

Estée Klar

- [Home](#)
- [Bio](#)
- [Lectures/Events](#)
- [Published Articles/Papers](#)
- [Books](#)
- [Contact Me](#)
- [Media](#)
- [Youtube](#)

In Retrospect

Filed Under ([Uncategorized](#)) by Estee on 28-04-2009

I've been reading the thousands of pages of Adam's journals I've written and kept track of over the past seven years. It's a lot of tracking. I've tracked everything from the structure of our days, the logs of his work and progress, his first "steps" in every aspect of his development, those early ABA charts, other progress reports, my to-do lists. ...I still survived on severe sleep deprivation (Adam never slept through the night), life obligations, taking care of four other step children (I always felt guilty at having to ask them to quiet down when Adam came around not knowing that Adam was autistic and extremely noise sensitive at the time), autism activism and advocacy, three of my own surgeries and three of Adam's (ear and dental), and of course, my own struggle with accepting the various aspects of the journey. I have so much paper that I am quite surprised and fascinated that I look back on those old days as no big deal. Yet, one can say that in retrospect. I could tell parents all about acceptance and the journey, but each of us has to go through the years and experience ourselves. When I write like this, I have no idea if it fully sinks in to a "new" parent. There is reading, absorbing and then there is knowing. I can see it through my notes, all the queries, all the research I did, all the intensive time I spent observing and playing with Adam. I see who I was and who both Adam and I have become.

Other than pejorative referencing of autism as illness, and of course, dangerous therapies that risk a child's health, well-being and life, I can discuss autism with so many parents with different attitudes, which is the gift of time. I meet parents who have taken a different route, who think differently than I do, and in most cases, it's pretty much okay (again, unless they want to describe my son as of lesser value and do not accept him, then get out of the way).

We are all on the same route taking different paths. Many of us see things differently. There is still work that needs to be done; questions on the nature of what it means to be human and a full acceptance of our children by and in every facet of society. I do not think that our kids need to change themselves in unnatural ways (an autistic person will always be autistic) in order to fit in, for being a part of this world is a constant compromise, but one should never compromise one's true nature. As a woman going through a divorce who has made enormous compromises, this resounds so strongly within me these days. Being a woman in this world somehow draws me closer to others who need that strong sense of acceptance and belonging. I know I write as a woman in a particular circumstance, but there are dads out there too who are going through the same journey. I do not want this post to sound this is for *women-only*. We can only belong when we first accept ourselves.

I think I've survived it all so far pretty well, maybe even more than "pretty-well." Yes, I have feelings, and no, it's really not easy. One doesn't have to pretend to be strong in order to be strong. Strength comes from not being afraid to talk the truth — in not being ashamed of being sad, weak, in need of help, in finding the humour in things...

Divorce, cancer, autism, stigma, and I'm still standing. Adam is still happy through it all because mom doesn't believe that anything less than fortitude, truth, and a positive attitude is warranted in this world. Mom believes that Adam is good enough as he is, and now, as a single person, that *she* is **more than good enough** as she is. She expects Adam to clean up after himself, go to school, continue learning and contributing to the world. I expect no less of myself — of fulfilling my own purpose. Everyone, no matter what challenge, can press on. We all have a purpose in life that needs to be fulfilled. It is our hope, our inspiration, and our difficult, yet still inspiring, mountain to climb.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[7 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Autistic Boy Struck By Police for Standing](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#), [Discrimination](#)) by Estee on 25-04-2009

April, 25, 2009, Chicago Tribune:

[Days after Chicago police promoted their expanded training for dealing with people with autism, a teen with the disorder was allegedly struck by an officer who ignored the family's pleas that he was a "special boy."](#)

[While Chicago police refused to discuss the incident, relatives of Oscar Guzman detailed the alleged assault and said it was an example of why more officers need to be trained in handling people with special needs.](#)

[Guzman, 16, was standing on the sidewalk Wednesday night, taking a break from working in his family's fast-food restaurant in the Pilsen neighborhood. He was watching cars go by when a police cruiser pulled up and two officers began asking him questions, his family says.](#)

[Guzman didn't understand the questions, said his sister Nubia, 25, and looked down, away and eventually began walking away. Diagnosed with moderate autism at age 4, he doesn't like confrontation, his sister said.](#)

This story comes on the heels of the other incident in Newfoundland several days ago, where an autistic boy was arrested for walking. Due to the difference in his gait, the officers thought he was drunk. In both instances (see previous post) officers deny the allegations, excusing as "an honest mistake," or "not commenting until further investigation." If these statements don't infuriate parents and autistic people, I don't know what will. Seems to me that our society values deceit (covered up as "honest mistakes" and "further investigations), more than honesty and goodwill.

In this Chicago incident, the report states that Easter Seals gave them a training list. Sounds like paper to me. If we don't get autistic people in there training our police, and some parent allies as well, I'm not sure a document will do the trick.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)

- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[5 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Autistic Boy Arrested for Walking](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#), [Discrimination](#)) by Estee on 23-04-2009

[Dane Spurrell, an autistic fifteen year old, is arrested for walking out from a video store. Apparently, because his gait was different, the police officer thought he was intoxicated. Despite pleadings from the mother that Dane is autistic, the boy was incarcerated overnight.](#)

“It was an honest mistake,” the police insist.

No, it’s not honest but indeed it is a mistake. Mom wants an apology, and this is what she gets in return. This is flat-out discrimination. Think about it: because someone walks with a limp, they are deemed to be drunk. They are not accepted for being autistic, after the mother pleads with police.

I think about all the news stories I read every month on a boy being kicked out of class for acting autistic, for being who they are; all the arrests.

There is a reason to galvanize. Yet, I’m perplexed how the autistic community can’t get past individual differences to protest what is clearly wrong.

I know many of us will be blogging about this today, and we should. Autistics have to face this every day. We parents who love our children have to go out and educate others every day as well. Be it in hospitals, schools, programs and even with the police, our work is never done.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[10 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[The Autistic Foodie \(and Other Passions\)](#)

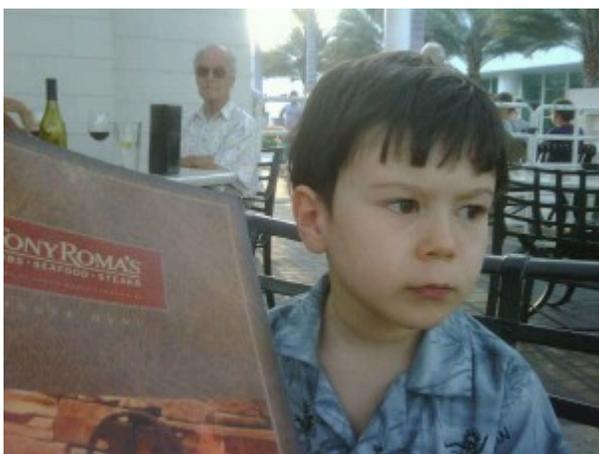
Filed Under ([Adam](#), [Communication](#), [Development](#)) by Estee on 20-04-2009



There's nary a moment when I won't find Adam engaged in some new passion. Unlike the so-called "static" nature of supposed autistic interests and fascinations, I find Adam's interests variable and ever-evolving.

