

**THE INSIDE OUT OF AUTISM**  
**(Continued)**

**Learning Through Passions**

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## **PART III      PASSIONS: THE BRAIN IS A DISCOVERY MACHINE**

Lastly, here, I will pick up the theme that has been spoken of before, as with the young trumpet player, the cartooner's drive to cartoon, or Jake's interest in the stars, and **that is that if we are allowed to delve and even dive into one's passion in life, this can lead to success in ways that we have been slow to recognize, not understanding how the brain works.**

Following passions, for some autistics...when fixations are supported, free from pressure, judgment and rejection, these individuals, in particular, can begin to thrive, **and additionally, their brains can inherently help to take care of what and how all else will develop.**...for them to learn, find a way to communicate, and to contribute, as I will now speak about in more depth.

### **OUR AMAZING BRAIN**

The right/heart brain's functioning, in cooperation with the left brain, is a creative wielding of information that cannot be studied and understood by the usual means. Indeed, just a left-brain analysis of the brain in general, cannot possibly describe how it totally functions since much of the brain's working is out of the arena of linear analysis and explanation. (Kim Peek, will share with us in this way, at the end of this paper.)

In some unknown, non-instructed, and very powerful way, the brain receives broad information, discerning patterns and alignments there-in. It then delineates, integrates, manipulates and expresses discoveries and understandings from all this that cannot be done by any one facet of the brain alone, neither by a singular right or left brain functioning.

As part of all this, perceiving outside the box, pattern finding, and replicating are just three key characteristic traits of the right/heart brain's mode of inclusion, relationship, and inspiration, as it integrates with left brain skills as well.

**And the human brain is built to function, well-equipped in itself, to do all of this without strong outside instruction or direction.**

Have you seen a toddler lately with a cell phone?

And a story of children learning to use computers largely without adult guidance:

Dr. Sugata Mitra, Chief Scientist at NIIT, (NIIT Limited is an Indian Multinational company that offers learning management and training delivery approaches for corporations, career groups and schools), is credited with developing the **Hole-in-the-Wall** experiment. Mitra had been toying with the idea of unsupervised learning and computers. In 1999, he decided to test his ideas in the field.

Dr. Mitra's team carved a "hole in the wall" that separated the NIIT premises from the adjoining repressed living area in Kalkaji, New Delhi. Through this hole, a freely accessible computer was set up for use. This computer proved to be an instant hit among those living in this adjacent area, especially the children.

With no prior experience, the children, in groups, learned to use the computer on their own. In order to further prove this occurrence of natural, largely unassisted discovery, Dr. Mitra created even more difficult challenges in the computer opportunity, also locating one computer in a totally rural area, away from the city. The results were the same. This prompted Dr. Mitra to make the following hypothesis:

*The acquisition of basic computing skills by any set of children can be achieved through incidental learning provided the learners are given access to a suitable computing facility (computer), with entertaining and motivating content and some minimal (human) guidance.<sup>1</sup>*

## **Returning...**

As I said earlier, three-year-old autistics can teach themselves to read from signs passing outside the car window, and can memorize a parking lot full of license plate numbers. **The brain is a discovery machine**, and, particularly, these right/heart-brained individuals can have amazing abilities.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/Beginnings.html>

## EMBRACING AND HONORING PASSIONS, OTHER SKILLS CAN FOLLOW ALONG

Support for how spectrum brains function, starts with honoring.

**And now, to expand this...allowing, supporting, nurturing, and ENLARGING upon their inner guidance to follow their abilities and passions by these individuals, can lead to their OVERALL growth and embrace of success.**

When I was teaching, I found that scheduling extra, individual gardening time in our school's raised-bed courtyard garden, allowed a student with pronounced ADHD to focus on our normal classroom studies, and to do well, even excel, after these immersions into his internal need for experiential connection with nature.

And of Jake, and other students, Kristine Barnett, again, author of *The Spark*, comments:

As long as Jake could get a good dose of serious astronomy, he could keep up with the social end of things in school. As I had seen so many times with the typical kids at the daycare and the autistic kids at Little Light (one of her support groups), as well as over and over with Jake himself, all of his other skills would come along naturally as long as he was doing what he loved.<sup>2</sup>

A general education extension of this is that in one of the highest educationally rated countries in the world, that being Finland, no homework or a maximum of ten minutes, is given. This is because it is believed that other well-rounded life experiences adds to the ability to learn, and to integrate *knowledge*, which includes but is not limited to just facts.

