

# THE INTUITIVE INSIDE OUT OF AUTISM

-AND OTHER SPECTRUM LEARNING STYLES-

## **LEARNING THROUGH PASSIONS**

and

## BELONGING

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# THE INSIDE OUT OF AUTISM, AND OTHER SPECTRUM LEARNING STYLES

## AND LEARNING THROUGH PASSIONS

### **Preface**

Welcome! As you read through my observations, accounts, research support, and conclusions, please take full advantage of the informative and moving recorded online presentations that are cited in my discussion. You might do this after reading the whole paper, to maintain continuity of understanding of my discussion, or intersperse them as you read, if this does not overly divert your attention. These and all references are listed within the sequential section titles in the “Notes” at the end of this paper, and the recorded presentations are specifically indicated by \*\* at the beginning of that citation line, for easy reference. Thank you.

So to begin....

### *Seeing the world in a different way*

Most people have heard of Autism Spectrum Disorders, as these conditions are the concern of so many parents, educators, health providers, and society at large. ***However, I assert that what we think of disorders is incorrect.*** I would wish that, for whatever reason you are here reading, you can open to what I hope will be a liberating new view of what is going on with these individuals in our world, the number of whom is steadily increasing.

Our interest is to try to understand the very different behaviors and abilities, and/or ‘disabilities,’ that characterize the lives of so many children, autism alone now said to be 1 in every 59<sup>1</sup> children, (a second source saying 1 in 39 children)<sup>2</sup>, and those, also, with ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder), dyslexia and Asperger’s Syndrome. And, for all these categories, there are, additionally, the numbers of those who were former children, now young adults, and many other individuals even older.

**I am using Inside Out as the topic basis for this paper**, for these words recently also titled a Disney movie of the same name, in which the inner emotional and mental processing components of a young girl’s experience were illustrated as animated characters, giving the audience, young and old, a look at how we process, learn, and grow. For that reason, and because these spectrum individuals ***actually live Inside Out***, this description is very applicable as we take a look at how these individuals on the ADD – autism spectrum function.

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To give an initial overview of our rather extensive reading journey together:

PART I: I move into the discussion regarding the major functioning difference of these individuals, starting from my teaching experiences that led me to this realization, sharing along the way, later, many stories that arose from my classroom. I go on to explain that, ***instead of a deficit, it is a different orientation to the right brain which governs*** the learning and actions of

these individuals, describe their basic characteristics, and cite research that I pursued avidly which also supported my conclusions. Then a look is taken at the knowledge arising from the heart and right brain, both referred to as Connective Knowledge, and the role of the left brain, Distinctive Knowledge.

I explain that the pressures of living **inside out** day in and day out take their toll on these individuals, and as in the very recent news, these ongoing pressures can lead to the terrible **school shootings by spectrum individuals** (Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, and Parkland).

Following is a look at history for evidence of the many great minds, resistant to just left brain functioning, that have advanced our civilization. The characteristic basics of ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, and Asperger's Syndrome are then shared, accompanied by classroom stories.

PART II: Here, begins the focus on autism: early characteristic behaviors and sensitivities, both quickly leading into a discussion about vaccinations, looked at in part with a view of the life of Temple Grandin, also considering Sensory Processing Disorder, and stories cited from Jenny McCarthy about her son.

Autism's unusual behaviors, inner journeys and gifts are explored as part of a quietude sought in fending off the world in order to focus within, as seen, in the lives of Grandin, gifts of Evan McCarthy, Jake Barnett, and others, leading to the question: "So, what is autism."

Part II ends with a look at therapies and supportive measures suggested in many examples.

PART III This final and culminating exploration applies to autism and the other spectrum differences learners, and to all children in general, which I have attested to already, up to this point in the paper. It is a discussion of how the brain is naturally a discovery machine, here highlighted in research and live Youtube and Ted talks, adding to those already cited.

Autism especially benefits (the others also) as passion immersion and passion magnification brings the skills needed to the situations of conversation, connection and belonging in this world. And nurturing, as researched, and belonging, as obvious, are shown to be the forces that allow optimal development for all brains, in order to access heart and right brain connection and inspiration, accompanied by left brain shaping skills, for the betterment of this world by and for, all.

## **PART I**

## **WHAT I DISCOVERED**

First, a bit of background about me....

I am a retired teacher, having taught in mainstream classrooms for many years, some before, and then again after raising our children. My teaching career restarted in 1998, this position being in a third grade mainstream classroom in San Ramon, California. It was earlier in that 90's decade

that I had learned about something called ADD, regarding kids who couldn't seem to pay attention in the classroom.

This new teaching position was now twenty years after my former classroom assignments when very little about differences or disorders was recognized or diagnosed.

As I entered the classroom again, and as the numbers, concerns, and recommended disorder treatments continued to increase from the 90's on for these differently functioning children, I just couldn't accept what the world thought was happening, and that so many children were being born, needing to be medicated. So, I began reading more, researching, as well as continuing to learn from my students.

One day I was stopped short as I read a quote from a Dr. Castellanos, head of the NYU Child Study Center, and one of the speakers for the Frontline program, *The Medicated Child*. His words were enigmatic regarding one of the difficulties for parents, and all, involved in the search for answers:

His statement:

**“The idea that not all children are born perfect, is a very hard one to deal with.”<sup>3</sup>**

And indeed, I said to myself, it is an idea that either states and accepts that many, many individuals are imperfect, or it is the driving question that compels us to look deeper. Parents are having to face this apparent imperfection more and more, and it is this assumed 'imperfection' and its frequency, that made me feel we were missing what was truly happening.

Working with the students in my classroom, I always saw each student individually for who they were with their particular needs. At one point, I had a student with selective mutism, who had not spoken outside his home since preschool, yet, by December or January, I was able to get this child to speak with me and small groups of his classmates.

Of course, there are many other differences among the students of any classroom, and my inner question in my approach was how to honor each, to the best of my ability, according to their needs and how they learned, no matter what the cause. This being what most teachers do, of course.

Because of my understanding and ability to connect with these children with life and learning differences, many, many were guided to my classroom by administrators, parents and other teachers.

### **A RIGHT/HEART BRAIN ORIENTATION**

With this return to teaching, 15% or so of my mainstream class each year now had ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, Asperger's Syndrome, or autism, and it was early on in those years, that, in addition to the many difficulties these kids on the 'spectrum' had, I also saw something I had not seen or experienced before, something amazingly different about them.

This segment of my class was getting the deeper meaning of what we read and studied. They thought outside-the-box, had intuitive and insight-based perception (what I am calling Connective Perception), were very bright, and had an innate ability or yearning to know deeply, and to help others and the world somehow.

Instead of predominantly using the left brain, which organizes incoming information and stimuli in a sequential fashion, these individuals were aligned more with the right brain. Seeing this, and reading more about the right brain, it was affirmed that this hemisphere has particular gifts for us, which these children very strongly exhibited in a variety of combinations. I also saw that each child had their own mix of spectrum traits.

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**An aside here**, for awhile it seemed that the word spectrum was not going to be used, and then Asperger's Syndrome became joined within the name autism, whereas I feel both 'spectrum' and a differentiation for Asperger's Syndrome should continue with their descriptive meanings.

Just as there are differences in the qualities of light that we identify with our reference to the light spectrum, there *are* differences in characteristics in the different categories referred to as being on the spectrum. ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, Asperger's Syndrome, and autism each have some basic characteristic differences from the other categories, while also showing up often as this mix within each individual, he or she still mainly in one category.

**And, differences referred to as deficits, as they are stated**, certainly gives a negative power to categories or labels. Whereas, when differences are seen only as that, **'differences' which accompany and empower definite gifts, we then are referring to subtleties within individuals who are here with identifiable talents, along with sensitivities.**

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Returning now to our discussion of the right brain...

This right brain orientation, and its receptive gifts, are indicated by any or all of the following; keen intelligence, a vision, a draw to, with often accentuated special abilities related to: nature, music, science, art, math, design, movement, all accompanied by a deep gut-empathic understanding of people, and of fair, and 'moral' action. With this statement, I am speaking about all of the individuals on the spectrum, ADD to autism.

Further, I saw that it is the right brain that connects us spatially and inspirationally to the world and beyond, and thereby is also partially our **heart connection** as well.

Yet, importantly, while this right brain reception allows for connection, insight and great creativity, some definite difficulties also arise. And this is when I realized that, first of all, the right brain is like a satellite dish receiving wide and subtle degrees of information all at once. And, secondly, that with these kids, they do not have a left-brain filter, or information linear/

sequential manager, or translator, with which to filter and order this incoming information and stimuli, this often resulting in stimulation overload, overwhelm, and certain other difficulties.

A right brain orientation is as we have seen, but it is also indicated by just how difficult it is for an individual to use those left brain linear and filtering skills such as: to adjust to a changing schedule, to organize, to listen, and to keep their attention on a subject matter.

To expect many on the spectrum to deal with linear information easily, is as futile and even as abusive, as putting Chinese text in front of any student, and insisting, “Don’t be lazy, read this!”<sup>4</sup> Unless, of course, they can read Chinese.

Further, if an assignment has been engaging enough, or the spectrum child has somehow persevered to finish a homework assignment, he or she can often fail to turn it in. This is because *their minds also need a challenge*, and anything that is not a challenge, in this case, turning in the homework, is anticlimactic and boring. Because of this, and without their choice, their mind goes on screen saver.

