



Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew

Ellen Notbohm

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Winner of an iParenting Media Award and Honorable Mention in the 2005 ForeWord Book of the Year Awards! Every parent, teacher, social worker, therapist, and physician should have this succinct and informative book in their back pocket. Framed with both humor and compassion, the book defines the top ten characteristics that illuminate the minds and hearts of children with autism. Ellen's personal experiences as a parent, an autism columnist, and a contributor to numerous parenting magazines coalesce to create a guide for all who come in contact with a child on the autism spectrum. Don't buy just one of this book- buy one for everyone who interacts with your child! Give the gift of understanding. Helpful chapters include: My sensory perceptions are disordered Distinguish between won't and can't I am a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally Be patient with my limited vocabulary Because language is so difficult for me, I am very visually oriented Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do Help me with social interactions Identify what triggers my meltdowns

Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew Details

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From Reader Review Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew for online ebook

Gavin Bollard says

This is quite an unusual book. It's not a practical guide to handling day to day issues with Autism, nor is it a dry clinical description of Autism. It's essentially a book promoting a new paradigm, (a whole new outlook) on Autism. It provides you with an understanding of some key positive concepts and then goes on to show how they can be put into practical use on a daily basis.

I feel that this book could be better described with the considerably less catchy title of; Ten concepts which your future happy and successful grown up child with autism needs you to know, understand, believe and "live" now - in order to ensure that the time line works out for the best.

Make no mistake, these aren't ten baby concepts which will only hold true for a small part of your child's life. They're adult ones, mantras for living - and they apply forever.

The book starts with a list of the 10 things which I'll list below because there are no surprises here.

1. I am a whole child.
2. My senses are out of sync
3. Distinguish between won't and can't
4. I am a concrete thinker, I interpret language literally
5. Listen to all the ways I'm trying to communicate
6. Picture this! I am visually orientated
7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do
8. Help me with social interactions
9. Identify what triggers my meltdowns
10. Love me unconditionally.

You'll notice that every one of these ten things is open-ended. Each topic contains a lot of important discussion material. I won't say that I agreed 100% with everything but the later chapters put all of my minor niggles to rest. Ellen makes it clear at the beginning of the book that all children are different and that not everything here will apply to every child.

This book spends quite a bit of time discussing the "language of autism" as it used by parents, media and support personnel. It makes it very clear that the way in which we express, embrace and encourage our children has monumental impact both on their self esteem and their future success. Often we use negative language without realising it and the book provides some handy hints on how to detect and remove these negative words from our daily interactions.

If you've ever used a phrase like "my child suffers from autism", then you really need to read this book. Similarly, if you've said; "my child will never do that".

The subject of the book is Ellen's son Bryce and by reading between the lines, you can follow his journey from a child seen as a PIA (Potentially Independent Adult) to a fully functional, self-supporting adult.

There are some wonderful "bonus chapters" in the book including; "Ten things I want my high school senior

with Autism to know" and a great chapter called Evolution which really presses home the problems of limiting language. Finally, the book ends with some discussion questions which are really worth thinking about.

If it all sounds really technical, don't worry, it's not. In fact, it's quite an easy read at just under 200 pages and a really easy-going font but it's a book that will get you thinking and it's a book that could change your life. It probably should be required reading for all parents of children on the spectrum.

Jamie says

Sorry library copy: I dogeared a lot of pages! This was very easy to read and so practical. Notbohm's early essay is in the 100 Day Handbook from Autism Speaks and she wrote an entire book.

My favorite takeaway is how important it is--for our own mindsets, for how we speak to our children, for how we portray them to the wider world--to start with their strengths and to find the positives in their child's challenges. For example, tonight: my son with autism was passionately researching Gordon Ramsay's recipes online and was totally absorbed compiling these transcribed recipes into his own recipe binder. Even though prior to this book and my general shift in mindset lately I would have loved how into research and recipes he was, I would have seen his single-mindedness, inflexibility, and rigid thinking as the dominant players in our evening. My son lives with autism. He does not "suffer" from it.

I will come back to these 10 things again and again. This is a book I'd recommend to anyone who loves a child with autism, grandparents included.

Carrie Mallon says

'The greatest tragedy that can befall a child with autism is to be surrounded by adults who think it's a tragedy.'

<3

Jillinda says

Wow there were so many things that I learned from this book, and quite a few that pertain to all children and parents when it comes to living a good life and helping our kids be all they can be. I did have a hard time not feeling guilty at how positive the author says she was from the start of her son's diagnosis. I am trying, and hopefully I will get to where she is at some point. I think one of the things I liked the most is when she talks about not dwelling on what you don't have.

She states "how much time and energy do you expend dwelling on what you don't have and can't have? That's called brooding. How much could you accomplish if you redirected that energy into doing, trying and reaching forward? That's called progress."

This is so true with everything in life.