Lately, he loves puppets, faces, art (he's an excellent artist), making faces, swimming, the ocean, and most of all, reading cookbooks and then, cooking. He has always enjoyed cooking, but now that he has better coordination, cooking becomes more fun. I thought of this when I traversed upon this website:

<http://www.mywire.com/pubs/Lets-Cook/>



Adam deciding what he wants to eat at Tony Roma's

We've always wrote out the recipe in visual form for Adam to follow, and I know many parents employ this structured approach which works very well. For those of you who are new, you might want to check it out. It's a good step to break down other creative projects as well, and might give parents some ideas.

Adam used to be the young boy who wouldn't have much of an attention span. He used to "obsess" over his alphabet and numbers, and love to watch videos over and over again, and we expanded his interests by using his own and also allowing him to just be with his own. While he likes the alphabet I once never imagined, in his early days, when he wouldn't *need* the alphabet anymore (in the calming sense or as a restricted interest). I could have obsessed over this as a parent and let it (excuse the pun) eat me up. Now, we watch little tv and spend our days reading, making things, going out, going to the theatre, playing and visiting friends, discovering new toys and yes, in the pool of our activities, there is still a lot of swimming.

I keep wondering how to relay this to a new parent of a young child who has just received an autism diagnosis. How do you talk to parents about how life *will be*? It is a question that many of us "older" parents think about a lot. There is no way, I have concluded, to offer advice except to speak of our own path and acknowledge that everyone has their own journey. My life with Adam is different than I thought it would be before I had Adam or before he was diagnosed. Yet today, as we've simply lived our lives, we no longer fret our days away. We just do. We just live. Only time and learning to live with Adam as a member of our family who as GIVEN so much to us, has it mellowed me. One could read this journey by going back to the early days of my blog as I observed prejudice, among so many other injustices. There comes a point, unless it is outright cruel and pointed, that one

becomes less angry and understands that the only way to social justice and acceptance is to carry on with a level of determination and constancy.

To live peacefully is our ultimate aim. To accept autism isn't to accept in order to cure or "recover" (a silly word used as a curtain to hide the word "cure"). Acceptance means to leave what is and get on with living.

Hmmm... I wonder what I feel like cooking tonight....

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[11 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Research That Enhances Lives, Not Annihilates Them](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#), [Critical Disability Studies](#), [Research](#)) by Estee on 12-04-2009

I know that as a parent of an autistic child, I want to see much more research on what enhances the lives of autistic individuals, not research that seeks to annihilate autism. I want research that shows how autistic people learn and what they have already contributed to the world in order that an autistic way of doing and thinking is more valued in this society.

I believe with all my heart that there is a place for Adam — many places among us all where he will contribute greatly. I believe it so much, I joined the Critical Disability Studies Department at York University; to help make the dialogue as prominent, if not more so, than the research funded for cures.

I am at a university which not only has such a department that questions all status quo notions about disability, but also talks fundamentally about social justice. It is so ironic because nearby work the to "fight this terrible disease," and across the way, a behavioural department seeking to modify undesirable autistic behaviour. It's an interesting mix, this microcosm of the world the UNIVERSE-CITY. (University was never as subdivided as it is today. The focus used to be on studying everything so one had a universal knowledge — sort of like a renaissance-man sort of body of knowledge where one area of study would inform the other. Scholars often note the dumbing-down of a university education with areas of specialty. This is what the Critical Disability Studies Department does not do. It culls from philosophy, history, sociology, law, culture, art and more to study disability).

If you are interested in this kind research (and there are more calls for social research out there everyday), you can start at the Interagency Committee on Disability Research to start. Check out the universities as well. The more we ask, the more we may receive:

The ICDR Seeks Your Recommendations on Emerging Disability Research Topics

Web site provides opportunity to vote and prioritize disability issues of greatest concern

This year for the first time, the federally mandated Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) is utilizing an innovative Web-based approach to collect online disability research comments to assist in developing a federal disability and rehabilitation 2010 research agenda. This technology-driven approach gives the public a three-week time frame from **March 27th through April 17th** to submit their recommendations.

Additionally, registered participants will be invited to review all comments submitted and vote on their top ten concerns in each topic area during the one-week period from **April 22nd through April 29th**. Public comments from stakeholders are the focal point of the disability research recommendations in the ICDR Annual Report to the President and Congress.

All disability-related research topics are welcomed, including discussion about concerns important to the veteran and military communities. The ICDR is seeking comments with special emphasis placed in the following areas:

- Collaboration and coordination among federal agencies;
- Health information technology and/or electronic health records;
- Health disparities;
- Health promotion in the workplace;
- Employment and health; and
- Other critical research issues.

Guidelines and Instructions:

- To submit your comments and vote via the Web site you must [create an account](#).
- If you have problems submitting comments via the Web site please either:
 - e-mail your comments to ICDRevents@cessi.net,
 - fax them to 703-442-9015, or
 - mail them to: ICDR c/o CESSI, 6858 Old Dominion Drive, Suite 250, McLean, VA 22101.
- Written comments must be:
 - No longer than 250 words or 1,500 characters
 - Single-spaced using 12-point font in Times New Roman
 - **Received or postmarked by April 17, 2009 (3:00 P.M. EDT)**
- Online Public Voting: April 22–29, 2009 (**11:59 P.M. EDT**)

About the ICDR

The ICDR is authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) to promote overarching coordination and cooperation among federal departments and agencies conducting rehabilitation research programs and activities. Major roles of the ICDR are to identify research duplication and gaps, secure public input and compile data to inform future research, promote communication and coordination, and facilitate interagency collaboration.

The ICDR brings together agency representatives, policy makers, advocates and people with disabilities through a Senior Oversight Committee (SOC) and subcommittees. The SOC is the ICDR administrative body that spearheads interagency collaboration and research coordination. The subcommittees represent specific areas of disability research including education, disability statistics, employment, medical rehabilitation, and technology. The ICDR facilitates the exchange of information on disability and rehabilitation research programs, activities and collaborative projects among ICDR member agencies and federal partners.

For more information about the ICDR, visit the Web site: www.icdr.us.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)

- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[2 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Actions Trump Religion](#)

Filed Under ([Family](#), [Uncategorized](#)) by Estee on 12-04-2009

I don't mean to rain on your Easter Parade. Or for that matter, your Matza Brei. It is another religious holiday again and I wish everyone peace and happiness as you celebrate with your friends or families. Also, I would like to think of the vast majority of people who have no place to go today, who have no friends or families, or at least have not been invited by them to eat at their tables.

Religion and holidays tend to make me question everything that has to do with religion. I have seen and experienced unjust things on the "holiest" days of the year, for man cannot, by his very nature, live up to these expectations created not by God, but by man — the leaders of religions. I listen to people who won't eat pork, but will eat a cheeseburger or shellfish, when their religion bans it. I am very interested to listen to the concept of "observance," and "tradition," but am equally interested at how individuals modify practice in order to suit their own needs. Religion has come to be something we consume and like all consumption, it eventually leaves us empty.

So what is it that we hang on to under the religious umbrella?