Procrastination can also be a characteristic, for waiting until there is little time left creates a challenge and a subsequent satisfaction with completion of the task, and often, in the meantime, creative ideas are marinating.

Additionally, adding to what we have seen so far, poor small and large motor skills can also accompany a right brain orientation, often evidenced in trouble with handwriting and a lack of physical coordination.

Accompanying these receptive and connective right brain talents and left brain difficulties, *the lack of a left-brain filter* also makes it very difficult for these individuals to interact with others. The reason for this is that without a linear filter, it is very hard to perceive and integrate the many nuances of social communication, this including both verbal and body language.

Therefore, these individuals are very often seen alone, or perhaps with one other person, or with a computer since computers are more predictable and understandable than humans. These several things can give observers a mistaken perception as to why spectrum individuals seem to be loners, or reclusive.

Further compounding things, these individuals have very sensitive nervous systems.

As you will see, this juxtaposition of troubles and gifts for those with these learning differences, is seen by many as “weaknesses within a sea of strengths.”

## AGREEMENT FOUND IN THE RESEARCH

As my experience with these children informed me, I also found corroborating information in my research. One resource I came upon was the teacher textbook: *Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders: Characteristics and Teaching Strategies*, by Lerner and Klein.

The first page of the preface of this text states:

This new title reflects the shifts in the field of learning disabilities. These shifts occurred with the realization that many students with learning disabilities exhibit coexisting related disorders, such as attention deficit disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, nonverbal learning disabilities, and other related conditions...

Learning disabilities can impede learning to talk, listen, read, write, spell, reason, recall, organize information, or achieve in mathematics. Described as a weakness among a sea of strengths, the condition of learning disabilities is especially perplexing because each individual has a unique combination of talents and characteristics, and of strengths and weaknesses. Students with learning disabilities are found in every classroom....<sup>5</sup>

In *Driven to Distraction*, a book about ADD and ADHD, author Dr. Hallowell describes these gifted traits that also apply to many other "learning disorders." I have joined quotes from a few pages into this summary:

You might describe many with ADD as having a "special something," a hard-to-pin-down yet undeniable potential... In fact, there is a powerfully positive aspect to ADD, and learning disorders in general, a positive aspect that is as yet ill defined, something good... (These individuals) can be highly imaginative and empathic, closely attuned to the moods and thoughts of people around them... They also see new things or find new ways to see old things. They are not just the tuned-out of this world; they are also tuned in, often to the fresh and the new. They are often the inventors and the innovators, the movers and the doers. Good Do-Bees they may not always be, but we should be wise enough not to force them into a mold they'll never fit... If that potential can be tapped, the results can be spectacular.<sup>6</sup>

### **THIS DIFFERENT ORIENTATION IS NOT A CHOICE**

How these individuals are oriented to function is not a choice for them, for **they are hard-wired to be so**. Whereas, those from my generation, born in the fifties and earlier, could bail out and try to fit into and hide this orientation as they lived and worked in society, while not really understanding how and why they were different, yet continuing to be so.

What we see in these individuals is very unusual and different from our current or assumed ‘normal’ operating patterns, for we have become a world *largely governed* by the left hemisphere of our brain, perceiving, symbolizing or representing, and managing our physical and social environments from the linear, thought-driven perspective of this part of our brain.

And, education has all but left the right brain behind, although there is now an effort to regain some use of it with the program called Common Core. This comes as No Child Left Behind, and its extension, Race to the Top, formerly focused our national education attention almost entirely on the accumulation and the testing of facts, all this a huge left-brain focus.

**Let me say here that equally important to the right brain is the left brain**, which is to gather data, use linear processes, etc., to be resourced from by the rest of the brain. Working together toward a connective right brain vision or inspiration, the left brain can then shape that inspiration to bring it into a useful result, an idea or solution that informs or helps the world in a balanced and beneficial way.

As an example, I can share that in a community garden in which I work, there was a need to have many raised beds built fairly quickly since temporary approaches for gardening above ground needed to be improved upon. The below ground foundation was an old parking lot. Quickly, and with incredible, minute accuracy, a team of four or five men built one very large raised bed, each with varying acute and otherwise angles, on seven or eight sequential Saturday mornings, following the direction of one special garden member with unusually gifted spatial and mathematical prowess.

We have always accepted that certain ‘**artist**’ types have special, spatial and creative talents that are of the right brain, and that they, therefore, may not be as purely ‘thinking’ oriented. However, with ‘spectrum’ individuals, this right brain connection is about something else, which I would like to share with you now. **In order to do this, we first need to look at the heart, the brain, and two types of knowledge.**

## **THE HEART, BRAIN, AND TWO TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE**

In recent years it has been proven that our brain and heart work in tandem. I am not speaking of merely what we might call our sentimental heart here, but of our physical heart that modern researchers are finding has a great many neural transmitters that communicate with our brain.

The Institute of HeartMath, located in Boulder Creek, California, is a study center that has been researching the connection between the heart and the brain since 1991. In the Institute’s words about their research regarding the Science of the Heart:

At the Institute of HeartMath (IHM) Research Center, we are exploring the physiological mechanisms by which the heart communicates with the brain, thereby influencing information processing, perceptions, emotions and health...

We observed that the heart was acting as though it had a mind of its own and was profoundly influencing the way we perceive and respond to the world. In essence, it appeared that the heart was affecting intelligence and awareness...

The answers to many of our original questions now provide a scientific basis to explain how and why the heart affects mental clarity, creativity, emotional balance and personal effectiveness. Our research and that of others indicate that the heart is far more than a simple pump.

The heart is, in fact, a highly complex, self-organized information processing center with its own functional "brain" that communicates with and influences the cranial brain via the nervous system, hormonal system and other pathways. These influences profoundly affect brain function and most of the body's major organs, and ultimately determine the quality of life.<sup>7</sup>

We often feel our heart's participation in our lives, and now, research evidence is confirming our heart's role is indeed significant, greater even than we thought. The brain overall has millions of components, and functioning units, but for now, in a simple way to understand, and a way that works and that many use, I am going to speak of it in terms of the right and left brain, and of this heart that The Institute of HeartMath has been researching.

### **BASIC LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN FUNCTIONS**

Right and left brain functions are available to us all, and in the best situations, we would have a balanced use of our left and right hemispheres. Most of us do, however, have a predominant orientation toward either the right or the left brain.

As far as the brain, we use both the left and right hemispheres of our brain every day. Each of us usually has of an inclination toward one hemisphere more than the other, but also have the ability to work toward more of a balance between the two.

The picture of a spinning female dancer graced the internet in a not so recent year with the following question and information:

Do you see the dancer turning clockwise or counter clockwise?  
If clockwise, then you use more of the right side of the brain and vice versa. Most of us would see the dancer turning counter clockwise (left brain) though you can try to focus and change the direction.<sup>8</sup>

There was a listing also of basic right and left brain functions, which I will use, modified just a bit for clearer understanding: (in 2018, this listing is no longer available at the site.)

## Left and Right Brain Functions

### Left Functions

uses logic  
detail/linear oriented  
fact-based  
words as delineators  
present and past  
multi-discipline facts  
fact, detail comprehension  
acknowledges  
linear perception  
object-label oriented  
outward knowing  
in-the-box strategies  
practical  
safe  
enjoys thought involvement

### Right Functions

uses feeling, empathic  
big picture/visionary  
feeling/imagination-based  
words as symbols and images  
present and future  
multi-discipline principles  
meaning-based comprehension  
appreciates  
spatial perception  
object-function oriented  
inward knowing  
out-of-the-box possibilities  
impetuous  
risk taking, impulsive at times  
enjoys hands-on endeavors

## **TWO TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE**

**The left brain can be said to deal with Acquired or Distinctive Knowledge, that which it gains in observation and study of details about the ‘thingness’ of objects and ideas.**

In general, the left brain’s operation is linear and verbal, used for analyzing and sequencing of what we can call separate pieces, that primarily being letters, numbers, thoughts and concepts. These discerned separate pieces can then be put into wholes.

Our mind’s conceptualizing *EYE sees* with this delineating left brain, which shows us the *differences* that abound about us, also conceptualized in our thoughts, all the while also showing us what changes.

**In contrast to this, the right brain processes information in an intuitive and simultaneous way, looking first at the whole picture, and then for patterns of details.** The right brain, and the heart, as described earlier, are equipped to discover what is the same throughout our world, thus creating a different kind of *inner vision or seeing* of what can be called **Revealed or Connective (Discovered) Knowledge, made possible by the right/heart brain’s connective perception/intelligence.**

This that the right/heart brain sees, as I will refer to them together, is revealed to it and is discovered through a direct or integrative experience. In a direct experience something is known through direct perception such as seeing and learning that a tree is a tree, an animal, an animal.

Intuitive and subtle integrative knowing is also a part of this direct experience, such as realizing that a statue is not alive, and that animals are usually very much unlike humans, or some, somehow, very similar to us.

This connective knowledge is an EXPERIENCE and is retained, not forgotten.

Whereas the distinctive shaping details in what we see can vary and can be categorized as so. A Rodin sculpture is very different than one by Henry Moore. Or, what kind of tree is it, or even what kind of a Redwood is it? And of course, the similar distinctive details about animals: just how fast does the cheetah run as opposed to the lion or the gazelle?

