circuit between the anterior cingulate in the frontal cortex and the amygdala is not completely connected. As a result, people with autism or Asperger's have decreased metabolism in the anterior cingulate.

Is my Asperger symptoms genetically driven or maybe a combination – a genetic disposition combined with something else? The brains of Aspies are physically different from normal brains. So is it possible that an individual genetically disposed towards Aspergers, if they suffered brain injury at a young age during their growth spurt may manifest as full-scale Asperger's as they grow?

That may explain why males tend to experience a greater incidence of Asperger's Syndrome and INTP & INTJ personalities than females. It might be due to the fact when they are young, males experience a more rough-and-tumble form of play than females.

But maybe because Aspies pass through the stages of childhood development at a slower pace than their peers, it paints a bright red target on their back. As a result, they are subjected to mental and physical abuse and systematic torture. And this abuse over time halts any further transformation through the other stages of childhood development. So they are frozen in place like little children. [In general, males tend to resort to physical violence more than females. But maybe both sexes resort to psychological abuse equally.]

I also sense that another Aspie trait may be related. I remember very early childhood events. Normally childhood amnesia kicks in around age 8.

My earliest memory that I can accurately date was at the age of 2 years 3 months old. I remember my parents leaving my sister and I in an orphanage. And I remembered quite a few details about the event. So around 50 years later, I asked my mom why she abandoned us. She said what! It never happened! Then around 6 months later, she asked me how I remembered that. She said it was true and gave me the back-story.

My mother was expecting her third child, David. We lived out in the country, 30 miles from Buffalo, New York. My dad bought a farm for \$10,000 of over 300 acres. He used the nest-egg money he saved from the Army to purchase this foreclosed farm. The land was immense. It stretched from one small mountain to the next with a valley down below. There was a farmhouse and a creek. Dad always bought old junk cars on their last legs for \$50. He worked on them and squeezed 6 more months of life from them before they were sent to the scrap heap. Winter was fierce in Buffalo with sometimes 6 feet of snow. And winter was coming on and mom was scared. What if the child came in the middle of a snowstorm! What could she do if she was alone and my dad was far away at work! She met with her relatives and tried to arrange for one of them to watch her children as time was getting close to delivery. But they all refused. They told her they would take my mom in but not the children. In desperation, she went to a Catholic orphanage and arranged for them to watch my sister Kathy and I for a few weeks. We were brought to the orphanage and dropped off. It was horrible. I was just old enough to know what an orphanage was. All I knew was one day I was a happy boy in a happy family and the next day I was abandoned and an orphan. It was a nice place full of children and toys. But I would have none of it. I tried to explain to my younger sister Kathy (1 year 3 months old) our predicament but she didn't understand. She ran around having fun playing with the other children. And I was so frustrated that I couldn't convey to my sister what was going on. So I did the only thing I knew how to do. I cried and cried. I cried all day, all night, the next day, and the next night. And then the nuns in the orphanage contacted my parents and told them to come and get us. My parents came back for us and I was glad.

XII. WHY ARE ASPIES BULLIED?

A thought flashed across my mind “Perhaps the strange traits exhibited by Autistic children are just caused by a delay in childhood development?” Many of their strange traits like throwing temper tantrums and banging their heads against the wall are eerily similar to a stage of childhood development called the TERRIBLE TWO’S. Dr. David Canter and his associates at the University of Maryland found that low-functioning autistic children between the ages of four and twelve had Electroencephalography (EEG) readings that resemble the brain-wave pattern of a two-year-old.

Children progress through stages of development coined the Terrible 2’s, the Trusting 3’s, and the Pleasing 4’s. Perhaps an autistic child just takes a little longer to transition through these phases. They are out of sync with their peer group. If that is the case, then maybe the toolset developed by the parents collective to successfully deal with the terrible two’s might be very beneficial in correcting some of the negative traits exhibited by low-functioning autistic children.

When I entered the 6th grade around the age of 11, I was still probably in my “Pleasing 4” stage of childhood development. [Truth be told, I am almost 70 years old and probably still in this vulnerable stage of development.] Although this phase is generally not a stressful phase for parents and teachers, it does place a bright red bulls-eye on a child’s back within their peer group. They are out of phase with their peer group and their peer group instinctively recognizes the anomaly. When a teacher gives a compliment like “He is well behaved, a little angel in my class”, his peer group hears “teacher’s pet”.

How can you please members of your peer group when you are subjected to continuous torture daily for years with physical and psychological abuse! It arrests your transition through childhood development. You become like a turtle that ducks inside its hardened shell whenever it senses danger. It keeps you an introvert and you become “stubborn as hell” in order to just survive. My high pain tolerance and my rejection of destructive criticism is most likely a direct result, a type of coping mechanism.

What are the childhood development stages after the “Pleasing 4’s”? Is one of them the “Extrovert Stage of Child Development”? A quick bit of research on the Internet uncovers an article called *Child Development by Age* by The Center for Parenting Education.

[<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/child-development/child-development-by-age/>]
At Age 8 children are described as “Lively and Outgoing” – the extrovert stage.

The listing of traits in article *Child Development by Age* mixes apples and oranges. It combines the traits of normal children and the different normal (Aspie) children. So around Age 7 normal children “may join several peers to gang up on one child”. But at the same age some of the traits listed might be those of Aspies. For example at Age 7:

- * thinks others are mean, hateful, unfriendly, always picking on him, not liking him
- * may tell stories of maltreatment
- * does not respond well to humor
- * does not want others to laugh at him
- * likes a room of his own to which he can retreat
- * is absent-minded
- * loves to think, observe, and reflect

So if the traits applicable towards these two populations were separated apart for all stages of childhood development, it might become a truly exceptional list.

I avoid confrontation and try to please people. So maybe because I consider myself an unbroken Aspie child, I am the way I am with a fabulous skill-set of very unique toys (gifts) at my disposal.

Many animals naturally live and travel together in groups called herds. They form into groups and act collectively without centralized direction. Examples include: zebras, buffalos, sheep, cattle, antelopes, deer, elephants, giraffes and camels. By sticking together in a herd, they reduce the chance of being singled out and becoming the one animal that gets killed by the predator. Some of the benefits to forming into herds are:

Safety - Catching one animal is much harder when there are hundreds of animals nearby. There are always eyes watching for individual safety, which translates to safety for everyone. If one member of the herd detects danger, they will share with the rest through sounds or behavioral changes and alert the rest of the herd to the threat.

Camouflage - A large group of animals with an overlapping combination of colors makes it difficult to distinguish one animal from the next and is visually confusing to a predator. Individuals visually blend into a herd making it difficult for the predator to lock onto an individual single target to prey upon. Perhaps eyes or a nose are visible, but not seeing exactly where one animal starts and another begins makes catching just one animal much more difficult.

Efficiency - With a large group on the alert for treats, individuals do not have to be constantly vigilant. This provides individuals the opportunity to spend time and energy on other tasks such as looking for food. Some animals within the herd can share the burden of performing guard duty.

Separation from the herd, isolation, is seen as dangerous and life threatening for these species. An animal separated from the herd may exhibit behaviors associated with fear reactions (such as elevated heart rate, shaking, and hypersensitivity to sounds and other senses). Separation triggers fear-based behaviors.

As species evolved some animals (for example **primates**) began to exhibit social traits. Social animals in a hierarchic community have been observed exhibiting the following structure:

The highest-ranking individual is sometimes designated as the **Alpha Male**. Alpha animals usually gain preferential access to food and other desirable items or activities. Alphas may achieve their status by superior physical strength and aggression. The individual with alpha status sometimes changes, often through a fight between the dominant and a subordinate animal. These fights are often to the death, depending on the animal.

Beta Male animals often act as second-in-command to the reigning alpha. They will replace a dead or unfit alpha and become the next alpha.

Omega Males are referred to as the lowest caste of the hierarchical society. Omega animals are subordinate to all others in the community, and are expected by others in the group to remain submissive to everyone. Omega animals may also be used as communal scapegoats or outlets for frustration, or given the lowest priority when food is distributed.

This structure is also exhibited in tribes of humans. Humans form into societal groups called gangs. A gang is led by an **Alpha Male** (otherwise known as the bully) and his lieutenants, **Beta Males**. Generally this tribe encompasses the entire school class because the other members of the tribe participate as soldiers in the gang or as silent eyewitnesses. The leadership of the gang is determined by brute force. An Aspie fills the role of an **Omega Male**.

One of the interesting observations about school bullying is that generally for males it peaks in the Junior High School years. What makes the timing of that phase interesting and special? It is because males are transitioning into puberty at that age.

In primates, **Alpha Males** often gain preferential access to sex or mates and as a result to reproduction and offspring.

XIII. ASPIE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Not all Aspies exhibit the same traits in the ways their brains function. Therefore a classification system is beneficial. Temple Grandin in her book *The Autistic Brain* breaks Aspies into three groupings: Visual Thinkers, Pattern Thinkers, and Word-Fact Thinkers. Individuals on the autism spectrum have been recognized to have almost effortless associative thinking skills and to be prone to “bottom-up” processing. An Aspie brain is physically wired differently. Temple once wrote:

“I’m good at trawling through the Internet through vast amounts of journal articles and then pick out what are the really important things. I then synthesize all of this resource down into one short paragraph . . . That’s something that I’m good at doing... I’m a bottom-up thinker—I take the details and put them together.”

Wherein the normal individual is taking in the concept before the details, based on collective memories, the autistic mind is taking in the details before the concept. This “details before the concept” idea is a definer of the bottom-up process approach to thinking. This approach is indispensable to innovative thinking. In short, Aspies don’t take things at face value. We come to our own conclusions and let those guide us.

A **visual thinker**, thinks in terms of photo-realistic pictures. Their mind works by retrieving pictures from the catalog of pictures stored in their brains. Their thinking is dominated by images, to have a series of images pop into their mind—and not just abstract images, but very specific, concrete images of things they have seen. Temple Grandin is an example of a visual thinker.

A **pattern thinker** observes deep patterns in the information stored in their memory or the information being observed. I am a pattern thinker. Sometimes this trait is described as Music/Math thinking. I am on the math side of this trait. I look at details and see patterns. I can easily take three-dimensional objects and tear them apart into two-dimensional space and identify any anomalies. This trait is called spatial visualization. I can rotate three-dimensional objects in space within my mind.

Theories are like puzzle pieces. They are all interconnected. If a puzzle piece doesn’t fit, some people simply smash them together to make them fit. That approach really affects a multitude of other theories because they are all interconnected. Smashing puzzle pieces together is a TERRIBLE approach. I can assemble millions of pieces correctly within my mind. The puzzle is like an elaborate “impossible” puzzle. I can see which theories are flawed and which are true and in some cases I can even fabricate missing puzzle pieces. The puzzle in this case is commonly referred to as the Great Mystery of the Universe.

A **word-fact thinker** is sometimes called a verbal/logic thinker. These are the thinkers who like words and speech. They love to make lists and will often memorize things such as train timetables & routes, stories in alphabetical order and even mundane things like software product codes. There doesn't need to be a pattern, there just needs to be words. One individual with this trait described it in the following way:

At university, I didn't write much of what the professors were explaining. Other students were all scribbling furiously every word they heard (often without processing the information first). I, on the other hand, just listened, visualized in my head everything I heard, then wrote down a few schemes with isolated words or phrases linked by arrows or arranged in a way that would conjure up the images right back in my head when I saw my notes, but that wouldn't mean anything to anybody else. When another student had written 5 full pages, I had barely half a page. Yet I got better results and hardly had to study at home. I just needed to review my schematic representations once before the exam and that was it.

Word-fact thinkers are not great at thinking outside the box. They can be quite good at logic when terms are clearly defined, but are prone to missing obvious fallacies when terminology shifts or where words have two meanings.

How does an Aspie Brain Work?

I woke up one morning a few days ago and visualized how my brain works and how it is different than a neurotypical brain. It happened in a flash. It felt like 4 seconds of real time. So I will describe this visualization.