Unfortunately, therefore, we are doing great harm to American schooling, as we continue to limit or totally eliminate art, music, woodshop, home economics, along with minimized physical education, all in an effort to improve our education.

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<sup>2</sup> K. Barnett: 137.

## **FOLLOWING PASSIONS CAN BRING A REDUCTION IN SENSITIVITIES and DRAWS OTHERS INTO THE HARMONY OF A GREATER KNOWLEDGE**

Looking further, as we allow exploration and even immersion in a child's deep interest, amazing corollary and crucially important events can happen at the same time...*this being the reduction of their sensitivity to the outside world, and the inclusion of others in their passion-subject matter.*

As an individual grows to embrace more and more about the knowledge discovered in their passion-focus, **their sensitivities to the outside world can decrease. The wholeness of their passion immersion can turn down the volume of outside stimuli and evaluative measurement.**

The impassioned focus of these individuals into how something works, or being involved in a unifying process, places the individual in a Whole of understanding and experience that unifies and aligns with the sense of wholeness in that individual, thus giving them an inner calm which quiets brain and nervous system receptors that would normally be overrun by outside stimuli and irritants. This experiential wholeness has effects similar to those created by meditation, and actually, *similar to Temple's squeeze machines*, I realize now as I update this in 2018.

Consider this quote by Jake's mom as they were at a planetarium class for college students, Jake only being three years old:

Usually overcome by crowds, Jake took everything around him in stride, staring contentedly at the last slide, a close-up satellite shot of an enormous mountain on the surface of Mars.<sup>3</sup>

**And, as a further important secondary outside event...as a spectrum individual's knowledge is seen and appreciated by others, the others are drawn into this discovery of understanding and greater wholeness also, dropping their prior estimations of how these different individuals are somehow at deficit odds with the world.**

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<sup>3</sup> K. Barnett: 88.

Now, instead of disconnection, distance, and wanting to change these individuals in some way, all are joined in a greater understanding, which unites and creates respect and comradeship, and belonging for the learning different individual, and all.

After hearing three-year-old Jake answer astronomy questions that they could not, when it came time to observe Mars through the large telescope, the college students in the planetarium class parted ways to let him through for first viewing and even held him up so he could see.

And Jake, at age 8, in classes with college students, was guiding *them* on information and understandings about astronomy. They, in openness and dialogue, were rapt to learn what Jake could share. According to Kristine, ***Jake had found his conversation with the world***, others aligning with his knowledge and not being in opposition or a wanting to reject any of his differences. **Without a unifying inclusion and harmony such as this, the \*\*world often brings only disruptive stimuli or the stresses of judgments and rejection for many on the spectrum.**

This harmonizing inclusion can also be see in the movie about Temple Grandin, where, originally, she had to combat the anxiety-inducing-energies coming from those who shunned and even ridiculed her presence and research at the animal handling facilities where she had worked so hard to fit in.

Soon, however, those who designed these facilities began to listen and joined *her conversation* on how this would not only treat the cattle better, but very importantly to them, would also save the company money. Soon, even those who worked further down the hierarchy, those who had originally ridiculed her, were treating her with acceptance and respect.

**Connective knowledge brings a knowledge of the whole, deeper meaning, and belonging for all.**

Let me add here, that if an individual's deep interests are not readily known, there should be freedom and opportunity for the them to discover these, not trying to create these passions in them, but allowing them to be experientially discovered and uncovered, through exposure to many things, as Grandin even suggests, to various UTube videos covering different topics and activities.

And, as individuals are all very different, if one were very quiet or yet non-inspired, then allowing this to be, meanwhile also noticing what it is that allows

*them to feel good, to thrive*, is the optimal approach, which is more of the general approach of Montessori or Waldorf schools.