I can think of one thing: family and friends. We all want to be connected to each other. Religious holidays can sometimes force us to do it. But when the holiday is over, then what? I am concerned that what we lack is not religion, but connection and spirituality. That last word is so overused. It is sold on video tapes and spirituality is often tied in with some aspect of "becoming successful," in a monetary sense — *get in touch with yourself and the money will follow*, and usually you can find some book that links in getting in touch with yourself and success in business in seven easy steps. But spirituality it isn't concerned at all with money, achievement, success. It is concerned with love. Sometimes the money will follow and sometimes it will not. But even if it doesn't, one can feel so filled and complete by doing the things we love. Love is about connection, a deep connection to everything around us so that we realize we are never alone.

"The Hindu-Moslem-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist believe about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: 'Let us love one another, for love is God and everyone that loveth of born of God and knoweth God.'" (From Bell Hooks, All About Love: New Visions, p. 75).

Religion is the most segregating and alienating aspects of human life. And *that* is my humble opinion. It does not urge people to act out of love, but instead act out of pity. It says you will have a place in God's kingdom if you do "good acts," even if you just throw money at someone or some cause. Yet, it is the most selfish way to act. Instead, if we view God as a power within us, the power of love that transcends us, we are living in the here and now, fully, with dignity, love, and respect for all life. It means that when we love others as ourselves, we try to engage with them.

I hope we can all decide not to hide behind the matzah and the Cross, but come out and treat others with love and kindness. Seems to me the world and all its creatures are so in need of this action, above all else, for John says, "anyone who does not know love is still in death..." All awakening to love is spiritual awakening." I know this to be true as far as Adam has awoken something very special within me.

If someone is suffering in not being accepted by a person or a religion, or is experiencing extrication of any sort, let us all try to listen and share. Act out of love, *not* to save ourselves a place in heaven. For ultimately, we ARE

each other's pain, suffering and struggles. We are all one.

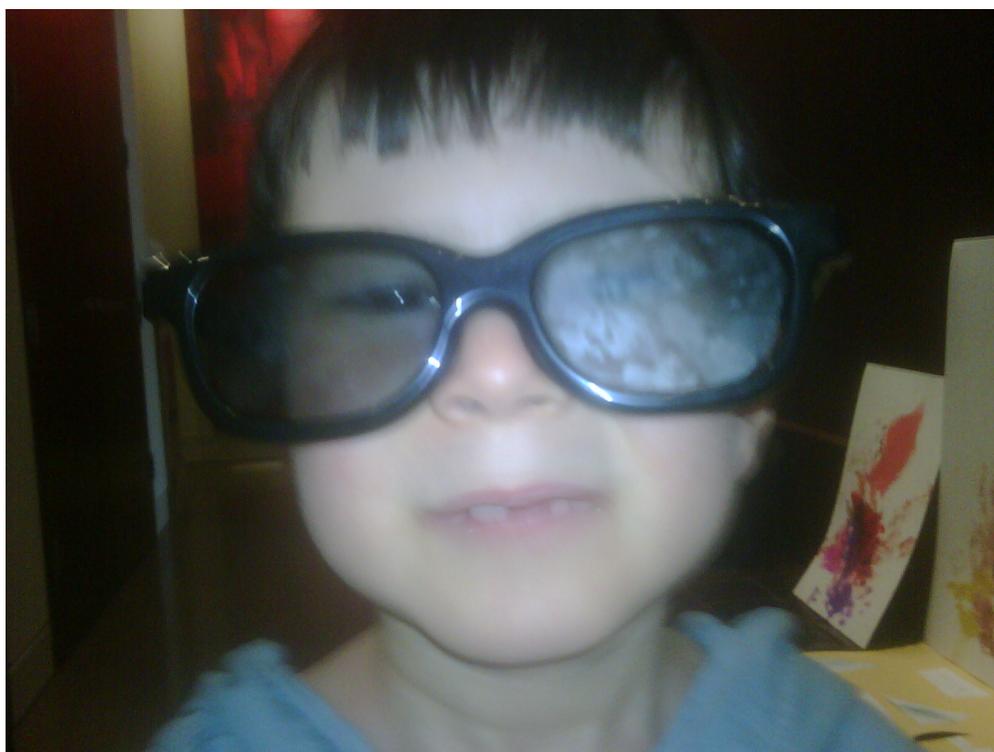
- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[3 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Darwin's Children?](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#), [Communication](#), [Critical Disability Studies](#)) by Estee on 06-04-2009



In the seventeenth century Spanish and Dutch ships came ashore to the new land and killed natives because they were perceived as “pests.” In 1828, The British Captain Robert Fitzroy arrived on a survey mission for the Royal Navy. Fitzroy took four natives as captive back to England to transform them into “civilized” people. “After nine months of religious schooling, [the natives] were summoned to appear at the court of King William IV and Queen Adelaide, where Fuegia Basket [a name ascribed to one of the native girls in England] was presented with a lace bonnet, a ring and a small dowry. To fulfill his goal of bringing Christianity to Tierra del Fuego, Fitzroy set sail on December 27th, 1831 on the 240-ton bark HMS Beagle with seventy-four crew members, and Anglican catechist who would establish a mission with his three converts, and a recent graduate of Cambridge, the young naturalist Charles Darwin.” (p. 90 **Blessed Unrest**).

As Paul Hawken writes, Darwin had only seen natives clad in “civilized” clothing up until the time he reached the New World. He did not expect to see, I imagine, Fuegians clad in seal blubber. He could barely accept that the Fuegians were members of the human race. He said, “I could not believe how wide was the difference between a savage and a civilized man: it is greater than between a domesticated and wild animal, in as much as in man there is a greater power of improvement.” (Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle: Journal of*

Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited During the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle Round the World, New York: Modern Library, 2001. p.122).

Like most of us, Darwin's powers of observation failed him. Darwin was, Hawken notes, surprised by the Fuegian's ability to mimic — they could do so with language, right down to entire sentences, coughs, facial expressions. Yet, “because he could not easily distinguish words in their own native language, [Darwin] concluded that they were merely repeating a few simple phrases and thus had a very small vocabulary.” (p.91). Darwin said, “Their language does not deserve to be called articulate: Capt Cook says it is like a man clearing his throat; to which may be added another very hoarse man trying to shout & a third encouraging a horse with that peculiar noise which is made in one side of the mouth...I believe if the world was searched, no lower grade of man could be found.”

Because Darwin didn't understand the Fuegian language, because they were not like him, he deemed them barbaric. Little did he know that Fuegian culture was ripe with “animated and nuanced conversation.” Thomas Bridges, an orphan adopted by a missionary family, “spent twenty-one years compiling a dictionary of 32,430 words and inflections [of the Fuegians], a number that was comparable to Japanese vocabulary, before accounting for Chinese and English influences. Because Bridges died in 1898, before the dictionary was completed, we are left to imagine the sum of the Yamana vocabulary. [Yamana is the Fuegian language].

“As you turn the pages of this remarkable document, you realize that there seems to be a precise word to describe every moment in their life. To appreciate the intelligence required to understand and use 32,430 words, consider that *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755, contained 42,773 words. Shakespeare is credited with having used 29,066 different text words in his complete works, but in terms of truly distinct words, and disregarding overlapping usages, there are fewer than 20,000 words but will use no more than 1,500 to 2,000 over the course of the week. Half of the conversational vocabulary of an American teenager consists of fewer than forty words.” (Hawken, p.92)

Hawken's book **Blessed Unrest** is about the loss of indigenous cultures, abuse of the environment, free-market fundamentalism and social justice. He notes that with the loss of a language comes the extermination of a culture.