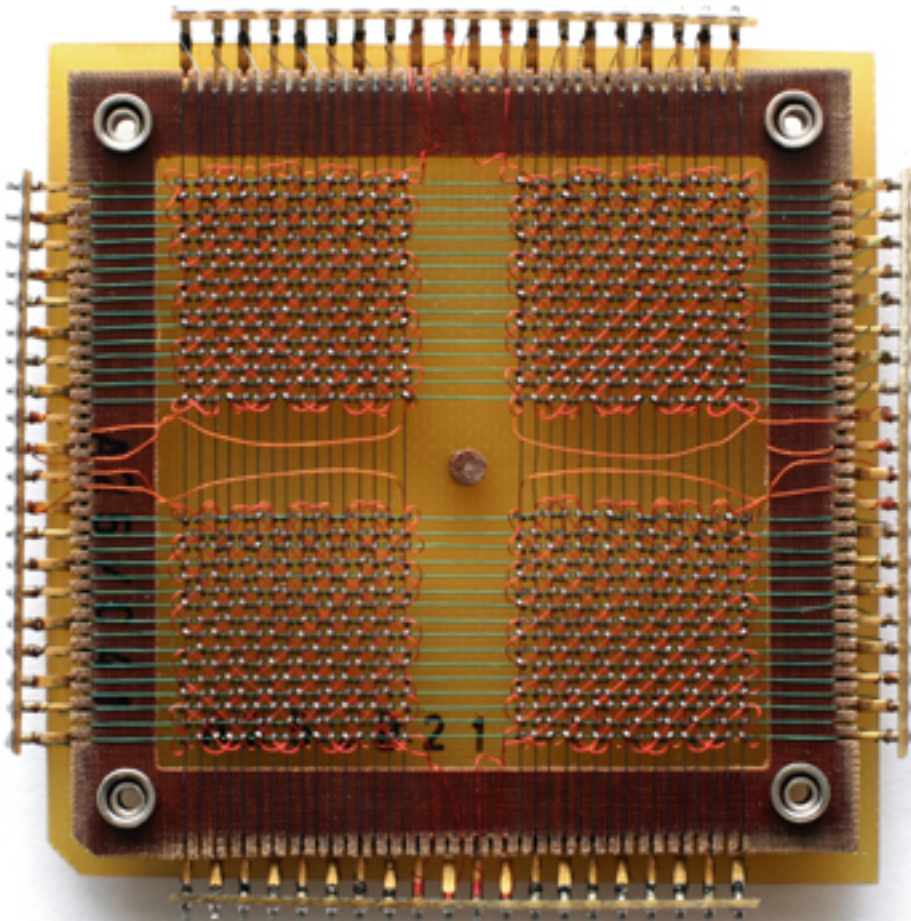
The first image I saw was a fidget spinner, a small little toy that spins round and round. When we retrieve memories, in a sense it works like a little fidget spinner.

The second image that I saw was a highway called I-465. Jason Lu (author of Elkona Bridge) suggests in his writings that the manner in which information is retrieved from the brain is like a highway. In a neurotypical brain, there are many on-ramps and off-ramps but in an autistic brain there are very, very few. Without entrances and exits, cars could technically travel at far greater speeds. But then again what advantage would that trait be in traveling if one could never enter or exit the highway. Now around the nearest city to me, Indianapolis in Indiana, there is a highway called I-465 that circles the city. The loop around the city is approximately 53 miles long. There are many on-ramps and off-ramps. The city is also the home of the Indianapolis 500 race. I sometimes wonder what it would be like if they blocked off all the entrances and exits to I-465 and instead of conducting the Indy-500 race on the racetrack, they instead moved the venue to I-465. Race cars traveling as fast as they are technically capable of (without restricting engine size limits or automotive design) on a real highway. Now that to me would be a real race.

The next image I saw was a lamp that I purchased a few weeks ago. It is a magnetic levitating floating light bulb lamp. It is almost magical. The lamp consists of several LED lights mounted on a heavy round base. The LEDs are surrounded by a plastic bulb and look very similar to a light bulb. And there is a heavy square base plate that the lamp rests on. You plug the base plate into a wall outlet and place the lamp over it and it floats about a half inch above the base plate like magic and the LED bulbs light up. The electricity from the wall outlet travels through the wiring to the base plate and then the electromagnetic power passes through the air and enters the lamp and lights the bulb. You can pass a sheet of paper or a strip of cork between the lamp and the base plate and the lamp still floats in the air and the bulb still remain lit. The process is done by electromagnetic induction. Think of a lamp being lit by electromagnetic energy that is passed through the air instead of through an electrical cord. This observation is important because I feel the brain works similar to the principles of electromagnetic induction.



The next image I saw was a computer core. I am old enough that I have actually seen a real magnetic computer core. They were the first step in developing computer memory. Magnetic core memory uses tiny donut shaped magnetic toroids (rings) through which horizontal and vertical wires are threaded to write and read information. Each core represents one bit of information. The cores can be magnetized in two different ways (clockwise or counterclockwise) and the bit stored in a core is **zero** or **one** depending on that core's magnetization direction. The key point here is that electric wires transmitted information both electrically and magnetically similar to electromagnetic induction.



Magnetic Core Memory (courtesy of Wikipedia)

One of the differences between an Aspie brain and a neurotypical brain is that an Aspie brain has more interconnecting wiring. According to Temple Grandin (author of *The Autistic Brain*) the white matter part of the brain, which makes up three-quarters of the brain is a vast thicket of wiring that makes sure all the areas of the brain are communicating. Autistics can show anomalies in this area such as significantly longer inferior fronto-occipital fasciculus (IFOF) and inferior longitudinal fasciculus (ILF).

The interconnecting wiring in the brain does not operate like a single wire where an electrical impulse begins at one side of the wiring and transmits to the other side, but rather like a loop where an impulse passes over a memory cell it triggers the memory cell and senses the stored memory without physically touching the memory cell. Just like the levitating lamp passes electrical power to the floating lamp. Electromagnetic inductive design generally uses a receiving coil and a transmitter coil to transmit energy.

So at least in me, all these on-ramps and off-ramps exist but to move at fast speeds, I either have to wait for the dead of night when I am in a state of deep sleep when there is no traffic on the roadway or I have to concentrate and block out all the on and off ramps from my mind. It is often commented that wide awake Aspies will sometimes have a spaced out look or death stare at times. This spaced out look that many individuals see is the mind spinning round and round, at very high rates of speed retrieving with each pass little bits of memory and adding them together to form a more complete picture with far greater detail and resolution.

It is a little more complicated than that because in my brain there are many different highways circling many different cities. And when my brain is moving at very fast speeds, I can jump track from one highway to another seamlessly. For example in thinking about how an Aspie brain works, I jumped from fidget spinners, to superhighways, to electromagnetic floating lamp, to the original computer cores, to physical differences in brain structure between Aspies and neurotypicals, to how memories are retrieved in the brain. And all this happened in what seems like 4 seconds of real time.

Then on the sensory processing side of the brain, if you make a thousand passes and relay a bit of information from your senses (touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight), the processor in the brain magnifies these signals with each additional loop and brain can become overwhelmed. So an ordinary sound can become extremely loud. An ordinary sight might become blindingly bright. This can lead to a sensory overload, which is a problem that plagues many Aspies.

That observation also explains why the flicker produced by florescent lightning can become disruptive to an autistic brain. It is because it resonates with the loop frequency of our internal wiring circuits.

Someone who has a photographic memory is able to make tens of thousands of loops around a brain cell capturing many fine details with each pass from their memories. Whereas many neurotypicals instead only make one or two passes around the track. Also an Aspie brain is able at these fast loop speeds to instantly jump track into another memory loop, like Sherlock Holmes, observing many patterns and differences in arriving at their deductive reasoning.

Generally I thought of the functioning brain as controlled by electrical impulses along essentially an electrical wire. But if I consider that it functions from an electromagnetic force, then magnetic interactions need to be integrated into a proper understanding. One branch of brain research is called repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS). This process uses powerful, focused magnetic field pulses to stimulate the neurons in specific targeted regions of the brains. Although this tool is in its infancy, it has the potential for shedding light in how the brain functions and the differences between NT, Aspie and autistic brains. One of the goals of this research is to enhance brain functioning such as sensory processing and minimizing sensory overload.

My attributes of being a Pattern Thinker opened several doors for me throughout my lifetime. So I thought I might mention a couple examples.

Pattern Mathematics

At the end of my senior year in high school, I applied for a summer scholarship to the Dallas Tabulating Institute. At the time, I was 18 years old. I took a strange type of aptitude test and received a full summer scholarship because it was the highest score they had ever seen. This 3-month summer course in 1966 was my initiation into tabulating equipment and computer mainframes. It was due to this training that I landed a summer job working in the main bank in a downtown Dallas skyscraper. I processed and balanced the books on the main Dallas, Texas bank and all its subsidiary branches. I handled several million dollars in checks, deposits and cash transaction receipts each night on my own and balanced them to the penny. [That was in 1966; in today's dollars that would be equivalent to balancing the books on around \$15,000,000 each night.]

I developed a new form of mathematics, which I labeled Pattern Mathematics. This is not a revolutionary branch of mathematics that will open new windows into the world but rather an obscure branch that will sit in the corner collecting dust. For the life of me, I could not figure out anything useful to do with the theory. This is the story of how this mathematical theory came to be. The Dallas Tabulation Institute's course material covered operation and programming of tabulating machines and also provided an introduction into computers. The world was about to be transformed by computers and it was a time of wonder. Before computers, there were tabulating machines. These were complex electronic and mechanical units that emulated many of the same functions as the modern computer. These tabulation machines were programmed using wires. The information to be processed was punched on IBM cards. These cards were feed into tabulating machine to perform functions. As the coursework progressed, I was given the opportunity to work with a computational machine. This was a monster of a machine, larger than a small freezer. It had thousands of relays. The patch panel contained hundreds of plug-in slots. I decided to program the machine to square any number. When I was done, every slot in the patch panel contained a wire. I almost felt like a mad scientist. The course teachers had never seen anyone do this operation before. I took an IBM card and punched the largest number available, all 9's and feed it into the machine. The card went in but nothing came out. Relays began to click. The machine vibrated and began to shake. There was some smoke. I thought I destroyed the machine. After a full 60 seconds the card spit out of the machine with an unusual answer. Pattern mathematics was born. Of coarse I had to spend several days in a trance like state to figure it all out, but this event was the key.

http://www.breadandbutter-science.com/Pattern_Mathematics.pdf

Vietnam War Draft

In 1969 the U.S. government instituted a lottery system for the military draft for the Vietnam War. I drew lottery number "1". So it was a forgone conclusion that I would be drafted unless I

volunteered. So prior to graduating from college, I went through an Army pre-induction physical. Part of the comprehensive physical was a test for color blindness. It turned out that I had severe color blindness. So I asked “Does that exclude me from the draft?” The sergeant said “No. That actually makes you a better candidate because you are not easily confused by camouflage.”

So one of the options I considered was joining the Air National Guard. But I was deeply concerned that my colorblindness might preclude me from many career fields in the military. I went to the library and checked out a book that contained Ishihara’s test plates for measuring color deficiency. I spent hours looking at the circle of dots trying to see the patterns or some trick that I could employ to detect the hidden numbers, all to no avail. There were very few openings available in the Guards. I sent in my written application and then I was scheduled to take a written aptitude test. It was a very strange test. Part of it was unwrapping three-dimensional objects into two-dimensional space. It was a test to measure spatial visualization. In my opinion it wasn’t particularly difficult. After the test, I was told that if I did well on the test, that in about a month, they would call and schedule a basic physical exam. But there were only a small number of openings, so don’t get your hopes up. Well I drove home and immediately received a phone call from the Air National Guard office. They asked me to come in immediately and sign an acceptance contract. I was surprised. I said I hadn’t even gone through the basic physical exam. They said it doesn’t matter; I had scored the highest score that was ever recorded.

XIV. WHAT ARE MY SUPERPOWERS & HOW DO I TAP INTO THEM

I feel many Aspies are blessed with an array of interesting superpowers. Many are unique and strange and mysterious. And I stand in awe when I witness them. But I can only speak for mine and I will try to describe it.

When my youngest daughter was a child she loved puzzles. She could put them together in a few minutes. So we were always looking for some that would give to her a more difficult challenge. Such as thousand piece puzzles, and three-dimensional puzzles. That is when we stumbled across a class of jigsaw puzzles labeled as “impossible puzzles”. These are a type of extremely difficult puzzle. The pieces are cut in such a way that the wrong pieces can easily fit together quite nicely. In addition some have two sides [Two different pictures, one picture on each side]. Sometimes they add five extra puzzle pieces. Some puzzles did not have pictures on the cover of the box so you could not use the box as a reference. Some would only show a small piece of the final picture on the box. They may not have borders or straight edges or corners. Some have hidden images in them that only magically appear if you solve the puzzle correctly. But what was truly amazing is that my daughter could easily put impossible puzzles together. Maybe it took her a little longer – a day or two instead of a few minutes. But it was amazing to see her do it. In a way I see this trait in myself, except it is with theories. Perhaps 40 percent of what an average person believes to be true, set in concrete is really false. All theories fit together like a giant puzzle. If you put a false theory together with another piece of the puzzle, it doesn't fit; it doesn't work. But normal people smash them together never-the-less and try to make them fit. But I can instinctively put all these theories together like pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle in my mind to make sense of them on a global scale. For example, I know what killed off the dinosaurs. I understand how an infinite universe works. I understand the cause of the next major extinction event. I look at things from many different perspectives, figure out which theories are true and which are false or corrupted, and arrive at conclusions that for me become intuitively obvious. And then I move on.