If looked at in other disciplines by themselves, e.g. history, science, mathematics, details can be much harder to remember and soon lost if not integrated into some whole picture.

In our world, we presently, and for several hundred years, have focused primarily on Acquired/Distinctive Knowledge, measuring, evaluating, categorizing, and manipulating information, and with this, granted, have created a world of greater outward, objective progress, overall bringing a better life, for not all, but many. However, in our efforts we have often created as many divisive problems as we have solutions.

Our right/heart brain has been available to us, and we do use it for inspiration, appreciation, and the many other functions referred to above, but as far as a balanced use of this part of us, we have left the right brain behind in much of our lives, leaving its primary use to artists, dancers, and our right/heart experiences such as being with nature, what we call hands-on activities, gardening, wood working, etc.

Unfortunately, in the way this left-brain focus is used to assess the world, it also sees us as separate objects, giving us the predominant view that we are primarily separated from each other, our focus mainly on how we are different, rather than how we are all alike.

**And yet, in contrast to what usually preoccupies our distinguishing mind, we know that *more importantly than our differences*, all humans have similar basic unchanging needs: air, food, water, shelter, and care, these needs carrying over to all living things in general, thus making us connected in an important whole.**

**It is the right/heart brain that is the great revealer, as well as interpreter of what is the same for all and what is part of a whole.** It reads a different story about what is perceived through this *connective perception* that it has, that being an ability and intuition to perceive things that pertain to the whole of life, like health, beauty, well-being, and even basic underlying laws of life.

These connective components of life are the *natural study through discovery* of this right/heart brain, it also then working along with the detail oriented and integrative skills of the left brain. If we were to really attend to using our connective perception, this being our inherent inner, whole way of seeing things, our connective perception would flip us from being mainly separate

perceivers, to dynamically being a part of the whole, perceiving human, plant, animal, and earth needs, and realizing our need to live according to reciprocal care, respect and harmony.

The numbers, letters and concepts of Acquired Knowledge, often just used within their own domain, pushed around looking for an objective explanation, solution, or fulfillment of some sort, could take on a whole different meaning and function when first arising from some connective whole picture. Being a part of it all, creates a sense of belonging and dedication to a greater purpose, something bigger than ourselves, which brings meaning to our lives.

**This is truly being a human being, using all of the receptive knowledge of our right/heart brain, along with the abilities so very needed provided by the left brain regarding details, integration, and more, all in order to shape outcomes for the betterment of this world.**

### THE PRESSURES OF LIVING ‘INSIDE OUT’

So now, with this background, I will go into the details of an ‘inside out’ explanation of how spectrum individuals not only process and function in a way that we can examine, as in the Disney movie, but also to say that these spectrum individuals are actually living inside out. **This is because their connective, perceptive heart, brain, and nervous system operations are those with which they viscerally meet this world. They live each day in wide open, connective perception/intelligence, while also often experiencing societal and environmental pressures and intrusions.**

Understanding this, we may choose to change our view of them. When in the presence of some who may have what we interpret as aberrant learning and social behaviors, although very often accompanied by some gifted abilities, our predominant response to these learning differences has been to *see what we’ve determined are deficits in relating to this world.* And with this, the tendency has been to try to remedy the ‘problems’ of these individuals in order that they function more like the world. But if you notice, this approach and our world overall is not working all that well.

**And one very tragic related indication of how our world is not working...**

### ‘MENTAL HEALTH’ RELATED TO SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

**I am now updating this paper in March of 2018, it largely written in 2016. This is because the issue of ‘MENTAL HEALTH’ has come front and center in connection with school shootings once again, but even more loudly now. Seventeen individuals were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglass High School in Parkland, Florida three weeks ago, and the students there, thank goodness, are not going to let the country or the world forget it!**

**Once again there were many victims of this shooting, many tragic recipients of the anger from an individual who, however, was himself, the first tragic victim. This discourse reveals the isolation and misunderstandings that marginalize these individuals, causing**

**their loner tendencies to magnify and manifest into loner killers. This is all part of the discussion of the real original cause for these shootings.**

Of course, there are other factors leading to these terrible events: the breakdown of the family, violent video games and movies, the accessibility of guns; but here I am focusing just on the situation of misunderstood differences, and the troubles that mount from there.

My first long paper about learning differences was written in 2009, after Columbine, where shootings were perpetrated by two young men who had asserted prior to the shootings to having been bullied for years, this description indicating, most likely, that both were on the spectrum. Virginia Tech was next, and *that* young man was known to have been treated for spectrum differences. Then Sandy Hook Elementary was attacked and now it has happened in Parkland, both these shootings by individuals on the Autism spectrum. WHY??!!

Living inside out and with no stimulation and information filter, life for most differently oriented individuals, especially autistics, can feel highly invasive, causing great physical pain, frustration, anger and reaction, and clearly creating a sense of not belonging and being broken, as we label them and others, as disabled, or having a disorder.

And, as with any of us, the pressures and evaluative estimations of us by modern life can cause us to take on deflective, protective, or coping behaviors. And, as with all, these behaviors can further complicate our responses to our environments and our interactions. We need to remember that these, which some might call ego responses, also live within spectrum learners, right along with their basic differently oriented responses.

But, going even further in addressing what we have seen in the news, when these inherent differences, for any individual on the spectrum, are not recognized and honored, and over-sensitivities are not understood and appropriately remedied, (these also often exacerbated by the side effects of being on an anti-depressant or other medication), further complications can come.

Secondary symptoms can be: humiliation, rejection, low self-esteem, all potentially leading to frustration and anger, then deceit, and efforts to gain self/other control, recognition, power or escape in other ways including substance abuse (as self-medication) and even violence.

These can all be attempts to fit in, control, retaliate for, or self-annihilate, after many experiences, suffered through many years leading up to and including high school years, of not being understood, being labeled as disabled, not fitting in, and being shunned or outright rejected.

However! I believe, with a change in understanding, we can remedy these extremely unfortunate situations.

## A NEEDED PARADIGM SHIFT

**As I have shared with you in my opening remarks, my teaching experience and ongoing observation and research led me to the conclusion that these differently functioning individuals do not have a disorder or a deficit,**

*but rather that the complexities of their differences contain a hidden paradigm shift that we need to understand.*

**This understanding shift is that they have an important, different, hard-wired brain orientation which is to the right brain, and also to certain functionings of the heart, all of which is a chance that has come to help balance our world to find deeper solutions for our problems.**

Were these individuals to have a left-brain filter, they would not focus in their characteristic way on the right/heart brain, their connective perception, for they then would function much like the rest of the world, leaving us with our more limited and separate estimation of things and with our limited solutions. It is their strong orientation to Connective Perception and Knowledge that can point us to our belonging and to new inspirations and solutions, *and to the understanding that we have left behind our own connective perception.*

In a predominantly left brain, linear focusing world, we have lost connection to each other and the earth, and no amount of Acquired/Distinctive figuring alone will succeed in solving our problems. The left brain by itself, negotiating and jockeying around ideas, will always fall short if we are not connected to each other and our world, while also the rest of our capabilities of the right brain: insight, inspiration, and different perceptual answers, are not resourced for the inspired and connective solutions that can come.

Where was this type of perception before? Has it suddenly come from nowhere?

## GREAT PEOPLE IN HISTORY

**Some of the world's greatest people, those who helped us make our best strides forward, came from deep inspiration, thinking beyond and outside the accepted norms.** They used perception and research abilities not found in the left brain alone, all in order to make a huge artistic, scientific, or societal contribution toward a more aware and caring world. As most people know, Einstein was dyslexic, but there are so many, many others. And most were considered slow, disabled, or retarded in some way.

In *Driven to Distraction*, quoted earlier, Dr. Hallowell reports evaluations made about several individuals who achieved greatness after performing terribly in school due to undiagnosed "learning disabilities."<sup>9</sup> These individuals were not good with left brain skills, unlike most others, because they were oriented to their heart and right brain receptivity. Here is a very short listing of just a few of these individuals and their 'troublesome' characteristics as described by others.

**Mozart:** distractible, impatient, innovative, creative  
**Einstein, Poe, Shaw, Dali:** these, expelled from school  
**Edison:** at the bottom of his class, mentally defective  
**Lincoln, and Henry Ford:** both considered having “no promise”

The textbook also quoted earlier, *Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders*, also cites many great people who have excelled despite apparent left-brain “learning disorders.”<sup>10</sup>

**Nelson Rockefeller:** severe dyslexia  
**Charles Schwab:** reading problems  
**Auguste Rodin:** “uneducable”  
**Woodrow Wilson:** a non-reader until age eleven  
**Albert Einstein:** persistent language (reading, writing) problems throughout his life. Einstein stated that he rarely thought in words; it was only after a visual understanding came that he tried to express it in words. Temple Grandin (will discuss later) also thinks in pictures.

Instead of predominantly left-brain skills and approaches, these individuals relied on their right/heart brain gifts of insight, along with left-brain shaping, and found their own successful ways to express and excel.

### **A BRIEF LOOK AT ADD, ADHD, DYSLEXIA, AND ASPERGER’S SYNDROME**

**While my main focus in this presentation is on autism,** I would like to first talk just briefly about the other spectrum difference categories, without a full description of all their varied qualities. I’ll do this by sharing a few stories about these individuals, all of whom exhibit many of the qualities of this right/heart brain Connective Perception/Intelligence Orientation, with some main category distinctions.