Autistic people and the disabled community call themselves a culture, to which there has been vitriolic response from non disabled communities, namely parents and caregivers. I have to question, then, what constitutes a culture and why the self-appropriation of “autistic culture” by autistic self-advocates has become so offensive to some care-giving groups. One automatically assumes that anger is generated by a fear of loss — services, empathy, pity, perhaps. This has been the assumption by disability rights activists, after all. Yet why the contest? I personally see no reason why thousands of people who come together and self-appropriate “culture” is not just as valid for autistic people as it is with Native people, Black people, Asian people, Jewish people and so forth.

I am herein beginning to make a case for autistic culture. I am pointing out that our autistic children, privy to the same, potentially harmful assumptions that they are of lower value because they are not understood by society-at-large, are not Darwin's children, yet, they are treated no differently in most cases than Darwin treated and referred to the Fuegians.

This will not be my complete essay on the topic. I am only suggesting that a culture, by virtue of the following definitions we've used to ascribe a people as a culture are:

- ” – a particular society at a particular time and place; ‘early Mayan civilization’
- the tastes in art and manners that are favored by a social group
- acculturation: all the knowledge and values shared by a society
- (biology) the growing of microorganisms in a nutrient medium (such as gelatin or agar); ‘the culture of cells in a Petri dish’
- the attitudes and behavior that are characteristic of a particular social group or organization; ‘the developing drug culture; “the reason that the agency is doomed to inaction has something to do with the FBI culture’

- grow in a special preparation; ‘the biologist grows microorganisms’
- the raising of plants or animals; ‘the culture of oysters’ “(Source: Wordnet)

It seems to me that autistic people, or people within the autistic culture, share these attributes. The most highly disrespected aspect to autistic culture, and perhaps the least investigated from a point of validity, is autistic language — an “agent” of autistic culture. That is, as long as we view autistic behaviour and actions as irrelevant and deviant, much like Darwin did to the Feugians, we are potentially missing a rich dynamic system and people. In a world where English is used everywhere and we are homogenizing world-wide mostly in the name of business, we will kill off indigenous cultures by the thousands. Hawken’s writes “A language dies when it is not spoken to a new generation of children. At the rate of decline we are now experiencing, half of our living cultural heritage will disappear in a single generation.” Language, many linguists state, is a distinct way of experiencing and sharing dreams, ideals, visions of life itself.

“A Western bias about belonging to a superior culture is valid only if we use selective yardsticks,” writes Hawken. “Rather than assuming people want to surrender to Western values we would be wiser to consider the loss of language as yet another indicator of worldwide collapse of ecosystems...” (Hawken, p.95).

Can we define, narrow down, or record a distinctive autistic “language?” Is autistic language and modes of expression systematized? It seems to me we have **absolutely** recorded many of the nuances of autistic language and behaviour — the latter which of course is a form of language. Just look at the DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual). Like Darwin who put on a set of glasses with a view to calling native culture “inferior,” the DSM uses similar terms of inferiority to define what autistic people and their language are *not*, rather than what they are. If we can observe and categorize a group of people as “deficient,” then the opposite can be true. Autistic people, like other indigenous peoples, are in and of themselves distinct — a group with their own language, behaviours, modes of expression, art and for the most part, values.

Adam’s language contains thousands of nuances, combinations and permutations — gesture, noises, words, typing, singing, and more, which I have come to understand quite well. I have not yet sat down to describe every single utterance, but as you note on this blog, I sometimes do try to record things for the sake of suggesting that his language is just as valid as mine.

I would strongly encourage everyone to consider that autistic culture is something we should cherish, not perish. Darwin’s view was that there were “higher” and “lower” kinds of people, something that autistic people can attest still exists when others define them. We don’t have to put on rose-coloured glasses to see autistic culture, we just have to consider changing the lens.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[16 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[April Fools — It’s “Autism Awareness Month” Again.](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#), [Autism and The Media](#), [Autism and Vaccines](#), [Critical Disability Studies](#)) by Estee on 03-04-2009

April Fools of the month on Larry King tonight: Jenny McCarthy, Jim Carrey, Jerry Kartzinel and JB. Handley (of Generation Rescue) — yet again in the “name of autism” or to “wage a war” on it as it were, are STILL purporting their vaccine hypothesis — which, really, is no longer deserving of being in *that* category, since it has been disproven over and over again. The “bulking” of vaccines or the “schedule” — all of it — are, [according to](#)

[science, not the cause of autism](#). Yet science doesn't seem to matter in all of this. People do not matter in all of this. Not the people who matter, anyway.

Jerry Lewis was recently heralded at the Academy Awards regarding his work “for” people with disabilities — a man who used these words in a recent response to criticism of his annual Muscular Dystrophy Telethon: “If it’s pity we’ll get money. . . . Pity? You don’t want to be pitied because you’re a cripple in a wheelchair? Stay in your house!”

Yes, a man who continuously spoke in derogatory terms about people with disabilities and dehumanized them stood proudly receiving his Oscar amidst the beautiful people at the awards. [There was no mention on how the disability community for years has protested Mr. Lewis and his telethons](#). There was no reference to the pain and harm he has caused them. [The fact that Lewis used the kids \(they went from being “Jerry’s kids” to adults who turned up for those protests and were kicked out by Jerry\) was venerated and forgotten with smiles and gowns](#). Celebrity trumps the hard work of science (when it works hard), dialogue, debate, justice and intellect. Celebrity fails to question more often than not as exhibited yet again by Jenny McCarthy and Jim Carrey.

I was somewhat relieved for a moment to see [Carly, the fourteen-year-old non verbal autistic Toronto girl who types](#). She should have had more time on the the show along with other autistic individuals like her. I am always much more interested in hearing the perspectives about simply “being wired differently,” because it is in learning how people are wired differently where we can appreciate that people can take in the world and learn on many different planes. And if that can happen, people can also *contribute* to the world in different and more rewarding ways as well.

CNN has not yet taken the bull by the horn the way the CBC did in its show [“Positively Autistic,” \(see it on the side bar in this blog\)](#). CBC did not want non-autistic doctors talking or journalistic narration in order to trump what autistic people had to say about themselves because that was the point and it is too often overshadowed.

CNN ought to take its cue, at least from the perspective of that particular documentary, from the CBC and from autistic people. I have been thinking for so long now that as much as we have medical and health components dominating the news, we should have a show on how society views difference (which would include disability) and has medicalized people who are different from whatever norm has been established at any particular point in our history. What’s the purpose of information if we do not look at it through a variety of lenses? What’s the point of medical research if we do not apply any ethical standards or reflect continuously on what it means to be human?

I meandered the [Autism Hub](#) to see if anyone else has yet written anything on the torrid experience of watching these shameless celebrities sounding really idiotic, trying substantiate their claims with quacks who call themselves doctors, namely, the infamous Dr. Jerry Kartiznel who calls our children “soul-less.” Again, such programs revolving around “Autism Awareness Month” make me afraid.



"Awareness"
Lock the Doors!
April is Here!