Two decades ago when I began constructing my website, I noticed several other websites included a quote from some famous person. I decided to emulate that approach. But I couldn't remember any quotes that would adequately describe who I was and what I thought, so I just made one up. This is my quote:

Events shape our lives, even distant and dark ones. From the time I was a wee little one, I have stopped my fear of dark places. I pick up my torch and journey alone through darkened corridors leading down into bottomless caverns of events past. I stumble upon the remnants of an intricate puzzle, which I bring back with me, and in the quiet of my dreams, are assembled before me.

Looking back, I can now see that this quote encapsulated my superpower. So it might be interesting to dissect this quote into four aspects.

1. I think of myself as a young child. Here I am almost 70 years old but I am still just a small little boy in a world filled with wonder and I stand in awe. At a memorial lecture Robert Oppenheimer described Albert Einstein as almost wholly without sophistication and wholly

without worldliness. He had a *wonderful purity at once childlike and profoundly stubborn*. My growth through the stages of child development might have been arrested in the “Pleasing 4’s” stage.

2. I am not afraid of being alone. This is part of my introvert nature. One of the greatest fears of an extrovert is being alone but not so for an introvert. The secret to this characteristic is that I am never really alone, because someone always walks beside me. Others also experience this feeling. I suspect that Aspies share two personality types: INTP and INTJ. Other individuals with INTJ describe this characteristic in the following way:

“We can stay alone for a loooong time: Because there is a party going on inside our heads. A 100 voices talking, debating with each other about the best course of action around something.”

“I’m hardly ever bored, because there are worlds, inside worlds, inside worlds in my own head.”

3. I am brave and fearless. I am willing to walk alone through the dark unknown. One of the traits of an Aspie is that they are fearless; great risk takers, and have no sense of danger. Of all the traits that I cherish the most is my sense of adventure.

4. The fourth element is *I stumble upon the remnants of an intricate puzzle, which I bring back with me, and in the quiet of my dreams, are assembled before me*. Another individual describes this trait as:

“I learn quickly, sometimes intuitively. I can ride a motorcycle, go to sleep, play a computer game or otherwise “turn off” active thinking, and come back and sit down and know exactly how to solve extremely complex problems. It’s not that I didn’t think about it, but instead my mind thought about it for me.”

I have noticed the following about this superpower. It appears to have several components. The first is that my **processing speed** goes off the charts *in the still of the night*. Generally this trait begins about 4 hours into my 8-hour sleep cycle. It seems easier to describe this process in computer terms.

First my dreams become like a computer data buffer that needs to be placed in long-term storage otherwise the buffer overflows and is overwritten and the data is permanently lost. Therefore I tend to wake up in the middle of the night.

Second when I wake up, I retain a state of rest during my sleep that my mind is so utterly still that thoughts flow easily. It is like my mind has become a super liquid cooled computer and my processing speed are truly off the charts. The chips in a computer are susceptible to damage by overheating. Most computers are cooled with air. If you drive a computer to faster speeds, they will heat up the chips leading to their destruction. So the computer designers adopted other methods to cool the chips using liquid cooling. This allowed the computers to operate at greater speeds (overclocking), creating supercomputers.

One of the problems with this superpower, is often when I finally wake up in the morning, I have totally forgotten everything. During the night, it is like I have solved great problems but when I wake up I cannot for the life of me, even remember what the problems were. It can be very

frustrating, because what was lost, others have described as “pure genius”. Trying to remember the last thing before I woke doesn’t help, because after I found the solution I moved onto another topic and then another one. In the morning I spend hours and hours trying to remember but to no avail.

So over the years, I have learned techniques to train and harness this superpower. Whenever I wake up in the middle of the night, I jot notes of everything I can remember and then I go back to sleep. Sometimes even when I am awake, the information data stream does not stop but continues even while I am writing notes. But then after a while, I return to bed and a few minutes later, my mind explodes into more thoughts. And around 30 minutes to an hour later, the buffers have again filled up and I automatically wake up and jot down some more notes. This can go on for hours; sometimes I go through this cycle 3 or 5 times per night times then my mind becomes rested and I stop my restlessness and finally I return back to sleep until dawn. When I wake up, I collect all my written notes and scribbles and read through them. I then stand in awe for a while. Next, I take my notes and transcribe them into the word processing file. It is like my mind can fabricate the missing puzzle pieces of a vast puzzle.

After several years of doing this, my mind knows when to wake me from a deep sleep. In a computer, when a data buffer is full, the data is dumped into storage. This is how I would describe that process. It is sure better than what happens during a buffer overflow.

My wife absolutely does not like to be woken up from her sleep. She is a very light sleeper. So I can accommodate that. I simple scatter blank writing tablets around the house at strategic locations or in the glove compartment of my car. Blank 3” x 5” writing tablets work best for me with fine black felt-tip pens.

There is an old phrase called “sleep on it”. So if I have a problem or concern, I just sleep on it and the next morning, I generally have an answer to address the problem or concern. The above is the process that occurs when I “sleep on it”.

Another aspect of my superpower is my **filing system**.

One of the demands on Albert Einstein’s contract to his wife was “that my bedroom and study are kept neat, and especially that my desk is left for my use only”. This seems overly harsh but I think I understand where it came from. Some Aspies have almost photographic memory. I do not but I have the equivalent of a huge library card catalog in my head. Generally all my life experiences, everything I have read, all the movies I have watched are cataloged. I do not remember the entire contents, just a few key points and generally where the information might be retrieved at some later date, but most of all I remember the key points or anomalies.

I had a friend named Nathan. He was probably an Aspie. When he married and bought a house, he created for himself an office in one of the rooms of his house. In that room he had a large desk. The entire desk was covered with many large stacks and piles of papers, magazines, and files. These piles were two feet high and ready to fall over. There were also piles of paper on the floor. His office was a complete mess and need a good Spring-cleaning. But when I walked into his room, the first thing he said was **don’t touch anything on my desk**. In hindsight I now understand why. Nathan had a quirky file system. He knows where everything was located on

his desk. If something were moved, when he tried to retrieve it later, the fact that a critical piece of information was no longer where he put it would cause Nathan great stress.

Another component of this superpower is **dual mode**.

Sometimes when I am seriously thinking about something while I am awake, I enter a state where both my normal and different normal states are operating simultaneously. It takes a lot of concentration to be able to do this and hold this state. I put my normal state in auto drive and then I disappear into my different normal state. I appear as if I am spaced out. This drives my wife absolutely crazy. But in this state I am very intolerant of being returned to my normal state prematurely. This is because if I transition abruptly before I am finished, I lose my entire thought process. I can lose it entirely forever and that can be very frustrating. One of the demands that Albert Einstein gave to his wife “you will stop talking to me if I request it”. I suspect that is where that demand came from.

These three elements describe my superpowers: processing speed, filing system, dual mode. There are a variety of superpowers and I suspect many are quite unique. It is very important for an Aspie to figure out what gift they have been given and how to maximize its usage.

XV. DO YOU KNOW?

Do you know why many Aspies experience psychological problems (such as anxiety, depression, adjustment disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS), somatoform disorders, nightmares, intrusion, insomnia, decreased libido, memory lapses, reduced capacity to learn, sexual dysfunction, social withdrawal, emotional flatness, and headaches)?

It is the result of years and years of stress from experiencing physical & psychological abuse and torture. These psychological problems are due to the unbearable degree of stress that these children and adults experience.

Do you know why Aspies are honest and direct?

It is because they have been lied to so many times when they were young, they have been psychologically abused and tortured and can no longer trust what people say. They have no means to determine reality. They need brutal honesty and directness in order to maintain their grasp of reality.

Don't you know why they are face-blind and miss social clues?

“Come on now – isn't it intuitively obvious. Haven't you ever seen a movie when someone is being held in a prison or concentration camp? Rule number #1 = avoid eye contact. If you look directly into the eyes of your tormenter, it is interpreted as challenging their authority over you and you will be instantly tormented or killed as a result.”

Do you know where their strong sense of social justice comes from?

It comes from being on the receiving side of social injustice. They know what it feels like being physically abused and tortured and have developed a strong sense like Superman to suddenly appear and come to a persons aid when they are in danger or in need.

Do you know why they are driven to logic?

It is because they live in a world that says one thing and does another.

Do you know why many Aspies gravitate towards becoming Math experts?

It is because mathematics is one of the most pure forms of communication. It doesn't lie. It is almost immune from being manipulated. [The exception to the rule: Statistics]

Do you know why Aspies are stubborn, tenacious and averse to being criticized?

It is because if they are not stubborn, they may have to admit that they are abnormal and worthless.

Do you know why they have a singular focus on a subject and become experts in that area and talk endlessly on a subject?

It is their need for acceptance, to be normal. They want to be normal and fit in. Who do they emulate – who has a vast reservoir of knowledge, has great authority and control and talks endlessly. It is their teacher. That is why they become little professors.

Do you know why Aspies commit suicide or suddenly explode into a violent rage?

It is because for years and years they have endured physical and psychological abuse and torture and they finally broke.

Do you know why Aspies hide facial expressions or withdraw into spells of silence??

You don't cry or show emotion when being tortured, because generally it causes your tormentors to believe they are succeeding which causes them to only increase the intensity level of the torture, in order to break you. You need to be invisible and wear a face of stone.

Revealing emotions in facial expressions or revealing facts about themselves when they talk can be weaponized by their tormentors. Becoming stone face or being silent is a type of invisible shield they use to protect themselves.

Watch this video and tell me you cannot see the cries for help from this 10-year old girl

<http://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/2018/04/12/10-year-old-girl-urges-others-to-stop-bullying-in-heartbreaking-viral-video.html>

XVI. GAINING A VOICE

I am shy and an introvert. I had only a very small voice; nothing more than a mere whisper. I was essentially completely ignored. Day after day, I was bombarded from the outside world with distortions of the truth, corrupted data and unsupported theories. But after several decades of this, I began getting severe headaches by the stream of illogical theories, perhaps as much as 40% are not true. So perhaps that is why I decided to fight back, stand on my own two feet, never accept anything as set in stone but look for the ultimate truth, test everything, consider everything and not accept anything at face value. These are INTJ qualities. But how did I gain a voice? How does an Aspie gain a voice?

An Aspie is weak in presenting arguments orally but the written language, logic and computer programming are their friends. The Internet arrived and thinking out-of-the-box, I realized quickly it held the key to “gaining a voice”. I was well versed with computers and adept at programming. I was working with computers in the early 1960’s, supercomputers in the late 1960’s and with systems integration in the mid-1970’s. So even though I had zero training in website design, I designed and launched my website two decades ago and began to project my voice. The Internet essentially changed the playing field for me.

I feel the world would be a far better place if Aspies found their voice. They could talk endlessly on their passions. They would release an endless stream of new ideas and concepts. They could take up their torch and shine light in the world. So many ideas are tossed into the scrapheap of time and lost forever. It is time to give them a voice.

For one thing, gaining a voice will give them a measure of self-worth; it gives meaning to their existence. It will energize them. Once I created my site, my research accelerated. I read and read and turned theories over in my mind seeking the ultimate truth of things. My circle of influence grew and grew. My headaches disappeared. My self-education exploded. And I became bold and fearless.

I could publish whatever I wanted on my website, my passion or my current circle of concern. Research in many ways is controlled through a very regimented way by publication in journals. An Aspie can publish his own theories and research and passions using this new tool. All he has to do is create a website and have fun projecting his voice.

XVII. HOW DOES AN ASPIE PARENT TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN

I wanted to be a good parent to my children. But I viewed life through an Aspie lens. And I didn't even know what an Aspie was until a couple months ago. So I guess I can see that my parenting skills were different and odd.