Again, it is important to remember that all of these different learners will have their own particular mix of larger or more subtle spectrum characteristics.

**ADD** individuals are said to have “**Attention Deficit Disorder,**” whereas ***I have renamed ADD as “Attention Differently Directed.”*** Here on out, if you see “ADD,” with comments made by others, they will be using the original meaning as Attention Deficit Disorder. But, coming from my experience and knowledge, I will always consider the meaning of ADD, whenever it is used, to be ***Attention Differently Directed.***

When a student with ADD sits in class listening to what can be primarily linear instruction or directions, they receive it unfiltered and can feel overwhelmed. These individuals then turn away from the input, looking away, out the window or turn to conversing with a friend.

Thus, *when they are supposed to be attentive and quiet*, they can be seemingly daydreaming, or distracted into talking, especially if they sense a friend needs some help, or even needs to be warned, “You’re supposed to be paying attention!” !

ADD individuals can have many of the spectrum differences, and fit the overall ‘differently directed’ right brain descriptions of being very bright, thinking outside-the-box, needing a challenge, drawn to nature, music, or some deeper interest, as well as having some of the linear skills difficulties I’ve previously described.

These kids are very gut-empathic regarding others, especially anyone who is an underdog, and they love to collect little critters at recess for example, rather than playing a competitive team sport. They can generously share the critters with some of the other kids, who might then go ahead and step on them, breaking the hearts and trust of those who gave. This example and these other stories come from experiences with my students.

**Characteristically, it is the depth of intuitive, beyond-their-age knowings and gut-empathy that signals a right brain orientation, for it is the right/heart brain that joins us to a broader perceptual knowledge and also to others in deep connection.**

A story I would like to share is of a very sweet and cooperative young man, again a third grader I had, who could *not* pay attention, no matter what I tried, me not knowing then as much as I do now, while he, also, and his parents, were looking hard for a solution. This very difficult situation continued on for him as he moved to 4th and 5th grades, as I followed his progress.

One day, as I was working late in my classroom after school, it being a time of playground free activity for those kids in the after-school daycare program, I heard this amazing trumpet playing, like there was an actual virtuoso outside on the playground. I looked out, and to my amazement and great, great pleasure, I saw it was this young man of whom I have just spoken.

Knowing he and his family continued to be troubled with his academic performance, I called him over and said, “Do not worry about yourself; just do the best you can, for your life is going to be about your music.” Many years later, I randomly met the music teacher he had had in high school. This teacher also saw his giftedness, and relayed to me that this young musician had invented, I’m not sure what it would be called, but maybe like an instrumental lick, or some amazing technique, that had never been known before.

Moving on....

**ADHD** individuals can share some of the same qualities as ADD, and they often need to move, for movement for the ADHD individual could be enhancing their ability to attune to their inspiration, or the learning at hand, and/or to ‘shake off’ the over stimulation of linear input in general.

Many ADD and ADHD individuals are known to work better doing two things at once, the second, self-directing activity allowing them to focus more on the first. Examples would be: needing background noise, such as music or TV, in order to focus on homework, and drawing or

doodling in class in order to pay better attention to lectures. Moving could also be an anti-boredom measure, stimulating the brain with movement at times when linear input could be overwhelming or boring, causing their brain to attend elsewhere, or to go on 'pause.'

A recent example:

Needing music as an insulator, and/or stimulator, in order to focus on an interest or passion was seen recently in the film, ***The Big Short, about Michael Burry***, an Asperger's individual who bet against Wall Street's huge bubble in the subprime-mortgage bond market, winning big for himself and his clients. In the movie, we saw him drumming with headphones on as he and drums sat sectioned off, but within view in a financial investment office. The rhythm in his hands and the din of loud music in his ears, Burry continued to access and integrate in order to explain to others his accurate and successful analysis and prediction of the financial crash in 2008. (For a full account of Burry's life story, please see my paper: *Heart Centered Minds*, at my website: HeartCenteredMinds.com.)

**Dyslexics** are three dimensional thinkers, that is many can think in pictures and are very spatially oriented. And, although some have letter reversals and other major spelling difficulties, enigmatically, many are drawn to creative writing and can excel at this, given the right support.

A very famous dyslexic screen writer named Stephen Cannell had a successful early personal strategy: he dropped any college class out of a list of seven he had signed up for whose teacher would not support his writing because of poor spelling. Interesting also is his statement, "My writing is a right brain activity, for it is something that comes out of nothing."<sup>11</sup> His support for his children, also dyslexic, was to advance them through school with tutors or whatever needed, as a means to get them on the road to their true passions.

As I mentioned, Albert Einstein was also dyslexic. He had painted his front door red so he could find his house, due to trouble reading numbers, and way beyond this, he envisioned sitting on a light beam and thereby understood the principles of what was to be  $E=MC^2$ . Not linearly number-talented, Einstein's brother helped him write his findings in the actual equation form.

And, I met a young man in a paint store who could 'see' the underlying variety of mixed colors that made up any one paint sample. On a hunch and out of the blue, early on in my experience with all of this, I asked him: "Are you dyslexic?" And, sure enough, he was.

Another story I would like share is about a student who was both ADD and dyslexic. This young man loved to cartoon, and would spend stolen moments doing so in class when he should have been attending to other academic priorities. I found that allowing him time to cartoon before, and also as part of a project, or as a reward for finishing the other tasks, he would do much better.

The 4th grade teacher after me had also taught in the 'gifted' kids program, and when this boy landed in her general education 4th grade class, she maximized his academic achievements by supporting his cartooning gifts, even more than I had.

Come 5th grade for him, and as I would stand yard duty on the playground, I suddenly saw him, very uncharacteristically reclusive from all the kids, and most of the time, almost frantically striding alone, around and around the perimeter of the asphalt playground. I enquired as to what had changed, and was told that the approach in 5th grade was that he was too old to be spending time on cartooning. (Sponge Bob creator was also dyslexic.)

**Asperger's Syndrome** individuals are very sensitive and, like others on the spectrum in varying degrees, need predictable schedules which insulate them from sudden change.

Those with Asperger's, along with other characteristics, have an expansive ability in relation to taking in knowledge, especially of a higher, or more in-depth level, particularly in accordance with a special interest, or arena of knowledge. They then, can also be very talented at putting this information into use. It is additionally true that they often rather insist on doing things 'their way,' and resist being 'put in a box.'

I've already mentioned Michael Burry, almost literally the only man willing and able to read all the complicated language of the many bank mortgage loan agreements that proliferated and led to the demise of the economy in 2008. Burry had predicted and bet upon this demise, helping his stock market investor clients, for his knowledge of the faulty loan agreements made the crash certain to him.

Burry's Asperger's abilities enabled him to do and know all this. Those clients who stuck with his advice made a gain of 489.34 percent as the market crumbled, whereas the S&P 500 returned just a bit more than 2 percent<sup>12</sup> for the rest of the market investors. (Please see my paper Heart Centered Minds at my website for a full accounting of the experiences of Michael Burry.)

And another poignant example of Asperger's Syndrome:

One of my third graders with Asperger's had many qualities, both the gifted and also the more difficult. He was an avid reader of adventure and inspiring books, but when it came to his writing skills for the district year-end test on expository writing, which we had worked toward all year long, he tediously and with great effort, followed the structure he had learned for writing a multi-paragraph expository composition, struggling with basic words, misspelling many, remembering some periods and capitals, while forgetting others, etc.

However, there in the middle of it all, his accelerated ability to take in words and meaning, in deep literary engagement, along with his empathic connection to the story's underdog, all suddenly flooded forth: "**Annie's heart blossomed like a lotus flower in the spring.**" (The original story theme was about self-assurance, and this writer was thrilled Annie had succeeded against the apparent odds.)

**Autism:** One of our earliest public exposures regarding learning and processing differences was in the movie, *Rain Man*, which was about the life of Kim Peek, and about whom I will share more later.



can occur in autistics, some fearing this then to be the ‘cause of autism.’ The recent research continues to find no concrete and verifiable evidence of this.

**I do not know the answer. However, what I do see is that these children, and the others on the spectrum, born with a right/heart brain orientation and its connective perception, are living openly, without a filter, while also having very sensitive nervous systems, which might be affected by vaccinations.**

Let’s continue on with this specific vaccination discussion a bit later, after we discuss this particular theme of *reclusive and reactive signs* in response to *sensory overwhelm* and *overstimulation*, just due to lacking a left-brain filter, as seen in the life of Temple Grandin.

Lacking a filter, autistic children can be very sensitive to sounds, colors, rapid movement, abrupt change, and stimuli and information overload. The now famous and autistic, Temple Grandin, famous due to her books, her continuing life contributions, and the movie about her life: *Temple Grandin, Different, But Not Less*, has said some sensitivities can be as intense as a dentist’s drill hitting a nerve, or like sandpaper on extremely sensitive skin. Remember our original picture of the satellite dish, and these receptively open individuals.

If you are unfamiliar with the life of Temple Grandin, let me give you a thumbnail sketch. She, now 70 years old in 2018, was one of the first, with whom we are familiar, to be diagnosed with autism. I will add more details as I go forward, but with Grandin’s then perceived very negative autistic diagnosis, her mother went all out to find solutions for her, as parents of autistic individuals most often do.

