

This is dedicated to my son, Ben, in honor of Autism Awareness during the month of April. Autism comes in many different forms, and Aspergers Syndrome is one of them. Although considered to be very highly functional, Ben has social struggles that no one could ever know about, or understand.

“Through His Eyes”

When I wake to face a new day, I yearn to see the sun rise, take in its beauty, and the hope it brings to each new day.

When he wakes, he keeps the curtains closed, to block out the world that seems to cause him so much pain.

When I get ready for my day, I choose a color to wear to reflect my mood, and perhaps choose comfortable shoes to match my relaxed outlook for what is to come.

When he gets dressed, he wears the same color each day, sometimes the same pants, the same shirt, and the same shoes. He likes... no, needs, his routine.

When I am at work, I enjoy the conversations with my coworkers, and I seem to perform best under pressure, always striving to accomplish my daily tasks with confidence.

When he sits in class, watching the other students laugh and cut up with each other, he has private panic attacks and sweaty palms as he contemplates whether or not he can find the courage to get up to sharpen his pencil in front of all these people.

When going out to eat, or going to the stores to shop, I have a habit of smiling at everyone I meet. I was brought up to be kind and considerate that way.

When he goes out in public, he speaks when spoken to, but hates it. He feels like he should have a paper bag over his head with emotions drawn on the outside, to reflect the responses people expect from him.

We go to church every week. He has been in church his whole life. He is saved, and he studies, and does research and is so very smart, about so many things. But he can't relate to me when he sees my tears of joy as we worship in song. He says he wishes he could.

We are told that there is no cure for what Ben has. All we can do is treat the symptoms, which includes heavy bouts of depression. He takes medication for this, but sometimes his lows are more than I am able to deal with. Thankfully he sees a Christian psychologist who he considers his friend. He has very few friends.

Ironically, Ben has a girlfriend. She too, has some slight personality disorders, but she is lovely and sweet, and accepts my son for who he is.

Finally, I am so proud to call him my son. In a world that seems so dark and unfair to him most of the time, my Ben can see when I am hurting or sad, and will muster what little compassion he can find within himself, and hugs me. He will hug me goodnight. He will talk with me when he won't talk with anyone else. May I always treasure my Ben, and the special gift of who he is. I constantly pray for God's leading and protection, for the man he will become.