Bravery

One of the traits that I tried to teach them was bravery. I felt that my children needed to be very brave in order to endure the trials that I knew lay ahead. In order to survive this world, one must be brave. I tried to teach them bravery by the brute force method, by osmosis without even understanding its root cause. True bravery is a trait that is forged in fires of a large furnace. True bravery came from being subjected to years of torture and abuse with only willpower to survive. It came from the fact that I was an Aspie who was never broken. I wanted my children to be fearless because I was fearless.

I was always pushing them to venture into the scary unknown. When my oldest daughter was one month old, I took my wife and daughter to see the movie Star Wars. My little daughter slept through part of the movie but when the battle scenes started with all the audio special sound effects, she awoke in a panic. Her heart was pounding a hundred miles an hour. She clung onto my wife and my wife comforted her and she never cried.

When my youngest daughter was about 3 years old, I took her to see the movie Indiana Jones. The movie theater was packed. There are some scenes in the movie that are truly frightening to a young child, like when large spiders fell from the ceiling of a cave or when he dropped into a floor covered with poisonous vipers. It didn't bother me, but my daughter was standing on top the seat of the theater chair with her arms waving in the air. She was in total utter terror.

When we went to amusement parks, I was always pushing them to go on the most challenging rides, the scariest ones, the terrifying ones.

Popularity

I wanted my children to be popular in school. If they were popular then they would always be surrounded by friends to protect them. They would never be alone or vulnerable to bullying. When I went to high school, one of the most popular boys at school was elected to become a class president. One of the attributes that I noticed was that his family hosted a foreign exchange student. So I emulated that approach. Over the years we sponsored 5 foreign exchange students (1 from Brazil, 1 from Croatia, 2 from Poland, and 1 from Germany).

I didn't want my children to be loners at school, so I drove them to join clubs and build layers and layers of friends, like the layers of an onion, to protect them. My littlest daughter joined a singing group. It was an exceptional singing group. They toured the nation and competed in competitions in New York City and in Disneyworld in Florida and they generally brought back trophies. They gave magical performances. These children formed strong bonds of friendship. Many of these kids also then became the core of actors in the exceptional school plays. I formed a school club called the Media Club. We competed at regional and state level and even once made it all the way to an international competition. Our group brought back many trophies for the school. They were a very talented group of kids.

The high school prom is an important right of passage. But generally you need a date. I never went to mine because I was too shy to ask a girl out. I also had a great fear of rejection. It is an important achievement for an Aspie to go to the prom because it is what NORMAL people do.

When it comes to going to a prom, being part of a group can be important. You want to know if a girl has already been asked to the prom and accepted, otherwise you will be hurt when you ask her and she declines. Groups can also put you under their wings. They can determine who is still available to be asked. Sometimes they can even broach the question and provide you with the probability that if you asked her, she might be inclined to accept your invitation.

When my daughters went to school, they were part of a very tight knit group. The Media Club would raise money by videotaping the prom and selling these videos. Many of the children in the Media Club actually went to the prom in their freshman and sophomore years because they did the filming. By the time these students reached their junior and senior years of High School, they were already old hats, experts on every element of the Prom, and found no difficulty or fear associated with going to Prom.

The kids that excel in education at the elementary, junior high and high school levels are the same kids that are involved in a variety of after-hour school activities. They go hand-in-hand together.



XVIII. MOVIES AND TELEVISION

One of the tools that I use to learn from is watching films at the cinema. Since about 1980, I have watched a little over 2,360 films at the cinema, or on VCR tapes, Capacitance Electronic Discs (CEDs), Laser Disc, or on various formats of DVD's. It is one of the ways I learn and experience life through the other people's eyes. It relaxes me and gives me pleasure.

In the early days of man five hundred generations ago after the invention of fire, I would be the child sitting around the campfire at night listening to the wild stories from the elders and taking it all in and absorbing all those experience.

As the ages wore on, the media changed from campfire stories, to books, to plays and to films.

I can understand why Aspies loves to watch films, television and play video games. The experience is almost addictive. An introvert recharges their energy by being alone. As a child, introverts loved to play with their toys and hobbies, but later as teenagers and beyond, they migrated to other forms of entertainment. But watching movies and television does not pay the bills, or buy the latest role-playing video game or a back issue of a vintage comic book from when comic books merely cost a dime, or a rare copy of a 500-year old book.

I like to watch movies. In a way, they are an advanced form of storytelling, and their stories generally have merit or fragments of knowledge tucked away inside. So I thought I might mention two recent films with an Autistic or Aspie twist. They are "Ready Player One" and "The Accountant".

Ready Player One

An interesting film that has just hit the theaters is called "Ready Player One". In the film James Halliday, in my opinion a brilliant Aspie, has created a virtual reality world called the OASIS. This imaginary world is so captivating and addictive that almost everyone (normals and Aspies alike) spends almost all of their waking time there. Essentially everyone has left the normal real world behind and the real world is essentially falling to pieces. An 18-year old Wade Watts competes in the game for a grand prize to take ownership of the company that runs the OASIS. One of the interesting points in this film is at the end of the game when Wade and his friends succeed in winning the grand prize. They have come to understand that the real world is also very important and as a result decide that the OASIS must be shut down every Tuesday and Thursday in order to bring people back to reality.

So one important element contained in this film is the very important lesson for an Aspie. These forms of entertainment are very addictive and need to be restricted to downtime. They cannot replace the need to turn in your homework assignment, earn a living by working, or raising a family. Downtime is always secondary to the responsibilities of life.

The Accountant

Maybe this film is a little too mature for the little ones to see because of the moral dilemmas within the film.

This film *The Accountant* shows the approaches that two fathers independently take in teaching their autistic children how to cope with the outside world.

As a child, Christian Wolff is diagnosed with a high-functioning form of autism. His family is under extreme stress in dealing with Chris's condition. His mother wanted to lock him up in an institute, a sensory friendly environment, in order to protect her son from the outside world and allow him to grow. His father believes that Chris must overcome the hardships inherent in his condition and as a result, declines the offer by the Harbor Neuroscience Institute. That creates a rift in the family and the overwhelmed mother abandons her family. Chris's father, a US Army psychological operations officer—begins a brutal regimen of training that provides his son with expert martial arts training along with stoicism training. The stoicism training uses overstimulation via a variety of extreme sensory inputs including loud heavy metal music, strobe lights and self induced pain in order to normalize his son after a severely stressful event. Since Chris is being subjected to bullying at school, Chris's father arranges for Chris to confront his bullies in a dark alley after school. So essentially his father gives his son expert tools to defend himself and permission [exception to the rule] to utilize those tools.

I really like a couple linked scenes in the film that are just utterly fabulous to watch unfold. In the first scene, the adult Chris who is an accountant is helping prepare the tax statement for his client, a farmer and his wife.

You can see his special attributes being played out in this scene:

- * His attention to detail.
- * His almost total memory of the U.S. Tax Code.
- * His out of the box thinking.
- * His compassion for social justice.

Chris solves the dilemma of the poor farmer and his wife in dealing with their tax filing.

In gratitude, the farmer says “I meant what I said son! You're welcome out to my place any time. Do you fish? I have a two-acre pond that is thick with catfish and bass.” Chris says, “No, I don't fish, I shoot.” The farmer says, “The farm is the perfect place to do a little plinking. So!”

In the second scene, Chris recognizes an extraordinary opportunity and takes the farmer up on his offer. Chris has a need to perform target practice with a long gun at the range of around a mile. This is a special skill-set. And one of the best places to practice such a skill is a large level farm out in the middle of nowhere.

The other father in the film has a low functioning autistic daughter. He dedicates the rest of his career to help her and others like her. He founded the Harbor Neuroscience Institute in order to help her.

So the film broaches on two very radically different approaches to helping autistic children cope with the outside world. In a way, I view both approaches as somewhat successful. Both fathers love their children but select very different toolsets to use.

So maybe I watch too many movies, but they teach me things and I enjoy listening to wild stories sitting around a campfire in the dark of night.

Maybe if you are an Aspie and have an INTP personality, you might try being an INTJ for a while and enjoy the hell out of life. **Spread your wings and fly.** That is unless you are an Aspie that takes things quite literally. Then understand that I am talking about invisible figurative wings and the symbolic freedom to travel into the vast unknown and not actual jumping off a real cliff. That is unless you are Abbas ibn Firnas, Leonardo DaVinci, George Cayley, Otto Lilienthal, the Wright Brothers, or Superman, then in which case you can interpret that statement quite literally.

Television

One of the programs currently on television about Aspies is called the “Big Bang Theory”. It attempts to capture the quirkiness of Aspies, which is sometimes very humorous. The program directors and screenwriters will not admit to this connection because if they did, a self appointed group of so-called Aspie experts would intervene and demand that they participate in the formulation of the episodes content, so that Aspies will be accurately portrayed. The problem is that if this self-appointed group is allowed this control; the program essence would quickly dissolve away. This is because there are many traits of an Aspie that are not humorous; quite the opposite. So the program looks at Aspies through the lens of rose-colored glasses. And this is fine by me.

There was something buried in my distant memories covered in cobwebs within my brain cells and I instinctively felt it was important. It was a time when I was a young man and I remember watching reruns of a television sitcom with a quirky name called “The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis” and I identified with it and its humor. Before there were Hippies, there were Beatniks. And this sitcom was about Beatniks.

Beatnik was a media stereotype prevalent throughout the 1950s to mid-1960s that displayed the more superficial aspects of the Beat Generation literary movement of the 1950s. In 1948, Kerouac introduced the phrase "Beat Generation", generalizing from his social circle to characterize the underground, anti-conformist youth gathering in New York at that time. "Beat" was slang for "beaten down" or downtrodden. In a sense it was a generation of rejects or outcasts. Today one might consider Beatniks as the lost Aspie subculture. As Kerouac explained:

The Beat Generation, that was a vision that we had, John Clellon Holmes and I, and Allen Ginsberg in an even wilder way, in the late Forties, of a generation of crazy, illuminated hipsters suddenly rising and roaming America, serious,

bumming and hitchhiking everywhere, ragged, beatific, beautiful in an ugly graceful new way—a vision gleaned from the way we had heard the word "beat" spoken on street corners on Times Square and in the Village, in other cities in the downtown city night of postwar [First World War] America—beat, meaning down and out but full of intense conviction. We'd even heard old 1910 Daddy Hipsters of the streets speak the word that way, with a melancholy sneer. It never meant juvenile delinquents, it meant characters of a special spirituality who didn't gang up but were solitary Bartlebies staring out the dead wall window of our civilization.

I suspect that the Beat generation just crashed and burned by the introduction of Kryptonite.

The sitcom “The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis” aired from 1959 to 1963. As I rewatched the series episodes, I quickly saw this was a television show about Aspies under the lens of rose-colored glasses. Maynard G. Krebs was a beatnik, but if you look closely he was of the sub-tribe of Aspies called a music Aspie. He was very shy and wore sloppy comfortable clothes. He was a natural musician and his whole obsession was music. He had one close friend who was Dobie Gillis and he was a loyal friend to Dobie. Maynard was absent minded and had no common sense. He was a sweet good kind human being that learned how to walk first and then later how to crawl. He was “true, loyal, trustworthy and not one mean bone in his body.” Another character Zelda Gilroy was a very intelligent female math/science Aspie. She first appears in the third episode “Love is Science”. She decided that she and Dobie are destined to fall in love because of the principles of propinquity. Their last names start with the same letter, therefore when seats are assigned in the classrooms, they will sit together and naturally this close proximity will lead to love. The only problem is Dobie was not attracted to Zelda. Of all the characters, Dobie, was the most difficult to figure out. I think the thing that gave it away was Dobie has a *wonderful purity at once childlike and profoundly stubborn*. He was in his “Pleasing 4” stage of childhood development. The program begins in High School and Dobie has one great obsession, to find one special girl to call his own. But what sub-tribe of Aspie was Dobie? Well I had to use a little deductive reasoning to figure this one out. Many writers write from their own life experiences. If the character of Dobie is based on an individual that would someday become a very successful screenwriter of a hit television program, then that would make Dobie from the sub-tribe of literary Aspies.

Some of the other hints about this program lie in the opening scene of each episode where Dobie is in deep thought sitting on a park bench next to a statue by sculptor Auguste Rodin called “the Thinker”. Aspies show a pattern of having a logical thinking and deliberative reasoning styles. In a way, the statue by Rodin is a symbol for Asperger’s Syndrome. Even the quirky title of this sitcom tells a story. “The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis” is about a boy named Dobie who realizes that unless he can find one special girl to share mutual love, he will become an outcast and abandoned and left behind in the dustbins of society. Therefore the quest to find this girl becomes his logical intense overriding obsession.