Very sensitive to life, and by the way, living before the large number of vaccinations that are now given, Grandin had any number of the typical autistic behaviors, but also, as is the general case, was very obviously intelligent.

Here is a beautiful quote on the back of her book: *Emergence*, Grandin’s autobiography of her early life:

Temple Grandin longed for affection but feared human contact. Unable to experience reality as other children could, she was quick to anger, easily over-stimulated, and isolated. Facing ceaseless waves of terrifying nerve attacks, she was a child heading into a dark abyss of autism. But within her lonely world, Temple harbored a creativity, intelligence, and yearning for self-expression that refused to die.<sup>13</sup>

Grandin’s mother made every effort to support her daughter, helping her build skills to connect to the world, (which I will describe more in general later), also finding her an alternative high school to attend. Grandin was mentored and highly inspired there by a kind and perceptive science teacher. Dr. Carlock, who had formerly worked at NASA, **focused Grandin’s attention on challenges and experiments to solve**, these inviting her to use her natural thinking in pictures and pattern finding abilities, which enabled her to excel.

Highly sensitive to change and stimulation, and subject to frantic meltdowns, as the book cover and inside story describe, Grandin was having such a meltdown while staying at her aunt's cattle ranch. Grandin begged her aunt to put her in the cattle squeeze, used for inoculating. Grandin had seen that the cattle were not just restrained by this method, but were also greatly calmed. When her worried and frenzied aunt finally relented, putting her niece in this restraint, Grandin's highly provoked sensory alarm system quieted, much like when we swaddle a baby. Subsequently building four such squeeze machines for herself, Grandin found that in this self-enhanced calm she could understand things she had not been able to before, such as her mother's love for her, and in this calm and quiet, she saw new solutions for her life's problems and even the world's challenges.

Going through new doors, this once literally frightening to Grandin, soon became her symbolic, physical, and emotional way forward, leading eventually to her graduating college, and later getting her Ph.D. Along the way, using her intuitive awareness of stresses for cattle and their preferred style of movement as a herd, she designed new systems for their treatment before slaughter, revolutionizing the industry, winning out over old, inhumane ways of handling these animals.

“Temple Grandin, living with autism, revolutionized livestock handling by using her ability to *see the world in a different way* to develop a deeper understanding of animal behavior.”<sup>14</sup>

So, from Grandin and others' experiences, it is known that the use of compression on the individual's body, as Grandin did with her own squeeze machines, and as others do in a variety of ways, helps to calm these individuals when they are experiencing intense stimulation overload. This induced calm then opens them to greater learning and more interactive success. These, along with many other helpful understandings and approaches, can honor these individuals for who they are and how they function.

With this knowledge from her own experience, and in working with others, Temple Grandin has also become a world-wide lecturer on autism.

And now, briefly, but additionally....

**For a mirror example of an 'autistic' experience** of the quiet, calm, and inspiring inner experience of the right brain, while also, at times, the pain from invasive stimulation coming into this unfiltered right brain orientation, watch the moving TED Talk by Jill Bolte Taylor about her left-brain stroke, which she calls her *Stroke of Insight*, the name also of her book.<sup>15</sup> In her talk, Taylor vividly describes how she experienced the opposing gifts and difficulties of a purely right brain orientation, but came to this overall conclusion:

I believe the more time we spend choosing to run the deep, inner peace circuitry of our right hemisphere, the more peace we will project into the world, and the more peaceful our planet will be.<sup>16</sup>

## VACCINATIONS, REACTIONS TO CHEMICALS, AND FOOD ALLERGIES

Now, let's return to our discussion about possible body reactions to vaccinations. In addition to **sensory** overload for autistics, like Grandin's, other sensitivities can be to chemicals and foods, autistics being like **'canaries in a coal mine' not only to overstimulation, but also sometimes in this way.**

**Being born with a right/heart brain orientation and its characteristics, can account for those symptomatic early signs of focusing and ordering/patterning behaviors of what we call autism, even before the vaccinations come later.** And if these signs do appear early, then this might be an important indication that this very sensitive, and behavior-different individual would do better with vaccinations administered in two groups, until we know more.

Chemicals and food allergies can also create a **deeper *uninvited* shutdown** of an autistic's interactive abilities. Allergies for some are to gluten, casein, products containing dairy, and other foods that cause inflammation, which interfere with their system, inhibiting their *ability* to interact with those around them.

(Please see my discussion about Jenny McCarthy's son in my paper *Heart Centered Minds* at my website, which discusses his autistic behaviors and also those that seem to intensify his inhibitions further, in my opinion not caused by autism, but by his sensitive body's reaction to some food and toxins. See HeartCenteredMinds.com.)

With great sensitivities, autistics can react as some others do who just have very sensitive systems without being autistic. SPD or Sensory Processing Disorder is said to account for several neurodevelopmental disorders and recurring health problems for many just sensitive children. These kids can have very frequent ear infections, asthma, inflammation, developmental delays, acid reflux, and more.

Without much successful help from pediatricians, mom and author Maria Rickert Hong says she finally figured out what was causing all these illnesses for her son(s), saying that "It's 'toxicity,' gut dysbiosis, immune dysregulation, nutritional deficiencies, inflammation and hormonal imbalances."<sup>17</sup>

If your child is highly prone to illnesses, perhaps also having asthma, or other conditions, and is greatly inhibited in many ways, you might want to look more into all of this. For a very in-depth discussion of these situations, get the book just referred to: *Almost Autism, Recovering Children from Sensory Processing Disorder*, by Hong, as well as other resources.

Hong does also list autism and ADHD as "neurological "disorders," autistic individuals sometimes showing these reactive symptoms as well. ***I, in contrast, separate out what I believe autism is: a spectrum different orientation with its own many characteristics, including strong reactivity to sensory stimuli, overwhelm, and reclusiveness, due to lacking a left-brain filter. However, these can then also couple with SPD-like-caused extra reactivity to***

chemicals and foods, which increase inhibited interaction and create other troublesome problems. I will speak again of this conclusion in the section: *What is Autism?*

## THE UNUSUAL BEHAVIORS, INNER JOURNEY, AND GIFTS OF AUTISM

Going on, but remembering this possible chemical impact of vaccinations on these kids that seem the most sensitive on the differences spectrum, **I have long thought that these autistic individuals, co-relatedly, could also have an even more *profound* connective perception and discovery ability than others.**

Thinking outside-the-box as to what possibly could be going on with their very unusual behaviors, I came to the conclusion that these individuals are up to something else with their perception, which is **enabled and enhanced by their different and unusual behaviors.**

I have asserted, and it is now being corroborated that their deep and often very specific fixations, and repetitive, stimming body movements, including repeated phrases or soundings, are all to shut out the world's over-simulation in order to feel more insulated and calm, but are also to enter that quiet in order to delve deeply into what they want to focus upon: their inherent and passionate explorations.

As Grandin described, some of her early stimming behaviors, such as flapping her hands, and loving to spin around, which act as sensory insulators and focusers, allowed her, and allow other individuals, to access their inner protected calm and quiet, and their connective perception.

The lining up toys, fascination with shadows and light, along with for example, the ability to memorize and recite long portions of songs, commercials, license plate numbers, or whatever, even before having real speech as a habit, are actions, abilities, or tendencies related to the connective right brain.

The right brain explores and discovers patterns and relationships, and, at times, is like a replicating film, allowing for easy memorization, sometimes even acting like photo film from which some can later read, as Grandin can, while others, savant-like, can capture the picture, but then also integrate and process all of the received information into their knowledge bank. (Kim Peek).

Having this different perception since birth, autistics are equipped to explore, even research, ***subtle laws of relationship***, including having a penchant for scientific terms and disciplines. Jenny McCarthy, who very passionately wrote of her personal experiences with her autistic son, shared that when she asked him to say door, he said rectangle, and when asked to say stop sign, he said octagon. This when he was three years old.<sup>18</sup>

Another three year old, when refusing to part with a highly technical college-level astronomy textbook he had come across on the floor at Barnes and Noble bookstore, which thus was bought, proceeded to drag it around for several years until it fell apart. This young star enthusiast, named Jake Barnett, diagnosed with autism at two years old, was taking university classes at age eight.

It turned out Jake is a math and science genius, and his life is a fascinating one which you may have seen on 60 Minutes.<sup>19</sup> Jake's story is unique because he does have an amazingly high IQ, but his everyday autism life, and his daily challenges, fully chronicled in the book by his mother, called *The Spark*,<sup>20</sup> can help us see things more clearly.

Formerly, I read that Jake, now 19 years old I believe, was researching Loop Quantum Gravity and Quantum Foundations at the Perimeter Institute for Advanced Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Canada, as a doctoral student, perhaps now having already received his Ph.D. After also recently studying with the research team at OIST (Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology), it is said Jake has returned to his study at the Perimeter Institute, (Google it, fascinating.) Jake's work in these accelerated academic years has related to his initial fascination with light and shadow as a mere three month old baby.

