

The Difference Inside Me

by an Aspie who is in high school

Throughout my life it has been a struggle everyday to find that one point, where I could feel comfortable and pleased with myself. Where I would know the functions of the world and who I truly am as person, and be “normal.” Though I have never reached that point yet, I have a lot to show you about the life of someone who has Asperger’s, so one can see the world in the eyes from a different perspective.

Ever since I was little, I did inappropriate things without realizing what their effect was on other people. I couldn’t think intuitively, but I did what I felt on the tight string of an impulse. I used to hate getting help from therapists. I always thought that I had to be the best at everything. If I didn’t get what I wanted, I would break down. I felt I had nothing wrong with me, except that I wasn’t the best, or couldn’t be. It was frustrating trying to compete with everyone to have the best grades, be the tallest, and most popular. Generally, I would not escape that competitive edge and I was described as thinking that a game wasn’t a game, but my life revolved around it. I hated when teachers corrected what I did. I thought that the assistant teachers were spies, who watched every move I made and wrote notes on even the twitch of my thumb. To avoid them, I used to hide.

In the beginning of middle school, I was told that I had Asperger’s Syndrome. I thought that was a burger with your butt in the middle and it was very ugly. I hated being referred to by that term. Also around then, I first heard about team meetings. That got me really upset, that I didn’t know everything that went on about me, but my parents did. I also started my grade obsession, competing to have the best grades in the whole class. To this day, I continue to be obsessed with grades, but less severely. In middle school, I got angry if I got anything lower than an A, since I usually got A’s. I would throw temper tantrums if I got a B+, and sometimes an A-.

People in school ignored me. I felt lonely. I thought everything was fine with me, and I cried that I should have an aide another year. When I got older, I would realize all this fighting with others would be a disadvantage for my future. I avoided saying hi to the guidance counselor, afraid that I was be the only one who had to sees her. She mortified me, especially in front of my friends and people I had crushes on.

In 7th grade, I finally realized that I needed to work with my SPED liaison to improve my social skills. I wanted to be accepted by my peers. Every week I would go to her and it would give me great success. . This year, not only did I accomplish great things socially, but I became very mature and I was able to make new friends and finally observe the world and what was going on with my social problems.

That year, however, I had the stress of my upcoming Bat Mitzvah. I also had to take allergy medications, which made me drowsy. And I started becoming obsessively interested in members of the opposite sex. I became infatuated with this trumpet player and I found valve grease or “trumpet oil” near my seat. I fooled around with it at a concert, and it got me in serious trouble. Not only did my friends not want to talk to me, but I had no one who I could rely on really.

In 8th grade, I took the “boy craziness” to a new level. I began to write poetry about these guys that I would like and think about them every day. I had barely any friends and it was probably one of the hardest years for me. Many kids started dating and I felt left out. I would obsess why I didn’t have a boyfriend and become very depressed. Even though I did manage to flirt with a couple of guys, my female peers rejected me. I began to realize that some boys I liked were put off by how I pursued them. I got jealous over a girl who had a crush on my long term crush and best guy friend. She flirted with him and dropped me as a friend. In addition, my parents got divorced, which left a hole inside my happiness.

My first year of high school wasn’t much better. I did make a lot of friends, who had special needs, and other people older than me, but I still was obsessed with guys. I would dress, try to impress, and dream about them TOO MUCH. Unfortunately, I told two people, who were family members of my crushes that year; the guys were very rude to me and scoffed at my existence. Upset by the way peers rejected and bullied me at school, I became abusive to my family. Then I had to go to a social skills groups to stop my social regression. Before going to these groups, I thought that the kids in them were social retards; today I laugh at the prejudice I used to have. The group greatly helped me. I developed new friends and new skills.

The thing that helps me the most is that one summer, I worked with a social skills counselor, who has helped prepare me for real life situations. Currently, I am working avidly to improve my social skills. I am trying to listen to my parent’s cues and make contact with my friends. I am learning how to be less self-centered and be part of a family. In addition, I plan to help and advise others with my disability. I am proud that I was able to survive all of this and grow.

I advise that people who have Asperger’s should work hard with their disability. Never give up. Don’t complain about being different: someday you will be a very successful person. It takes a while to develop your social skills, but have patience and then you can succeed. Practice social skills by going to pragmatic groups, therapists, psychologists, or psychiatrists. Try to think positively and find ways to stop anxiety by doing things that work for you, such as listening to music, or doing something else you enjoy. Try to filter what you are saying and see how things affect others; be observant of your world. Listen to other’s suggestions. Help the less fortunate. Advocate for yourself. I hope that all the time and effort you put into working with Asperger’s will pay off and you can become successful later in life.