

What Happens When They Grow Up?

I often get asked “what happens to children on the spectrum when they grow up?” Temple Grandin, herself diagnosed with autism has put together 14 people’s inspiring stories of achievement in a book called *Different... Not Less*. (If you have seen the movie you will recall this is what her Mother said about Temple “Different Not Less”). Temple’s forward to the book is a wonderful summation of her own life and aspirations. Her primary mission is to inspire and help people (with ASD and ADHD) reach their full potential in careers in any field of interest.

The book *Different... Not Less: Inspiring Stories of Achievement and Successful Employment from Adults with Autism, Asperger’s, and ADHD* will be of enormous interest to teachers, teacher assistants and parents who are encountering the various aspects of ASD. It includes all the issues confronted by the contributors while growing up, especially during the school years. The stories provide great insight for educators into the areas of learning styles, bullying, social isolation, sensory overload and fears in the school setting for children under their care. *Different... Not Less* is very readable – each story is stand-alone making it an easy book to just pick up and browse.

Key Points for Parents and Schools to Consider in Encouraging Life Long Success

1. Use special interests for future jobs. Their parents encouraged and joined their children in their special interests. “At age 4, I started dismantling watches with a sharp knife. When my mother saw me demonstrating this skill, she began to provide me with additional watches, radios, and other things to take apart.” *Stephen Shore pg 49*
2. Keep an open-mind about what an individual autistic child might do with their lives (not letting the stereotypes – or even intense interest in autism itself – hold back or definitively define a child’s future).
3. The importance of mentors (all writers in this book, without exception, recall and praise a specific teacher, parent or mentor.)
4. Encourage skills necessary for employment when young. Most had jobs as teenagers from paper rounds to mucking out horse stalls.
5. Be aware of the challenges of forming and maintaining relationships, and sometimes raising families.

6. Manners and behaviour need to be taught and expected. “I was taught manners and punctuality.” *Anna Magdalena Christianson pg 78*
7. Pursue a diagnosis. Diagnosis is a relief and helps. “Desperate for an answer as to why I felt so different and why I thought so differently from other people.” *Stewart Forge pg 375*
“I felt I had finally found my tribe.” *Sean Jackson pg 349*
“Diagnosis gave me a new perspective. Once I began to understand myself, I looked at the pattern of my past through a new perspective and began to forgive myself for all the repeated mess-ups in my life. I felt like I was finally able to move on.” *Stephen Shore pg 41*

Challenges faced included:

- Were often mislabelled as children.
- Experienced bullying. “My most painful memories of bullying are from my university years, in the form of frank contempt expressed by fellow students for someone who was socially lacking.” *Neil McRae pg 234*
- Social Isolation. Wanting friends and social isolation, not understanding WHY they couldn’t make social connections. “I wanted very much to be social. School did nothing to alleviate my unbearable loneliness.” *Charli Devnet pg 29, 31*
- Anxiety, panic, depression. “I experienced anxiety and panic every day.” *Steve Sepal pg 165*
- Changes to routines. “Small changes in routine can disrupt my entire day.” *Sean Jackson pg 347*
- Difficulty controlling emotions.

Sensory Overload:

Every contributor discusses the challenges around sensory processing. Temple Grandin often states this is the ONLY part of her autism she would change.

“I was hyperactive as a child. I had early onset of language and was highly sensitive to sounds, movement and smells. I hated having water on my head when my mother washed and bathed me.” *Leonora Gregory Collura pg 302*

“School was simply a torture chamber. The external stimuli were overwhelming. It was too noisy, with children playing, teachers talking, and bells ringing.” *Anita Lesko pg 191*

“Some of my favourite sensory-seeking activities as a child were riding my bicycle into a snow bank as fast as possible to launch myself into a snow bank.” *Stephen Shore pg 53*

New Book by Dr Temple Grandin

Different Not Less: By Dr Temple Grandin

Temple Grandin offers the world yet another great work, an inspiring and informative book that offers both hope and encouragement. In these pages, Temple presents the personal success stories of 14 unique individuals that illustrate the extraordinary potential of those on the autism spectrum. Each individual tells their own story, in their own words, about their lives, relationships, and eventual careers. The contributors also share how they dealt with issues they confronted while growing up, such as bullying, making eye contact, and honing social skills.

CODE B65 \$35 (incl P & H)