The series contains many hidden moral lessons. Generally in each episode, Dobie is influenced to break his inner moral code of conduct, which then inevitably leads to disaster. So in a sense this sitcom is about individuals from 3 different sub-tribes of Aspies mixed in with a larger world of neurotypicals at a pivotal time where the male sub-tribe and female sub-tribe are realigning and combining into something new – a tribe of couples, the world of grown-ups.

Like Dobie, I also share that obsession, that drive to find “one girl, one very special girl, to have and to hold. Dobie believes a special girl would make me whole again. I found that special girl and we have been married for around 45 years. And many nights before I lay my head down to sleep, I thank God for giving me that special girl.

Lessons Learned:

- * Aspies bond with other Aspies and accept their individual quirks. Aspies above all value loyalty and honesty. And Aspies share this trait.
- * Some Aspies, but not all, dream of finding their perfect soul mate. This desire may be close to an obsession. They feel that if they succeed, they will become normal. [But Aspies are very poor at picking the qualities needed for their perfect soul mate.]

XIX. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media can often be weaponized by bullies. Bullies hiding behind the mask of anonymity thrive on the Internet.

Social Media is websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Some examples of social media sites and applications include Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Vine, hi5, MyLife, Periscope, Plaxo, Snapchat, Houseparty, Tumblr, Google+, Instagram, Twitter, Digg, Xing, MySpace, Agorapulse, Path, blogging platforms, discussion boards and forums and other sites that have content based on user participation and user-generated content (UGC). In general, social media sites are tools for extroverts. Introverts should exercise extreme caution when using these sites because they can also become the home of anonymous bullies, who find relish in the art of verbal and psychological abuse. Also an Aspie (**different normal**) is more vulnerable to bullying than a **normal** individual. Some social media sites like Ning [This site connects groups of people who are passionate about particular interests, topics or hobbies.] might be a good tool for expanding the Aspie's global world. A small subset of social media sites like Ning, Howcast, Vimeo, Quora, Scribd, and others might be useful sites for an Aspie but many are simply not. Some blogs and discussion board such as those solely populated by Aspies and their parents/teachers/counselors might be very useful. Another problem with social media sites is that they can release personal information such as photographs and child/family biographical information to the open world and this information can be weaponized and used to target an individual. For example I included my email address in the open on my website and as a result I received thousands of Nigeria type scam emails. Also this personal information can be extracted by computer spiders, crawlers and bots and used to market unwanted goods and services to an individual or expose the individual to destructive content, like X-Rated videos, phishing scams, and provide a gateway to malware.

When designing a website, do not include a comments or feedback function into your website. At least not until you evolve a highly tuned sense to tell the difference between destructive criticism and constructive criticism and also have developed a very strong coat of invisible armor. Many bullies lurk in discussion boards. If the discussion board is yours, then you are its final editor and can remove inappropriate comments at will. You are able to establish the guidelines and rules for the discussion board. This is not censorship but rather a tool to remove vicious content, such as personal attacks generated by bullies. If you participate in some discussion boards, you may be elevated to becoming a moderator, which will allow you to remove inappropriate comments. Here is an example of the rules and guidelines from one discussion board. <https://www.bariatricpal.com/guidelines/>

In your website design, never put your email address in the open. Rather type out your email address and print it. Then scan the sheet of paper as a picture file, such as in jpeg format, and insert it as a picture in your website. Generally computer spiders are not adept to reading text embedded in pictures.

Technology keeps improving, there are now computer algorithms that can filter all your child's social media content and detect threats and bring them to the attention of schools and parents. One example is the monitoring tool called Bark. It generates automatic alerts to signs of cyberbullying, depression, online predators, adult content, threats of school shootings, etc.

XX. RENAISSANCE MAN

One of the qualities that I possess is that I am a Renaissance Man, a person whose expertise spans a significant number of various subject areas. During my 40-year career, I seamlessly moved between many different fields. These included physics, systems integration, test site design, electrical engineer, analytical trend analysis, facility design, supervision, and management. I was an expert jack-of-all-trades. In general, most career paths require the development of a very specialized skill around a very specialized field. Most professionals are specialist and not generalist. In my case I was both.

In my opinion, to excel as an INTJ, one needs a wide span of knowledge. This allows one to perceive all the pieces of the puzzle rather than just focus on two pieces of the puzzle that may or may not fit together. That is within the realm of a Renaissance Man.

Recently a group of scientist studied the qualities that drive Scientific Innovation [Is There A Magic Formula For Scientific Innovation? by Chuck Dinerstein of 2 March 2018 at <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/03/02/there-magic-formula-scientific-innovation-12651>] They discovered “The novelty of a scientific subject frequently accompanies interdisciplinary research that allows recombination of ideas from disconnected, disparate fields. Innovation takes what is known in a new or serendipitously encountered direction, extending the known through unique concepts outside the usual focus.” This approach sounds vary much like a Renaissance Team approach.

XXI. THE 40% RULE

In our world, newspapers are in the business of selling papers. This mission can sometimes be at odds with telling the truth. The truth is many times distorted. Many normal people are being led around like sheep to the slaughter.

Most normal people have learned herd instinct. They travel with the herd. If their teachers teach them something they accept it without question. If a politician says, “the debate is over” or “there is a consensus”, they accept this as true in blind faith. They do this for convenience. But this normal approach also has a severe weakness.

Around 40% of what you read is outright false or a misleading narrative.

On one day, the New York Times might publish an article titled *Latest research indicates coffee is bad for you and drinking it will cause you to die prematurely.*

The very next day another newspaper publishes an article titled *Coffee is beneficial and scientist have proven that drinking it will extend your life.*

So which headline is true and which is false?

The correct answer is probably both headlines are somewhat true. However, as first stated by Paracelsus, the #1 principle in toxicology is, “The dose makes the poison.” This means that below a certain dose (probably about 4 cups a day) coffee is beneficial to drink and above that threshold it can be destructive. In general, if you drink a few cups of coffee a day or not, it doesn’t really matter in extending or curtailing your life expectancy.

Consider even drinking too much water will kill you. Severe cases of hyponatremia (drinking too much water at once) can lead to water intoxication, an illness whose symptoms include headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, frequent urination and mental disorientation; and this condition can prove fatal. So do you really need to put a warning label on water! Or as in California, a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge just ruled that coffee must carry a warning label! Goodbye Starbucks!

Over 150 years ago Sir (Joseph) Norman Lockyer, a brilliant astrophysicist, found it very difficult to gain a voice and expand science. He created a new tool; he founded a great scientific journal called *Nature* and was its editor for a half century from 1869-1919. *Nature* encouraged controversy and vigorous debate within its pages. This was a tool he developed in gaining a voice.

But now the editors of many of these fine scientific journals have become corrupt and no longer encourage controversy and vigorous debate. They have made themselves the ultimate arbitrators. They have picked sides by deciding what is true and what is false, what to publish and what to censor. And many times they select the wrong side. They have lost their way.

Let the battles be fought out with logical arguments and research findings across the pages of the journal *Nature* or the many other scientific journals.

An article by the National Association of Scholars titled *The Irreproducibility Crisis of Modern Science* of April 2018 confirms that the crisis of reproducibility exists and compromises entire disciplines of science. In 2012 the biotechnology firm Amgen tried to reproduce 53 “landmark”

studies in hematology and oncology, but could only replicate six. In that same year the director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research at the Food and Drug Administration estimated that up to three-quarters of published biomarker associations could not be replicated. A 2015 article in *Science* that presented the results of 100 replication studies of articles published in prominent psychological journals found that only 36% of the replication studies produced statistically significant results, compared with 97% of the original studies. If scientific findings are not reproducible then modern science is being built on a foundation of quicksand.

Governments run by biased politicians tend to down-select slices of funding to confirmational research at the exclusions of all others approaches. They arbitrarily pick winners and losers. As a result, many times the winners of government grants are actually to defective approaches and the funding is totally wasted.

You might even wonder if the *Theory of Special Relativity* might not have even survived the selection process used by the scientific journal publishers of today. After all Einstein was an obscure government employee working as a clerk at the Swiss patent office.

The case is never closed. There is no such thing as scientific consensus until the fat lady sings.



For Albert Einstein and the other scientist in the Manhattan Project, the fat lady did not sing until they built a prototype of the first atomic bomb and successfully tested it.

Aspies tend to question everything, examine everything, and test everything. And that is why Aspies are critical to society.

XXII. MISCELLANEOUS

I thought I might throw out a few miscellaneous thoughts and ideas to help Aspies evolve both their normal and different normal sides.

I would recommend that they join boy scouts or girl scouts. They teach many types of basic survival skills like navigating in a forest, creating a shelter and making a campfire.

About once per year when the grandkids come over we light off a bomb fire. Over the year, we had accumulated a large pile of logs and large branches and put them on a pile to dry. So now we send out the grandkids to find small and medium branches to add to the pile. And then we light it off. When the fire burns down, my wife and the children wrap potatoes and sausages in aluminum foil and then place these in the hot coals and embers to cook for a couple hours. The grandkids enjoy just standing around the campfire. Then we sit down for a meal. Later when it gets dark, we gather up the grandkids and take them down to roast marshmallows on the open fire. Roasting marshmallows over a campfire in the dark must be one of the most important life skills ever!

Another activity for them to join is 4-H. Even though my daughter lives in the suburb of a large city, her kids compete every year in 4-H and she teaches them important life skills in the process.

I would also suggest that Aspies be allowed to raise a dog or cat. These animals are therapeutic because they can improve the child's sense of touch.

Let me try and explain this. One time I went to an off-site management seminar. I learned about personality types. We separated ourselves into introverts and extroverts. The instructor asked the extroverts what they felt. The extroverts said they felt sorry for the introverts because they were missing out on life. They decided the solution would be to have a party and include the introverts and help them break out of their shell. Then the instructor asked the introverts what they thought of this proposal. The introverts thought this was simply a horrible idea. They were content being alone and going to a party would put them under great stress.

An extrovert might think an animal such as a dog or cat might provide some degree of companionship to an introvert. Almost by definition an Aspie is an introvert. The reason is because introverts are all alone in the world. But from my perspective companionship with a pet isn't a strong driver, because loneliness isn't a driver.

The 3 reasons I recommend a cat or dog is because:

1. These animals love to be petted. It is one of their basic needs. By petting them correctly it not only brings pleasure to the animal but also the person petting them. It can activate a pleasurable experience with the sense of touch. If it is developed properly it can be very therapeutic to a child. Touch is one of the most important senses.
2. They are natural protectors. We have one cat and one dog. They are not indoor animals but rather live outdoors and are free to roam. We live in the woods and there are many wild animals that come within a few feet of the house, like raccoons, deer and possums. The dog keeps those animals at bay. The cat joins in by keeping the mice out.

3. These animals are creatures of natural wonder. An Aspie feeds on awe and wonder. I teach the dog to tolerate the cat and over time they bond together and are at peace with each other. In the winter, in the cold and snow, the cat will snuggle up against the dog and the two of them will share warmth together in the doghouse. Our dog does incredible things, things I never trained him to do. It must be imparted traits over hundreds of generations passed down from dog to puppy. Whenever someone new approaches my dog, he will run around and find a stick or bone and put it in his mouth and then he will approach the person. It is his way of telling them “I am not dangerous. See, I have a stick in my mouth. I will not bite you. Come and pet me.” Also when I walk down the hill to get the mail, the dog will run 40 feet ahead, stops and remains perfectly still. He will scan the area for threats and listen intently for danger. If he perceives anything, he will bark for warning and to scare whatever is out there away. As I get closer, he will break and race another 40 feet ahead and repeat the process. I never taught him that. It was a built in feature.

One time we had an older female dog, a boxer, and then we got a baby kitten. The baby kitten was all alone and would often cry. The dog would let the kitten come and snuggle and nurse on the dog. It was a motherly instinct. But whenever I approached, the dog would immediately stand up and walk away. It was like the dog was embarrassed and knew it was not natural for a dog to do this, so she didn't want anyone to witness this, because she was ashamed.

I had an Irish Setter. When the dog saw something like a bird, squirrel or rabbit, the dog would jump up and take pose common to pointer dogs (tail erect, one front paw up, nose towards their target). But what was remarkable is sometimes the cat would stand on top the dog and make the same pose at the same time.

So I think that it is beneficial for an Aspie to have dog or cat or both because it allows the child to experience awe and wonder in the natural world around them.

