



The  
Other Side of Me



The side you rarely see



**This side you will like of  
me**



The side people do not wish to see...





Caught in the act of being me

So  
Follow me



Follow me and take my lead.  
Don't you notice I take no Heed?



How would you feel  
If you were 4

And never saw

**That car coming towards?**



Their tracks in snow,  
I follow with my little feet  
I may never know the  
danger they will lead



The cars go by,  
they go so fast  
Those tracks I follow that  
I find so neat, they can  
take me in the street

They take my hands,  
they hold me back,  
they grab my coat,  
won't they just  
**LEAVE ME ALONE?**

I don't know, I don't understand





Those tracks I follow with my little feet  
the patterns the shapes-where do they lead?

My mom and sister-they hold me  
back

the danger I don't know



I just follow  
Follow me, see what I SEE

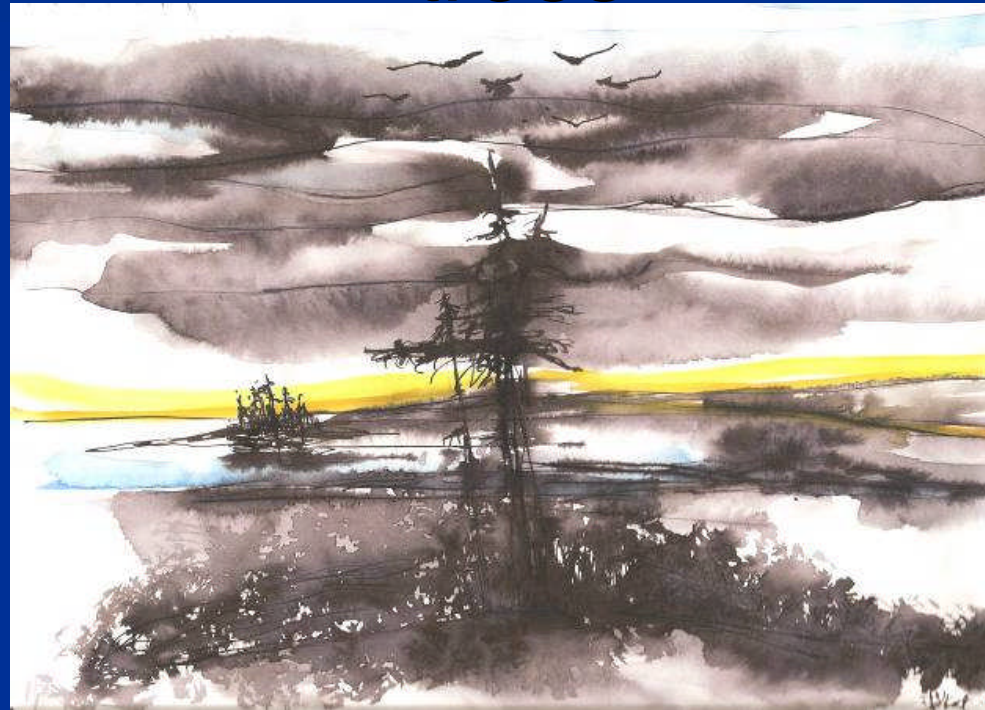


help me show you a part of me

Watch the snowflakes,  
watch them fall  
Stop and listen, one and all  
I like it here.



Follow me,  
the quiet place, among the  
trees







I cry at the thought of growing old... I am very frightened..I do **NOT WANT** to grow old- and so I won't - I will be a kid forever, you'll see!!!!

Your eyes scare me but they help me to focus on your words in your world  
so look at ME!



Lead me and I will lead you.  
It's a dangerous world out there, it 's lonely in here..  
Come inside my world and understand me.



# Welcome to Northern Ontario



What drives you?

When a developmental delay is found in the file a speech pathologist is not usually provided.



**We are not your saviour**

When I see a truly autistic child, I tell the parents to go home and handle it.



*We don't service autistic children*

Your daughter didn't HAVE to go to school until she was six



Help me and I will be alright  
Talk gently to me and I can listen  
Touch me to get my attention  
Let me sit at the front of the bus  
and please don't yell at me I am your precious cargo  
You need to hold my hand because I run in the street,  
take care of me.