Dear Valued Guest,

Thank you for visiting Asperger Square 8 this April. If you have found this blog by mistake while searching for standard "awareness" statements, please stay and have a look around. See what one adult on the autism spectrum has to say about discrimination, bullying, unemployment, and other important issues.

This year, instead of "walking for autism," please consider walking alongside someone who is autistic. You can offer support in many ways: perhaps by reducing sensory stimuli in the environment you share, or waiting patiently for the person to process your questions. Or you might choose to join a cause of importance to autistic adults, such as efforts to stop the use of restraints in schools. Including us in decisions that will affect our lives and well being is good, too! And please, don't shop at Toys R Us, a company which, along with Autism Speaks, promotes a view of autistic children as heartbreaking "puzzles."

Thank You!

But it's a nervous kind of laughter. Autism Awareness Month simply reminds me every year that no matter what we do, no matter hard hard we work in trying to make people aware that autistic people are simply people, that IGNORANCE still SPEAKS loudly attempting to drown the real voices of autism.

While I am not autistic, I am a parent who will remain relentless in positioning myself against such ignorance.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[11 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[My View of Boston](#)

Filed Under ([Uncategorized](#)) by Estee on 23-03-2009

I went to Boston. My step-son studies film in Boston. I love Boston. Here, I do not talk about autism. Autism is, perhaps, indirect — I am a mom of an autistic person looking at things a little differently. Maybe the way Adam looks at things has inspired me to look a little more closely. Here are my impressions of Boston:

Under A Boston Sky:



Boston Reflections:





Boston Form and Repetition:





[Read the rest of this entry »](#)

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[7 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Spring Has Sprung](#)

Filed Under ([Adam](#), [Development](#)) by Estee on 16-03-2009



If you live in Toronto (or *any* part of Canada for that matter), it is so amazing to be outside again. Here in the city during the cold winter, we rely on cars, not snowshoes, to get around. Sad, I think, for we would be outside taking advantage of winter a lot more if city snow didn't turn gray or melt with salt. City winters are wicked.

Nevertheless, spring has sprung. Or at least it's about to. Adam and I are out walking, taking photos, and he's now beginning to have his first "conversations." He uses that word now too. He tries very hard on the telephone and afterwards the word "conversation" springs forth with ferocity from his mouth. He has become outgoing, say his teachers, and he speaks louder too.

The other day, he looked at me intently and asked for a dog. "Black," he said forcefully. When Adam is sure about something, I can be sure he's sure. I couldn't help but feel a wave of guilt, for when recent events transpired, I got rid of the dog in order to resettle. I just didn't want to leave the dog alone. So Adam is remembering his dog.

"Kiki," he said again loudly, turning to look me in the eye.

"You can see Kiki," I said reassuringly. Kiki is now living with friends just around the corner. Just when I thought (even though I should know better) that Adam wasn't so keen on having his big Goldendoodle pooping and throwing up around the house, I was proven wrong. (I guess Adam doesn't remember that part).

Now that we will be moving in the summer, a dog might, sooner or later, be imminent. A smaller dog, perhaps. That is, if he keeps asking for one.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[2 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[**This Ordinary Life**](#)

Filed Under ([Uncategorized](#)) by Estee on 15-03-2009



I've been to London
I've been to France
(this is not about your underpants)
Yet there's nothing better than rigorous dance
With arms flailing
Joy assailing
Down the river of happenstance

The dance ends
Begins again
Like sun and storms
Asunder

I've traveled near
I've traveled far
In clacking trains
And humming planes
A hope of something Other.

But home I always do return
to warmth like beacon fire;
cracking, hissing, fluttering,
This we all desire.

We live with misery and content,
yet the latter we do yearn,
this ordinary life cannot be bent,
for all it does is burn.

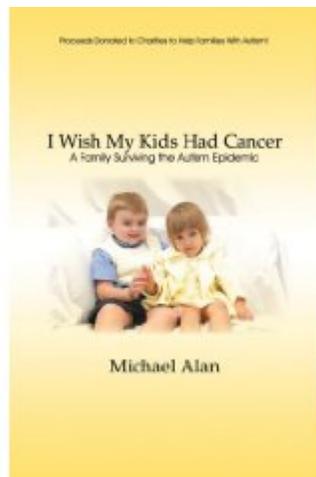
- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[0 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Judging a Book By Its Cover](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#), [Autism and The Media](#), [Critical Disability Studies](#)) by Estee on 11-03-2009



When a friend alerted me to this book by Michael Allen, **I Wish My Kids Had Cancer**, I had to write this post. I have to say to Allen: are you kidding? Are the publishers of this book kidding? Where has all the human decency gone? If anything goes when selling a book, a remedy, a product, what does this say of us who permit it? How far does freedom go before crossing important boundaries that we just should not cross?

I can say that I've witnessed a few remarkably hypocritical things blowing around me the past few months that makes me question human dignity and grace, but this is ridiculous. No parent of any child, let alone special needs child should let such a book go on sale without outrage. To me, this title is no different than to suggest how horrible it would be to raise a black child in a racist world. To suggest that the child would be better off having cancer is just insane.

My mother has had cancer twice. Cancer runs in my family. I can tell you after early stage ovarian cancer last year, that the very thought of the worst (before my official diagnosis' and surgeries which have now rendered me fine), made last year one of the most horrifying years of my life. The thought of becoming seriously ill or dying before your time when one has a child to raise is the most scary experience I've ever had. I'm sure it would absolutely be worse to watch my own child go through cancer.

Speak out. Speak now, or forever hold your peace. One does *not* compare having an autistic child to cancer. I don't care how tough it is.

Tough it out.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[26 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Happiness is not always an ending](#)

Filed Under ([Uncategorized](#)) by Estee on 10-03-2009



I took this photo a couple of days ago. The park where Adam frequented in summers, it is desolate and gray now with the promise of spring as the snow melts away. I went out on Sunday and began taking photos of that which I will miss when we move from our home. I admit, with so much loss, I can really be queen-of-the-mopers. I can walk around and feel the *woe is me* deep down in my bones. No, I don't pull out the booze and talk about what's wrong with the world. I don't go that far. It doesn't mean I'm a sad or depressed person. It just is what it is.

I know I'm not the only one. To deny your moping is just that: denial. The difference between a down-right serious depression and this, is that I think I can measure the space in between loss and happiness. In other words, by writing, painting, taking photographs, whatever, it creates an awareness so I do not become lost in it. I can feel both within the span of a day (no, that doesn't mean I'm manic). I don't feel that running away from my feelings of alone-ness will heal me or make things better. Instead, I take photos of it. When I need to dive in, I just do it.

A few months ago, I read that most women suffer from "bag lady syndrome." It was in the **Globe and Mail** last fall as well and I remember the story well. Searching on the Internet, there are a deluge of stories on it. No matter how affluent and successful a woman is, she still worries she's going to end up in the streets. So deep is this affliction, I decided to wallow right in because facing fears is the only way to minimize them.