In regard to this apparent reclusive and particularly deep inner journey that autism individuals can take since birth, and soon even deeper around two years old, Katherine Barnett says about Jake:

When we thought he had just been staring at the shadows on the wall, Jake had been making real scientific discoveries...My beloved boy hadn't been missing after all. He'd just been working.<sup>21</sup>

Jake also remarks: "**Children with autism are not missing. Instead they are off making discoveries.**"<sup>22</sup>

**This inner journey is natural to autistic individuals, but remember, it can also be intensified by their sensitive nervous system's reaction to chemicals and foods.**

## SO, WHAT IS AUTISM?

So, after all this, *what is autism*, with its intensified spectrum characteristics of both gifts and difficulties? **To me autism is a connective perception orientation that exhibits a natural outer unfiltered openness, and an inner inclination to explore life's patterns and relationships**, these both often the cause for hand flapping jubilation, as well as other stimming behaviors to quiet their outer world in order to explore inwardly.

**Additionally, without a left-brain filter, and with a very sensitive nervous system, their autism orientation makes them 'the canaries in the coal mine.'** Their body and stimulation sensitivities are alerting us to the extremes our world has created in terms of a harsh sensory environment and toxic chemicals; this all exacerbated in some by allergic reactions to certain foods, natural or adulterated, that are unfriendly to their systems.

We also need to add here that the world's crushing, inaccurate conception of them as having a disorder adds to these other complications, *all* culminating in autism's strong reactions, health concerns, fears, and greatly diminished sense of self-worth.

*Most importantly in all of this, because of the evidence of their varying, heightened, perceptive and gut-empathic abilities and interests, I feel strongly that we have been misunderstanding and misdiagnosing very intelligent and giftedly perceptive individuals.*

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THERAPIES

Whereas, I am now going to mention some therapies out there, of which there are many that can help normalize the lives of autistics, **it is my core conviction that allowing *all* children to discover and express their inherent interests and passions leads to their absolute optimal development. This approach drives and inspires their way forward, and their brain's optimal development, regarding both their interest abilities and overall education. Doing this also optimizes their emotional and sensory path forward, enabling them to find a place of comfort, belonging, and contribution in this world. I will go into this in depth in Part III Passion: The Brain is a Discovery Machine, and those sections then following.**

However, I do want to very briefly mention therapies and afterwards other supportive measures.

Regarding therapies, it is said that it is best to try these before a child is five years old. Hours spent every week with speech, occupational, physical and/or developmental therapies, as well as ABA work (Applied Behavioral Analysis) can all be helpful. (Some parents prefer a therapy called Floortime to ABA). Yet, it is also known that they can help some, or many, while others not at all.

What seems to be true, and is also Temple Grandin's advice, is that if a child is going along well enough with a type of therapy, it can be helpful. However, if they are resisting or are repelled and are not thriving with this work, it is better not to engage them in that activity.

**These therapies can also be the hope to 'recover' a child from autism, and certainly, anything that can remedy their sensitive physical and emotional reaction to whatever interferes with or aggravates their natural way of existing, and/or kindly enhances their learning and interactive skills, I believe is good.**

**I am seeing any number of very good teaching and therapeutic approaches that are offering exactly that, very important supportive work, hopefully freeing them from agitations and limitations, which thereby leaves them as who they giftedly are.**

**However, I do not believe we should be looking for a recovery from autism, or from the other so called disorders, since these are essentially a different orientation. Spectrum differences, including autism, I believe, are about changes that have arrived in brain functioning at a time when humanity must return to connection perception/intelligence to help solve our world problems.**

The left brain, when you come down to it, could be called the wheels of our doership, whereas the right/heart brain is the engine, or power, this being the context of inspirations, values for good, and the answers that are needed to direct meaningful actions.

## **SUPPORTIVE MEASURES INCLUDING AIDING THEIR FIT IN THIS WORLD**

Supportive measures are extensive enough that they would take a separate whole document, but here are a few of the measures that can assist and enhance the lives of spectrum individuals in general, and autistic and Asperger's individuals particularly. (Please also see recommendations for support in my paper: *Heart Centered Minds*.)

- Autism individuals, and others on the spectrum, are all helped if they can be taught **basic social skills**, giving them tools that connect them to others around them. These can be called **bridging skills**.

Temple Grandin's mother made sure that Grandin, raised in the 1950's, had interactive and coping skills with which to meet the world. These included activities like walking to the post office to post a letter, playing cooperative board games with others, and having good manners including a polite greeting with which to meet others. Grandin's greeting: "Hello, my name is Temple Grandin. How do you do?" which she emphatically repeated with every new meeting. Part of Kim Peek's repeated greeting contained, "Hello. You are beautiful!"

We saw bridging skills in the movie *The Imitation Game*, when Alan Turing, an Asperger's individual who created a machine to decode German attack codes, was directed by a co-worker to befriend rather than shut out his team members. The young adult Turing started by bringing them all an orange after the next lunch, which began to mend a former rift between them, helping Turing's work to continue faster. (Asperger's in some ways is closely related to autism, but, as I mentioned, I believe it should remain its own category, for the differences from autism are significant).

I am, in part, using Grandin's and Turing's lives as examples, even though there are so many other stories out there, because their life stories are chronicled for us, Grandin's available in the movie about her life, *Temple Grandin, Different But Not Less*. In the movie, we can see in detail, her spiral of success that resulted from her orientation and abilities and the supportive measures of others in her life.

- As mentioned before, **we must reduce the pressures** of our expectations for these individuals, **and stop negatively labeling them as having disorders and deficits**, for all this represses their sense of self-worth and their inner natural workings, making them feel broken, hugely fearful, and tense. How well do we learn and perform when we are hugely fearful, and how would we act with others? Kim Peek was much more at ease, even with large crowds, once he had gained renown from the movie about him, *Rain Man*. **Belonging brings wondrous results. (More about belonging in part III of this document.)**

Dr. Meg Fields, living in the East Bay of the San Francisco area, has run two-week-long camps for Asperger's individuals in Tahoe.<sup>23</sup> She shares that once they are there and settled, they soon are learning things that have been hard to learn before, i.e. riding a bike, interacting with others more, packing a backpack for a two or three-night away hike, skills they were not able to acquire due to outside expectations and pressures in their everyday living.

- We must **be like horse whisperers**, just as sensitive as we are/were with infants, assessing and fulfilling their every day and changing needs. As with a seed, we need to nurture, watch, and support what allows them to thrive. (Kristine Barnett, along with raising Jake and her two other sons, started her own PreK program in her home with sensitive and very effective support for small groups of autistics. More about her also, later in this paper).

- Other Supports: meditation, being with animals, dogs and horses in particular very helpful for calming and centering autistic individuals, there seeming to be a heart/brain coherence that occurs. These all leading to easier acclimation, and the learning of skills for the world around them.

- What is also essentially true is that we need to meet these Inside Out kids with our insides out, our open embrace of who they are expressed in our acceptance, support, encouragement, love and advocacy.

- I would also like to address the important topic of how these knowers/learners can function in our world. Many 'high functioning' spectrum learners, accommodating for their more difficult differences through school (or bailing out of school), and moving out and forward in society, can follow an interest or an ability and find a good job in some aspect of our culture. This can be either mainstream, like many successful entrepreneurs and others, or in some off-the-beaten-path *unique fit* to their insights, interests and abilities found elsewhere.

A specific example of a very unique fit: autistics are more and more being employed in jobs needing scrutiny for anomalies or small differentiations. Often thinking in pictures, autistics can see the finer details, spot a pattern in a distracting environment, detect visual structures, and can mentally manipulate complex three-dimensional shapes, as supported in an article by Laurent Morttron.<sup>24</sup> The Israeli army<sup>25</sup>, US army<sup>26</sup> and many businesses in various fields, particularly in Silicon Valley, are employing autistics to heighten accuracy or help find broader applicability and opportunity aided by their heightened perceptive skills.

And to note, these autistics do not feel overburdened with this work as a 'neurotypical' individual would, for their brain is designed to see these things easily, and these autistics do not mind, but rather thrive on repetitious work. This is a little different than what has been said about other autistics such as Temple Grandin needing challenges, but there are differences among differences, and most autistics and spectrum individuals are highly motivated, and thus 'challenged' by *any work* that they feel helps others or is for some bigger goal.

Many other individuals with differences, and 'high functioning' enough within that general definition in our traditional schools, will make it through our current school system with the help of tutors or special support classes. Many get a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) in order to

graduate high school, perhaps going to a junior/community college, maybe then motivated and focused enough to pursue even higher education. At whatever point, they can eventually find their place within a broad ability range of jobs such as computer work, chef, builder, musician or artist, bakery or pet store worker, or wherever their connective intelligence may take them with their ability and interests/passion, large or small.

And then, many of these individuals are here to strongly underscore that which all these learners know at some deep level: that we are to return to connection and kinder, gentler times. A friend of mine mentioned that many individuals with more marked learning differences that he knew were primarily interested in animals, children or older people. This is because the simplicity and depth of connective heart interaction in these experiences matches who they, and all spectrum learners, are inside.

Often helping these last mentioned individuals heighten and build upon these interest-based experiences and interactions can bring greater interactive and performance skills, which feeds further confidence and ability and— continuing development. The brain’s abilities are fueled by interests, passions, nurturing, belonging and success. (See “The Inside Out of Autism” at my website HeartCenteredMinds.com.)