I was laughed at  
I was humiliated by a store owner and told to  
take my Autism elsewhere  
My mom was told to “control me” when I had a meltdown  
I was told that I may never learn anything  
My parents almost institutionalized me  
My friends tied me to a tree at school  
I was left in a broom closet at school  
My teacher sat on my chest to control me  
I can't handle all the noise





I raised my own children

I received a volunteer of the year award at the YMCA

I can ride a bike all by myself down the street

I can hear the flutter of a butterfly's wings- can you?

I can hear the lights buzzing in Walmart and it upsets me, so I scream

You smell salad. I smell lettuce, water, carrots, tomatoes, cheese,  
peppers, celery, garlic, pepper, vinegar.

You hear music, I hear the instruments one by one.

# Fact

## Autism is now a National Epidemic

Less than 20 years ago the prevalence of autism was 2 to 5 in 10,000 births.

1 out of 165 babies born today will receive the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

We are one of you, come share our world

(F.O.C.A.)

[http://www.talksudbury.com/media/userdocs/FOCA\\_FACTS\\_SHEET\\_Aug2006.pdf](http://www.talksudbury.com/media/userdocs/FOCA_FACTS_SHEET_Aug2006.pdf)





## What Does Autism Mean?

**Autism** (say: **aw**-tih-zum) causes kids\* to experience the world differently from the way most other kids do. It's hard for kids with autism to talk with other people and express themselves using words. Kids who have autism usually keep to themselves and many can't communicate without special help.

They also may react to what's going on around them in unusual ways. Normal sounds may really bother someone with autism - so much so that the person covers his or her ears. Being touched, even in a gentle way, may feel uncomfortable.

Kids with autism often can't make connections that other kids make easily. For example, when someone smiles, you know the smiling person is happy or being friendly. But a kid with autism may have trouble connecting that smile with the person's happy feelings.

This is an excerpt from

[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/autism.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html)

\* (Reference to "Kids" also relates to anyone on the Autism Spectrum)

A kid who has autism also has trouble linking words with their meanings. Imagine trying to understand what your mom was saying if you didn't know what her words really meant. It is doubly frustrating then if a kid can't come up with the right words to express his or her own thoughts.

Autism causes kids to act in unusual ways. They might flap their hands, say certain words over and over, have temper tantrums, or play only with one particular toy. Most kids with autism don't like changes in routines. They like to stay on a schedule that is always the same. They also may insist that their toys, or other objects, are arranged a certain way and get upset if these items are moved or disturbed.

If someone has autism, his or her brain has trouble with an important job: making sense of the world. Every day, your brain interprets the sights, sounds, smells, and other sensations that you experience. If your brain couldn't help you understand these things, you would have trouble functioning, talking, going to school, and doing other everyday stuff. Kids can be mildly affected by autism, so that they only have a little trouble in life, or they can be very affected, so that they need a lot of help.

[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/autism.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html)

# What Causes Autism?

...no one knows what causes it. Some scientists think that some kids might be more likely to get autism because it or similar disorders run in their families. Knowing the exact cause of autism is hard because the human brain is very complicated.

- The brain contains over 100 billion nerve cells called **neurons** (say: **nur-ahns**). Each neuron may have hundreds or thousands of connections to other nerve cells in the brain and body. The connections (which are made by releasing neurotransmitters) let different neurons in different areas of the brain - areas that help you see, feel, move, remember, and much more - work together.
- For some reason, some of the cells and connections in the brain of a kid with autism - especially those that affect communication, emotions, and senses - don't develop properly or get damaged. Scientists are still trying to understand how and why this happens.

