

**Our Contribution to the Social Impairment – and Social Solution – in Autism Spectrum Disorders**

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*"...the social impairment in autism is shared."*

Gray, 1988

**Dictionary definition of *social***

"...related to meeting and spending time with other people for pleasure"

[http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=social\\*2+0&dict=A](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=social*2+0&dict=A)

*Two equally valid but different perspectives*

Gray, 1988

**Minschew & Williams**

- "Studies of the brains of individuals with autism provide evidence of differences in how the brain is organized, and how it functions."

• From a chapter in press. The chapter is titled, "Brain-Behavior Connections in Autism" by Nancy J. Minschew & Diane L. Williams. The book is edited by Kari Dunn Buron and Pamela Wolfberg, and will soon be available through Autism Asperger Publishing Company, Kansas.

*'a little bit of  
autism...?'*

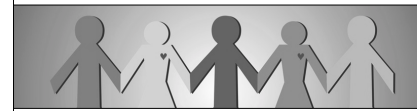
Gray, 1989

*It's not autism  
we recognize,  
but our own  
responses  
occurring with  
greater  
frequency and  
intensity.*

Gray, 1989

Abandon All  
Assumptions

Gray, 1989



Gray's Guide to Neurotypical Behavior:  
The Morning News Winter 1996  
The Morning News Spring 1997  
The Morning News Summer 1997

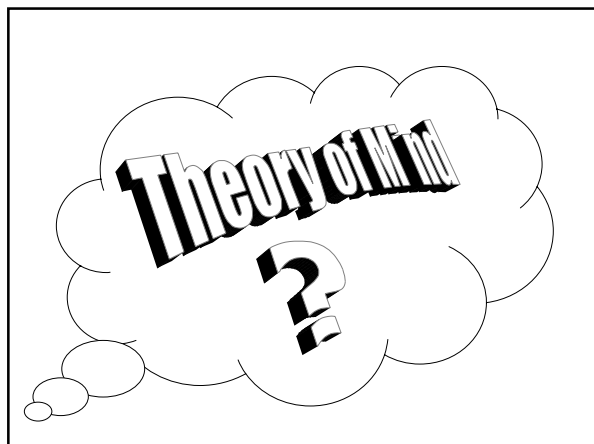


### Description of NeuroTypical Person NTP

*A NTP has relatively average intellectual abilities and often talents in one or more areas. NT people exchange meaning through a coordinated system of words, context, gestures, expressions, and inflection. They "read each other's mind" to tailor their communication to the needs of the listener. Often, NT people will use phrases like, "Not to interrupt..." to indicate they are about to do just the opposite. Communicating effectively with NT people involves guessing what they are thinking, listening to their words, and simultaneously interpreting their gestures, inflection, and tone of voice.*

### Observations of Typical Behavior

Readily 'know'  
and apply  
another  
person's  
vantage point



### Observations of Typical Behavior

Posses Standard Social Equipment in good operating condition; mean what we mean (sometimes mean what we say).

### Observations of Typical Behavior

Value and demonstrate  
*Unoffensive Honesty*

### Observations of Typical Behavior

Prefer to be alone as a choice over a circumstance

### Observations of Typical Behavior

Continually compare, categorize, and conclude.

Executive  
Function

University of Pittsburgh  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
University of Illinois-Chicago

*Collaborative Program of  
Excellence in Autism (CPEA)*



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**When Typical Thinking Works  
Against Us in Practice**

**Ever notice how the obvious  
ALWAYS takes us by surprise?**

Paradigms in Practice

*What is a Paradigm?*

'...commonly used today to mean a perception, assumption, theory, frame of reference or lens through which you view the world.'

Stephen R. Covey, *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit*, 2004, p.19.

Attitudes  
Experiences  
Beliefs  
Paradigms

Regardless of setting or endeavor, a paradigm alters perception, colors judgment, and to a large extent, determines action in the same way a lead domino influences the direction that all of the others fall.

...in terms of interventions in the field of ASD, a *paradigm may be defined* as a conceptual framework-in-practice, a parent or professional's attitudes, beliefs, and orientation to the person in their care.

We see what we believe should be there.

From the Brenda Smith Myles calendar...

In *The 8th Habit*, Covey emphasizes that a paradigm may be accurate or inaccurate, '...like the map of a territory or city. If inaccurate, it will make no difference how hard you try to find your destination or how positively you think – you'll stay lost. If accurate, then diligence or attitude matter.  
But not until' (Covey 2004, p. 19).

