

Asperger's Syndrome - My Story

I've always had a passion for helping others, especially those who can't lead a normal life,
I myself struggled through my childhood, dealing with chronic illness, and social strife.

I was a loner through my younger years, an outsider looking in,
Never having many friends, so focused on personal battles, I felt I could control & win.
I continually came up against health issues, but I fought, always determined to live,
Perhaps knowing at an early age, that I would have something important to give.

I was working at Great Ormond Street, when I met my now husband Joe,
Not realising at the time what we had in common, the direction in which our lives would go.
Joe could occasionally be a difficult man, often moody, or displaying unexplained rage,
He was never violent towards me, but his moods would be difficult to gauge.
The words were often hurtful, but it was only our furniture, that felt the physical pain,
His behaviour would often resonate with me, in a way that was difficult to explain.

I found him to have what I called "Joeisms", many obsessive compulsive inclinations,
Plus there were normal things that I did, that he found to be intense irritations.
He often couldn't put into words, what was going on in his head,
Least of all the anger he felt, when I was wearing my favourite colour red!
I attributed his behaviour to life, the stresses and strains it brought.
In truth I was often concerned, his actions often made me fraught.

Joe encouraged me to train in Karate, and I found that I was pretty good,
That led me to start to teach, even though some people didn't think I should.
Nevertheless I did well, my methods for teaching those with special needs has been deemed a success,
My research, and background has benefitted others, my students flourish and continue to progress.
Over the years I continued to recognise myself, in some of the students that I taught,
Focusing on my own personality traits, that I had often ignored or fought.

As my awareness and passion for AS grew, we realised that Joe was affected by this condition,
Not long after I too was diagnosed, confirming both of our suspicions.
The changes this diagnosis has made to our lives, has been a complete transformation,
Control has been given back to us at last, and for our behaviour we both have an explanation.
The unexplained feelings we experienced for so many years, finally has a name,
A refreshing feeling of relief, to know that there is no need to attribute blame.

I still often find it difficult to socialise, or stand up at conferences to speak,
But I know it's part of what makes me me, perhaps different but still unique.
The most important thing I've realised, living with Asperger's, both husband & wife,
Is that it has never stopped us both fulfilling our dreams, and leading a successful life.
The condition need not define you, excuses will never get you very far,
We've learnt that you can succeed in your ambitions, no matter what you do or who you are.

So my experience and passion for this condition, doesn't stop with myself and Joe,
I am able to use it to teach others with AS and autism, to help them develop and allow them to grow.
The discipline and repetitive motions of Karate, create consistency and routine,
Offering the additional benefits of interacting within a social scene.
Martial arts has given myself & Joe the confidence to succeed,
Together we are keen to keep moving forward, to help deliver what each of our students may need.

**So Aspies are not that different, we have a normal life and regular IQ,
We sometimes have exceptional skills or talents, but most likely look the same as you.
Sometimes we may appear a little eccentric, you may think us a little insane,
We perceive the world slightly differently, but it's just down to the differences in our brain,
We often have a great vocabulary, might be sensitive to taste, sounds or smell,
But we still carry out a normal life, and we do it rather well!**

