

SIX WORD
LESSONS™

ON GROWING UP
AUTISTIC

100 Lessons
to
Understand How
Autistic People See Life



Trevor Pacelli
GrowingUpAutistic.com

Six-Word Lessons on Growing Up Autistic



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Editing by Patty Pacelli

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Six-Word Lessons on Growing Up Autistic

One percent of the population of children in the U.S. aged 3-17 have an autism spectrum disorder...

One in 50 newborns will be born with an autism spectrum disorder...

Only 56% of students with autism finish high school...

One million Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder...

My name is Trevor Pacelli. I was diagnosed with Autism at age 5. I am the first in my extended family to have autism. Growing up autistic has been difficult not only for me but for my parents and my sister. We've all had to learn about autism and how to maintain a peaceful household. I deeply want other families with autistic children to learn from my experiences. This is why I wrote ***Six Word Lessons on Growing Up Autistic***.

In ***Six-Word Lessons on Growing Up Autistic***, you will find 100 short, practical tips to help understand the autistic person in your life, told through insightful personal experiences by someone who has grown up autistic. Rather than pore through pages and pages of content, ***Six-Word Lessons on Growing Up Autistic*** gives them to you quickly and easily.

My hope is that you are able to use my experiences to help you with raising your autistic child, or relating to anyone you know who is living with autism. Tell me how it's impacted you at Trevor@GrowingUpAutistic.com.

For my sister, Briana, for understanding me when no one else did.

For my Mom, Patty, for helping me write and edit this book.

For my Dad, Lonnie, for encouraging me to write this book.

And for my Auntie Lori, who is now with her Savior.

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Suspecting that your Child has Autism

1

Other children don't
act like yours.

Some first clues that a child has autism are the differences from other children. A few of these clues are: delayed speech, not understanding what you are communicating, crying when held, advanced abilities and obsession in a specific area, such as, for me, putting together puzzles.

2

The doctor has the right voice.

“I’m sorry to tell you this, but your child has autism.” It’s scary to hear this coming from the doctor when your child is first diagnosed. Your pediatrician is a good first step for finding specialists who will help with a diagnosis. The doctors should be honest, even if it contradicts what you want to hear, or what your friends are telling you.

3

Some don't like to be hugged.

Children with autism like to have their space, and that means they sometimes dislike having people in physical contact with them. Although it's not true in my case, many autistic children feel very strongly about being held, touched, or hugged.

4

Speech is an important early sign.

According to my pediatrician, by age two, a child should be speaking at least two words to form an idea. If not, this is a good reason to suspect autism. This was the case with me, and I immediately began work with a speech and language pathologist, to help me learn to comprehend as well as communicate better.

5

Do they ever make eye contact?

Children with autism are often more interested in the texture of the furniture than they are in you, so they may not make eye contact with you. However, they are very observant, so they will notice everything, including your attitude toward them.

6

A child's mannerisms
are quite
distinguishable.

Does she sway when she walks? Is her posture leaning a certain direction? An autistic child can have physical habits that make her stand out. These habits can be managed with physical or occupational therapy. I appreciated it when people kept in mind that it was still part of my identity.

7

They may interact
differently with
siblings.

Most parents have multiple children, and when they are young, the kids are together much of the time. If one of them has autism, he may have a more difficult time getting along with his siblings. Work with his siblings to help them understand your autistic child's differences and needs, especially for time alone.

8

They very rarely
share their thoughts.

You may think they are being secretive and simply not sharing. But I have this issue all the time as well, and I can say that usually these children are just really protective over what fantasies go on in their head.

9

They don't like to be disturbed.

Because autistic children are not very open with their thoughts in the real world, they can't stand when people try to break the barriers in their heads. Until they learn better coping skills, they will most likely cry, scream and get upset with their parents when interrupted.

10

New places often make them cry.

Leaving the house for a new place can intimidate autistic children. Because they are not familiar with anything, they will complain about wanting to go home. To prepare for this, bring something like a favorite toy, and give plenty of advance details about the outing.

11

They play very
well by themselves.

My mom tells me that I was actually easy to take care of when I was very young, because I loved playing by myself. I could stay focused on my favorite activity, puzzles, for hours, and didn't need any attention. This was very different from my sister, who demanded a lot of interaction from a parent or other child.

A Different View of the World

12

You won't believe
what they think.

Most people think in logical terms, others think in imaginative terms. But some who have autism, such as myself, think in completely abstract terms that makes little sense to others. It is a combination of imagination and how they see things.

13

They don't just
see a tree.

Instead of just seeing a tree, they may add on to that and imagine it painted pink and yellow, sprouting seventeen eyeballs and growing to Godzilla height. Their imagination lets them see everything as a world of their own.

14

Their imagination is
over the top.

A grapefruit peels open and a hybrid giraffe-bat comes out and sings *Mary Had a Little Lamb* in Chinese. That is just an example of how my imagination functions. Anyone other than me would not understand where I got this.

15

They observe
everything to the
extreme.

With my case of autism, I have a very strong attention to detail, for I notice little things that other people do not. Others like me also have this, and it has been shown that most autistic people are extremely visual learners and observers.

16

They find it
tough to explain.

With all that is happening in my head, I sometimes cannot find it in me to share any of it with others. My thoughts are very personal to me, and I usually just can't form thoughts into words.

17

Only focus on one single subject.

Because I get so focused and absorbed into whatever I am doing, it often takes a full hour to fully move on from that activity to another. This is one reason transitions are one of the most common difficulties for autistic people.

18

It's difficult to
try new activities.

I have certain subjects, such as drawing and art, in which I'm very fascinated. When I was younger, I actually had an aversion to any other subjects or interests that were not my own, and often did not want to join in such activities.

19

They have their own
exceptional talents.

With myself, I know that I have a true gift in drawing and photography. Every autistic child is not artistic, but they usually have a specific exceptional talent that stands out. One may be a whiz in history, a master in marine biology, or even a careful nutritionist!

20

They get either As or Fs.

With some autistic kids, their brains allow them to do either tremendously well or horribly. One may be a master in science and just breeze through all the labs, but just cannot perform a math equation to save his life.

21

Nobody on earth
thinks like them.

I have met very few people who have the same wide-ranged, detailed thinking style that I possess. Every individual who has autism has a unique way of thinking, which can provide help in areas that no one else can.

More books on Autism

Available on www.GrowingUpAutistic.com in paperback and e-book

50 Things You Should Know About Me

by Trevor Pacelli

The Kindergarten Adventures of Amazing Grace

by Briana Pacelli

Six-Word Lessons for Autism Friendly Workplaces

by Patty Pacelli

Six-Word Lessons for Dads with Autistic Kids

by Lonnie Pacelli

Six-Word Lessons on Females with Asperger's Syndrome

by Tracey Cohen

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About the *Six-Word Lessons Series*

Legend has it that Ernest Hemingway was challenged to write a story using only six words. He responded with the story, “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” The story tickles the imagination. Why were the shoes never worn? The answers are left up to the reader’s imagination.

This style of writing has a number of aliases: postcard fiction, flash fiction, and micro fiction. Lonnie Pacelli was introduced to this concept in 2009 by a friend, and started thinking about how this extreme brevity could apply to today’s communication culture of text messages, tweets and Facebook posts. He wrote the first book, *Six-Word Lessons for Project Managers*, then started helping other authors write and publish their own books in the series.

The books all have six-word chapters with six-word lesson titles, each followed by a one-page description. They can be written by entrepreneurs who want to promote their businesses, or anyone with a message to share.

See the entire *Six-Word Lessons Series*
at www.6wordlessons.com