Some of these last knowers/learners may need more support to make their way from home and school to the world outside. And this ‘world-fit’ challenge is about spectrum learners but also others such as those with down syndrome or cerebral palsy. It is very often true with some autistics, when not reacting strongly to our ‘noisy’ sensory and/or toxic world around them, and of those with down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and others, that we see their deep nature: simple, gentle, calm, quiet, kind, and some, deeply knowing. Lamenting the lack of understanding by others of her autistic son’s differences, mother/author, Laura Shumaker, writing in her book, *A Regular Guy*, protests: “...they can’t accept Matthew as he is. Can’t they appreciate his honesty, his humor, and the pureness of his soul?”<sup>27</sup>

And Lexi’s mom, from a documentary called *Autism, the Musical*, at first stressed, confused and depressed by the huge challenges of Lexi’s autism, became a highly accepting and supportive parent, joyous and grateful for Lexi’s wonderful nature. She entreats:

Autism is considered a disease...and nothing will happen that is positive, until these humans are valued by others for the beautiful people they are and the gifts they have. I cannot make others respect Lexi and love her, but living with Lexi has had a strong effect on who I have become.<sup>28</sup>

It is up to us to make that place for those who need a big transition to our world or to live apart from it. This can be in communities like Camphill Communities<sup>29</sup> where many join together in a living environment with counselors/teachers as part of the community, supporting the shared life skills of all the residents, many of which include interests such as cooking, landscaping, gardening, farm machinery operations, etc. Here there is acceptance, respect and value seen in differences which creates a place for comfort, meaningful contribution, belonging and joy.

Those with more skills can live in group homes where contact with counselors is by call or text, and residents with ‘differences’ work together using independent living skills, with schedule check-in’s with counselors, and school and/or jobs as part of growing into an adult life.

One very developed and supportive site for those able and wanting to find their way forward successfully in mainstream society is Aspen Network in northern California, created from the vision of co-director Dr. Meg Fields. Part of the website description:

Aspen Network offers four integrated, year-round programs for teens and young adults with social concerns, anxiety disorders and social differences, including spectrum behaviors...the programs, both residential and nonresidential, allow young people to learn and grow in a welcoming environment with peers of their own and a sensitively trained staff that includes neurotypical young adults... Developing a housing community with people of blended diagnoses means that residents can use their strengths to assist others in their areas of growth.<sup>30</sup>

This type of inspired and comprehensive support for spectrum individuals is so very needed for so very many. The programs I have found at this time are paid for by parents or other support people. In the best situation, this would be paid for in a way similar to Medicare perhaps, for initial and/or ongoing cost for families is very high. Who will pay when parents are no longer here?

The fact that our awareness of all of these different learners has been alerted and heightened now for some twenty years **makes this high time for a paradigm shift.** This will be the change point, acknowledging who they are, allowing them *to be* who they are, support then coming forth big time in all ways, this also opening us to our own heart, inspiring our balanced use of our right and left brain intelligences to find optimal solutions.

### **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 they, and we, are allowed to delve and even dive into our passions in life, this can lead to success in ways that we have been slow to recognize, not understanding how the brain works.**

My experience and research has indicated that when these individuals’ passions or fixations are supported, free from pressure, judgment and rejection, these individuals can begin to thrive. **In such an environment, 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 in a way that shows this, at the end of this paper.)

In some unknown, non-instructed, and very powerful way, the right/heart brain receives broad information, in which it discerns patterns and recognizes alignments. It then delineates, integrates, manipulates and expresses discoveries and understandings from all this with the help of the left brain. This process 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.**

Not necessarily the best practice, 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, groups of children 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>31</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.

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

**Support for how spectrum brains function, starts with honoring. And 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 development of other necessary skills, leading to their successes.**

As one example, 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>32</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 30 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. You will find this information along with many other learning supportive approaches in "11 Ways Finland's Education System Shows Us 'Less is More.'" <sup>33</sup>

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

**FOLLOWING PASSIONS CAN BRING A REDUCTION IN  
SENSITIVITIES and DRAWS OTHERS INTO THIS  
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 even the external limiting judgments of who they are, which are known to inhibit them.**

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. This connective experience unifies and aligns with the right brain 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 *Grandin'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>34</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.**

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, 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 eight, 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 seen 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 an experience of unseen deeper meaning, including all in a new belonging of connective understanding.**

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. This is not about trying to create or force passions in these individuals, but allowing their passions 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 the original 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, 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, "*Do Schools Kill Creativity?*" and then read his book, *The Element, How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*.<sup>35</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 can particularly help those who have more trouble fitting into this world perhaps, having interactive barriers, such as overwhelm, or a lack of communication skills.**

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. Grandin also phrasing it: "Let's focus on what they can do, and not on what they can't."<sup>36</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, with 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 other staff members 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, in particular, 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 are to "**Turn Passions into Progress,**" and "**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>37</sup>

**Katy, an older girl in Kristine's support group** was a severely autistic, nonverbal, seventeen-year-old, and her parents were concerned for her future. This girl loved to bake, so Kristine and the girl made cupcakes when she came to see Kristine. It was nearly like the cupcake wars you may have seen on TV, frostings starting simple but Katy evolving them to be in very sophisticated colors, and moving in to using a pastry bag, eventually making flowers that looked so real, Kristine was afraid to eat them.

With all this immersion, acceptance and joy, and Kristine just continuing this enlarged focus, Katy soon found her future. Her thrilled parents shared with Kristine that Katy 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 hugely encouraged to engage, discover, and integrate toward growth and success, by Kristine's 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.

**Another very concerned mother brought her older boy, who could not speak**, to Kristine. After their informational exchange during the first session, for 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. She 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, along with his ability to put feelings into words.**

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 certainly not 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, in small part, similar to giving an autistic child the calming and integrative 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.**

**I learned this in a classroom situation, while doing accompanying research; Kristine Barnett learned this in her home, with her own children and many children from other families.**

**This is all an authentically valid and successful approach for those on the spectrum, *and equally valid as the basis of education for all children.* We need to support children in discovering what they love and do well, and let them expand, and their brain to grow, naturally, by following and building in the direction of their interests and passions.**

**See these two internet, interview references for Kristine's's affirmation of the "mother-and teacher-sense" rightness of how this works;<sup>38</sup> mine also of those two senses, for mother/father-sense can also inform classroom teacher-sense.**

**And now another 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 forward. And Gutlove was inspired by his workers: "Seeing their passion and their desire to create something of worth for other people is very, very impressive."<sup>39</sup> This day to day work was their immersed passion experience.

In the appreciative and enthusiastic 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 (in 2009), 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 Gutlove is still there after twenty plus years, and he shared, it is not primarily for the wine.

**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."**<sup>40</sup>

Both Hawking's 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>41</sup> is a recent, inspiring video about enhancing interaction for individuals with dementia through exposure to the music of their youth. It is said by some that 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,' and the health, of life.**

Another example of too much left-brain focus, 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. Carson, I believe, chose a calm, non-invasive environment in which his more open right-brain orientation allowed him to 'soak in' great amounts of information.

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

Carson used this latter skill when a five year old child came into his practice, she subject to increasing 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."<sup>42</sup> (Read Carson's autobiographical book, *Gifted Hands*, and/or see the movie about it.)

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.

So, with that additional information, enjoy this 'heart and soul' right/brain, free from-left-brain-

over-concern, reconnection to music for this man with Alzheimer's.<sup>43</sup> (See "Notes")

## AN UNCOMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE BRAIN

This all that I've described, seeming a miraculous functioning 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 these intelligences, not separate from, but dependent upon an integration with the connective intelligence of the heart as well. This brain 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: **NURTRING**.

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* (purely left brain) 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>44</sup> (My italics, parentheses and bolding).

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 AND BELONGING

In addition to nurturing and these passion immersions, 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 every childhood, and continue on throughout *all our lives*.

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

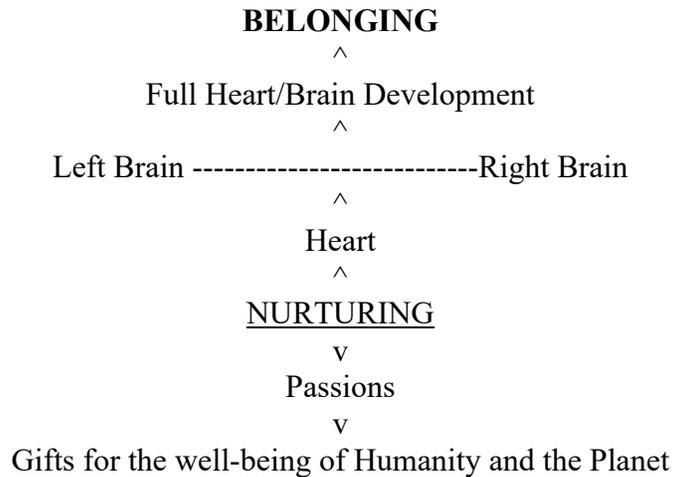
-One very important realm of immersion is **enjoying our senses** for grounding and well-being: touching paper and soil, etc.; smelling natural fragrances; reveling in the sounds of nature and music; seeing natural scenes, close-up and personal; using the body for pleasant experiences, alone or interactive,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

Think of our world, and how much of the time we are 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. This then harmonizes with the supported and encouraged open and connective nature of the interests and passions of these individuals. This connective combination gives them a solid, experiential internal, and interactive foundation of acceptance and confidence on which to grow further with their passions.**

Doing all this, for spectrum individuals and for us, creates a sense of Belonging, giving meaning to our lives, fulfilling us, and ending any inner emptiness, if ever created. ***Belonging, itself, then actually becomes an active life force for creative well-being.***



## SEEING THE WORLD IN A DIFFERENT WAY II

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 wired 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 separatist 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.**

**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 deep 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, for connected and honoring indigenous peoples lived in balanced connective perception with all things. However, this giving up of connection we have gone through over time has also been a long part of our growth as humanity.