**All of this, of course, should also be true in education in general!!**

For so long in public education, we have focused on what *should* be learned, we not understanding how the brain functions, or what “to educate” is, which is to “draw from within,” rather than “to teach,” which focuses on imparting information. (Seeing this definition of “educate” years ago, I fail now to find a similar listing on the internet, but indeed, this is the true way to allow students to access their inner right/heart brain knowledge, then to be combined with left brain detailing).

For a wonderful immersion into this wisdom, listen to the Ted Talk by Ken Robinson, “Education is Killing Creativity,” and then read his book, *The Element, How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*.<sup>4</sup>

**Passions are our call to our heart connection, which when followed, allows for the integration and use of our full brain and heart for the expression and delivery of the particular gifts we are each here to share.**

### **THE BRAIN’S RESPONSE TO MAGNIFIED PASSION IMMERSION !!**

Going further with the great benefits of letting a child’s more casual or deep interests lead them, let’s talk about this *amazing possible encompassing remedy*, which I came upon through my experience with students and in my research, and as it also applies to all spectrum learners in varying degrees...an approach that can be added to other therapies.

**This approach might be said to help those who have more trouble fitting into this world perhaps, having interactive barriers, such as overwhelm, or a lack of communication skills.**

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity), and Ken Robinson, Ph.D, *The Element, How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (New York: Viking 2009)

This approach is to encourage, and to **HUGELY immerse individuals in their focus, interests or passions.** Temple Grandin has said, that allowing these individuals to focus on their passions, or fixations, can lead to their real contribution to life, as was true in her own life, in addition she essentially saying, Let's focus on what they can do, and not on what they can't.<sup>5</sup>

**Now, considering that these individuals, especially autistics, are surrounded by a large world that is very different and invasive, consider the size of their experience that can be needed to put them in their world, and their gifts, sufficiently turning down the volume of the outside world which overwhelms them.**

**In the movie, *Patch Adams*,** one sweet older woman had given up on living and was refusing to eat. **Robin Williams, as Doc Adams,** called for a large doughboy pool to be filled with spaghetti pasta, which the woman had formerly loved, and that she be immersed in it. Then he and others joined her inside the pool, in great joy and celebration. Belonging.

With this immersion and nurturing, and in this experience of enlarged sensory brain connection, the woman's heart and brain functionings were re-engaged, re-enlivened, and she, regained her enthusiasm for living.

We ourselves, have to be willing to open enthusiastically to reengagement with life, in order to find what can support these others, and even ourselves.

Jake's mom, Kristine Barnett, particularly, carried out this approach with her Little Light support classes that she ran in her home for small groups of autistics. Two statements of her approach is to ***"Turn Passions into Progress,"*** to ***"Find the lens to magnify each child's interest."*** For when there is nurturing and heightened or focused involvement, the brain responds for the success of the individual.

Kristine:

But while the parents might have recognized their child's talent or passion, they didn't necessarily think of it as a way to connect with him or her or to advance the child's progress.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Temple Grandin, Ph.D, The Way I See It, (Texas: Future Horizons 2008), "The Importance of Developing Talent," 35.

<sup>6</sup> K. Barnett: 74.



**One older girl in Kristine's support group** was not reading or doing very well, and her parents were concerned for her future. This girl loved to bake, so Kristine and the girl made cupcakes when she came to the evening Little Light class. It was nearly like the cupcake wars you may have seen on TV with the numbers of cupcakes they made...and with many different flavors and frostings, every week, with letters on top of the cupcakes.

With all this immersion, acceptance and joy, the teenager was soon learning to read, as Kristine continued this enlarged focus by buying more and more sophisticated baking and frosting utensils. And, as her thrilled parents shared, this young adult girl got a very good job as a baker, she being happy, very self-confident, acknowledged and fulfilled.

As with the older woman, this young girl's heart and brain were very abundantly encouraged to engage, discover, and integrate toward growth and success, by the efforts to create a sense of acceptance and belonging. The brain, quite amazingly, responds to a sense of nurtured belonging, which I will say more about in this paper.

**Another very concerned mother brought her older boy, who could not speak,** to Kristine. After their informational exchange at the first session, with the second visit, Kristine had flooded her living room floor from wall to wall with single letter flashcards, which her son, Jake, had also loved, and then asked the young man to find and add the missing letter to \_at. He looked, found, and added a C.