### On Stories...



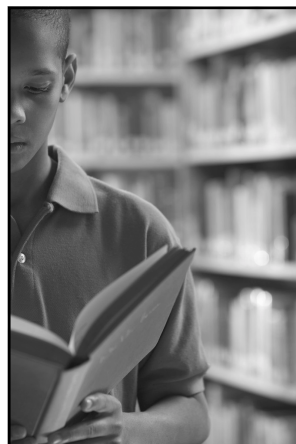
*The stories we tell ourselves:*

- *accurate*
- *outside awareness*
- *“What’s the story?”*

### *The Secrets of Storytelling: Why We Love a Good Yarn*

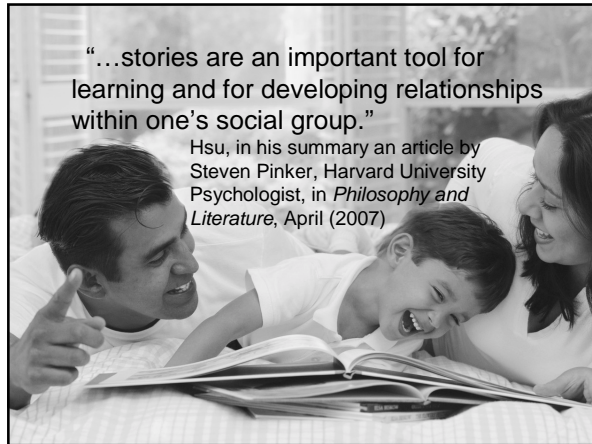
Jeremy Hsu, Scientific American Mind  
September, 2008  
[www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-secrets-of-storytelling](http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-secrets-of-storytelling)

*“Storytelling is a human universal...”*



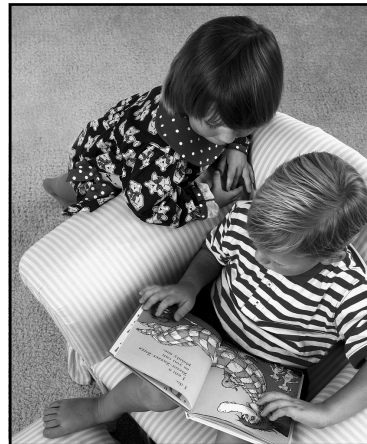
*“These characteristics of stories... reveal clues about ... the roots of empathy and emotion in the mind.”*

(Hsu, paraphrased)



“...stories are an important tool for learning and for developing relationships within one’s social group.”

Hsu, in his summary an article by Steven Pinker, Harvard University Psychologist, in *Philosophy and Literature*, April (2007)



“Stories may be an important proving ground for vital social skills.” Hsu

**Social Story™ References**

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**My reply...**

I work in the field of autism spectrum disorders, and developed the now popular educational intervention, Social Stories™, in 1991. A Social Story™ describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of the relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of every Social Story™ is to share information using a format, voice and content that is descriptive, meaningful, and socially and emotionally safe for its audience. Every Social Story™ has an overall patient and reassuring quality. This wonderful article further confirms my theory that one of the reasons Social Stories™ "work" so well is because stories work for all people... **While Social Stories™ are defined by ten characteristics that are consistent with the learning profile of people with autism spectrum disorders, I believe ultimately we will discover their success is rooted in human nature.** Thank you for a great article. More information on Social Stories™ is available at [www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org). - Carol Gray, President, The Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding

**In closing...**

From *Gray's Guide to NeuroTypical Behavior: Appreciating the Challenge We Present to People with Autism Spectrum Disorders*.

Part III: Understanding the Social Impairment in NeuroTypical, THE MORNING NEWS, Summer 1997.

You are a NeuroTypical person.

You will understand people similar to you. You will notice people different from you.

People are like mirrors: try to recognize yourself but respect the differences.

It's okay for other people to talk different, move different, express different, learn different, and work and play different.

All people live on this world called Earth. No one lives anywhere else, including in a world of their own.

People like to be alone as a choice over a circumstance. Autism is a circumstance.

If you want to be social, you need more than one person.

If you can't finish the puzzle, it could be that you are missing some pieces. Find a friend who will help you search for the missing pieces, ignore the friend who pretends to have the missing pieces, and learn to know the difference.

Keep most secrets; share the social secrets you assume everyone knows.

Always describe what you see, before deciding why you see it.

Look for facts - you can see them - even in situations where you don't hear many. If you see something and everyone tells you, "I don't see it..."

maybe they have their eyes closed.

Note and respect the obvious or it will take you by surprise.



Be selective: choose words carefully.

Smart people get confused. Trust any classmate who says, "I don't know."

Always be willing to wait your turn, and to wait for the truth.

Ask questions of people who know what they don't know.

If you are not the one with the map, and you don't know the way, don't try to lead.

There's a lot to learn in the back of the line.

When you grow up, be anything you want and always be an explorer.

The best places to play will  
always be the places you  
discover.