*"Bag-lady syndrome plagues, puzzles and, in more extreme cases, paralyzes women who want to get a better grip on their financial lives, according to Olivia Mellan, the author of *The Advisor's Guide to Money Psychology* and a Washington, D.C., therapist who specializes in money psychology. Lily Tomlin, Gloria Steinem, Shirley MacLaine and Katie Couric all admit to having a bag lady in their anxiety closet." (MSN Business).*

As I did this day of photography, I suddenly came across this bright yellow shopping cart in our neighbourhood park. What struck me is how bright yellow it was (I've got a bit of tweaking to do on this photo to bring that out). It's owner, I imagine, must be some wonderful imaginative bag lady leaving it for a while to find food or objects, for it was not there at the beginning of my walk, but only here at the end of it. The cart is empty, sitting there, an entity waiting to be filled up.

Is that what we are? Just a bunch of numb people waiting to be filled up? As a woman now "on my own," this is exactly what confronts me. It's not that I haven't created ventures and done and accomplished many things. It's

just that when you lose your partner in life, desolate feelings arise within. I am not trying to diminish the value of partnership here by suggesting that it is bad to have a partner in whom you trust to take over aspects of your relationship. Connection should fill us up. It is natural for partners to assume different roles. It is a fact that when your partner leaves or dies, life can be scary and bag lady fears can come rolling in. We have this fine line between being comfortable and confident in ourselves and appreciating even the fleeting reality of connection between people.

Lately, I have been replacing “Bag Lady Syndrome” with The Little Match Girl Syndrome. The story was written by Hans Christian Anderson. Do you remember her? The little girl sent out to sell matches? I bet many people born after 1970 don’t know her at all. With no shoes in the stark cold, she dared to light some of the matches she depended on to make income to keep her warm. In her desolate state, the world buzzing around but ignoring her, she crouches in a corner and begins to imagine a feast, the warmth of her grandmother, a lovely Christmas tree. Her imaginings bring her enormous happiness.

“She hastily struck a whole bunch of matches, because she did so long to keep her grandmother with her. The light of matches made it as bright as day. Grandmother had never looked so beautiful. She lifted the little girl up in her arms, and they soared in a halo of light and joy, far above the earth...”

Of course, by morning, the little match girl is found in that corner, frozen-to-death, passers by only making mere mention of it “she must have frozen-to-death,” they utter. On the last page, which is an illustration without words, the sky shines now two stars, which we imagine to be the little girl reunited with her grandmother.

It got me to thinking more about happiness. In this case, the little girl’s imaginings were necessary for survival. If I were starving, I might pretend to have a big feast if it would make me feel better. If you have access to a computer, I doubt you are one of those people freezing in the streets. You are probably dabbling through your day, in and out of your busy tasks, watching the stock market and drinking a cup of coffee perhaps intrigued by this notion of happiness. Who wouldn’t be?

So I lead to a question here: do you read your children the story of **The Little Match Girl**? Do you read it as some sort of pity story about poverty and how we have to help the poor? Or do you avoid the story because it contains too much pain? Or do you read it as a story of not only social responsibility but of happiness? What are we really teaching our children about happiness, pain and suffering?

It stuck me when Adam’s assistant picked up the book and read it to Adam (she did not know the story). As she was reading, she felt she had to censor it for Adam’s sake because it was “too sad.” This, a children’s tale! A Hans Christian Anderson tale! Never mind the Brother’s Grimm. I mean, these tales do not have proverbial happy endings. Happiness is not just an ending, its a means and an ending.

Nietzsche said “the measure of a society is how well it transforms pain and suffering into something worthwhile. Not how a society avoids pain and suffering — for Nietzsche, a deeply troubled man...knew that was impossible — but it transforms it.” (*The Geography of Bliss*)

Aristotle believed that how we pursue happiness matters more than the goal itself. “They are in fact, one and the same, means and ends. A virtuous life necessarily leads to a happy life.” (Ibid).

Perhaps there is something missing when we pursue happiness in things and avoid the pain, the struggle and the “failures” of life. It is missing when we suggest that a goal in autism, even is to make people “normal” or “indistinguishable” because, let’s face it, it will make many parents (not necessarily the autistic people in question) “happier.” If we think it will be easier, we believe it will make us happier.

Everything is tied in to our view of happiness and how we shape and live our lives and how we think we and other people *should* be. Instead of enjoying the journey, embracing the struggle as if it were a natural part of our existence and an intrinsic part of our overall happiness, we want to avoid it at all costs in favour of something *over there* — over the rainbow — something better (even if we don’t really know what that is).

Right now, my happiness is in writing, reading, taking photographs and thinking about life itself. It is in my early morning cups of coffee and the luxury (and necessity) of reflection. Happiness right now, is sublime. I suppose with all that life has brought me thus far, the good and the painful, I am not a person to run away. I don't believe we find happiness in other people, except that connections with other people do bring me much joy. I believe happiness and imagination are so deeply entwined. We make our own happiness.

While these objects stand alone in a desolate landscape (about to turn into a spring), they are in and of themselves entirely beautiful. It brings me happiness to travel to the depths of my feelings about what's happened in my life lately.



As the woman walks away down the well-known path to her, we know she will yet go someplace else.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[2 Comments](#)

[Read More](#)

[Gross National Happiness](#)

Filed Under ([Uncategorized](#)) by Estee on 07-03-2009

Are you happy? Just think about how loaded a question that is. Just thinking about it makes me dizzy. The question leads to many others, like what will make me happy? Am I happy now? How do we measure happiness?

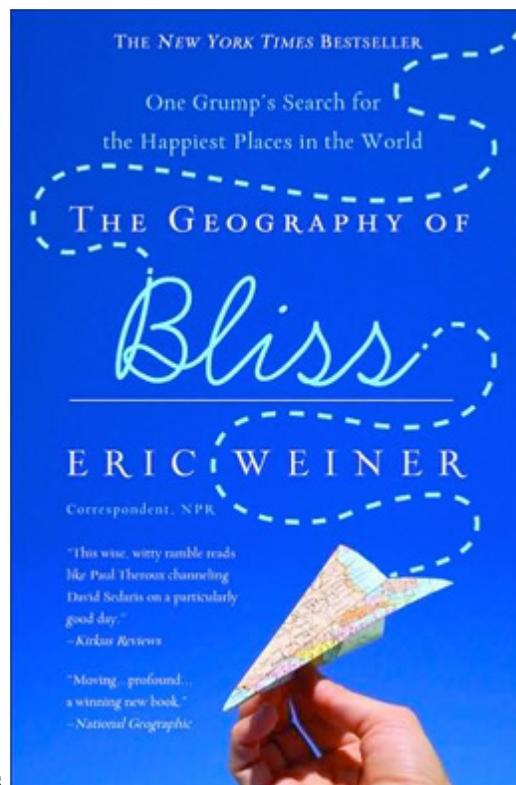
I've done what most people do upon a major life change: I've made lists. Wish lists, to do lists, travel lists — all in the name of happiness. Instead of a list of what makes me happy right here in the now, don't we all tend to make lists of what will make us happy *if only* or *when we...* I plead guilty.

I know that books prescribing ways and means to be happy must be flying off the shelves in contrast to a threatening economic depression. I find the dichotomy quite revealing. Just yesterday, I bought more books on how to be happy right alongside Harvey Dent's **The Great Depression Ahead**. What an irony! Yet is is a fact that books on how to be happy are popular in times of financial strife. As I must manage my own finances now in the face of divorce, I find myself swallowed by the deluge of material I feel I need to learn about financial markets — they don't seem to be making *anyone* happy these days. (In fact, in his [Washington Post article A Year of Living Gloomily](#), Weiner suggests we have a proclivity to live negatively). As an artist, a writer and a creative spirit, I feel sort of overwhelmed by the confusion out there among the very financial “experts” —

everyone scurrying to be the next correct financial prophet. If too much information leads to stupidity, then we must certainly be on the right path.