Then after several other words had been correctly spelled, Kristine took him to the next step, which was waiting within him. This was to tell his mother that he loved her, no matter how it sounded. And, he did. **The ability to spell was inside, but something was inhibiting putting words into speech.**

At one point, Kristine actually had a llama in her home, to bring a large-as-life experience to those loving animals, which probably included her own children. This very expansive experience boosted the integrative and growth power of all the kids' brains, this fed also by the not-so-subtle message of acceptance and encouragement thus demonstrated in Kristine's efforts to support them.

By this, they were so hugely nurtured by this presence of the embrace of life, that their brains were, not kick-started, but immersion and hug-started into their

amazing ability to discover, integrate, learn, and create adapting skills to participate more actively in life. (This is somewhat similar to giving an autistic child the calming experience of being around horses, or dogs.)

All this seems totally miraculous, but is really just the way the brain is meant to receive and integrate information from the world around us. And it is NURTURING and opportunities to explore that are needed in order for this to happen.

**The brain is designed to investigate and follow an interest in whatever direction it leads, particularly when it has found a deep line of passion, as it then integrates and learns as all the aspects of our intelligences operate together. And this is part of a healthy approach for all on the spectrum, as also seen at Kristine Barnett's website,<sup>7</sup> *and in the education of all children.* Let them discover what they love and do well, and let them expand, and their brain grow, naturally, by following and building on that direction.**

#### **A wonderful story....**

Japan has many housing and activity centers for individuals with autism. One such center, also doubling as a school, is a site where young adult autistic individuals live to help in the production of wine. For years, Japan had been making wine, but overall being considered too sweet, the wines had never gained much national respect.

In view of this situation, Bruce Gutlove, a winemaker in California's Napa Valley, was invited to Japan to give advice and direction at the Japanese winery for three months. Having no special training to work with autistic individuals, Gutlove just kept his usual standard and expectations for the workers as he addressed the challenges of making a good wine.

Since the winery was located on steep terrain, all had to be done by hand. However, autistics do well with routine and repetition, and the students were happy in their work.

Gutlove said the students did not let setbacks stop them from meeting his expectations. Even when Gutlove would get discouraged, the students kept pushing

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<sup>7</sup> Barnett, Katherine. the-art-of-autism.com, n.p., n.d., Web. 2 March 2018.

forward. And Bruce, was inspired by his workers: "Seeing their passion and their desire to create something of worth for other people is very, very impressive."

In the appreciative and enthused words of Machiko Ochi, the daughter of the founder of Coco Farm & Winery: "Bruce considers all of the residents colleagues. This is a big distinction. Treated as equals, the residents meet his expectations on the job."

Hiromitsu Watanabe, 28, is one of the students who arrived several years ago at the winery, not able to communicate with anyone. Today he is happy, committed to his work, and talking "non-stop." His favorite job is putting the labels on the red wine that he helps make.

Not only did the winery produce a Chardonnay that the Japanese critics acclaimed, but Bruce is still there after twenty plus years, and, he shared, it is not primarily for the wine.<sup>8</sup>

**Stephen Hawking, author of *A Brief History of Time*, and whose life was portrayed in the movie, *The Theory of Everything***, was supposed to live only a few years after he received a diagnosis of having the motor neuron ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease in his college years. (ALS: "Upper motor neuron degeneration generally causing *spasticity* (tightness in a muscle), while lower motor neuron degeneration causing muscle weakness, muscle *atrophy* (shrinkage of muscles) and twitching.")

Both his wife and later his care giver, kept his spirit and his brain engaged with discovery as they met every stage of his abilities or disabilities with a way for him to remain challenged and engaged. Hawking is still alive now, well past 70 years old. (Updating: Stephen Hawking has just died on March 13, 2018, at 76 years old.)

*Alive Inside*<sup>9</sup> is a recent, inspiring video about restoring interaction to individuals with dementia through exposure to the music of their youth. It is said by some that

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<sup>8</sup> Japan, [Autistic winemakers crafting fine vintages in Japan - CNN.com](http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/04/01/japan.autism/index.html)  
www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/04/01/japan.autism/index.html...