Sometimes when conditions are just right, when you pet a cat, you can build up an electrostatic charge. And that feeling is magical, in the eyes of a child. A cat will purr producing a low frequency vibration when it is content. This is also quite magical.

Perhaps there are types of games that would be useful for training young Aspies. I think the following might fit well:

“Staring into your eyes” games.

Group hug games.

The tickling game. (a primitive form of play that teaches bravery)

Primitive and Primeval Play

When I think back to how I played with my children when they were small and now my young grandchildren, there are some differences between how normal parents would play with their children. So maybe because I am an Aspie parent those differences may be of help to normal parents raising their young Aspie child. I tend to use primitive and primeval play.

Sometimes when it is dark outside and the moon is full, I will take the young ones into the dark and then I will begin howling at the moon, and before you know it, the young ones begin to join in and we become like a pack of wolves, howling at the moon. And then the children begin to laugh because they never howled at the moon before and didn't even realize how much fun it could be. Maybe it is my way of saying I am not afraid of the dark or of all the wild beasties that lurk there. Howling gives me great energy and makes me fearless, master of the unknown. I feel this is a quintessential characteristic that must be passed down to the little ones.

Sometimes the world is a little too much prim and proper and a young child just needs to let their wild side out every once and awhile.

I saw this play out one time at a water amusement park. A family of six got onto a large circular rubber raft. As they got strapped in, the father bent down and whispers to his small daughter. She was a wee little lass only 2 or 3 years old and had never been on a ride like this before. He whispered, "This is a wild ride. You will get wet. It is very, very scary. Hold on tight." The raft is set free and begins to move towards a dark tunnel entrance. She is grasping so hard on the railings that her fingers are changing color. The raft is almost at the edge of the first drop-off and he whispers his final words "You will get wet". The raft enters the ride and dip down into the tunnel, and the girl immediately screams at the top of her lungs. She screamed for a whole minute, like she was facing imminent death and was in sheer and utter terror. And then she looked at her dad. He was totally drenched to the skin with water and she didn't even have one drop. So she started laughing and laughed for the rest of the ride. And when she got off she asked her dad "Can we do it again?"

But I suspect, that it is probably best to start a young Aspie at the smaller kiddie rides and slowly work their way up over many visits to the massive roller coasters, one baby step at a time.

I play the tickling game with the grandkids. The tickling game is a primitive form of play between one adult and several small children, generally within a family. It teaches bravery. The game is played over several years. I can best describe this game by citing an early popular series of films called the Pink Panther. The films are about a bumbling and inept French police detective, Inspector Jacques Clouseau normally played by Peter Sellers. In order to sharpen his defense skills Clouseau gives permission to Cato Fong, his Chinese manservant, to attack him regularly to keep him alert and skilled in the martial arts. So generally within each film Cato launches a surprise attack. The results are hilarious. Entire buildings are sometimes destroyed in the process. So generally within the tickling game, a parent or grandparent takes on the role of Clouseau and the children collectively take on the role of Cato. [But you don't explain to the children that it is a game.]

In the early episodes of the game, you simply catch the children and tickle them.

In middle episodes of the game, all you have to say is "I am going to tickle you" and the game begins and the children scatter in all directions. You chase the kids around the room, but most times you chase them so slowly that you rarely ever catch them. After awhile you take a break and sit down on the couch to rest. As a result, the children will begin to launch surprise attacks of their own. And you play along and allow them to win every now and then and pretend to be tickled. The children learn to work collectively as a group.

In latter episodes of the game, you simply plant yourself on the couch. The kids will suddenly disappear and you will hear whispering. If you listen carefully you might hear “Let’s tickle Grandpa!” and then attack plots are discussed. Then out of the blue, the children will launch their lightning fast tickling attack from all directions. When the littlest one approaches, I raise up my hands like a big bear and let out a loud roar. The littlest one stops dead in her tracks and lets out a squeal and then runs quickly away, laughing all the way. She was brave enough to launch a surprise attack and quick enough to flee and survive for another day.

I was reading a book by Temple Grandin in which she described the Squeeze Machine she constructed to relieve overwhelming stimulation. This evoked a strange observation. When my wife and I went on our honeymoon we stayed one night in a hotel that had a waterbed. My wife was so impressed with this type of bed, she urged me to buy one and so we did. It was a heated waterbed. My firstborn did not like to sleep in her crib and during the day sometimes she would become very crabby. My wife discovered that if she took our daughter and place her in the waterbed and covered her in a soft blanket instead of placing her in the crib, she was out like a light in a few seconds. I reasoned that to our young daughter this warm waterbed was like sleeping in the safety of the womb. She felt warm and secure. We have used a waterbed for almost a half-century now. When I go to bed and tuck myself under a fluffy warm down comforter, I am out like a light in a few seconds. When the grandkids come over, many times they jump into the waterbed together and cover themselves completely in a down blanket and they laugh and giggle together.

Heated waterbeds are becoming rare today. But maybe a waterbed can help an autistic child sleep at night like in a womb, snug and safe. This might be a place for them to recharge their batteries after a day of extreme sensory overload.

There is another strange ritual that I do with my grandchildren. Children will begin to understand language from 6 months to a year before they begin to speak. As a grandfather, I feel it my duty to teach them early. And I begin to teach them at that time. So when my daughter calls, I ask if their young child is available. And if so I ask that she put the child on the telephone. Children love the magic of telephones. I say, “This is your Dziadziu [the Polish word for Grandfather]. I want to tell you something. It is **really** important. Every day remember to give your mommy and daddy a big hug. Tell them you love them. Give them a big kiss. That is **your job**. That is what you are supposed to do. **Remember, it’s important.**” I perform this ritual repeatedly for the first couple years after I start it for each of the grandchildren, until it engraved on their heart.

I just realize there is another symptom of autism that was not listed. From my perspective this fits in the anomaly list. The attribute is motion sickness. I do not suffer from this trait. I love to go on the meanest fastest roller coasters ever built. But when I search the Internet, this trait appears frequently in the autistic discussion boards. And it makes a lot of sense that children with autism have sensory issues that make it difficult to filter sensory input. Their nervous

system does not know what to block out and what to amplify. Children with autism with hyperactive sensory systems tend to avoid engaging in activities that involve motion. They may get motion sickness very easily. “Autistic adults may have difficulty with vestibular (movement related) sensitivities may frequently get car sick, air sick, or motion sickness; be fearful of heights, have difficulty riding elevators, escalators, or moving sidewalks. These individuals may avoid amusement park rides that drop, climb, spin, or go upside down.”

When my daughters were growing up, they suffered from motion sickness. Now that they are grown up, they still suffer a little but they found out that if they are driving, they are immune. So they prefer to be the driver in the car.

But this trait is also visible in some of my grandchildren. So I put my “mad scientist” hat on and created a blend of essential oils, that I aptly named “Anti-Motion Sickness Formula”. My daughters use it on long trips to prevent nausea. They put a dab on their wrist. The grandkids are instructed to take a whiff and smell their wrist whenever they get queasy. It seems to help them.

Now I really like to go on rides in the amusement parks with the grandkid. But they seem always afraid. So maybe it is not a lack of being brave but rather a sensory overload problem. So the next time we take them to an amusement park, I absolutely have to make sure I bring some of this formula along. Riding the biggest meanest ride is an absolute must; it is one of those primitive skills that my grandkids need to experience in life.

There may be one other tool to add to the toolkit in teaching young Aspie kids. When I was small, I practiced ventriloquism. During the time I grew up, there was a program on television called “The Howdy Doody Show” and it was one of my favorite programs. My parents bought me a Howdy Doody puppet. I often played with it. I suspect that it helped to develop within me a variety of inner voices.

Some individuals with INTJ personalities expressed their traits as follows: “We usually see things from a million perspectives.” “We can stay alone for a loooong time: because there is a party going on inside our heads. A 100 voices talking, debating with each other about the best course of action around something.”

This puppet allowed me to express myself from a variety of perspectives. It integrated symbolic play, imagination, expressing my inner feelings, humor and debate. The puppet allowed me to express an “alter ego” and suspend introversion tendencies temporarily through the voice of a puppet. It allowed me to shift perspectives. It allowed me to role-play using reflective dialogue with an imaginary friend. I suspect that child-led puppetry for a young Aspie could be very beneficial in their early learning process, and may even be integral.

This whole concept of Aspies and the existence of other people like me is a very new experience for me. This morning, another thought popped into my mind, so I did another deep dive, an introspective analysis.

Before I describe this, I must describe another one of my strange traits or quirks. I generally call my kids or grandkids by the wrong name. I am always mixing up their names. If I play this in slow motion it looks like this. I call them a name out loud. Then I pause and think NO that is the wrong name. Then I call them by a different name out loud. Then I pause and think, NO that is also wrong. After rattling off three or more names, I finally say the right name and everyone laughs.

So back to the main story! My youngest daughter exhibited a type of superpower. She is able to put impossible puzzles together with ease. But she is an extrovert. How do I know that she is an extrovert?

My daughter was beautiful and popular in school. When she was in high school, she would bring home suitors. I would make it a point to remember their names. It is a major social disaster to call a current suitor by the name of a former suitor. So I had to exercise extreme concentration in order to say their names correctly. But she went through suitors like changing clothes. And after awhile it just became too much for me to handle. So I told her that I am going to call her suitor by the name "Steve" from now on. Now "Steve" was the name of her current suitor so all was fine, and he seemed to be a fine young lad. But if she broke up with him, then the next one she brought home I would call him "Steve" also, and the one after that too. Luckily for her she moved off to college about that time.

So I began to think is it even possible to be an extrovert Aspie? Could she have transitioned through all the childhood development stages on her own and still retain the special traits of an Aspie. She can still put together complex puzzles with ease. Then I thought what did I do different with her. So I made another Aspie type list:

- * I built her an invisible coat of armor.
- * She had an older sister to protect her on the bus when she went to and from school.
- * She had developed a friend before she started school and they transitioned into school together.
- * She joined an exceptional singing group at school when she was very, very small and became one of its star performers. The interesting thing about this club was that it encompassed many different age groupings, many different classes.
- * She was fearless.

So the uniqueness of the club was that it was way beyond the peer group of her class but bonded her across many different peer groups. And her involvement in this club opened doors to being inducted into the drama club and performances in plays at an early age. The whole process just springboarded. So she had layers and layers of protection like an onion that shielded her from abuse and allowed her to develop through the stages of childhood development without being bullied or abused. She had her own cocoon to protect her transition to adulthood.

She essentially hit the ground running the first day she entered kindergarten and never stopped.

[So my daughter told me, "Well dad you are wrong, I am an introvert." Who would have ever guessed!]

XXIII. CLOSING COMMENTS

I am an old Aspie. In bygone days I might even be considered an ancient Aspie. But I still feel young like a child. I am still amazed by many things and pause and stand in great awe and wonder. I look back on my incredible life and realize it was extraordinary. If I could go back in time would I change things? Perhaps, or perhaps not! Sometimes you have to suck it up and take the good with the bad. Ultimately do you want to define your life as normal or would you rather be Superman?

I suspect many Aspies exhibit INTP and INTJ personality types. One individual with an INTJ personality described himself in these terms. "I am also an intensely private person. Most of the time even my closest friends and family don't know exactly what I'm thinking about or feeling because I prefer to keep it to myself." I can relate to that. Perhaps it is because he has learned to never reveal himself because it might reveal his vulnerabilities or perhaps he still holds great anger and rage from being subjected to years of systematic torture. Many parents and professionals try to help Aspies. They are generally outside looking in. But I am on the inside looking out. Maybe I am an anomaly, an atypical Aspie; but then again maybe not. So that is where the power of this book rests.

Perhaps by decoding myself and letting it all hang out, it might help others like me to come to grips with their unique lives. I wish you Godspeed on your journey and completing the puzzle, named the Great Mysteries of Life.

Lessons Learned: Opportunities will come. Recognize these opportunities and take advantage of them. Some of your weaknesses are counterbalanced by your great strengths. Sometimes I can even turn disasters into one of my greatest accomplishments. And don't take what others say about you too seriously. You are very special and unique and the world is much better off having you around; even if they don't know it yet.

And if you ever come across a 8-foot rattlesnake that has struck at you and missed (very rare) and is now coiled 2-feet away and rattling next to your feet and about to strike again, the correct action to take in this circumstance is to stay very, very still, motionless and soon the rattlesnake will not be able to tell the difference between you and a large tree and will simply slither off back into the shrubs where it came from.