I would recommend this book to anyone that wants to know more about what goes on with children with any type of spectrum disorder.

Kristen says

One of the best books for parents with an autistic child. This book not only helped me understand my son better but left me feeling hopeful for the future.

Michele Lee says

This book reads easy and fast and it should be handed out to every parent whose child is diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum. It can change the perceptions of anyone--family, friend, educator or counselor--who is face with the baffling behavior of an autistic child. I cannot impress just how much this slim volume can help.

The core beliefs in 10 Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew are:

-All behaviors happen for a reason.

And

-All behavior is communication.

The focus is on presenting (not really exploring or solving problems) the possible causes of "bad" behavior and realigning the thought patterns neurotypical people have when dealing with those on the spectrum. It can also help parents get behind the possible causes of misbehavior on the part of "normal" children.

Some principals in this book are--or should be--universal. Don't let one term (Autism, ADHD, or even "trouble child") define all your child is. Focus on what your child can do instead of getting lost in what he or she can't do. All behavior has a cause, ferreting out the cause can go very far in helping to resolve negative behavior. And most importantly of all, love should not be dependent on good grades, good behavior or "being normal". Love should be unconditional.

If there was ever an Idiot's Guide to Raising a Child this might be it. An essential book for understanding the social, language and sensory challenges experienced by many types of special needs children. This book should be mandatory reading for anyone whose life is touched by Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Ari Reavis says

A great source of knowledge and understanding. It was mostly about acceptance, unconditional love, and instilling a can-do attitude in both yourself and your child with autism. Definitely made me more aware of certain aspects of autism and ways I can help my child reach their potential.

Stacy says

I think the most important thing I learned from this book was to stop telling my child what he was and was not capable of doing. Let him try. Let him discover for himself what he can and can not do.

This is a borrowed book and I want to remind myself of the 10 things to refresh my memory as needed, so here they are . . .

- 1) Do not let Autism limit what I can try.
 - 2) Remember my sensory issues. My bad behavior might be because I am feeling sensitive to something.
 - 3) Distinguish between won't and can't. I will not respond to commands issued from the other room because I can't.
 - 4) I am very literal and will not understand idioms, puns, inferences, etc.
 - 5) Be patient with my limited vocabulary and echolalia.
 - 6) I am very visually oriented. Pictures help me understand a LOT!
 - 7) Focus on what I can do, rather than what I can not do.
 - 8) Teach me how to respond in social situations.
 - 9) Try to identify what triggers my melt downs.
 - 10) and finally patience, patience, patience
-

Dennis Wood says

My sister-in-law recommends some good reading and I have to say, THIS book provides terrific insights as to how we all can communicate better with the children in our lives. While the book is primarily intended to help families and teachers better understand how children somewhere on the Autism Spectrum or Aspergers need us to communicate, I find myself rethinking my approach on communication with everyone. A simple phrase like: "It's raining cats and dogs" can leave a LOT to the imagination. While many of us figured out that it meant there is a lot of rain coming down, those in our circles who take things more literally, like those mentioned above or those for whom English is a second language, can just be flummoxed. This is only one example. As I read through this book, I find myself wanting to be more clear when giving instruction, and more patient with those trying to untangle our strange language. I find it refreshing that this book is not written by therapists or researchers, but a mom who learned the hard way, and followed her heart and gut to resist the "norm" when dealing with the "system". This is time well spent, and I am better for having read it. It can be purchased in hard copy or for Kindle.

Alfred Haplo says

To a special, spunky kid - Z (you too, I and C). A letter to you.

Thank you for letting me into your world. At first, I wasn't quite sure if you were so deep into your thoughts, that I did not exist. Or that you knew I was around but preferred silence. Since your mum or dad needs to run errands sometimes, so it's me you have to play with. Or, rather, I have to figure out how to play with you.

Forgive me for being such a klutz when we play. Often, I feel like a bull in the china shop when I am around you. No, no, I am not really an animal going berserk in a store in China! Sorry for being confusing. I know now that words are often taken literally. It is very hard for me to know when you were having fun or just wanted to be left alone. Once I had you on the swing but your feet refused to leave the ground. You screamed in anger when I tried to take you off but seemed happy perched on the seat swaying gently. I got it. You were having fun, but on your own terms.

Hugs. Let's talk about those! Hugs are like the gum in my pocket. I have many. You like them sometimes

but other times not so much. Your mum said that you may not like the detergent scent in my clothes or the feel of the cloth. That's why I always wear your favorite Elmo T-shirt when I see you even though it is a very, very, very old shirt. Anything to bring a smile and the color red, apparently, calms you. By the way, great birthday party. But no whistling. Or clapping. I will remember that. It hurts your ears.

