

## **A COMPRESSED GENERAL LISTING OF ADD-AUTISM ‘LEARNING-DIFFERENCES’ CHARACTERISTICS...MILD TO MORE SEVERE**

A listing follows of general characteristics of learning differences, from mild to moderate, and then moderate to more severe, written as a characteristics continuum flow of shared and intensifying qualities. It is important to recognize that each individual will present with a different set of characteristics. These are quite broadly recognized as typically occurring characteristics, **however my point of view being that individuals on the ADD-autism spectrum do not have a deficit or a disorder, but instead a different orientation**, this listing comes from that paradigm shifting perspective to *explain the reason* for these differences.

I have made this listing as a quick and yet in-depth overview of the characteristics of **those hard-wired with a right/heart brain orientation, those on the ADD – autism spectrum. This spectrum includes Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, Asperger’s Syndrome, and autism.**

Included here are **both their strengths and challenges**, sometimes stated also as their likes and dislikes. This is all to be used to **understand how these right/heart brain individuals function, with their gifts and talents, and how they have difficulties with this predominantly left-brain-governed world since they lack a left-brain filter and left-brain focus, and have very sensitive nervous systems.** (Autism at times, and Asperger’s Syndrome can use more left-brain functions.)

**Supported to follow their fixations/passions, spectrum individuals can acquire left brain skills** in the process, wanting to share their discoveries with the world. **Theirs, and all brains, work optimally to know, learn, and acquire skills when individuals are accepted, nurtured and feel like they belong. All spectrum individuals do better adapting to life when they feel supported particularly in these three ways, these engendering success and success feeding back on itself.**

**Additionally, enlarging upon/magnifying an autistic person’s passions can ignite learning of skills they were unable to learn before. (For all this information about spectrum learners see my website: HeartCenteredMinds.com, looking particularly at my paper “The Inside Out of Autism,” which refers to all of these learners, while focusing greatly on autism.)**

**A. Here in section A**, is an accounting of the characteristics that are nearly universal to all right-brain oriented individuals, and which are the major qualities of the more mild to moderate individual learning differences for ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, nonverbal learning disorder, and mild Asperger's Syndrome.

**Characteristics include:**

1) **Very bright** individuals, with **heightened to extreme sensitivity**, evidencing as both being **highly gut-empathic** and/or significantly **vulnerable** in regard to people, accompanied by mild to acute **sensory sensitivity** to an often toxic and invasive world around them, due to very sensitive nervous systems. Therefore, best with a predictable schedule and other insulating measures. Also, **working in a run silent/run deep mode** of knowledge retrieval and use, most find it difficult in a 20 minute shift of activity in a "centers" learning environment, for example, they needing more time to settle in, work, and move away from that activity.

2) Most often have **no differentiating, left-brain filter** to physically shut out overstimulation, or **to take in or give back in linear form**; although very gut-empathic to the inner state of people, lack of this filter makes it **very difficult for them to read body language and social cues**, thereby often making them more reclusive, some preferring computers, they being more predictable than people. Also for most, no filtering left-brain system makes **school very difficult** due to the enormous focus on left-brain, linear approaches to learning, causing potentially both overwhelm on the one hand and boredom with mainly two-dimensional, linear, flat information, on the other hand.

3) Also, nearly universally: **drawn to** (often passionately) or calmed by right-brain exposures or activities involving: **nature, music, art, literature, principles or workings of math, inherent congruities and details within a certain realm of science, drama, play, cooking, sewing, gardening (hands-on things), etc.**

4) Connected to experience coming in as from an open satellite dish, so **information is taken in as a whole and not in piecemeal fashion**. Understandings then come from, and are fit into, a **large picture of things**. Therefore, exhibit **profound understanding** and embrace of the **deep values in life**, intuiting these themes, beyond the norm, in school studies, movies, and making '**values advocates**' of these individuals **on the playground, in careers serving others**, and leading to a strong sense and **drive for social justice**.

5) **Reading (and writing) may or may not be difficult for these individuals**, again, each developing differently; certainly for **dyslexics** (with phonetic and spelling differences), this presents a large challenge within educational systems, where rigid standards for form can supersede content, and for those with non-verbal learning disorder, where unfiltered information-overload and a non-linear orientation for experiencing and learning, makes reading and writing very difficult.

6) Often **lacking in organizational skills** (bedrooms, school desks, offices often in disarray) because the orientation is rather for creating, **e.g. may be motivated to do the homework, if it is inspiring, but then forgetting to turn in the work**, the creativity of the job being done, turning it in drops out of the mind like anything routine, interpreted by the brain as boring, non-challenging, so the brain goes on **‘screen-saver.’**

7) Nearly all being **passionate ‘creators,’** and, when free to be inspired, are filled with **great drive and excitement**, like and including, **great entrepreneurs**, whose office managers often deal with necessary, linear details.

8) Often **poor large and small motor skills**, because these are left-brain governed, therefore often less physically coordinated, and often poor initial handwriting (or never improved).

9) **Impulsive behavior**, from more mild forms to more dramatic, can be seen some in most of these individuals, as well as **varying degrees of depression**, (due to our societies’ lifestyles producing a shortage of serotonin in the brain, which can be increased with right-brain connective experiences to passions and nature, or, as a friend recently commented, if one is perceptive to all that is around, how could one not be depressed?).

**B. Here in section B**, including and building on the basic qualities described above, we move on to more particular, more moderate to severe characteristics, not so universally exhibited, but often accompanying autism and/or Asperger’s Syndrome.

**Characteristics include:**

1) **A more rigid need for things to stay the same**, in a particular state of understanding or physical placement, **schedules and patterns**, an unbending definition of a certain concept or relationship, the rigid need for **same placement**

**of objects** on some table or in a drawer (this showing the need for stability and some control over what can seem a chaotic world).

2) **Resistance to getting put ‘in the box’ of a defined, limited self**, having to abide by socially prescribed rules, preferring to be free in choice, experience of self, expression, movement, joy, musicality (Asperger’s, bipolar?).

3) **Over-stimulation** of these extremely sensitive individuals can lead to ‘stimming’: **repetitive physical and verbal behaviors such as spinning, arm-flapping, head banging, hitting others**, both the physical and the verbal repeated acts/phrases are self-induced (after change or environment-incited) to shut out over-stimulation and/or to create some stability and peace within, there also finding access deeper knowledge (autism).

4) Some exhibiting **strong technical inclinations, relating more easily to systems or some body of knowledge than to people** (autism, Asperger’s). **Autism individuals** enjoying repetitious and detail discerning activities; **Asperger’s individuals** having abilities to amass information, numbers, written materials, and vocabulary which they can then wield to some advantage to influence for their purposes and goals.

5) Sometimes **irritability, moodiness, and mild to very strong tantrums usually due to unwelcome change, overstimulation, chemical intrusion, boredom, or outside pressures to perform in certain ways** (autism, Asperger’s).

6) **Frequent video game, general computer, and/or TV viewing to deeply focus and/or calm themselves in a world of familiar programs which capture their attention and engage their creativity**, along with programming that **helps them absorb ‘rules’ of relating, reading body language, they also inspired by the others’ personal growth and passions** (autism, Asperger’s).

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