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.aliveinside.us/#trailer>

dementia and Alzheimer's can come from overwhelm and giving up on life. **I believe that over-focus on our left brain, which can overwhelm our right/heart brain connection, can bring about this eventual disconnection from life overall. *Left brain over-focus misses what we often refer to as the "heart and soul" of life.***

Another example of too much left brain, and needing a remedy:

Ben Carson was/is an extremely talented neurosurgeon, whom I believe is on the gifted Autism Spectrum, as far as his basic connective intelligence and his medical profession. He needed to learn primarily in his own room at Yale University and the University of Michigan Medical School, studying and taking in vast amounts of information about the body, and the brain in particular, away from the noise and usual proceedings in classrooms or lecture halls. He choosing a calm, non-overwhelming, environment.

Once a doctor, he performed the only successful separation of conjoined twins, joined at the back of the head, and, among other things, revived hemispherectomy techniques for controlling seizures.

This latter skill Carson evidenced as a five-year-old child came into his practice, she subject to seizures, and rapidly losing her sensory and movement abilities, as well as language; these left-brain skills. Carson evaluated the problem in-depth and skillfully did an hemispherectomy, removing her left hemisphere, for he said the "left brain was beating up on the right."

This was a last ditch desperate attempt to help the little girl, and Carson was not sure she would wake from the surgery being able to speak or walk. This was an inspired, and intuitive approach, based on Carson's accumulation of knowledge and "take on the big picture." When she awoke, the little girl's brain had indeed adapted, she waking with sensory, movement and language abilities. (Read Carson's autobiographical book, *Gifted Hands*, and/or see the movie about it.)<sup>10</sup>

So, with that additional information, enjoy this "heart and soul" right/brain, free from-left-brain-concern, reconnection to music for this man with Alzheimer's.<sup>11</sup> (See footnote)

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<sup>10</sup> Ben Carson autobiography and movie of the same name: [Gifted Hands, The Ben Carson Story.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Quando, Quando: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UQ5mjFzHTA>

## AN UNCOMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE BRAIN

This all that seems a miraculous working of the heart and full brain is all supported by the work of **Joseph Chilton Pearce** with his study and writing about the brain in his book, *The Heart/Mind Matrix: How the Heart Can Teach the Brain New Ways to Think*.

Pearce explains that the brain develops optimally, with all higher intelligences, not separate from, but dependent upon an integration with the connective intelligence of the heart as well. This development progresses through four stages and is dependent upon one key ingredient for all to develop well, one spoken of so very often, but not understood in its importance: NURUTRING. The stages:

the *reptilian/sensory-motor brain*

next the *old mammalian-emotional*

then the *mammalian-rudimentary thinking brain*

and on to the *governing, adaptive prefrontal cortex*

each one developing well, and interfacing with the former stages and the stages next coming, **\*if NURTURING is present as the brain develops.**

Pearce:

In our compulsion to make right a fundamentally flawed *logical* worldview, we lose our connections with and ability to open to the intelligence called for—which is heart-based, not head-based...

Our razor-sharp intellect can create and build atom bombs and destroy the very atmosphere of our Earth, but the basic intelligence needed to grasp this fundamental problem of loss of nurturing is gained only by brain-heart development itself, and brain-heart development is a major thrust of the *nurturing function* itself...

**Nurturing** should have already opened ever-new evolutionary pathways—and still could. Instead, we have locked into a survival mode, which

is now considered to be not just the norm, but the “human condition” and/or “human nature”...

Through the appropriate integration, *possible only through nurturing*, these four neural systems cooperate as an integrated function in alignment with the heart. Should this fourfold integration fail, we become not only a seriously split system, but the brain’s intimate connection with heart is seriously compromised—resulting in the continuation of our “human condition.”<sup>12</sup>

This immersion or focus that Kristine and I are speaking of *is to offer acceptance, belonging, safety, and freedom* for the brain to develop naturally, with all its receptive, integrative, and creative talents and passions. **Again, this is all also true for every learning individual.**

## ESSENTIAL, HEALTHY OUTER IMMERSIONS

In addition, there are other very important, healthy outer immersions that enable these individuals and every human to thrive, experiences that produce serotonin, and dopamine, rather than inflammation-inciting, anxious, and pressuring cortisol experiences. These are experiences that should abound in childhood, and, continue throughout all our lives.