My website is called Impact. My main hobby is called Cataclysmic Research. I study mass extinction events and how to survive them. Impact is located at <http://www.breadandbutter-science.com>. So if you are in the mood and have nothing better to do with your time, come by for a visit and play in my sandbox for a while. I have lots and lots of very unique toys.

XXIV. THE ASPIE PSA SELF-ASSESSMENT

After I finished this book, my mind keeps spinning. So there must be something I overlooked or I hadn't finished assembling all the pieces of the puzzle together. So in a typical Aspie way, I decided to do what I will term a PSA Self Assessment. The "P" stands for Psychologist, the "S" stands for Sociologist, and the "A" stands for Animal Behaviorist.

Now Aspies have been around for a very, very long time. Probably since the beginning of the human race and even then the traits existed long before that time in other species. It is a misconception to believe that all Aspies landed up homeless, in institutions, in insane asylums, drug addicts, criminals, or suicide victims. Many became the heart and soul of civilizations.

So I do not have a degree in any of the elements of PSA, nor have I ever taken a class in any of those subjects (except maybe field archeology), but I am high functioning and have retained the heart and soul of an Aspie and that make me uniquely qualified to understand my tribe.

I feel that many of the problems faced by Aspies can be condensed down to one word. And that word is FEAR. They live in constant unending fear always on the lookout for the first signs of danger. And that fear can weigh heavy on their hearts over time and become very oppressive. If they can resolve their fears, they will be set free, integrate back into society and lead truly remarkable lives.

Peter Pan

Many times our Aspie ancestors left us scraps of information hidden away as clues, like pieces of a puzzle. One of these is the story of Peter Pan. When I look at this story through my rose colored glasses, I see the story of a tribe of Aspies.

There are many different ways to dissect and neatly label the variation of Aspies. For example, I am a Math/Science Aspie. I am also a pattern recognition Aspie. But the one I find most intriguing, is dissecting Aspies through the lens of James Matthew Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan. His story divides the world of Aspies into three groups: Wendy Darling (the Aspie Girl), the Lost Boys (most Aspie Boys) and Peter Pan (a most rare Aspie). And I identify myself with Peter.

One of the main attributes of Aspies is their innocence. They have a child like imagination. In the memorial service of Albert Einstein, the nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer recalled that in Einstein "there was always with him a wonderful purity at once childlike and profoundly stubborn". When I look at myself even though I am 70 years old, I am in my "Pleasing Four" stage of childhood development. I am just a young boy at heart.

J.M. Barrie explains that the Neverlands are found in the minds of children, and that although each is "always more or less an island", and they have a family resemblance, they are not the same from one child to the next. For example, John Darling's had "a lagoon with flamingos flying over it", while his little brother Michael's had "a flamingo with lagoons flying over it".

The Lost Boys are a tribe of children who fell out of their baby stroller when their nurse was not looking, and who, having not been claimed by humans in seven days, were collected by the fairies and flown to the Neverland. There are no "lost girls" because, as Peter explains, girls are much too clever to fall out of their baby strollers and be lost in this manner. In the book, there are six Lost Boys: Tootles, Nibs, Slightly, Curly and the Twins. They live in caves beneath trees in the forest, wear animal skins, have spears and bows and arrows, and live for adventure. They are a formidable fighting force despite their youth and they make war with the pirates, although they seem to enjoy a peaceful existence with the other inhabitants of Neverland.

In the novel *Peter Pan*, and its cinematic adaptations, Wendy is an Edwardian schoolgirl. The novel states that she attends a "kindergarten school" with her younger brothers, meaning a school for pre-adolescent children. Like Peter, in many adaptations of the story she is shown to be on the brink of adolescence. She belongs to a middle class London household of that era, and is the daughter of George Darling, a short-tempered and pompous bank/office worker, and his wife, Mary. Wendy shares a nursery room with her two brothers, Michael and John.

Peter Pan's island was called "*Never Never Never Land*" in the first draft of the play, but later it was abbreviated down to Neverland. Neverland is widely thought of as a place where children don't grow up. The term has sometimes been viewed as a command "to never land there". It is the place where lost boys sleep and also a place where boys move almost directly from the womb to the tomb. Sarah Gilead [an expert on Victorian children's literature] sees the "never" in Neverland as a two-sided coin. On one side is the refusal of the mind to conceive of its own end and on the other side, the absolute reality of death.

The story begins when Peter loses his shadow. There is a duality of Peter Pan – his physical presence in the boy and his spiritual essence (his soul) in his shadow. When Peter's shadow became separated from Peter in the beginning of the story, it was Wendy that sewed his shadow back on.

Wendy is proud of her own childhood and enjoys telling stories and fantasizing. She has a distaste for adulthood, acquired partly by the example of it set by her father, whom she loves but fears due to his somewhat violent fits of anger. Her ambition early in the story is to somehow avoid growing up. She is granted this opportunity by Peter Pan, who takes her and her brothers to Neverland, where they can remain young forever.

One of the attributes of Peter Pan was his fearlessness. As the tide came up in the Mermaids' Lagoon, Peter and Wendy are trapped on Marooners' Rock and will soon be drowned. Peter finds a way to free Wendy from impending doom but not himself. Peter then shudders for a brief moment at the thought of his death and then a thought flashes in his mind and he says, "To die will be an awfully big adventure". Peter revealed fearlessness in the face of death and the capacity to turn every experience into a grand adventure. That is a pivotal traits of a Peter Pan Aspie – not desiring death but able to look death straight in the eye and not blink.

I do not have many of the negative issues that cripple most Aspies such as issues with sensory perception. This is due to the following reason. One of the traits of most Aspie is that they live in constant fear. They are always on high alert using all their sense to detect danger. They are separated from their herd and they are alone and vulnerable and that is why they live in constant fear. But I am different. It is because I no longer fear. I have stared death right in the eyes and I

didn't flinch. I have accepted my mortality and treasured the immortality of my soul. As a result, I live my life without fear and I live it to the fullest. And I don't grow old inside because I am forever a child at heart. I still retain a sense of adventure, of exploring new worlds, of standing in awe and wonder. Peter Pan Aspies are all about living their dreams and boy do they ever have the dreams. They possess great drive and determination and are not fearful of walking alone in the dark. I pass seamlessly between my imaginary world and the real world whenever I wish and many times I bring back a fragment of the imaginary world back with me. And I try to be true to my code of not harming others and by helping other when I can.

First Fear: Mortality and the Fear of Dying

When I was young, I lived on a farm. At a very early age [sometime between the age of 2 and 5 years old], I was kicked in the head by a bull that weighed over 1,000 pounds and knocked unconscious. Back in those days, there were no 911 phone calls. My parents just picked up my limp body brought me back into the house and laid me on my bed. I might recover or I might die. Their hearts were broken in dread and fear. I could hear it in their whispers while I lay in a coma. But eventually I regained consciousness and recovered without a scratch. My father sold the bull. But perhaps, I didn't recover "without a scratch"!

I think this near fatal accident may have spawned a change in me. Before this event I had no concept of death but afterward I had to process an understanding of death and my own mortality. Most boys are by nature fearless, but at this time I felt fear. And that can be very traumatic for a boy at such a tender young age.

I slept alone in a small room in the very middle of the house. The room had no windows, only a bed and a small closet. About this time hideous monsters or demons began to visit me at night when I was sleeping alone in my room in the dark. They were quite frightening and very, very real. I would cry out and my parents would come into my room and turn on the lights. They checked under my bed and in the closet and they looked everywhere and saw nothing. But almost immediately when they left and the lights went out, these hideous demons would rematerialize. They didn't harm me in any way. It was almost like they were spectators. But it was very, very, very scary.

After several months of terror, my mother pulled me aside and said that I didn't need to be afraid because God would protect me. And then my young mind had to process the concept of a God at a personal level. Suddenly poof, these demons disappeared and never returned. I think it was here that I first learned to put aside my fear of death.

There is a certain purity of soul in a young child. They are like Adam and Eve before they ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden and fell into original sin. And if one remains a child forever, then God doesn't hold it against them and will sometimes listen to their cries when they are in pain and advise them later in life. And God is the source of all Wisdom.

Second Fear: Being Separated and Abandoned by Your Herd

Many animals naturally live and travel together in groups called herds. They form into groups and act collectively without centralized direction. Examples include: zebras, buffalos, sheep, cattle, antelopes, deer, elephants, giraffes and camels. By sticking together in a herd, they reduce the chance of being singled out and becoming the one animal that gets killed by the predator.

Separation from the herd, isolation, is seen as dangerous and life threatening for these species. An animal separated from the herd may exhibit behaviors associated with fear reactions (such as elevated heart rate, shaking, and hypersensitivity to sounds and other senses). Separation triggers fear-based behaviors.

I observe separation from the herd in humans is the root cause of several of the Aspie negative traits. Many Aspies report living in a state of constant fear. They are always on high alert for signs of danger. They exhibit strange behaviors similar to those exhibited by animals separated from their herd. These negative traits include: hypersensitivity to senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch), sensory overload and shutdowns, gastrointestinal problems related to prolonged stress, mental health problems/psychological disorders (depression, self harm, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder), and muscle or vocal ticks.

As you travel through life, you encounter a series of transitions between herds. You generally start out in the tribe called the family. Then when you begin school, you separate into either a tribe of boys or a tribe of girls. Around junior high, the boy tribe and the girl tribe begin to dissolve away and reformulate into the adult tribe. Even along the way, many unexpected transitions can take place. Families can break up. Students can change schools. Romantic couples can break up ending in heartache. Children grow up and leave the nest. These transitions can be very traumatic to an Aspie.

Beginning in Junior High, boys begin to notice girls and girls begin to notice boys and the two tribes begin to dissolve away and merge. At this stage male/female bonding becomes extremely important to the two peer groups (boys and girls). It is at this stage that I believe most Aspie girls and Aspie boys begin to feel alone. Even their best friends abandon them and leave them behind.

My initial tribe was my family. At the age of 2 years, 3 months I was abandoned by the herd, my family and left in an orphanage. I displayed many typical abandonment traits at that time. Although this was a short event lasting only 3 days, it had a profound effect on me. I suspect that my parents were unaware, that I could understand the concept of an orphanage at such a young age. Since no one explained to me why I was abandoned, I might have felt it was somehow my fault. I must have done something wrong. As a result, I was extremely diligent on being a “good” boy so that my tribe would never reject me again and I tallied in the “Pleasing Four” stage of childhood development a little longer than my peers. It probably made me a little more clinging. And clinging (obsession) nature is a negative trait to interpersonal relationships especially within couples.

Our family moved around a lot. Every few years we pulled up stakes and moved to another city / another school. Junior high represented my fourth school. I made friends and then lost these

friends when we moved. But each time the number of friends became fewer and fewer because I was always the new kid on the block and the members of my peer group already had established their network of friends.

Another dynamic was that I came from a large family. I was the oldest of 8 children. I had many brothers and sisters to interact with which is in contrast to the small families of today's world. And I had a huge extended family. As a result my family tribe played a much larger and central role in my life than my peer group of boys.

I was the oldest child in the family and I had to set a good example for my younger brothers and sisters. Becoming independent as a young child was both a necessity and considered to be a virtue in my family. I had a responsibility to succeed on my own. Therefore I was taught to be self-reliant at an early age.

I am an anomaly among the Aspie tribe. I am a Peter Pan Aspie and I am fearless. I am comfortable being totally alone in this world and I do not fear death. And as a result, I do not exhibit these negative Aspie traits caused by herd separation.

When I grew up it was like being a gypsy. We moved from one location to another every few years. Just when you began making friends the rug was pulled out from under you and it was back to the drawing board. Perhaps that is the reason when our children were born, I moved to the country and allowed my children the stability where they could stay in the same school from Kindergarten through their senior year in High School – all the time in the same school and with the same peer group.

Third Fear – The Fear of Psychological and Physical Abuse from their Peer Group

As species evolved some animals (for example primates) began to exhibit social traits. Social animals in a hierarchic community have been observed exhibiting the following structure:

The highest-ranking individual is sometimes designated as the **Alpha Male**. Alpha animals usually gain preferential access to food and other desirable items or activities. Alphas may achieve their status by superior physical strength and aggression. The individual with alpha status sometimes changes, often through a fight between the dominant and a subordinate animal. These fights are often to the death, depending on the animal.

Beta Male animals often act as second-in-command to the reigning alpha. They will replace a dead or unfit alpha and become the next alpha.