Simply told and resonated with, you can see humanity’s story in the so-called children’s story, *The Giving Tree*, by Shel Silverstein (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. Returning anew to where we started, we will experience a deeper respect and conscious understanding of what that original place, and the belonging, 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>45</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.**

**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. However, they protested: "But he has already memorized the first eight volumes of the encyclopedias!"<sup>46</sup>

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

—THE END—

## NOTES

To begin with a disclaimer in this attempt to cite and update references in 2018, many original URL sites have changed the content from the time accessed, sometimes still related, simplified, changed, or gone altogether.

### **Section: *Seeing the World in a Different Way... I***

<sup>1</sup> Center for Disease Control, Search: How many with autism in 2018 at cdc.gov, “Autism Prevalence Slightly Higher in CDC’s ADDM Network,” 26 April 2018, accessed 4 May 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0426-autism-prevalence.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Zablotzky, Ph.D., Lindsey I. Black, M.P.H., and Stephen J. Blumberg, Ph.D.. “Estimated Prevalence of Children With Diagnosed Developmental Diseases in the United States, 2014-2016,” NCHS Data Brief, No. 291, November 2017, accessed 18 March 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db291.pdf>. Divide 1 by 36 and you get the same %.

### **Section: PART I WHAT I DISCOVERED**

<sup>3</sup> Marcela Gaviria, “The Medicated Child,” FRONTLINE, 8 January 2008, accessed 12 October \*\*2009, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/medicatedchild/>, 56:10.

### **Section: A RIGHT/HEART BRAIN ORIENTATION**

<sup>4</sup> As seen as an example in the amazing East Indian movie: *Like Stars on Earth*, Netflix, Aamir Khan, Producer, Director, 21 December 2007, Writers: Deepa Bhatia and Amole Gupte, he also the Creative Director.

### **Section: AGREEMENT FOUND IN THE RESEARCH**

<sup>5</sup> Janet Lerner “with” Frank Kline. *Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders: Characteristics and Teaching Strategies*, Tenth edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), xxi.

<sup>6</sup> Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., and John J. Ratey, M.D, *Driven to Distraction* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 36, 37, 43-44.

### **Section: THE HEART, BRAIN, AND TWO TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE**

<sup>7</sup> Older 2006 reference incorporated here: An Overview of Research Conducted by the HeartMath Institute, *Science of the Heart: Vol. 1 (1993-2001)*, “Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance,” accessed 18 November 2011, <https://www.heartmath.org/resources/downloads/science-of-the-heart/>.

### **Section: BASIC LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN FUNCTIONS**

<sup>8\*\*</sup><https://www.mindmotivations.com/resources/free/rightleft-brain-test>

## **Section: GREAT PEOPLE IN HISTORY**

<sup>9</sup> Hallowell, *Driven to Distraction*, 44.

<sup>10</sup> Lerner, *Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders*, 3 – 4.

## **Section: A BRIEF LOOK AT ADD, ADHD, DYSLEXIA, AND ASPERGER'S SYNDROME**

<sup>11</sup> Dyslexia E-Newsletter for Bright Solutions for Dyslexia, "Interview with Stephen J. Cannell." Fall 2007, accessed 5 November, 2009, <http://www.brightsolutions.us>.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Lewis, *Betting on the Blind Side*, excerpt, Vanity Fair, April 2010, accessed 24 January 2011, <http://www.vanityfair.com/business/features/2010/04/wall-street--excerpt-201004>.

## **Section: DEALING WITH HEIGHTENED AND GIFTED SENSITIVITIES**

<sup>13</sup> Temple Grandin, PhD, and Margaret M. Scariano, *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* (New York: Warner Books, 1986).

<sup>14</sup> Bill Drayton, Ashoka, 2011, accessed 4 April 2011, <http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/temple-grandin>.

<sup>15</sup> Jill Bolte Taylor, *My Stroke of Insight*, (US: Viking, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Jill Bolte Taylor, "My Stroke of Insight," filmed February 2008, TED video, posted on March

\*\* 13, 2008, accessed 28 March 2009, [https://www.ted.com/speakers/jill\\_bolte\\_taylor](https://www.ted.com/speakers/jill_bolte_taylor), 18:44.

## **Section: VACCINATIONS, REACTIONS TO CHEMICALS, AND FOOD ALLERGIES**

<sup>17</sup> Maria Rickert Hong, CHHC, AADP, *Almost Autism, Recovering Children from Sensory Processing Disorder*, (Westport, CN: Maria Rickert Hong, 2014), 5.

## **Section: THE UNUSUAL BEHAVIORS, INNER JOURNEY, AND GIFTS OF AUTISM**

<sup>18</sup> Jenny McCarthy, *Louder Than Words: A Mother's Journey in Healing Autism* (New York: Dutton, 2007), 121.

\*\* <sup>19</sup> Morley Safer, "60 Minutes," 'Jacob (Jake) Barnett Math and Science Prodigy,'

2011, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBPiY0bKoks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBPiY0bKoks), 18.16, accessed 7/2012, and

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<sup>20</sup> Kristine Barnett, *The Spark: A Mother's Story of Nurturing Genius* (New York: Random House, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

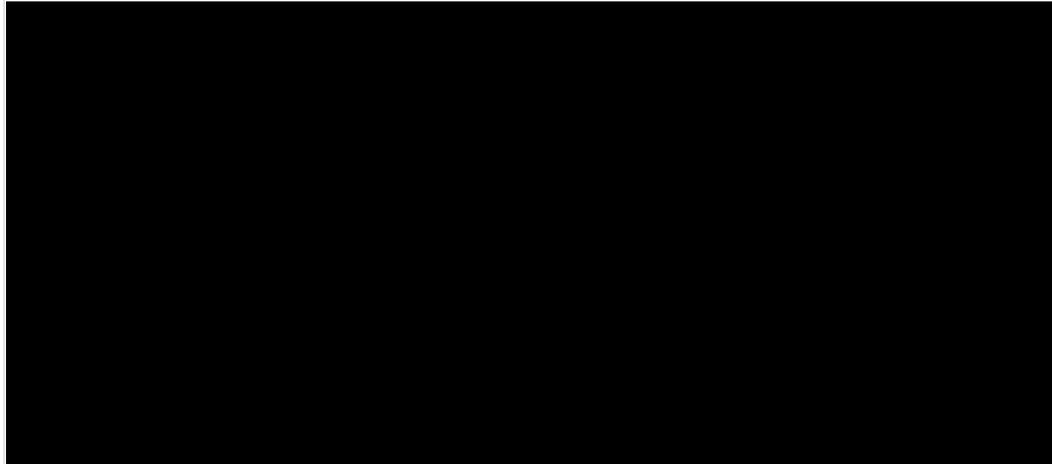
<sup>22</sup> Jacob Barnett, [www.jacobbarnett.com/](http://www.jacobbarnett.com/). n.p., n.d., Web. 10 June 2015, this site now gone, but of interest: <https://www.facebook.com/Jac0b.Barnett/>, accessed 12 June 2018.

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<sup>24</sup>Laurent Mottron, “The Power of Autism,” *Nature* 479, 3 November 2011, doi:10.1038/479033a, 33-34, accessed 20 September 2018.

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[The Israeli Army Unit That Recruits Teens With Autism](#)



### **The Israeli Army Unit That Recruits Teens With Autism**

Shira Rubin

Many autistic soldiers who would otherwise be exempt from military service have found a place in Unit 9900, a se...

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<sup>28</sup>“Autism, the Musical,” HBO Documentary Films, 21 March 2008, accessed 19 October 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U35Uc8eg7fo>.

<sup>29</sup>Camphill Communities, [www.camphill.org](http://www.camphill.org)

<sup>30</sup>Fields, <https://aspennetwork.net>, accessed 25 September 2018.

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<sup>31</sup> Sugata Mitra, “Hole-in the-Wall,” January 1999, NIIT Limited, accessed 21 April 2016, <http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/Beginnings.html>.

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<sup>33</sup> Kelly Day, “11 Ways Finland’s Education System Shows Us ‘Less is More,’ ” 15 April 2015, from blog: “Filling My Map,” accessed 3 June 2018, <https://fillingmymap.com/2015/04/15/>, 11-ways-finlands-education-system-shows-us-that-less-is-more/.

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<sup>35</sup> Ken Robinson, “Do Schools Kill Creativity?” February 2006, TED2006, accessed 8 January \*\* 2009, [https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity), 19:24.

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<sup>36</sup> Temple Grandin, PhD, *The Way I See It*, (Texas: Future Horizons, 2008), “The Importance of Developing Talent,” 35.

<sup>37</sup> K. Barnett, *The Spark*, 74.

<sup>38</sup> Kristine Barnett, “Kristine Barnett Discusses Her Memoir, *The Spark*,” 28 April 2013, Indigo \*\* Chapter, accessed 12 June 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgMcBV4AMKw>, 1:36.

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<sup>44</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.

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<sup>45</sup> "T. S. Eliot Quotes," BrainyQuote.com. Xplore Inc, 2018, accessed 18 June 2016, [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/t\\_s\\_eliot\\_109032](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/t_s_eliot_109032).

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