



AMAZING AUTISM

By Tom Baxter who is autistic.



I am beautiful,
not broken.
Different,
not less.
Challenged,
not challenging
Overwhelmed,
not spoiled.
Autism is not a choice,
However, acceptance is.



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WHAT IS AUTISM?

What Google says...

Autism is a mental condition, present from early childhood, characterized by great difficulty in communicating and forming relationships with other people and in using language and abstract concepts.

OR...in my words...

Autism is not some downloadable content for the mind. Autism is there or it is not there; you can't catch it. People with Autism do not come from the Planet Mars; they are human beings. Autism makes it harder to do certain things but it is NOT a mental illness. I prefer the term 'mental condition'.

Autism affects everyone differently.

A HANDY GUIDE TO WHAT AUTISM AFFECTS:

- Autism is not an excuse.
- Some people with autism do not enjoy loud noises but sudden ones can be even worse.
- Some people with autism find it hard to look people in the eye when having a conversation.
- Some people with autism do not like changes to their routine.
- Some people with autism find making and keeping friends difficult.
- Some people with autism find communication difficult.
- Some people with autism have obsessions about a particular subject.
- Some people with autism walk on their tiptoes.



HOW AUTISM AFFECTS ME!

It's very difficult to put in to words but...

- **It makes me good at doing speeches.**
- **I don't like changes to my routine.**
- **I don't like the fire alarm or loud noises.**
- **I have a strong, boosted imagination.**
- **It makes me really obsessed with dogs; especially my dogs Pippin & Raggly.**
- **It makes social introductions harder and I tend to need to tell new people about my dogs to make me feel comfortable.**
- **I like having my 'helpers' in my pockets to help me when I'm stressed.**
- **It affects my spellings but it makes reading easier.**
- **REMEMBER – this is just about me. There's a famous expression that if you've met one person with autism, then... you've met one person with autism.**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Accept people with autism and don't stare at or bully them.
- When you can see we are stressed, make things calm and keep language simple.
- Take time to get to know us. Although we find making friends hard, we love having good friends.
- Ask us about our autism.
- Teach your friends about autism, and your parents too.
- Understand that if we're not talking to you, it's not because we are being rude, it's just we are struggling.
- Don't laugh at us just because our behaviour is different to yours.
- Notice the good things that we do!



DOGS AND AUTISM

Dogs can be trained to help people with autism.

I have got two dogs called Pips and Rags. They are not trained but they do help me with my autism.

When there's a stressful event going on and I am crying, Raggly and Pippin will come and see if I'm ok.

Raggly likes to sit on my lap and that makes me feel calm and happy.

Playing tug of war with Pippin is a welcome distraction from stress.

When I talk about dogs, it helps me feel more comfortable with people.



MESSAGES FROM MY DOGS



“If I could snap my fingers and be non-autistic, I would not. Autism is part of what I am.”

— Temple Grandin