Money just doesn't seem to buy happiness outright. Research has shown that as soon as our needs are met, money alone cannot make us happy. British academic Avner Offer said that "affluence breeds impatience and impatience undermines well being." Just think about all the inattention and information out there. I can't remember when a person has simply paid complete and utter attention in a deep conversation with me. Minds are drifting in and out of blackberries, wants, *what-must-I-do-next* worries, and to-do lists.

So what is happiness, then? Is it an attitude — that happiness is not the destination, but the journey sort of thinking?



I'm enjoying my latest read by Eric Weiner, **The Geography of Bliss.**

Just halfway through in one sitting as of yesterday, my flu just easing enough to enable my eyes to focus on the printed word instead of sleeping through the day, I realize that this is all that's been on my mind since I can remember. Is happiness a "pursuit" or is it an attitude? Is it right here in my lap, or snuggling in the crook of my arm at night before he falls asleep? Or is it "out there" somewhere yet unidentified?

As we stimulate an economy in order that we all remain happy (or as we try so hard to hold on to the happiness we equated with consumption), we might be amused yet confused at what Bhutan has prioritized in its government policy as Gross National Happiness: "In a nutshell, Gross National Happiness seeks to measure a nation's progress not by its balance sheet but rather by the happiness — or unhappiness — of its people. It's a concept that represents a profound shift from how we think about money and satisfaction and the obligation of a government to its people," writes Weiner (p.56) The author then spots a hand-painted sign in a country that otherwise lacks billboards and advertising which reads,

*When the last tree is cut,
When the last river is emptied,
When the last fish is caught,
Only then will Man realize that he can not eat money. (p.57)*

Hmmm. I feel like putting that sign up on my door. What a great little mantra for a world gone mad — we Westerners who seem to have lost the meaning in our lives — and in a time when we face the reality that

consumption leads down a road of despair with scarce enough resources to survive (if we keep along the same path say the environmentalists), let alone be happy.

How much do our expectations infringe upon our potential for happiness or mere contentment? I mean, I am content with a book in my hands that I enjoy reading. I am content watching a good movie. I can become ebullient when dancing, or sharing a deep and attentive conversation with another person. I think that's it for me — a contentment and connection with a person or myself in a moment. I can be content with Adam just as he is. We are going to the art gallery today and we will simply enjoy each other's company with no grand affair. I can be happy even when I am going through crisis with the mere realization that there are moments that make us happy within more difficult times, like the times I am going through right now. For me, even these simple revelations are the essence of happiness.

Weiner writes, "In America, high expectations are the engines that drive us, the gas in our tanks, the force behind our dreams and, by extension, our pursuit of happiness." Just in that one word alone "pursuit" I am exhausted. It truly doesn't make me happy — this race to find what makes us happy. I don't believe that the grass is greener on the other side, as the saying goes. Something deep inside me has always told me that my happiness has to do with my outlook on life. It's something that I always have to re-confront.

Weiner interviews Karma Ura, a part of the Bhutan government's think tank. Karma (I like his name for I believe we reap what we sow), says, "My way of thinking is completely different [than an American's way of thinking]. I have no such mountains to scale; basically, I find that living itself is a struggle, and if I'm satisfied, if I have just done that, lived well, in the evening I sigh and say, 'it was okay....' Even if you have achieved great things, it is sort of a theatre playing in your mind. You think it so important, but actually you have not made such a difference to anyone's life... We like to think we really made a difference. Okay in the week's scale it may have been interesting. Take another forty years, I'm not so sure. Take three generations, and you will be forgotten without a trace." (p. 65)

Like Karma, I think about death every day. Like him, I find it "sanitizing," not morose. I think about it to remind me of the pleasures and gifts of today. I find that the work of being happy much too exhausting. Rather, the realization of what I have today, seems to bring me unadulterated contentment.

I hope your day brings you contentment, even if it's just washing the dishes, walking outside, reading a book or...going to the art gallery. Today, I'm not Elizabeth Gilbert of **Eat Pray Love**, or Eric Weiner of **The Geography of Bliss** — searching somewhere *out there* to find happiness. I am living as if the life and the things I go through are contributing to my happiness. The plain old subtle day-to-day stuff that is actually, quite special depending upon one's view of things. My life is about Adam these days, navigating a difficult time, and realizing what makes me happy, or at least content, right here at home. The geographies I navigate are living inside not just me, but in all of us. We don't need to really travel that far.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[1 Comment](#)

[Read More](#)

[On Desperation](#)

Filed Under ([Activism](#)) by Estee on 06-03-2009

It is no secret that I am going through a separation. In going through the process, I get to meet with more people who impute their thoughts and meaning about what it must be like to have an autistic child. I hear a lot of

empathy, sometimes sympathy, and it starts to make me uncomfortable. I mean, when Diane Sawyer interviewed Kristina Chew of **Autism Vox** and now **Change.org**, and said that joy is a way of masking sorrow, I was really upset with her.

We all have our own journey to take. In writing my book, I have to review old notes and diaries and come face-to-face with myself. I can see where the cracks may have begun to form in my life. If hindsight is 20/20, I can see clearly now.

There was definitely that “mama bear” in me — no one was going to discriminate against my child! Yet, there was also a great sense of isolation and aloneness in those early days. There was a great deal of misunderstanding. There was confusion on my part with the early messages about Adam’s autism in terms of how he played and what I should or should not be doing. There was a great deal of guilt and a heavy load of responsibility I felt upon me. In all of this confusion, I lost friends too. I don’t think they understood this journey I was on. When I became “Activist Mom,” I gained some friends, but also lost some and was called “too militant,” which only gave them greater reason to abandon me, instead of digging deeper to discover what someone has to go through to become an activist. Activism does not have to be militant, so I want to reveal that it is disconcerting to hear the two as synonyms, and I think there is a huge gap in understanding the journey parents must go on that the “outside world” (meaning families with children without disabilities) simply do not understand.

As I look back on my early words when Adam was not quite two years old but just diagnosed, I was so distressed. I was turning 40 years old. I was being told that autism was “not a sprint but a marathon.” I had written that I felt like “a part of me had died.” I had written that I “envied other families with typical children who were able to talk to them easily about their experiences when Adam could not.” I was angry when people went up to Adam and gave me distressing looks or yelled in his face as if he could not hear them. I was pressured to accept the comparisons between an ADD child and an autistic child — and in many senses, I still think you cannot compare these experiences at all. People were trying hard to be my friend by making my family experience familiar through comparison. It’s an understandable thing to do because it is one’s segue to understanding and empathy. But really, there was no adequate comparison that could match my experience.

The truth of the matter is, I experienced the pain of having a child diagnosed with autism just as much as any other family. I have a written record of it on my desk right now. I can see how isolated I felt, how I didn’t get the support I really needed, and how I fought to stay afloat all by myself. There was no one out there to really support us without pitying us, and I resented that too. Pity was not going to get Adam included in the programs and schools he needed to be participating in.