Omega Males are referred to as the lowest caste of the hierarchical society. Omega animals are subordinate to all others in the community, and are expected by others in the group to remain submissive to everyone. Omega animals may also be used as communal scapegoats or outlets for frustration, or given the lowest priority when food is distributed.

This structure is also exhibited in tribes of humans. Humans form into societal groups called gangs. A gang is led by an Alpha Male (otherwise known as the bully) and his lieutenants, Beta Males. Generally this tribe encompasses the entire school class because the other members of the tribe participate as soldiers in the gang or as silent eyewitnesses. The leadership of the gang is determined by brute force. An Aspie fills the role of an Omega Male, a communal scapegoat or outlet of frustration.

One of the interesting observations about school bullying is that generally for males it peaks in the Junior High School years. What makes the timing of that phase interesting and special? It is because males are transitioning into puberty at that age. For females school bullying peaks around the High School years.

In primates, Alpha Males often gain preferential access to sex or mates and as a result to reproduction and offspring. In humans, this bullying is part of thinning out the herd just prior to the mating age. It either mentally cripples males for the rest of their life or causes them to become loners and leave the tribe.

Once abuse and torture enters the picture, do not expect the child to advance any further along the stages of natural childhood development. For some (Aspie girls) who are further along socially, they may even digress backwards. I feel that girls tend to mimic the action of others and this is actually part of the natural process of becoming an extrovert. They are further along in social development and forced backwards into becoming an introvert by their girl tribe. As a result they are separated from their tribe, shunned and abandoned. Once you drive a turtle back into its shell in fear, don't expect it to come out anytime soon. Aspies exhibit paralyzing fear, afraid of sticking their head out of their shell, because they don't know what they did wrong to have their peer group turn on them, even their best friends, with great meanness pushing them out of their tribe.

When I entered Junior High, my world crashed around me. I was subjected to a constant barrage of teasing and bullying. It is better described as physical abuse, psychological abuse, and torture by my peer group. Around puberty, a social structure formed within my male herd with an Alpha Males (bully), and Beta Males (their lieutenants). I withstood the psychological abuse primarily by accident. My peer group decided I was Japanese and began telling Japanese jokes at every opportunity along with calling me thousands of other derogatory names. But because I was not Japanese, I became somewhat immune from this type of attack. The physical attacks had a severe effect. I figured out one solution, which helped me overcome being strangled with a tie on a daily basis, but that just expanded into other forms of physical abuse. In my case, a very strange act on my part caused them to believe that I was broken. They had falsely assumed that they had broken me, that my box was permanently irreversibly shattered and that they had successfully driven me insane. Their mission was accomplished and they could move onto other ripe targets to torment.

I was never going to accept becoming an Omega male, a scapegoat for my peer group. I resisted with all my strength and all my might and became stubborn as hell and a loner. Those attacks from bullies prevented me from progressing through the other stages of childhood development. I became like a turtle that was always ducking into my shell at the sign of danger. I was an introvert for life and happy being an introvert. I was O.K. with becoming a loner. Luckily for me, my torture only lasted 3 years in Junior High School and then the recovery process began.

The three fears that terrorize Aspies are:

- mortality and their eventual death.
- separation from their herd
- fear of psychological and physical abuse by their peer group

I choose to not let fear define my life. I stare death right between the eyes and do not flinch. And I try to be true to my code of not harming others and by helping other when I can. I always have and always will remain a child. I pass seamlessly between my imaginary world and the real world whenever I wish and many times I bring back a fragment from my imaginary world back with me. I have learned to live in an adult world and be successful even though I have the heart of a child.

If you are an adult Aspie then learn to manage fear. The more fearless you become, the more you will shed many of your negative traits. These negative traits include: hypersensitivity to senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch), sensory overload and shutdowns, gastrointestinal problems related to prolonged stress, mental health problems/psychological disorders (depression, self harm, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder), and muscle or vocal ticks.

The first fear to squash is one's mortality and coming to grips with your eventual death. The second fear to squash is banishment from your tribe and being left all alone in the world. The third fear to squash is brutal physical and psychological abuse at the hands of your peer group.

First of all, I am against trying to turn an introvert into and an extrovert. Around 49.3% of the population are extroverts and 50.7% are introverts [according to the 1998 MBTI Manual]. Introverts are happy being introverts and extroverts are happy being extroverts. Forcing individuals from one personality type into the other causes psychological harm. You don't need to turn yourself into extroverts to succeed. What you should focus on is the shedding the negative behaviors, such as sensory overload, which is caused by fear. Help them cope with fear and many of their negative traits will simply melt away.

I evolved from an INTP personality to a dual INTP/INTJ personality trait. The INTJ personality protects my INTP. The quality of an INTP is intelligence. The quality of an INTJ is wisdom. In a way an INTP/INTJ is the best of both worlds. As an INTJ I have a spiritual dimension. When logic becomes illogical, my INTJ personality has the ability to step in and make sense of it all. I have many internal voices that debate life's decisions from a thousand different perspectives.

For an Aspie with an INTP personality trait, absorbing an INTJ personality into their being can help them reduce loneliness. As other INTJ's have said,

"We usually see things from a million perspectives."

“We can stay alone for a loooong time: because there is a party going on inside our heads. A 100 voices talking, debating with each other about the best course of action around something.”

“I’m hardly ever bored, because there are worlds, inside worlds, inside worlds in my own head.”

I believe the key for developing my component of INTJ personality was to develop multiple personas. With other personas, you will never be totally alone.

I feel that one of the reasons why there are many more Aspie males than Aspie females is because girls play with dolls. In this form of imaginary play, girls develop alternate personas. These personas can help them deal with stress, fear and an illogical world when the tribe of girls disintegrates and turns on them, casting them out. That is why some girls can be seen talking to imaginary friend when they are coping with stress from being bullied at school. These voices and personas help them cope and blend back into the real world.

Now I am not suggesting that boys play with dolls. As a member of the tribe of boys, I would rather die than be caught playing with a doll. It was part of the unwritten boy tribe code of conduct. Having said this, it is important to understand a fine distinction that learning the art of ventriloquism using a male dummy is an acceptable skill for a boy. Some have made careers out of ventriloquism and made their livelihood from this profession. This is one tool that Aspie males can use to evolve alternate personas.

Ventriloquist dummy can have moveable head, mouth, eyes and eyebrows. They can reflect facial expressions. Sometimes the dummy can become more human than the Aspie child controlling them. In order to become a good ventriloquist, one must develop another persona, another voice. Learning ventriloquism can be a way for an anti-social child to learn communication skills, because they feel less restrained by speaking through the dummy. Ventriloquism was a means to discuss conflict and overcome shyness.

When I was young, I self-learned the art of ventriloquism. The dummy I used was Howdy Doody. The dummy was human because I was human. It was male because I was a male. The dummy moved its mouth when it talked because I move my mouth when I talked. The dummy was capable of making facial expressions even though the boy operating it might not be able to. Watching the Howdy Doody show on television was my teacher. Now I may not have been a good ventriloquist but I was good at creating other voices in my head to debate internally the mysteries of life.

But imaginary play with dolls or learning the art of ventriloquism are not the only tools for creating alternate personas. James Matthew Barrie, the author of Peter Pan, used the art of storytelling to create alternate personas. [Storytelling is not reading stories from a book but rather creating stories from one’s own imagination.]

I daydreamed in school. It is quite natural for a child to look out the window and daydream, or talk to themselves, or develop imaginary friends and evolve imaginary worlds when they are getting the crap beat out of them every day; when their bodies are physically changing because of puberty; and when their peer group has abandoned them in a street gutter along the side of the road. Daydreaming is a coping mechanism. Luckily for me, they had not developed the term ADD or ADHD and the variety of prescription drugs to treat this so called condition when I grew up. In Junior High as a male, I was experiencing strange new sensations that I didn't even know existed before. Daydreaming in the classroom is not the problem – child abuse by the student's peer group is the problem.

I feel that the introduction of prescription drugs would have desensitized me to the pain when I really needed to feel the pain in order to develop many of my personality traits such as stubbornness, tenacity and steady resolve. From the brutality, I evolved my sense of compassion towards others in pain. I also visualized imaginary worlds, better worlds much better than the real world.

After years of abuse by my peer group, I retreated into the imaginary world of my daydreams. Daydreaming is just a short trip to Neverland. When you finally break the bonds of fear and return to the real world, you are changed. You bring part of your imaginary world back with you. You live great adventures. You are fearless and you are not shackled by the norms of society.

It is very important for young Aspies to learn to value themselves, to evolve rock solid self-worth. To do this:

- First, learn as many real life skills as possible, starting from the time a child learns to begin walking and talking.
- Second, turn one of these real life skills into an occupation. When I was growing up I had chores to do around the house. One of these chores was cutting the grass in the yard. This learned skill evolved into one of my first occupation, which was cutting the grass in the neighborhood. The hardest part was not cutting the grass; it was knocking on the door of a stranger, talking to the person inside and then offering my services. I became a little self-sufficient. I earned enough money to buy my passion at the time (comic books), along with candy, ice cream and other treats. All this happened before I even entered Junior High School. In the winter I shoveled snow from the driveways.

So if any of the kids in school ever called me worthless, I knew better because I could measure my worth in dollars and cents.

Aspies boys should learn the tools of self-defense and be given permission to defend themselves from physical abuse.

If you are an Aspie and are all alone in this world and beset by bullies, then realize this. You are part of a tribe of children from *Never Never Never Land*. So open your eyes and observe. There are other Aspies in your school. Don't be afraid, find them and form your tribe. You can easily spot them. They are the children being picked on, and ridiculed. They are Aspies too. Join together and become friends. Aspies are honest, true and loyal, and have hearts of children.

Each one has unique minds encompassing a world of imagination and as a result they are very interesting. They may be in different classes or grades but they are from your tribe. And don't forget to include the Aspie girls. Just go up and introduce yourself. Be very patient and listen and make friends with them.

Join a club in school that includes both boys and girls and also spans multiple grades, such as drama club that put on plays. Not everyone in a play is an actor. Some members are involved in stage lighting, costumes, orchestra, props and set design, sounds effects, and makeup. Find your niche.

Many Aspies experience severe bullying in school. This generally occurs during the Junior High School years in boys and the High School years in girls. And then the level of bullying radically diminishes down to the noise level. According to those Aspies that have lived through severe bullying:

- * removing the children from school temporarily by home schooling them helps tremendously because it removes them from their tormenters and allows them to begin the healing process.

- * after the abuse and torture has ended some types of therapy are very beneficial. Therapy targeting fear and stress such as programs that treat PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) help. These include somatic experiencing, beam life coaching, Tipi emotional regulation therapy, and exposure therapy.

Many Aspies possess a great love of nature and they thrive in rural or farming environments or even the High Seas. They find peace away from the bustle of the city lights and this environment allows them to heal their wounds.

In summary, learn a multitude of real life skills. Learn the art of map reading and the art of reciting tongue twisters (with precision and speed), the art of ventriloquism or storytelling or both. Follow the path to becoming fearless and never allow your box to be broken. Stay strong; become whole again, innocent with a heart of a child but stubborn as hell! And most important, **stay away from kryptonite.**

So if you feel all alone and depressed, like one of societies outcasts, and if you have nothing better to do with your time, then go see the recent film *The Greatest Showman*. See how one man (still a boy with the heart of a child who became fearless – a Peter Pan) formed a tribe from societies rejects and helped them break their chains and shackles of fear and shame that bind them and how he made them whole again.

It's a wrap.

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According to an article by Deborah Rudacille in Spectrum magazine: “Contrary to popular assumption, people diagnosed with so-called mild forms of autism don’t fare any better in life than those with severe forms of the disorder. That’s the conclusion of a new study that suggests that even individuals with normal intelligence and language abilities struggle to fit into society because of their social and communication problems.”

Today, it is believed that 35 percent of individuals with an autism spectrum disorder are attending college, but it is believed that people with Asperger's have a 75-85 percent unemployment rate. It is also estimated that 90% of diagnosed people with autism in general don’t get married/have kids, not just Aspergers. Keep in mind that around 50% of people with autism also have intellectual disabilities, which plays a big role in not being a good marriage candidate. There aren't even any reliable statistics on how many adult autistics exist in the United States. All the statistics are on 8-year old children. But whatever the real numbers are, they statistics are very bleak.

I sometimes see the world through my rose-colored glasses. A couple months ago, I didn’t even know what an Aspie was. I had suffered a lot through life and figured it was just something different about me. But now I know there are others like me, others who have and are experiencing the same difficulties in life that I experienced. And all I want to do with this book is lend a helping hand.