[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/autism.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html)

# Social Characteristics

- Difficulty in accepting criticism or correction
- Difficulty in perceiving and applying unwritten social rules
- "Immature" manners - Naïve trust in others
- Shyness
- Low or no conversational speech and participation in groups
- Constant anxiety and stress over acceptance, despite recognition and commendation
- Scrupulous honesty
- Bluntness in emotional expression
- "Flat affect"
- Discomfort manipulating or "playing games" with others
- Low to medium level of paranoia
- Low to no apparent sense of humor; bizarre sense of humor
- Difficulty with reciprocal displays of pleasantries and greetings



# Social Characteristics

- Problems expressing empathy or comfort to/with others
- Pouting, ruminating, fixating on bad experiences with people or events for an inordinate length of time
- Shows true emotions irregardless of consequences especially in public.
- Abrupt and strong expression of likes and dislikes
- Rigid adherence to rules
- Flash temper
- Serious all the time
- Excessive talk
- Difficulty in forming friendships
- Social isolation and intense concern for privacy
- Limited clothing preference; discomfort with formal attire or uniforms
- Difficulty judging others' personal space
- Often perceived as "being in their own world" or weird, different, loner or "badly behaved" ie. The parent/caregiver is judged

# Physical Manifestations

- Strong sensory sensitivities: touch and tactile sensations, sounds, lighting and colors, odors, taste
- Clumsiness, gross or fine motor coordination problems
- Balance difficulties, unusual gait, stance, posture
- Difficulty in recognizing others' faces
- Stims - self-stimulatory behavior serving to reduce anxiety, stress, or to express pleasure
- Self-injurious or disfiguring behaviors, head banging, nail-biting, face slapping
- Depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties
- Difficulty expressing anger or excessive anger
- Flat or monotone vocal expression; limited range of inflection
- Difficulty with initiating or maintaining eye contact
- Elevated voice volume during periods of stress and frustration
- Unusual and rigidly adhered to eating behaviors, strong food preferences and aversions



# Cognitive Characteristics

- Highly distractible
- Resistance to or failure to respond to talk therapy (typical counselling approaches)
- Mental shutdown response to conflicting demands and multi-tasking
- Generalized confusion during periods of stress
- Low understanding of the reciprocal rules of conversation: interrupting, dominating, difficult in shifting topics, problem with initiating or terminating conversation, subject perseveration (repetitive)
- Insensitivity to the non-verbal cues of others (*stance, posture, facial expressions*)
- Literal interpretation of instructions
- Interpreting words and phrases literally
- Visual learners, ie. Use of picture cards to explain routine/transitions
- Dependence on step-by-step learning procedures
- Difficulty in generalizing ie. Carrying over learned skills to other environments/people/place/time.

# Cognitive Characteristics

- Difficulty in understanding rules for games of social entertainment
- Impulsiveness
- Compelling need to finish one task completely before starting another
- Difficulty in interpreting meaning; difficulty in drawing relationships between an activity or event and ideas
- Attention to visual detail, thinks in pictures
- High or low focus on external or internal sensations, thoughts, and/or sensory input
- Poor judgment of when a task is finished ( often attributable to perfectionism or an apparent unwillingness to follow differential standards for quality)
- Difficulty in imagining others' thoughts (mind reading) ie. "Theory of Mind"
- Difficulty with organizing and sequencing (planning and execution; successful performance of tasks in a logical, functional order)
- Difficulty in assessing cause and effect relationships (behaviors and consequences)
- An apparent lack of "common sense"
- Difficulty in learning self-monitoring techniques
- Extreme reaction to changes in routine, surroundings, people .





I am able



Love needs no words





I WON!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I W O N D E R.....



If they see, what I see.....

I W O N D E R.....