**This balance and harmony between the passion-focus, and wholesome, well-being-environment experiences, is fundamental.**

-One very important realm of immersion is **enjoying our senses** for grounding and well-being: touching paper and soil, etc.; smelling natural fragrances; reveling in the sounds of nature and music; seeing natural scenes, close up and personal; using the body for pleasant experiences, alone or interactive, in non-competitive swimming, karate, dance...these being integrative of emotional and physical pleasure, accompanied by exuberance.

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph Chilton Pearce, The Heart-Mind Matrix, How the Heart Can Teach the Mind New Ways to Think (Rochester, Vermont 2010, 2012) 15-18.

Think of our world...how much of the time are we in touch with man-made materials and products, including tastes, smell, sounds, etc., as opposed to the natural sources of all these? Our body is geared to thrive with natural experiences and materials, and it creates life supportive serotonin when we do.

-Along with sensory experiences, we need to create other supportive, healthy, **“outer” immersions, with friends and family**...carefree hours or days in physical, heart and soul interactions with nurturing and natural environments, playing with others in water, climbing rocks or trails, picnics, TV and popcorn night, community with like-minded others, and doing this in ways that do not subject sensitive ones to stimulation overload.

This is immersion in well-being, supportive, interactive life experiences, **which create a life context of belonging and open experience which then harmonizes with the supported and encouraged open and connective nature of the interests and passions of these individuals. This gives them a solid, experiential internal, and interactive foundation of acceptance and confidence on which to grow further with their passions.**

## **SEEING THE WORLD IN A DIFFERENT WAY**

Certain diets and other approaches can help with discomforts and bridging, but efforts to fundamentally fix or change these individuals to be like the world are going to be at odds with their inner intelligence that is guiding them. This would be like pressuring a chrysalis to change or improve its design. Surely, these individuals are different, and the situation is calling for us to *see* things differently. nature/nurture is calling for it.

This increasing inner resource of the connective right brain, along with the heart's additional intelligence and desire to help others and serve the world, are indicative of a shift away from our heavy focus on the left brain.

**Different functioning and learning individuals are here, gifted for the greater good, here to help change the world, and we are to be a part of it. This heart connection and connective intelligence is very important for the answers for our world.**

**These children, youth, and adults are here for all of us. They bring talents of**

inspiration and giftedness for new solutions, and hearts that are tuned toward the well-being of all. Our outward faced, hectic paced, goal driven, and disconnected societies are being forced to turn around and look right beside each of us, to care for extraordinary individuals who are unable to fit the world in the old ways. And, in the process of caring and providing for the needs of these sensitive individuals, we ourselves will be changed, finding our own heart-centered qualities of connection, sensitivity and service.

And in extension, we must see that those with other differences, with Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, and beyond, are also here for us. It is said, that as a difference or disability removes individuals from the normal fast interaction with life, there develops another, often more perceptive way to see things, that is, they also can see the world in a different way.

Early on, I was told by a friend who worked as a physical therapist with handicapped people, that their disability afforded them some disregard for normal concerns, for their concerns were of a different magnitude. And in this less engaged approach to life, they were more apt to see deeper meanings for their lives.

An amazing twenty-year-old I know with cerebral palsy states, “I use my disability to my advantage.” Knowing him for years, I am astounded at his connective grasp of knowledge, and at his very presence that has a healing quality for all others he meets, young to old.

## AN EMBRACE AND INCREASED APPRECIATION FOR WHERE WE BEGAN

We all started out with a greater balance between our right/heart and our left brain. However, this giving up of connection we have gone through over time has also been a long part of our growth as humanity.

Indigenous peoples lived in connective perception with all things.

Simply told and resonated with, you can see humanity’s story in the so-called children’s story, *The Giving Tree* (best we reclaim our connection before we are old, worn out and stooped over), and in other stories of mankind’s search for



answers that bring us back to where we started, now experienced with a deeper respect and understanding of what that original place and relationship afforded us.

We, and our make-up, are a part of nature and life's connection, and our wanderings away from this relationship eventually brings us back to it, with a greater respect for and knowledge of it.