Adam was my life buoy. Every time, even despite his anxiety issues and his cries, he smiled or made one small step forward, he pulled me back to him and to a new reality. I rebuilt my dreams and my expectations. Yes, I went through doubt and I walked through my own hell, but Adam pulled me out of it. My world shrank to Adam and I and then it exploded to a world of other friends — autistic people and other families — all thanks to Adam. It expanded to accept other people with disabilities in a way I had never done before. My world expanded so I could see things in an entirely different and new way. While I lost many friends, I also gained so many more. This is how life is supposed to work, I think. Life is meant to shatter expectations in order that we grow bigger and stronger and more open to many things.

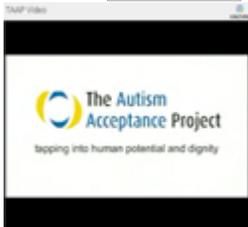
Desperation morphs, you see. It is part of the journey. A valid part. And you just have to wade through it, just like I did then, and am doing now in the process of divorce. I now prefer to see it as “a part of me died” in order that I could become a more accepting and loving person. So, walk through hell with dignity and an open heart. I promise you will get through to the other side.

- [Digg this post](#)
- [Recommend on Facebook](#)
- [share via Reddit](#)
- [Tweet about it](#)
- [Tell a friend](#)

[7 Comments](#)
[Read More](#)
[« Older Entries](#)
[Newer Entries »](#)

Search:

GO



About Me



ESTÉE KLAR

I'm a PhD candidate at York University, Critical Disability Studies, with a multi-disciplinary background in the arts as a curator and writer. I am the Founder of The Autism Acceptance Project (www.taaproject.com), and an enamoured mother of my only son who lives with the autism label. I like to write about our journey, critical issues regarding autism in the area of human rights, law, and social justice, as well as reflexive practices in (auto)ethnographic writing about autism.

• Categories

- [ABA](#)
- [Ableism](#)

- [Abuse](#)
- [Academia](#)
- [Acceptance](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Activism](#)
- [Adam](#)
- [Advocacy](#)
- [Aides and Assistants](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Art](#)
- [autism](#)
- [Autism and Employment](#)
- [Autism and Intelligence](#)
- [Autism and Learning](#)
- [Autism and The Media](#)
- [Autism and Vaccines](#)
- [Autism History](#)
- [Autism Spectrum and Diagnosis](#)
- [Autism Theories](#)
- [Autistic Self Advocacy](#)
- [Behaviours](#)
- [Book Reviews](#)
- [Books](#)
- [Capital](#)
- [Celebrity Advocacy](#)
- [Charity](#)
- [Children's Literature](#)
- [Communication](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Computing/iPad](#)
- [Contributions to Society](#)
- [Creative Non Fiction](#)
- [Critical Disability Studies](#)
- [Critical Disability Theory](#)
- [Development](#)
- [Disability Finances/Benefits](#)
- [Disability History](#)
- [Discrimination](#)
- [Diversity](#)
- [DSM V](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Estee](#)
- [Ethics](#)
- [Eugenics](#)
- [EVENTS](#)
- [Family](#)
- [Film](#)
- [Friendship](#)
- [Government Services](#)
- [Holidays](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [Humour](#)
- [Identity](#)

- [Inclusion](#)
- [Inspiration](#)
- [Institutionalization](#)
- [Institutions](#)
- [Intelligence](#)
- [Joy](#)
- [Language](#)
- [Law](#)
- [Living](#)
- [Love](#)
- [Media](#)
- [Medications](#)
- [Movement Difference](#)
- [Movement Disturbance](#)
- [NEugenics](#)
- [Newgenics](#)
- [Obsessions](#)
- [Organizations/Events](#)
- [Parenting](#)
- [Pharma](#)
- [Pity](#)
- [Play](#)
- [Poetry](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Safety](#)
- [school](#)
- [Science](#)
- [seizures](#)
- [Sensory Differences](#)
- [Single Parenthood](#)
- [Sleep](#)
- [Spectrumism](#)
- [Synesthesia](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [The Autism Acceptance Project](#)
- [The Autism Genome Project](#)
- [The Economy of Pity](#)
- [The Joy Of Autism](#)
- [Tics](#)
- [To Get To The Other Side](#)
- [Transitions](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Uncategorized](#)
- [Universal Design](#)
- [Wandering](#)
- [Websites](#)
- [What is Disability?](#)
- [Writing](#)

• Archives

- [February 2017](#)
- [April 2016](#)
- [July 2015](#)
- [April 2015](#)
- [February 2015](#)
- [January 2015](#)
- [December 2014](#)
- [November 2014](#)
- [October 2014](#)
- [September 2014](#)
- [July 2014](#)
- [June 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)
- [March 2014](#)
- [January 2014](#)
- [December 2013](#)
- [November 2013](#)
- [October 2013](#)
- [September 2013](#)
- [August 2013](#)
- [July 2013](#)
- [June 2013](#)
- [May 2013](#)
- [April 2013](#)
- [March 2013](#)
- [February 2013](#)
- [January 2013](#)
- [December 2012](#)
- [November 2012](#)
- [October 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [June 2012](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)
- [February 2012](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [December 2011](#)
- [November 2011](#)
- [September 2011](#)
- [August 2011](#)
- [July 2011](#)
- [June 2011](#)
- [May 2011](#)
- [April 2011](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [February 2011](#)
- [January 2011](#)
- [December 2010](#)
- [November 2010](#)
- [October 2010](#)
- [September 2010](#)

- [August 2010](#)
- [July 2010](#)
- [June 2010](#)
- [May 2010](#)
- [April 2010](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [February 2010](#)
- [January 2010](#)
- [December 2009](#)
- [November 2009](#)
- [October 2009](#)
- [September 2009](#)
- [August 2009](#)
- [July 2009](#)
- [June 2009](#)
- [May 2009](#)
- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)

• Tags

(Dis)abilities Adam Anxiety Asperger Square 8 autism Autism and Employment autism research Autism Websites [Autistic Self](#)
[Advocacy](#) Behaviours [Communication](#) diversity Inclusion [Joy](#) Law personhood Policy [school](#)
 The Autism Genome Project

• Blog Tools

- [Log in](#)
- [Entries RSS](#)
- [Comments RSS](#)
- [WordPress.org](#)

Podcast

- [→ Autism Podcast](#)

Blog Archive

The Joy of Autism:

because finding joy doesn't come without struggle;
because the point is to find it;
because if an autistic person calls autism their way of being, not an illness, then it is;
because every human has value and is a joy;
because despite inhumane acts, I believe in humanity;
but most of all, because of my son Adam.

The Joy of Autism

Blog 2005-2008

PDF Download (24MB)

[Click Here](#)

Contributing Blogger

- [→ dsq parent and sibling roundtable](#)



NetworkedBlogs

Blog:
The Joy of Autism 2

Topics:
autism, acceptance,
critical disability
studies

[Join my network](#)



[50 Learning Disability Blogs](#)



[Website Design](#) by AskGraphics.com | [Business Web Hosting](#) | [Best website Hosting](#) | [beer](#)

© All Rights Reserved. [Estée Klar](#)

Copyright 2019 © Estée Klar. All Rights Reserved. Web Design By: [Insight Design & Communications](#).
[Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#).