So I needed a lot of clues trying to understand what you want. When a dear friend shared "*Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wish You Knew*", the light bulb went off in my head. Ideas that popped out like Jack-in-the-Box! To see the world through your eyes. Not mine. The author, Ellen, has a child, Bryce, with autism who had difficulty communicating. So, she learnt how to communicate using his language by understanding his challenges and his needs, and worked around those issues to bring out the best in her son.

Is this what you think also?

1. I am a child.
2. My senses are out of sync.
3. Distinguish between won't and can't.
4. I'm a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally.
5. Listen to all the ways I'm trying to communicate.
6. Picture this! I'm visually oriented.
7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.
8. Help me with social interactions.
9. Identify what triggers my meltdowns.
10. Love me unconditionally.

Ellen first wrote these ten very practical guidelines in an article, which became so popular she expanded that into a book. With each guideline, she provided many examples of how a child with autism might perceive the surroundings through unique sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. Ellen's book was easy to read with a writing style that was straightforward and engaging. As if she and I were having a chat over coffee and cake. As I was reading Ellen's book, I became curious about the medical and therapeutic aspects of autism. That information is not found in this book. Through friends and family, I found some recreational resources - music, exercise, cultural, literature - for special needs children. If your parents want to some additional thoughts outside of this letter, please see here.

Before I finish off my letter, here's a high five for all the things you do wonderfully! Ellen is right. We need to focus on what you do well and build on that. Your dad said you taught yourself to read phonetically at 18 months old (you read "Sega All Stars Racing" off the screen) and can read virtually any words. He said work is needed on comprehension but I know you can do it. Also, your mum said you express yourself beautifully through a digital camera lens. I've seen the gorgeous and artistic photos you have taken from unexpected but very creative views. Remember the time we played on the piano? I fell off the chair hearing you sing pitch perfect and transpose keys effortlessly. And you memorized the entire "Everything is Awesome" song after a few listens! Your mum also said you were precise with numbers. Alright, I concede - we counted 54 *and one-third* earthworms not just 54 during our walk after the rain. You sure are good with mechanical structures. Building bell towers, clock towers and mega skyscrapers with Legos and Magformers. Constructing snap circuits and assembling 3-D printers with your dad.

Wow. My buddy. Wow.

You taught me so much. To deconstruct the world as I know it, and to reconstruct it so everyone has a place in it. Children with autism have a hard time fitting into a society built for people without autism. It's like trying to fit the square peg into the round hole. Instead of chiseling away the corners of the square, or

creating corners in the hole just to fit one peg... How about you help me make the hole bigger so it fits all shapes and sizes?

Sincerely,
A

Heather says

This is the best book on autism I have read, and I have read a lot. It helped me to understand more of what my own child was thinking, his limitations and his abilities. I would recommend this book to anyone who is curious, knows someone with autism or has a child with autism or just cares. It changed my life and I have given it to so many other people. It isn't full of theories and conspiracies and technical terms, it is full of understanding and compassion.

Kristina says

This book really is amazingly good. It is easy to read and also informative. If you are not familiar with autism, you will learn about a lot of the basic information and if you know someone with autism it may truly help you to understand them just a little bit better. I took a number of notes as I was reading and as soon as I finished the book I thought to myself how it would be a good book to re-read again in the future.

I enjoyed the perspective this book was written from. The author is the parent of a child with autism and she wrote the ten things from the perspective of a child with autism just as the title suggests.

Of course, you can read and certainly learn from all kinds of clinical books and studies about autism, but I felt this book was different in that it looked at autism from a realistic and hands-on point of view. The ten things she describes could be applicable to any number of children and not just those necessarily on the autism spectrum.

Heather says

This book is written by a mom who has a child with ADHD and a child with autism. She was determined to figure out how to help her son achieve his full potential and become successful. She talks about the ups and downs, but they have already had many triumphal moments. She figured out what things her son could not cope with and attempted to eliminate prolonged exposure to these things. She talked about his need for a schedule and his need to know what was going to happen next. Structure seemed to be a big key to his success. It was a very informative book and was written with great every day examples that people could relate to. I would recommend it to anybody interacting with a child who has autism.

Melissa Wilson says

1) Do not let Autism limit what I can try.

- 2) Remember my sensory issues. My bad behavior might be because I am feeling sensitive to something.
 - 3) Distinguish between won't and can't. I will not respond to commands issued from the other room because I can't.
 - 4) I am very literal and will not understand idioms, puns, inferences, etc.
 - 5) Be patient with my limited vocabulary and echolalia.
 - 6) I am very visually oriented. Pictures help me understand a LOT!
 - 7) Focus on what I can do, rather than what I can not do.
 - 8) Teach me how to respond in social situations.
 - 9) Try to identify what triggers my melt downs.
 - 10) and finally patience, patience, patience
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Letha says

I am a grandma and my grandson was just diagnosed. What an eye opener this book was. Well written and easy to understand and from the perspective of those living with ASD.