*“We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.”<sup>13</sup>*

Connective intelligence lives yet dormant within us to be reclaimed. The tip of its presence lives very quietly sensed, amidst our external din, as gut hunches, intuitions, the “Something-told-me-so’s,” ***and, as our latent passions.***

It is often said, and true, that we are extending our connective awareness and outreach with technology. Look at the cell phone's existence nearly everywhere now. But, to what end and with what inspiration is this outreach?

I see it very often for good, and also, very often simply to engage greater numbers of people or greater amounts of money toward limited ends, following the sweet and shining, to fill an emptiness inside due to our lack of connection to a bigger, more fulfilling belonging and passion/purpose in life.

I do believe, again looking outside the box, or at the big picture, that like a mobius strip, a strip of paper twisted and then joined back to its start, that somehow our outward technological arm will reach back to our inner connective, full heart and brain functionings, returning us to a visceral, human ***connection***, finding ourselves equipped with extraordinary tools with which to solve the world's problems.

We will know whether we are allowing, encouraging, and supporting this return to connective perception and knowledge as these individuals are oriented, **if we see that they are vibrant, happy and impassioned in their natural pursuits and deep interests, and thereby purposefully finding their meaningful niche, in their way, in this world.**

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<sup>13</sup> T.S. Elliot, Four Quartets, T.S. Elliot: Collected Poems, 1909-1962 (The Centenary Edition)

**And, the world will mirror to us as well, whether our approaches** are connected to life's deepest passions and purposes within us, if we see that we and the peoples of this earth are on our way to all equally thriving in well-being, and are following our inner passions and roles for humanity's and the earth's great betterment.

**And now, to close with a wonderful story about Kim Peek, Rain Man....**

Kim was born with different abilities and difficulties. Professionals early on told his parents he should have a lobotomy, but, they protested, "But he has already memorized the first eight volumes of the encyclopedias!"

Obviously very smart, savant-like, he later loved greeting people in the manner I shared earlier, then proceeding to tell them the weekday on which they had been born, and whether it was a holiday or not, after he had been told only the date of their birth. And, he had many more talents based upon these abilities.

After the movie *Rain Man* was made about him, Kim became even more confident and excited to interact with people he met, whereas before he would not often look in their eyes. Again, our acceptance and acknowledgement for his passion or ability, allowed him to open to what, before, was protected. Kim's experience of his presence in the world changed from non-acceptance and criticism to acceptance and even being admired. Belonging.

In later times, his father had to stop taking Kim to theater performances, for, even with Shakespeare, Kim would often stand up and correct actors if they had made an error in the words.

All the while, from early on, Kim's father had dedicated his life to his son, being a total support and advocate, helping Kim dress each day, taking him wherever life called them. This was necessary since Kim's make-up lacked left brain-directed motor and operational skills.

When eighty, his father told Kim, "Before I die, I want to take you to Stanford." This was so they could check Kim's brain to see why he was different. After testing, the doctors told his father that Kim lacked a corpus callosum, the nerve tissue that connects the right and left hemispheres of the brain. "This is why," they told his father, "your son cannot be a rational thinker."

Earlier, Kim had been interviewed at length about his life<sup>14</sup>, and, among other questions had been asked, “What do you think about your father, who has taken care of you your whole life?”

In response to this, Kim said, “My father and I share the same shadow.”

When the doctors told Kim’s father the reason that Kim could not be a rational thinker, he responded, “My son may not be able to think rationally, but there is something extraordinary in Kim’s abilities and his perceptive statement about our relationship.”

To “share the same shadow” is not a rational description...it is profound, such as one finds in the inspired words of poetry...a use of words based in inspiration and relational and connective perception, and not based in left brain analysis.

**Connection and belonging afford us the aptitudes and abilities for inspiration, beauty, inclusion, care, meaning, generosity, joy, and the ability to bring forth well-being solutions for all.**

Thank you!

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<sup>14</sup> Bruce Weber, “Kim Peek, Inspiration for ‘Rain Man,’ Dies at 58,” The New York Times (New York) 27 Dec. 2009., <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/27/us/27peek.html>

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