**Handle with care**



**TADA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**



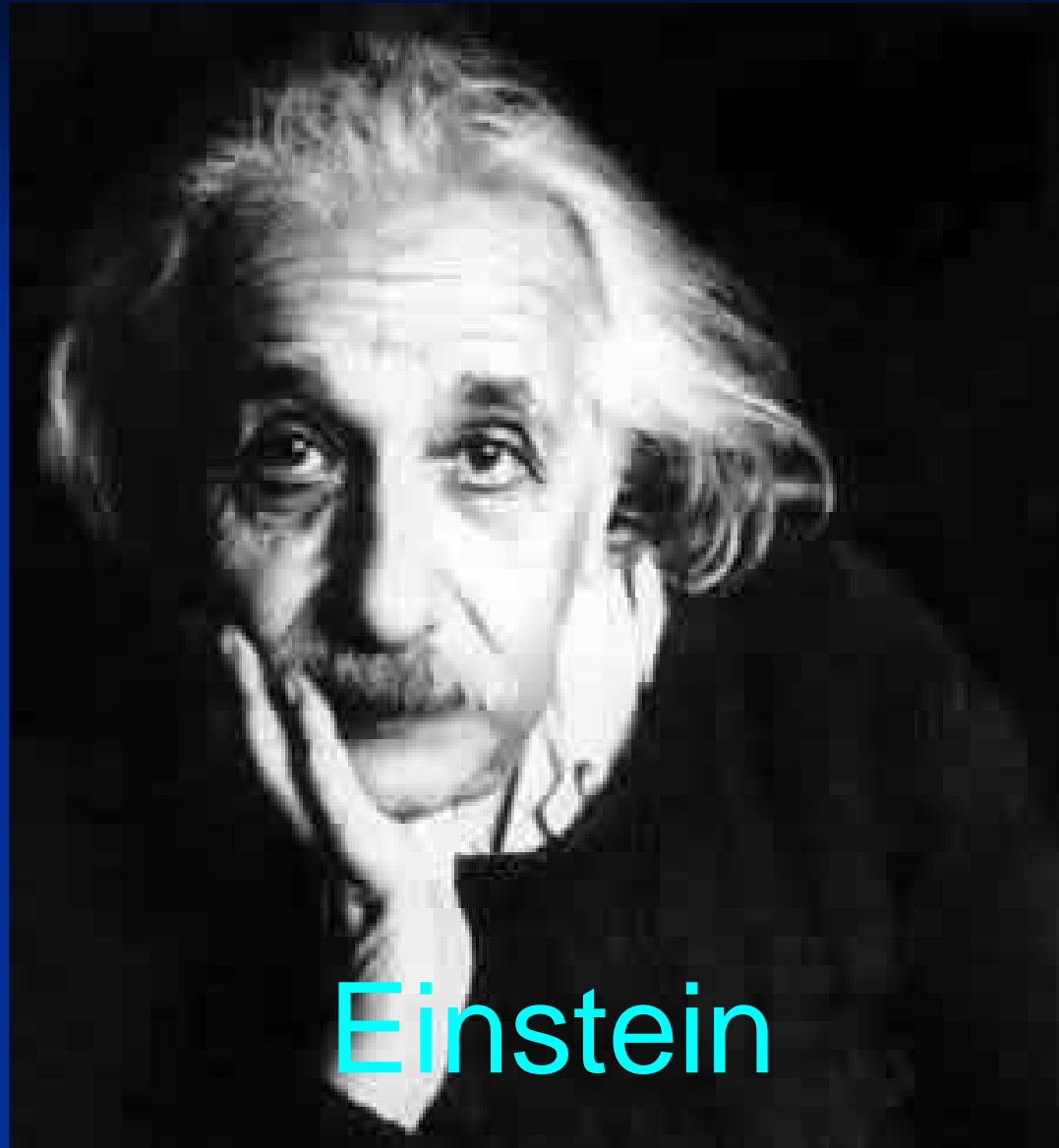
I love you





I can't see you so you  
cannot see me..





Einstein

# References and thank you

Thank you

To the parents of children with autism and to people with autism who have shared their stories and photographs.

To the community and others requesting Autism Awareness training

To my cousin Singer/Songwriter in the UK- Lisa Redford for her song “Be Around”

<http://www.myspace.com/lisaredford>

## References

F.O.C.A (facts sheet excerpt)

[http://www.talksudbury.com/media/userdocs/FOCA\\_FACTS\\_SHEET\\_Aug2006.pdf](http://www.talksudbury.com/media/userdocs/FOCA_FACTS_SHEET_Aug2006.pdf)

Slide 24-26 [http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/autism.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html)

Slides 28-34, Courtesy of Minna Mettinen

Israel Kamakawiwo'ole 's “Some Where Over the Rainbow” Mp3

Ian Tamblyn's song-Knock on Wood-winter piece

**Put together with the support of Sudbury Based Parent-driven support group**

**Autism Coffee Chat**

**Trish Kitching**