



Some Thoughts on Aspergers

Author: Richard Howlin

Added: 07/12/2003

Type: Observations

Thoughts and Observations on Asperger Syndrome

Varied and Complex Journeys

What I have come to discover over the years as a psychologist brought me a long way from my original training in Munich and the scores of textbooks and techniques of academic psychology. Through countless clinical interactions I have come to appreciate the astounding variations in human behavior. Many of the children I see are diagnosed with Asperger syndrome because they see the world in an intense and ingenious ways that refuse the existing paradigms of their school and peer culture. Others, while also unique, are more vulnerable. Their struggle is more complex and often intensified by anxiety and mood regulatory challenges. Learning disabilities can also create significant obstacles to the path of selfhood for these more complex journeys.

A Common Thread

One could argue that perhaps the one common thread unifying all children diagnosed with Asperger syndrome is a fundamental inability to relate and profit from human relationships in a consistent and age appropriate fashion. I have come to view my role, in part, as diplomat for idiosyncrasies, helping the child “fit in” (with or without diagnosis), expanding the frames of tolerance, but also earnestly attempting to comprehend and honor this unique expression of life and God’s work in the world.

The Basis of Selfhood

Human discourse forms the ground on which our individual existence stands as a unique figure. As such humankind and relationships form an absolutely essential component of development and personal meaning. Finding our own individual and creative expression through the human drama is fundamental. Psychological reflection and growth is inconceivable in total isolation, the imagined “other” is always there.

Expanding Paradigms of Social

Thus, human relations are a vital and fundamental part of what it means to be a human

being. However human interaction is a multifaceted process involving far more than simply “being social”. Societies have long valued the societal (thus social) contributions of those who otherwise were not especially gifted in the area of social discourse. Similarly, in childhood, the development of self is not merely limited to “success” within peer interactions or the cult of popularity. Self development requires also solitude and the countless other forms of relationships that we partake in (animal, material). Thus, tolerating individuality and authentic diversity of thinking is a barometer of health for every civilized society.



CONNECTING LIVES
ASPERGER
SOCIETY of MICHIGAN

This article brought to you by the Aspergers Society of Michigan.

For more information, please write to:

Asperger Society of Michigan

5047 West Main Street #358

Kalamazoo, MI 49009-1001

Or Email to:

info@aspergersmichigan.com